An African Perspective of Drama: 
The Case of the Homowo Festival Among the People of Teshie, Greater Accra Region – Ghana

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ABSTRACT

There have been literary scholars such as Ruth Finnegan who have argued and asserted that drama is not a literary genre that is well developed in Africa. Although this assertion has been refuted and disproved by other literary scholars such as Euchero, Enekwe and Owomoyela, people still struggle with exactly what drama in Africa entails and is about. Whether the dramatic elements and traditions found in the performances are simply not remnants of the encounter with the western world as popularly postulated or they are actually traditions deeply rooted in the culture and identity as Africans. The paper used a qualitative research method that is essentially rooted in ethnography and historical facts that surround the Homowo festival. Also, with Afrocentric theory and Structural Theory of Myth, this paper has critically examined the Homowo festival of the people of Teshie in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana as an African drama and established that the various performances during the festival festivities have the features of drama and not only that, but they practically and vividly show how the performances are rooted in history, myth, rituals and the belief of the people in the community; thus, exhibiting a clear perspective of African drama. This study further contributes to the existing knowledge on oral literature and the treatment of festivals in Africa as a literary genre. It presents the Homowo festival as a fully fledged cultural practice that takes into cognizance essential dramatic elements embedded in its performance.

Keywords: Festival, African Drama, Myth, Homowo

INTRODUCTION

Nkala asserts that “that African drama exists is not in question: the question concerns whether what exists as African drama can pass the test of euro-centric minds.”¹ This assertion by Nkala shows the confusion and conflicting opinions that surround what an African drama is, the assertion does not deny

the existence of African drama but acknowledges that there are a lot of conceptions of what constitutes drama and this hinders drama from getting a unified definition. This is so because of how African culture is viewed through the spectrum of an euro-centric paradigm. Nkala’s assertion becomes clearer when Finnegan maintains that “it would perhaps be truer to say that in Africa, in contrast to Western Europe and Asia, drama is not typically a widespread or a developed form.” A number of literary critics have disproved this assertion by Finnegan. They argued that Africa can be said to have a developed form of drama when a keen look is taken at some of the festivals and performances. Responding to Finnegan who referred to dramatic elements of some African drama as “quasi-dramatic,” Yankah cited in African Theatre Festivals laments that “in spite of the evident link between festivals and theatre, some critics of African theatre downplay the significant dramatic elements that undergird African festivals.”

Abrams defines drama as “a composition designed for performance in the theatre, in which actors take the role of characters, perform the indicated action and utter the written dialogue.” The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms also defines drama as “the general term for performance in which actors impersonate the actions and speech of fictional or historical characters (or non-human entities) for the entertainment of an audience, either on a stage or by means of broadcast; or a particular example of this art, i.e., a play.” These definitions of drama have a couple of things in common, the sense of performance, which implies the need for performers, performance space, and the presence of an audience. However, drama only focuses on performance, the other two, performers and performance space are only there for the sake of the performance itself. Albeit, the presence of a performance, performers, and a performance space does not simply mean that drama has occurred. There is a whole lot that fits into such a framework. Morgan and Brask posit that, “what is performed may be dance, musical drama, variety entertainment, mime, the improvisation and portrayal of a story involving impersonation and dialogue or the acting out of a written script including plot and character portrayal.”

Opoku opines that a festival is a celebration of a sacred or religious historical event, symbolized by the remembrance of heroic deeds, infused with religious and ritualistic undertones and activities. A festival is a cultural event because it bestows on all members of the community a sense of belonging from which they tap/source identity and uniqueness. Festivals therefore can serve as a channel through which the living and the dead and deities communicate their needs. In this light, Mbiti affirms the spiritual import of festivals when he says that some societies “hold worship ceremonies at harvest festivals at which, they offer sacrifices or offerings to God.” Festivals are not merely analyzed as drama that is just meant to entertain but essentially, one that seems to impart lessons and impact lives positively. Opoku also opines that:

Festivals are rituals that recur at regular intervals and which have their purpose, the expression of beliefs held by a particular community… Festivals take place at special times set aside by a community in order to commemorate some events of historical, cultural, or religious significance and by the performance of certain rituals; such events are re-enacted, giving both individuals and their communities, a sense of meaning and cohesiveness.”

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Some examples of festivals celebrated in Ghana include Ohum of the Akyems, Feok of the Builsas in the Upper East, Hogbetsotoso of the Anglos in the Volta, Kundum of the Nzemas and Ahantas in the Western, Fetu Afahye of the people of Oguaa in the Central, Akwasidae of the Asantes, Aboakyir of the Effutu-Winneba people in the Central, Damba of the people of Dagomba, Gonja, and Mamprusi in the Northern. One thing that is distinctly clear and aligns with Opoku’s assertion on festivals is that these festivals are celebrated in Ghana either to commemorate events of historical, cultural, or religious significance and they are always infused with the performance of certain rituals that give the individuals and their communities a sense of unity, identity and meaning. This study is to show that African drama exists and it might not necessarily align or pass all the euro-centric concepts of drama but that does not make the drama in Africa flawed or any less than drama. This paper, is, therefore, an attempt to show the African perspective of drama, which is to establish that there are elements of drama embedded in the performance of the Homowo festival celebrated by the Ga’s of Ghana.

METHODOLOGY
This research adopted a qualitative approach because the nature of the subject demanded a design that is rooted in the practice, process, and context of the research. It was highly observational and descriptive. In the course of the observation of the festival, pictures were taken, video recordings were made, and fifteen (15) interviews were conducted with custodians of the Ga culture to obtain historical facts that surround the Homowo festival. Due to the nature of the research, the author relied on ten (10) key interviews conducted with the traditional custodians who have direct contact with and are responsible for the festivities of the Teshie Homowo festival. Discussions of data collected were also grounded in theories that have been formulated by scholars and academicians. Also, a research assistant who understood the Ga language, a chief, and some elders of Ga culture were recruited to help with the translation of the Ga language, concepts, and symbols of the festival.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Afrocentric Theory
This theory is centered on the notion that Africa is unique and different in a recognizable way. Owusu-Frimpong asserts that the central feature of the Afrocentric paradigm is that there is a particular African worldview and value system which can be related to all other central concepts including those of religion, morality, and social organization. It recognizes that there is a certain way that all Africans are connected despite the variations among different groups, a way that is different from that of the European and Asian. This theory by affirming the differences between Africans and others concretizes the idea that the performances of African drama must not be subjected to the standards of Europeans and Asians. Owusu-Frimpong opines that the;

Afrocentric theory provides a methodological approach that directs our attention to our language, folktales, root rituals, Ebonics, music and the symbolic boundaries and iconic signposts not only for locating a text but also for generating substantive discourses and debates that would guide the knowledge about self as African people and transmit the knowledge to future generations.

In this light, the Afrocentric theory shows that there are differences in the same art form across various cultures and that these differences arise from the methods of expression and experience in those cultures.


Structural Theory of Myth

The common understanding of myth is that it is a traditional tale that relates “events alleged to have taken place in time: before the world was created, or during its first stages—anywhere, long ago.” through which human societies express certain basic feelings such as love, hatred, or revenge as well as provide an explanation for certain natural phenomena. The close connection between myth and ritual and the various disagreements about the relationship(s) that they share has resulted in difficulties in theorizing about myths. While on the verge of proposing a structural study of myths, Lévi-Strauss emphasizes this difficulty when he writes that, “from a theoretical point of view, the situation remains very much the same as it was fifty years ago, namely, a picture of chaos.” Kowalzig wrote several years after Lévi-Strauss and delved into the relationship between myth and ritual based on their performance context and how this performance strengthens the belief in gods.

In his study, Lévi-Strauss proposes a structuralist analysis of myth along the same lines as the structuralist analysis of language. The key ideas expounded in his work are, firstly, myth, just like language, constitutes langue and parole and can be evaluated along synchronic and diachronic lines, or better put as a form of language that exists at a particular point in time and also as one that exists through time. By advocating a study of myths from a structuralist point of view, Lévi-Strauss is able to account for how a myth, set in a particular time or one point in history (synchronic) is a story that is nevertheless timeless or exists through time (diachronic). Secondly, just like language, myth is composed of constituent units which are put together with certain rules in mind. For the author, the constituent units of myth—which he calls “mythemes”—share a certain relationship (of binary opposition) that gives rise to similar myth structures across the world. By emphasizing the relationships between the events that form a myth, Lévi-Strauss moves away from analyzing myths based on the content to analysis that is based on structure, and, by nature, seems more objective and scientific. Klages also asserts that myth can “be translated, paraphrased, reduced, expanded, and otherwise manipulated without losing its basic shape or structure.” Lévi-Strauss analysis of myth based on structure, therefore, offers a laudable explanation for the tendency of many similar myths existing across the globe, despite the fact that each myth in the process of composition (or narration) is subject to chance and possibility.

Therefore, the Homowo as a festival fused with rituals, which themselves are based on, explained by, or associated with myths, can be seen as a combination of performances that re-actualize past events.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GA’S AND THE HOMOWO FESTIVAL

The people of the Ga tribe are a littoral community occupying the south-eastern part of Ghana. Their territory is bounded on the east by the laloi Lagoon, on the west by the river Densu which is also known as ‘Sakumo fie’ and on the north, about 18 miles from the coast by the Akwapim Ridge which is inhabited by the Akwapims who form part of the Akan ethnic group. According to an interview with the Wulomo of Teshie, the Ga state comprises the following six main towns lying from west to east. Accra, which is the capital of Ghana, Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua, and Tema. It is widely speculated that the Ga’s immigrated from farther east of Yorubaland in Nigeria. The Ga people are said to have arrived

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in three parties, each of them led by its priest (Wulomo). The Ga Wo (Nungua) settled in the village of Wodoku and Wofagba. The Ga Boni or La people settled at Ladoku on the Laloi lagoon near Prampram (Ghughla), moved to Adzanote, and finally drove the Nungua from Wodoku (present-day La) and settled there. Teshie is an off-shoot of La which came with other groups. The third-party Ga Mashi settled in the west at Accra and Ayawaso (Okai Koi Hill).22

Ammah posits that Homowo is the main festival of the Ga people. Its actual origin is shrouded in mystery and attempts to solve it provide only plausible conjectures. Many writers seem to agree that Homowo is a first-fruit festival in which celebrants commemorate the past suffering of famine of their ancestor settlers. In certain respects, it is not unlike the harvest festival of other tribes. Essentially, Homowo is a religious festival and also one of the chief instruments of social control in the Ga communities.23

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE FESTIVAL FESTIVITIES

Below is a list of keywords that run through the discussion of the events of the Homowo festival:

- **Wulomei/Wɔyei** - priests/priestesses (individuals chosen by ancestral spirits to act as their mouthpieces among mortals.)
- **Wolɔiatse/Wulɔtsɛ Shia** - the chief fisherman/the chief fisherman’s abode or residence
- **Mantse/Mantsemei** - Chief/traditional chiefs (each of the six Ga traditional states is headed by a Mantse; the individual villages and towns under the capital town of each state may have their own mantse)
- **Tsese** - a wooden bowl that is used as a vessel for mixing and carrying medicinal herbs, herbs that are used for cleansing, healing, and spiritual uplifting of the Ga community.
- **Ataa-Naa Nyonmo** – Supreme Being, creator of the universe.
- **Jemawɔjiŋ** – Deities (lesser). These deities through which the Ga people commune with Nyonmo are believed to be harboured in places such as rivers, lakes, trees, hills, groves, shrines as well as animals.
- **Scy (Sacred Stools)** - The broom cleansing of these stools and worship of sacred deities creates the opportunity for the people to be in harmony with the universe.
- **Foiblo (Broom)** – Symbol of authority for the priest and priestesses (Wulomei/Wɔyei) used to ward off evil, to cleanse the town of all evil.
- **Yelega(Yam)/Yeleg Yeli** – Eating of yams; an occasion in the festive celebration where yams are sent to the chief’s palace and after rituals are done, shared amongst the clan members, symbolizing an abundance of food.
- **Nshor (Sea)/Nshornaa (Seaside/Beach)**
- **Kpokpo** – A traditional festive meal made with steamed corn, mashed and mixed with palm oil.
- **Kutuwa** – A small cup made of the hard shell of the coconut, used to collect the alcoholic drink for pouring libation.
- **Kotochi** – A bundle of powerful medicinal leaves (with spiritual underpinnings) tied together into a cone hive shape and used as a symbol of the sea god.
- **Mletsi** – Short brownish broom used by the Wɔyei and Wɔhin for spiritual cleansing.
- **Flɔnɔɔ** - Oval-shaped clay oven.
- **Banku** – A cornmeal made from fermented corn dough.
- **Manjaano** – Centre of Teshie town where the chief and his elders sit in state to see to affairs of the community. Most activities of the community take place there.

22 Interview with Wulomo, Nii Anan Gyeayɔɔ, Teshie, 10/08/2020.
• **Opokute, Adjeshimankonooa, Odamenaa, Akelenaa, Sankonaa, Blɔkojo, Kosekose, Kubblegyɛɔɔ –** They are the abodes of deities of the Teshie people.

• **ŋɔɔwɔ –** Traditional greetings of good health and life during festive occasions.

• **Clay symbol –** The indigenous participants (male and female) responsible for the ritual performances of the festival wear all-white attires (as costumes) for the occasion. Included are the chief priest and the priestesses (Wulomei and Wɔyei). In addition to their costume, they are marked with clay on their bodies and wear ‘nyanyara’ (braided leaves) around their neck. The custodians of the land who are very close to the Mantse and perform very significant roles in the festivities are marked with two strands of clay marks on the backs of the palm, their temples, their feet, and their foreheads, and go barefoot. After the festival, members who are set apart for deity service wear white throughout the year.

Clan Names in Teshie (Plus Heads)

- **Agbawe – Siketele**
- **Krobo – Mankrado**
- **Klemusu – Wulomo**
- **Gbugbla (war group) – Asafoatse**
- **Lenshie - Mantse**

THE HOMOWO FESTIVAL AS AN AFRICAN DRAMA

The Homowo festival of the people of Teshie in all its full expression, glamour and beauty is fitting for the title of drama. In light of Herskovits’s explication of drama, he opines that;

… the role of our (western) theatre in broaching and emphasising problems in living, ordinarily sidestepped by the average person, does not take into account in studying the drama in (traditional) societies. For where drama is a part of life, a psychological toughness is engendered, especially since compensations are social and culturally determined, this, in turn, is closely connected with the fact that supernatural beings to whom these folks look for support and guidance are so real to them. To the extent that (traditional) dramatic performances reinforce an escape mechanism, they do so in terms which merit and receive social understanding, since the tales they tell are known to all… thus in traditional societies, the spectator, as often as not, is participant and actor as well… Theatre in the sense in which we understand it does not exist. The (traditional) stage has no need for the proscenium.24

In Herskovits’s explication of drama, the African drama bears with it an exceedingly overwhelming desire to represent faithfully the way and manner in which their ancestors, gods, spirits and nature acted during the period of struggle, victory and survival of their traditional area. The traditional chief priest and priestess (Wulomei and Wɔyei and attendants) the chief and his elders, various Asafo clans and the members of the community come together during the Homowo festival to re-enact the significant events and activities which paved way for their ancestors to possess the land and survive on it. The imitation of the activities of their forebears is held in high esteem because of the reverence, respect and admiration they have for them. These actions are re-enacted during the festival to excite varieties of emotions among the audience. Emotions of fear, anxiety, joy and hope for a brighter future are intricately fused within the performers and audience. The volume of the performance and the significance it holds for the people of Teshie helps to show and establish the Homowo festival as an African drama. The ritualistic performance of the Homowo festival is made up of various stages in

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order of their performance. They include; the Blọhejju, Ablekuw/Yele Yeli, Nshorna Wodjin Adjamo, Nshor Bulemọ, Gbe Min Laa, Mansee Shia Baa, Kpokpoi Shwamo, Noo Wala Hamo, Tsese Kpa Faa and Tsetse Bumọ.

The Homowo festival starts in the last week of the month of July and throughout the month of August to the second week of September. The festival is marked by different district activities that come together to ensure the wholesomeness of the festival. This analysis will, therefore, delve critically into the various stages of the Homowo festival and how these stages shed light on how the Homowo festival can be categorized as an African drama.

**Blọhejju**
The Blọhejju (broom-cleansing) is the main ritual performance done in the last week of the month of July, the Blọhejju is an integral part of the festival and also begins the whole ritual festival festivities. The Blọhejju injects into the festival a profound understanding that holds the festival together. It is during Blọhejju that the absolute inclusion of the supernatural is invoked which gives weight to the Homowo festival and ignites the passion with which every performer acts his/her role within the festival.

Cleanliness is prioritized during this time; thus, the people are conscious of the fact that the deities prefer to dwell in a clean environment. This ritual cleansing is performed at dawn, the beginning of the day, from the hours of 3 am to 4 am on the first day of the festival week. The traditional chief priest and the priestess (Wọyie and Wọhin) on the first day of the celebration perform the ritual broom-cleansing. This cleansing has two main significances. Firstly, it is to officially announce the beginning of the Homowo festival, and secondly, it is a way of cleansing the environment so as to invite the full participation of the deities.

The stage designed for this performance is clearly noticeable, it is the “Manjaano” which is the central location where the Teshie community gathers for various activities. It measures about 20 meters wide. In the middle of the stage is a fully rounded clay oven (flọnọ) with a small opening known as Tutueno. A day before the celebration this oven-shaped mound is completely whitewashed. Legend has that, the people of Gbugbla (beyond Prampram to Nokopho in Accra) approached the Teshie elders to be given a place to settle down. The elders would not be convinced about them, especially since they came along with their numerous deities. To prove to the Teshie elders that they would not cause any conflict when they are given a place to settle, the strangers from Gbugbla presented a virgin who was buried alive seven feet. The oven-shaped mound was then erected on the grave of this maiden to signify the resolve to unite with the people of Teshie. The oven-shaped mound symbolizes the unification of all souls in Teshie land. The tutueno mound wherein lies the remains of the virgin who was buried alive as ransom to establish the loyalty and resolve of their forebears to live in peace with their neighbours also implies that the festive celebration is deeply rooted in the myth of the people.

The time for the performance of the broom-cleansing ritual is also very significant. This performance spans a limited time of about 3 am to 4 am under the cover of dawn, this is mainly because the ritual is to be seen by initiates; thus, the time provides a kind of covering that insulates the priest and priestess (Wọyie and Wọhin), the performers of the ritual from the prying eyes of ordinary men. The performers of this ritual are made up of about twenty-five traditional priests and priestesses consisting of about fifteen males and ten females. These traditional priests and priestesses wear white calico. The white colour of their clothing is symbolic. Hagan posits that “colour symbolism in ritual ceremonies may be used to differentiate the categories of individuals who are involved in the ritual” and also to define their roles in the drama of ritual enactment.”

The wearing of white calico differentiates the priests and priestesses from the ordinary folks as well as their purity and consecration to the gods whom they serve. The women wear the calico with the fold around their chest and above

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their breast, while the men wear the calico as a jumper with a loose-sleeve white calico top. The neck of the priest and priestesses are adorned with garlands of nyanyara leaves. The nyanyara leaves are the leaves of the bitter melon fruit. Its major spiritual use is to ward off evil spirits while at the same time cleansing the wearer. Once they put the nyanyara leaves on, they feel safe and secure to perform the rituals.

They hold short brooms known as mletsi (very short brownish brooms) which in line with the Afrocentric theory symbolize their authority as custodians and protectors of the land. The brooms are symbolic and represent the totality of the cleansing ritual. These brooms are usually not used to sweep, their presence on stage signifies the cleansing itself, however, its short and brownish nature symbolizes overuse and establishes the fact that cleanliness is an old age tradition adhered and guarded in the community. This broom cleansing festival illustrates dramatic elements in the sense that within this performance, the present generation mimicking the actions of their forebears is observed. There is a set time, that is 3 am to 4 am and there is a set stage, which is the centre of the community. The actors and their props here, signaled by the brooms and attires all enhance the drama of the performance. This performance is in tandem with the Afrocentric theory which clarifies that African folktales and rituals guide knowledge about Africans and transmit the knowledge to future generations.26 In the hour ritual, each of the twenty-five priests and priestesses holds a short mletsi in the right hand amidst hushed mysterious tunes. They point the mletsi to the skies as a way of seeking the approval of the heavenly deity. Broom in hand, they move around the community in a symbolic sweep-cleansing of the town, then converge again at their central location where each priest and priestess put the broom in front of them, while the chief priest (Wulomo) pours his final libation and offers a prayer to the deities and thus ends the ritual. The ritual performance with the mletsi is essential on two accounts; firstly, it seeks to cleanse the community of all spiritual filth and announces the beginning of the festive season. Secondly, it denotes the reaffirmation and allegiance, and loyalty to the deities.27

**Ablekuu/Yele Yeli**

The following Friday of the last week of July is the *Ablekuu* and *Yele Yeli* ritual performance. This performance is also done at dawn between the hours of 3 am to 4 am by the priests and priestesses (*Woyei and Wohin*). The traditional priests and priestesses all clad in white attire pour libation at all the deity spots around the town. The five clan heads (*Lenshie, Agbawe, Klemusu, Gbugbla and Krobo*) carry five bags of corn at waist level, to the *Manste’s* (chief) palace. There, more libation is poured by the *Wulomo* to announce their harvest of corn and he seeks blessings from the deities for a smooth celebration. The corn, the principal ingredient for the preparation of the *Kpokpoi*, a steamed corn dish prepared solely for the festival meal is at the core of this and needs to be ritually sanctified for the meal. After the libation, each clan head takes a bag of corn home to await the festive meal preparation. *Yele Yeli* follows after this activity on the same day around the same time, at the same place, which is the *Mantse’s* palace. A sack of yam is carried by the clan heads to the palace and after pouring libation and seeking blessings from the deities, each clan head picks a tuber of yam and takes it home. The yam is added in case the corn planted does not grow well and where there is a shortage of corn for the festive food, the yam can serve as a substitute.

In this ritual performance, there is a clear and defined plot. The traditional priest and priestesses all gather to pray and pour libation to thank the gods of the land for their crop’s growth throughout the year while at the same time leaning on the gods for the abundant supply of their needs. All the priests and priestesses, clad in white, go to all places in Teshie town inhabited by deities to pour libation to thank them for a bountiful harvest and ask for a continuous supply of food.

The clan heads, who can be viewed as characters, carry five bags of corn to the chief’s palace. At this stage, more libation is poured by the *Mantse* and *Wulomo*, after which each clan head carries home a bag of corn as well as a tuber of yam for later use. Symbolically, the corn and yam represent the

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27 Interview with Wohin, Nii Anan Akitiwa, Teshie, 15/08/2020.
physical manifestation of the abundance of food made possible by the gods of the land. It is also a way of encouraging the members of the community to take to farming seriously so that they do not go hungry.

**Nshɔnna Wɔdjin Adjamo**

The *Homowo* festival is occasioned with a lot of ritual performances which simply demand numerous libations pouring. The pouring of libation is not just an act of revering the ancestors, gods and natural elements to invoke both their presence and elicit specific responses from them. Essel asserts that libation is a beneficial and tangible cultural heritage permitted by Ghana’s constitution and international laws. Essel further advances a strong case for the relevance of libation and argues strongly that its place in the cultural heritage of a people demands attention.

The first libation prayer that takes place is the *Nshɔnna Wɔdjin Adjamo* which comes off on Tuesday in the first week of August. The *Wolɔjiate* and his entourage of clan heads (*Leshe, Agbawe, Klemusu, Gbugbla, and Krobo*) are responsible for this ritual performance. This ritual also takes place at dawn between the hours of 3–4 am at the bank of the sea (*Akelenaa*). The *Wolɔjiate* and his entourage of clan heads go to pour libation at the seaside to announce to the sea deity as well as all the people who might have been drowned by the sea (It is believed by the people of Teshie that their souls might be hovering around) that it is time for the *Homowo* festivities. Their belief that the souls of people who drowned need to be informed at the onset of the festival advances the idea of myth in the performance. The *Wolɔjiate* and his entourage go there with four goats, firewood, palm oil, corn dough and pots for cooking.

As the *Wolɔjiate* and his entourage near the bank of the sea, only the *Wolɔjiate* who is in his white jumper and white loose sleeve top with a straw hat, trudges into the sea, while his entourage is confined within the banks of the sea humming a mystic tune to get him moving to his dignified stage. This ritual paves way for the Afrocentric theory in the sense that there are peculiar symbols associated with Africans as clearly seen in their costume. Wilson opines that “theatre clothes send signals similar to everyday costume: but as with other elements of the theatre, there are significant differences between the costume of everyday life and those in the theatre.”

The costume of the *Wolɔjiate* alludes to Moses of the Christian faith, who led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land. He is believed to be pure in heart, sanctified, and elected to lead just as it was in the case of Moses, the *Wolɔjiate* ’s white attire gives him access to the holy ground. The straw hat he wears is made up of natural materials untainted by anything unclean and it bonds him to nature. By forging a link between his costume and that of the Biblical Moses, the *Wolɔjiate* is leaning on a Biblical occurrence with an intent to verify that he has the approval of the gods.

The day and time of the performance are significant as well. It starts on Tuesday from 3 am to 4:30 am. On Tuesdays, no fishing is allowed, it thus becomes an appropriate day to perform a sacred ritual away from the prying eyes of on-lookers, since the hours of 3 am to 4:30 am is a time when the sky is hazy. The covering of dusk in itself provides not only a shade but connects them to the sea god which is believed to be a Tuesday born. The stage, which is the banks of the sea where the *Wolɔjiate* ’s entourage stays during the ritual performance, and the lightning there creates an atmosphere that contributes to aiding the ritual. As the *Wolɔjiate* trudges into the sea, he does so till the water rises right below his breast while standing on a designated stone. The moment where his upper torso is out of the sea, he is certain that he has occupied the right stage. The importance of this partial immersion is that he is connected physically and spiritually to the gods. Holding a bottle of schnapps (gin) with his two hands, he raises it to the skies and chants some mysterious utterances to establish the link between the gods and himself. As he chants on, he pours the schnapps into the sea. The pouring of


29 Essel, "Libation Art in Art of Ghana: Linking The Underlinked."

libation at this time is a prayer to the gods and ancestors to announce to them that the *Homowo* is about to begin and to ask for their permission to grant them a peaceful celebration and a complete realization of all that they expect to gain from the celebration. When he is done, he throws the empty bottle into the sea which signifies that everything in the bottle belongs to the deity. He then walks back and joins his entourage who are waiting for him at the bank of the seashore for the second part of the ritual to begin.

The Wolɔiatse who is the major performer of the libation invokes the attention of both the participant and audience and the gods. There is a godly aura associated with the process of libation pouring, with the Wolɔiatse keeping a six-inch space between him and his retinue, there is a feeling of spiritual visitation as the whole atmosphere becomes intense and charged. The Wolɔiatse holds the kotuwa which contains the Schnapp with his two hands and starts the pouring act. As the alcohol drizzles onto the ground, it is believed that the gods are partaking in the drink. While the Wolɔiatse pours the Schnapp he utters the following words:

**Ga**

Wolɔiatse: Agoo, Agoo, Agoo  
**Attendant:** Amee, Amee, Amee  
Wolɔiatse: Nyeme ke tsemei  
Ni ekpeshi yebee  
Beele ye jee efɔynaa  
Shi omanye naa  
Ake wɔkane beiaaho  
Nshɔ wɔjin  
Ni ameke Otewediampong Kwame  
Ke egya Asaase Afia, Bɔls mawu  
Baaɔɔ anfra neenɔ ehawɔ  
Meini etsɔ ameɛ  
Ke meini yɔɔ  
Baaha ame wala  
Naagbe nɔɔji, nyeha daa  
Naa basɔɔbo  
Gbeiamlalo gbeiamlalo  
Shitse Odoma, omanfo akebuɔ  
Nii Osei, Ayala, Asowe, agbetsei  
Okpe nyomotsaana, Beyɔɔ ke beyɔɔba  
Osabu, Nii koɔa beile Eshe  
Afeshiman̄ko, Nana Sanko, Okpoite  
Nyebajia gbele ye wɔsutanɔ  
Ke helai fee

**English**

Agoo (repeated thrice, craving the attention of participants to which they reply *ameɛ*)  
Men and women  
Gathered here  
This time is not for bad tidings  
but good tidings  
we have counted the days till now  
Gods of the sea  
and together with God above  
and his partner Asaase Afia. God our creator  
Bless our offering here for us.  
those who have left us (ancestors)  
and those yet living  
Grant them health/life  
to crown it, here is your drink  
these are the gods  
libation is poured for  
starting with  
the gods closer  
and mostly known to them to  
lesser gods in and around  
the community in that order  
come and remove death from our midst  
and all sickness too.

As a verbal art, the words spoken by the Wolɔiatse concurrently with the pouring of the libation of the Schnapp are rendered in a systematic order where appellations to the gods are followed by the incantations and intercessions. This is in light of Kemevor and Duku’s assertion that “when libation is performed, the spirits of the ancestors are accorded reverence but not worshipped.”

After the libation, the elders bring out the goats, firewood, corn, and palm oil which will be used for the ritual performance. The custodians of the Teshie community are each given a goat for the ritual preparation. Once the goats are given out, these custodians now take center stage. At this point,

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the goats act as characters within the performance because they are going to be sacrificed to the gods to ensure the welfare of the society. The goats are killed, singed, dressed and the meat cut into pieces. Part of the raw meat is sprinkled about the seashore and the other is boiled; part of the boiled meat is also sprinkled around as well. The raw meat signifies the live goats that are used as a sacrifice while the boiled meat becomes food for the gods to partake. It is essential to note that the other half of the boiled meat is shared with the partakers who are strongly cautioned from eating the bones of the goat meat. The belief is rooted in the idea that the gods expect the goats do not have any deformity before or after death and this is why the participants are warned not to break any of the bones. The Wolbiatse then pours libation and offers more prayers for the next phase of the upcoming festival festivities.

**Nshɔ Bulemɔ/Kpelekemo**

This ritual performance happens on the following day, that is Wednesday and Thursday for the kpelekemo (arrival of the fishermen). There are two aspects to this particular ritual performance. The first part is only for initiates and is done in the early hours of 3 am to 4:30 am at the home of the Wolbiatse.

Early dawn, the Abluwe clan of Teshie goes to the exclusive forest on the outskirts of the Teshie community to gather seven different types of leaves. One observes a concurrent operationalization of the Afrocentric and myth theories as discussed in the theoretical framework; the purposively selected leaves are brought to the Wolbiatse’s quarters, they are then tied together and put into a big calabash in the Wolbiatse’s room. The Wolbiatse then pours libation on these leaves which are now referred to as kotochi, a symbol of the sea god. This particular libration is performed in the Wolbiatse’s room, which is bare except for a calabash gourd containing the kotochi. Standing barefoot in an empty room except for the calabash containing the kotochi and surrounded by some Abluwe clan members, his assistant pours the Schnapp into the kotuwa as he utters the prayer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ga</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okpee Nyomo tsaaanaa</td>
<td>God of Tsaanaa (sea deity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ke egŋa nyomo tsaaɓee</td>
<td>and his wife tsaaɓee (goddess)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beŋto ke beŋtoma</td>
<td>Male and female gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abajɔ na ɛhawɔ</td>
<td>Come and bless our undertakings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weiŋ agbe amedeiŋ ni</td>
<td>Heaven should open its arms and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ame ba fɛ ceŋŋ tala ɛhawɔ</td>
<td>Come and chair our undertakings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni amefee ehe butu</td>
<td>and become supporters as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keha meini baa ya nshɔneɛ naane</td>
<td>for those about to go fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keha nshɔ bulɛmɔ</td>
<td>to awaken the sea god.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This prayer which accompanies the pouring of libation is for all supernatural protection for those who go deep fishing on the high seas to bring fish for the preparation of the Homowo festival meal. The kotochi then lies in wait, locked up in the Wolbiatse’s room until the afternoon of the day when the Teshie Mantse (chief) and his entourage come to add their blessings with more prayers to the kotochi and the Wolbiatse. The Wolbiatse then takes the lead with the kotochi and the others follow him to the seashore for the performance of the other half of the ritual activity for the day which starts in the late afternoon around 2 pm.

At the seashore, the Wolbiatse and his entourage pour more libation to the sea god. He then dumps the kotochi at Ajeshimankonaas, the abode of the sea god that is very close to the sea. The fishermen, who are prepared for the event of the day, then bring their canoes for sail for a bumper harvest. The Wolbiatse pours more libation for a bountiful catch as well as the safety of the fishermen going to fish. Two canoes are made ready to go fishing; the men of the traditional custodian clan house of Teshie, Agbawe, Lenshie, and Gbugbla occupy one boat in preparation to embark on a journey on the sea. The other two clans, Klemusu and Krobo, also occupy a second boat. At around 3 o’clock late
afternoon, when all is said and done, the canoes set sail on their journey to come back the following day, which is Thursday around the same time.

For a bounty catch to be realized, it is evident that the audience, the traditional priest (*Wolɔiatse*), and the fishermen support each other. The effort of all parties involved contributes greatly to the bumper catch. Thus, the audience sing songs to liven the spirits of the fishermen and encourage them to bring a bumper harvest. This offers a unique reassurance to the people, the audience, the fishermen and the clan heads, energizing their hopes of the kind of bumper harvest they are to expect. Here, it is seen that for the ritual to be effective, the audience comprising the people of Teshie, with their clan heads and fishermen will have to exercise a unifying belief in the potency and power of the gods. This reechoes the reality of the audience-performer relationships predominant in African theatre or drama as seen in the works of Sutherland and Herskovits.32

Once the canoes of the fishermen set sail, the *Wolɔiatse*, his entourage, and the spectators disperse to their various homes to return to the seashore the following day at 3 o’clock noon. This is to welcome back the heroic fishermen who they believe have gone into the deep sea to bring a bounty harvest of fish for their festivities. Upon seeing the fishermen coming to the shore, the audience breaks into a song:

**Ga**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ga</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Nyɛya kwɔɔ ake</em></td>
<td>Go and check if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Asha awolo</em></td>
<td>Big /huge catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tsile awolo</em></td>
<td><em>Tsile (redfish) big ones</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Asha wolo</em></td>
<td>Big /huge catch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The song presents the joy, faith, and satisfaction that the participating audience has in the fishermen and the ability of the gods to give them a bumper fish harvest. The fishermen dock on the seashore and bring out their harvest. The fish are lined up as proof that their prayers have been answered. After lining the fish up on the shore for everyone to enjoy the sight for a while, the *Wolɔiatse* takes his *kotuwa* from his attendant to pour schnapps into it and with two hands clutched on the *kotuwa* he offers prayers to the gods. This is the last prayer he offers to the gods upon the return of the fishermen with their catch of big fishes. He prays:

**Ga**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ga</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Wonda Okple jishi</em></td>
<td>We thank the All-knowing God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wonda naaayoo bosuŋbo shi</em></td>
<td>We thank the goddess of the sea for taking care of us, protecting us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ekwewɔ ake jee, ɛbeji wo</em></td>
<td>We thank him for all seven gods of the land thank him for when sent for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wonda le shi</em></td>
<td>He was able to give us fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jenkojin kpawo jee da le shi</em></td>
<td>We plead in gratitude with the All-knowing for giving us long life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ake ni tsu keba</em></td>
<td>If we have life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Enye ejie loo keha wo</em></td>
<td>Whatever we want we will have but if there is no life, we have nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wɔŋkpa Okpalejen fai</em></td>
<td>All-knowing, thank you very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ake ehawɔ wala ni see jekɛ</em></td>
<td>If we have life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Keji wala yehawɔ le</em></td>
<td>Whatever we want we will have but if there is no life, we have nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Naʃianɔ ni wɔtaawɔɔ wɔbaana</em></td>
<td>All-knowing, thank you very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Shi keji wala be, wona nokonoko</em></td>
<td>If we have life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Okplejin oyiwala dɔŋŋ</em></td>
<td>Whatever we want we will have but if there is no life, we have nothing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The significance of this prayer offered by the Wolɔiatse to thank the gods and seek their further protection is common with most rituals in which the acknowledgment of the gods is considered paramount. The creative use of the Wolɔiatse’s language establishes that he is well versed in the history and traditions of his people and also adds to the cultural identity of the Teshie people. After the prayer, the Wolɔiatse invites children who each pick the fish, and in a straight line walk with the fish on their heads to the house of the Wolɔiatse amidst shouts of “loo eh loo eh loo” (fish oo fish). When they arrive, the fishes are divided, some for the Chief of Teshie, the various clan heads, the Mankrado, and the fishermen who brought the catch, and the rest is left in the Wolɔiatse compound for the preparation of soup, to be eaten with any accompaniment of their choice after the day’s hard work.

**Gbe Mlin Laa**

Gbe Mlin Laa (path closure) is performed the following week Monday, between the hours of 3 am to 4 am. The whole idea behind this ritual is based on the hunger which beset the people of Teshie upon settling at their present location. They swiftly got involved in weeding, tilling, and planting corn so they can get food to survive.

At the Manjaano, the traditional priest gives out seven hoes to the elders of the clan (Ashiawe, Gbugbla, Lenshi, Klemusu, Atwuade, Abluwe). The hoes are literally used in symbolic weeding exercises and digging of the earth for planting corn. It is vital to note how the action of the elders of the clan falls in line with the classical definition of drama by Aristotle that it is “the imitation of an action.” This imitation of the elders of the clan weeding by scratching the ground with hoes is fueled by their belief that wherever their feet and hoe touch, it is spiritually recognized as the beginning of the weeding and planting season as it happened in the days of old when the actual weeding was done. It is this myth that fuels this performance, just as their forebears upon arrival on Teshie land devoted themselves to farming and worked hard to ensure a bumper harvest. The re-enactment of this myth showcases an event that happened in the past and is being initiated in the present generation as though time is frozen within history.

The plot of this event comprises the exposition, the action, the climax, and the falling action. The exposition introduces the clan leaders and their conflict. As leaders, they need to ensure that their people have a regular supply of corn to eat with their fish. The rising action consists of the announcement to the people that it is time to start the planting which is illustrated by the mimicry of weeding; thus, scratching the earth with their hoes. The climax occurs when the seven clan elders announce again that they have finished planting and are closing the paths to the farm to allow the plants to grow. The falling action is when the seven elders turn to go back to their various homes. Through the re-enactment of this act, they remind themselves as people who through hard work and determination were able to hoot at hunger.

Immediately, after this ritual performance, the chief priest (Wulomo) announces the immediate ban on drumming and noise-making. It is believed that the gods, home, and around are visiting the community and they should not be disturbed. The ban is in place till all festivities are over.

**Mansee Shia Baa**

Two weeks after the Gbe Mlin Laa, precisely on Monday is the “Shia Baa” (Homecoming). This is the day for the homecoming of Teshie citizens abroad and from far and near. This is the time of the year when all Teshie indigenes from various locations and residences come home for the Homowo festivities. In the past, they come in their wooden vehicles known as isolo, they drape the front and sides of their vehicles with various colours depicting their clans and on reaching the outskirts of Teshie, the vehicles beep their horns to announce their presence amidst a cheering welcome from the townsfolk. The decorated isolo on that day used to symbolize the joy that comes with the arrival of the indigenes. Each clan and vehicle try cheerfully and zealously to outdo the other in song, horn-tooting, and dance. All these activities take place on the roads leading to the main Teshie town.
Now, things have changed, the warm euphoria that characterizes this homecoming jubilation has dwindled. Even though relations and members of the community who have traveled far away arrive, they come in their private cars, taxis, and other means of transportation apart from the isolåle but whatever the cause may be, they all arrive from their journeys to welcome family members and friends to partake in the festival celebrations.

*Kpokpoi Shwamo*

The following day, Tuesday is time for “Kpokpoi Shawmo” (the sprinkling of kpokpoi). In the early morning of Tuesday, all households including that of the Teshie Mantse (Teshie Chief) prepare kpokpoi; a traditional meal made of steamed cornmeal and palm oil served with palm soup which serves as the traditional food for the occasion. Every household prepares and eats this meal of kpokpoi and palm soup on this festive day. A greater part of this cornmeal dish is sprinkled all over the town by the Mantse and his entourage for the deities of the land and other deities who might be visiting the town too. The sprinkling of the kpokpoi is a ritual performance that aims at showing appreciation to the gods for giving them a bumper harvest, thus, the meal of kpokpoi is sprinkled at the designated traditional places and practically all over the community.

The Mantse, who is the major character in this ritual performance is guarded by his attendants, some of whom will be holding the kpokpoi as he fetches and sprinkles around. The Mantse starts the sprinkling of the kpokpoi at the Lenshie quarters because he is the head of the Lenshie clan and continues to the Shikitele quarters (the Shikitele is the head of the Aghawé clan). All the designated places are households of various clans. The Mantse then moves to the town square, Manjaano, and continues to sprinkle to Gbugbla quarters and then to the Atwaade quarters. The Atwaade people provide the Wulomo (traditional priest) who is part of this entourage, with a bottle of schnapps. This act by the Atwaade people is essential because the Schnapp given to him is what the Wulomo will use to pour libation to mark the end of the kpokpoi sprinkling.

All the designated places that the Mantse goes to sprinkle the kpokpoi, are analogous to the different stages. The props consist of the earthenware bowls from which the kpokpoi is scooped and sprinkled. The Schnapps presented by the Atwaade people is also a prop. There is dialogue, not with humans but with the gods. As the Mantse sprinkles the kpokpoi, he speaks directly to the gods with the belief that they are physically present; thus, even though the gods are not seen talking or eating, the Mantse believes that their presence fuels the dialogue. They are not heard talking but they listen, they eat and they are happy.

The Teshie Mantse’s actions in this performance are steeped in the actions of their forebears who led the people to first give food produced from their first harvest to the gods before they ate their own. The methodological approach of sprinkling kpokpoi by the Mantse as well as the various props signified by the earthenware is in line with the Afrocentric theory which clearly shows that Africans have their own unique ways of doing things and transmitting knowledge to future generations.

*Noo Wala Hamo*

*Noo Wala Hamo* (health and well wishes to all) happens on a Wednesday after the *Kpokpoi Shwamo*. Members of every household in Teshie use this opportunity to unite with other family members and family heads and those who are at home for the festivities. Children born outside the community get to know family members and their people. During this reunion, there is a lot of merrymaking and feasting.

Also, there are various family meetings during this day, where people willingly donate cash towards the upkeep of the family and the community. The spirit of family and unity carries on throughout Thursday, and Friday until the afternoon when there are sporting activities such as football between Teshie and Nungua, in the name of fostering unity and friendship.

On the dawn of Saturday, the elders and custodians of the Teshie land walk through the town and into every household greeting “*wala ehh wala*” meaning “life and health to all.” As the people respond to these well-wishes, they are reminded that the *Homowo* is once again here.
Tsese Kpa Faa

This takes off on Sunday after the Noo Wala Hamo. With this ritual performance, the Wolbiatse and his attendants are responsible for organizing the tsese (a wooden bowl specially crafted for this ritual performance) and its content. This wooden bowl, tsese, is painted with the colours, white, black and red. The colours represent the natives who bravely fought and fiercely defended their people during their early migration, the black represents those who fought and lost their lives during that period, the red also represents the blood that was shed in the midst of the chaos and confusion to possess and maintain their land while the white symbolizes the living; those who are alive and still celebrate the Homowo festival. The tsese, therefore, symbolizes the united soul of the people of Teshie. The Wolbiatse and his attendants leave for the cemetery at dawn to gather potent medicinal leaves (like nyanyara, tsoba, adedenkuna, gbe, tome, and aroke) while on their way to the cemetery, they pick some small selected stones.

Back at the Wolbiatse’s home, the stones together with the leaves are put inside the tsese. The Wolbiatse pours ritually sanctified water and libation onto the content in the tsese, invoking the healing and restorative power of the gods to bless the contents of the tsese. By 10 o’clock in the morning, the tsese content is ready for use in the afternoon of the day. When the content of the tsese is ready to be used, every indigene with a need (from childbirth, healing from various forms of ailment to the desire for prosperity and protection) comes to the home of the Wolbiatse to scoop some of the water in the tsese to wash their body. It is believed that when this is done, the individual’s need is met. The tsese with its content is now ready to parade the streets to purify any other person who wishes to use its water.

The principal actor, who is the carrier of the tsese carries the tsese with its content from the Wolbiatse’s abode at Nyomokyawena. He serves as a messenger of the gods with a mission to deliver healing and protection to his people. He has white calico wrapped around his waist with nyanyara leaves for garland as his costume for the role. He looks heavily possessed by the gods. The elders of the clan, all clad in white follow the tsese round to perform the libation ritual at designated places in town with the Wolbiatse leading the procession. Here, costuming set the performers apart and elevates the custodians of the traditions into another realm, a realm where they are now directly in tune with deities and serve as their intermediaries and mouthpiece.

The tsese carrier moves from one designated place to the other to pour water from the tsese and libation to the place as part of the ritual performance. While the carrier takes the rest of the tsese around the town, members of the community engage in Kpashimo songs of merrymaking to entertain themselves. When all is done, the carrier goes to keep the tsese and its content in the Wolbiatse’s house for the rest of the week until the following Saturday when the tsese carrier goes to carry again, following the same ritual formation as the previous week.

The day for this Tsese Faa ritual takes the whole of the Teshie town as a grand stage. The various places for pouring libation as visited by the tsese carrier become the various scenes of this one act. As the tsese moves round, the acts keep changing with the ritual activities done at the various clan houses which serve as the scenes. The drama keeps unfolding as the tsese carrier moves the audience through the scenes to the end of the performance.

Tsese Bumɔ

The Tsese Bumɔ is the dumping of the contents of the tsese into the sea. This is done on the second week that the tsese carrier makes his last journey around the town in the order of the first week before dumping the content of the tsese into the sea.

During this ritual performance, the tsese carrier who looks possessed, intermittently staggers in between walking but does not fall, and most times, water from the tsese splashes onto the people watching the performance. The carrier of the tsese followed by the Wolbiatse and the elders of the various clans, all clad in white follow the tsese around the town to pour libation at various designations of the lesser gods that surround the town. Libation is poured to these lesser deities soliciting their help and support for a smooth festival celebration. From noon of the day, the townsfolks and everyone who
has come to witness the ritual patiently wait for the performance of Kpashimo songs by various clan
groups and other minor groups along the main street of Teshie.

Seven recognizable official performance groups, as well as other groups, file past with different
songs and captivating performances to entertain the spectators. Kpashimo is one of the popular
traditional songs performed during festive occasions like Homowo. The songs mostly topical cover
the grievances of the people and events that have taken place in the community throughout the year, as
well as other notable events that have taken place in the country, including maladministration,
corruption, victories, celebrations, and many others.

All this while, the tsese carrier, and his entourage are doing their job of going round with
libation pouring until the linguist of the town announces that the tsese carrier and his entourage are
ready to pass through the main street to the seashore to dump its content.

As the announcement is made, the performance stage is cleared by the linguist to pave way for
the tsese and its entourage before anyone else is supposed to follow them. The white costume of the
tsese carrier sets him apart from the people and ushers him into his role. His possessed demeanor gives
him the ability to perform his duty of carrying the healing and restorative powers of the gods;
symbolized by the tsese and its content is clearly evident in this scene. This allows for those who are
in various needs access to the healing water from the tsese that falls on them; for as the tsese moves
along, its carrier intermittently staggers but does not fall, and the water from the tsese splashes on those
immediately around it and to the few lucky ones who quickly dash to have a feel of the splash.

The path of the tsese carrier which is the streets of Teshie becomes the stage for this long act,
with the spectators serving as the audience of the scene. The gods bless their own through the sanctified
water which intermittently falls on the audience who believe in the power of the gods to heal and
restore them through the sanctified water in the tsese. Before 6 pm, the tsese carrier with his entourage
reaches the seashore and dumbs the content of the tsese at Ajeshimankonaa, the abode of the sea god
which is very close to the sea. The tsese carrier is then carried shoulder-high by his entourage amidst
cheers and songs back home for a job well done. This ends the tsese bumô festival festivities until
another year.

CONCLUSION
The main objective of this paper has been to show the African perspective of drama; thus, by
establishing the dramatic elements embedded in the Homowo festival of the people of Teshie in the
Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The paper has clearly and thoroughly examined the use of dramatic
elements such as characterization, costume, stage, setting, monologue, dialogue, audience participation,
plot, scenery, and libation that are pivotal and dominant in the various stages of the Homowo festival
festivities of the people of Teshie and how these dramatic elements wholly contribute to the
significance of Homowo festival as an African drama.

It is clearly seen that although the Homowo festival of the people of Teshie in the Greater Accra
Region does not strictly follow the rudiments of the Euro-centric paradigm, it fully establishes its own
nuances of drama made by Africans and for Africans. Thus, Finnegan’s assertion that Africa does not
have a developed form of drama is simply untrue.
The findings, therefore, validate the argument that Africa has its own well-structured drama that is
depthly rich in its cultural stipulations and identity.

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