

**AN APPRAISAL OF FOLKLORIC FORMS IN TIV PLAYS AS INSTRUMENT FOR
CULTURAL EDUCATION**

BY

**AONDOFA ANDREW NYIKYAA
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Declaration

I, Aondofa Andrew Nyikyaa hereby declare that this dissertation titled: *An Appraisal of Folkloric Forms in Tiv Plays as Instrument for Cultural Education* has been written by me in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts under the supervision of Professor M.I. Umar-Buratai and Professor Steve O. Abah. The information obtained from the diverse literatures has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided at the end of the work. No part of this dissertation was previously presented for another degree.

Aondofa Andrew Nyikyaa

Signature Date

Certification

This dissertation titled; *An Appraisal of Folkloric Forms in Tiv Plays as Instrument for Cultural Education* has been written by me, Aondofa Andrew Nyikyaa here in the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. It has been read and approved for its contribution to knowledge, having met the regulations governing the award of the Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Theatre and Performing Arts.

Professor M.I.Umar-Buratai
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

Signature and Date

Professor Steve O. Abah
Member, Supervisory Committee

Signature and date

Professor M.I. Umar-Buratai
Head of Department

Signature and Date

Professor Kabir Bala
Dean, School of Post-Graduate Studies

Signature and Date

Dedication

This research work is dedicated to my late father, Pa Nyikyaa Igyusa, who was there for me as a responsible and visionary father up till his demise at the point of securing admission for this Master of Arts (M.A.) programme. Secondly, to my mother, Mama Msoon Nyikyaa, whose hard work and dedication saw me through my educational career up till this level.

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Abstract

The artistic portrayal or representation of folkloric forms into plays ought to reflect the crux of such traditional forms or materials in order to underscore their significance. This research examines the use of folkloric forms in a number of Tiv plays: Iyorwuse Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979), Saint Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are Not Tasty* (2002) and Yev Peter Gande's *The Rebound* (2012). The use of Tiv religious myths of *Swem* (ancestral land), *Tsav* (Witchcraft), *Kor* (concoction) and dance festivals through folktale narratives is considered a vehicle of conveying cultural education. The methodology deployed for data collection and analysis for this research is qualitative method, through content analysis of the three plays. With the aid of Sam Ukala's "folkism" as the theoretical framework, analysis of data obtained from the three plays is put into proper analytical perspective and context. The research therefore, found that: (a) the three drama texts significantly use folklore as a composite phenomenon. The usage ranges from Tiv religious myths like *Swem* (ancestral location), *Adzov/Mbatarev* (non-human spirits), *Tsav* (witchcraft), *Kor* (concoction) and dance festival or celebration. The plays also use complementary folkloric forms like connotative names of characters, proverbs, amongst others. The use of oral narratives by the narrators, thereby juxtaposing history and folklore tradition to make statement in the three plays is also another important finding. The use of folklore, allows important themes to be communicated to the audience. Another finding in this regard is the use of linguistic variables in the plays. There are cases of code switching involving English (dominantly used) and the Tiv (minimally used) languages. The research then concluded that folklore is very significant, because it facilitates cultural education. Playwrights who desire to write on folk culture should therefore harness them with genuine adequacy that would translate to cultural education instead of misrepresentation of folkloric forms in a creative piece.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research attempts an appraisal of folkloric forms in Tiv Plays as a vehicle for cultural education. The purpose is to determine the effective use of these folkloric forms in the plays as instrument of cultural education. The study is propelled by the fact that cultural values in our society are fast being eroded to a point of going comatose. The use of isolated folkloric forms instead of epic stories that are rooted in the culture and tradition of the people in some plays that serve as media of cultural transmission is also a propelling factor. A particular attention is paid to the significance of folklore as cultural material for playwriting and the adequate use of the material as vehicle for conveying culturally relevant education in three Tiv modern plays; Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979), Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* (2002) and Gande's *The Rebound* (2010). A close examination of the texts through content analysis has been carried out to arrive at findings that reflect the adequate use of folklore in the plays in this regard.

1.2 Background to the Study

Folklore as a body of cultural materials is rooted in the socio-cultural milieu of the society. It exists chiefly to address the basic social, cultural and individual needs of the people in the society. Such needs according to Gbilekaa (2013:219) include entertainment, recreation, education, and cultural perpetuation. Folklore transcends cultural and physical boundaries and possesses universal attributes and applicability that are crucial to the understanding of existence, and co-existence amongst people in the society. In other words, folklore is integral in defining the histories and cultural heritage of the people be it in Africa, America, Europe or elsewhere. Succinctly put, folklore is common to all human societies and peculiar to given societies. It is Common in the sense that there are traditional stories, practices and cultural

materials and symbols regarding the histories and origins of people in every society. At the same time, these stories, practices and cultural materials regarding traditions and ancestry of the people are understood better within the ambience of the cultural codes or symbols inherent in that given society. Thus, we have deliberate ascription of folklore to given societies (be it regions or nations) such as English folklore, American folklore, Chinese folklore, Hausa folklore, Yoruba folklore, Igbo folklore, Tiv folklore, Igala folklore, Ibibio folklore and so on.

In African societies particularly, folklore serves as the symbolic representation of the people's philosophy and worldview, a phenomenon that Africans hold tenaciously to as a code that defines them as a people. In the words of Usman, (2014:7) folkloric tradition is a very rich and fertile legacy that Africa bequeathed to many parts of the world especially North America, South America, and the West Indies. This was apparently made possible through belligerent cultural activities like storytelling, rituals, rites, hunting expeditions, artefacts, as well as symbols that were kept and cherished in Africa. Slave trade, colonisation, tourists' researches involving Africans and non-Africans alike helped identified those practices, and cultural materials in the realm of folklore. According to Darah (2014:34), the term "folklore" was first used by the English antiquarian, Williams Thoms in a letter published in the London journal; *The Athenaeum* in 1846. However, folklore is a pre-literate tradition that permeates cultural boundaries to assume contemporary significance. It is a universal phenomenon that is characteristically peculiar to given societies.

Folklore therefore refers to a traditional system that belongs to a given people within a geographical area. This traditional system is made peculiar through non-material cultural values exhibited in oral history, folktales, legends, myths, beliefs, fables, riddles and proverbs. In other words, as Gbenga (2014:38) rightly notes, folklore is a:

General term for the verbal, spiritual, and material aspect of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation. People sharing a culture may have in common an occupation, language, ethnicity, age, and geographical location. This body of traditional materials is preserved and passed on from generation, with constant variations shaped by memory, immediate need or purpose, and degree, of individual talent.

In the light of this therefore, folklore that is peculiar to the Tiv is rooted within the ambience of the Tiv cosmological society like other folkloric traditions of the world. The composition of folktales, history, myths, legends, artefacts, fables, riddles and proverbs that find expression through oral stories and renditions within the ambience of Tiv cultural background could be referred to as Tiv folklore. In other words, stories about religious myths like *Swem* (ancestral land), *Tsav* (Witchcraft), *Adzov/Mbaterev* (Non-human spirits), *Ikyarem* (proverbial green snake), *Wankwase hungwa Idyeregh* (Descended naked woman from the east). Symbolic folk materials like *Idyer* (wooden ritual gong), *Anger* (weaved traditional dress) and tales about animals and human characters like *Alom* (Hare, the trickster) and *Tor* (the human king) in relation to *Aondo* (supreme being) which are told and performed through the raconteur amidst songs, music, dance and other renditions is what characterises folklore amongst the Tiv people.

The Tiv are traditionally found around central Nigeria on both banks of River Benue. They are spread across the Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Cross River and FCT Abuja with the highest concentration of their population in Benue State. Their population is over ten million people (Hagher, 2003:20 and Tsevende et al, 2013:1). The name Tiv is also ascribed to their father who had two sons; *Ichogo* and *Ipusu* (meaning literarily circumcised and uncircumcised). Consequently *Ichogo* and *Ipusu* have since become the two ruling houses in Tiv land (Akpede 2010:1). Tiv also is the name of the father of all Tiv people, who according to Hagher (2003:23) is a descendant of Takuruku Anyamazenga, the grand ancestor(s). Much of the stories surrounding the ancestors of Tiv are scanty and thereby gives rooms for

speculations. While some scholars like Uhondo (1991:12) and Hagher (2003:23) regard Takuruku Nyamazenger as the grand ancestor, others like Makar (1994:3-4) claim that Tiv was the son of Awange. However, Tiv was “a hero who broke away from his brothers and moved with his entire family to settle at *Swem*” (Makar 1994:4). His wife, Aliwe gave birth to *Ichongo* and *Ipusu*, the *two* sons. The story of Tiv as the founder of Tiv race who now occupy the Benue valley, having migrated from *Swem* Mountains as compared to those of the distant ancestors is more explicit. Tsevende et al (2013:1) also argues that, “the Tiv are an ethnic group who today inhabits quite a substantial portion of the Benue valley”. The region extends on both sides of River Benue in central Nigeria, covering an area of about 30,000 square kilometres and is located between latitude 7 30’ to 8 10’ north and longitude 8 to 10 east, (Tsevende et al, 2013:2). In the words of Akpede (2010:2), “The Tiv people are one of the ethnic groups that inhabit the geographical area referred to as the “Middle Belt” in central Nigeria”.

Genealogically, Tiv people as they presently occupy the Benue valley, having migrated from *Swem* hills are members of one family, comprising of different clans and lineages (Gbor, 2006:13). The two sons of Tiv; *Ichongo* (the elderly one) and *Ipusu* (the younger one) according to Geri (2012:35) “provides the basis for Tiv lineage segment action that makes effective social and political organisation of the Tiv society”. The two genealogical families comprise:

- a. *Ichongo* (the circumcised) is made up of Iharev, Masev, Nongov, Turan, Ikyurav, Ugondo, and Tongov, collectively referred to as *Mbachongo* (*Chongo* people).
- b. *Ipusu* (the uncircumcised) has Jemgbagh, Jechira, Shitile and Ukum, also collectively known as *Mbapusu* (*Ipusu* people) [Geri, 2012:35].

Accordingly, the Tiv folklore is imbedded into Tiv worldview and way of life. This worldview specifically revolves round the human and the spirits as well as how the two worlds interact and co-habit the same cosmological habitat. The spirit world is comprised of the *Adzov/Mbakuv* or *Mbatarev* and *Mbatsav* (all non-human spirits in their categories) and they operate within the same environment as humans, even though they cannot be seen with ordinary human eyes. In other words, the Tiv belief system recognises the land of the living and the dead, which is understood through the activities of *Mbatsav* (witches/wizards). Generally, Tiv have many mythic stories regarding their origin and ancestry, which have been told and preserved through the folkloric tradition. The interwoven ancestry stories, for instance, indicates the migration saga of the Tiv people from the Bantu tribes in the present day Democratic Republic of Congo in South Eastern Africa. It is believed that they left their Bantu neighbours when dispute arose and crossed the Congo River by the help of *Ikyarem*, (the green snake). Many Tiv people believe that, it was the spirit of one of the ancestors that appeared as the green snake to rescue his descendants from danger by the Congo River. The Tiv people as a result do not kill a green snake. It is regarded as sacred, being a permanent friend of all Tiv descendants. The people then came to settle at *Swem*, (ancestral location) after the historic cross of the Congo River. *Swem* is a place believed to be situated on the border between the present day Kwande Local Government of Benue State and the Cameroon Mountains. The same way *Ikyarem* (the green snake) is considered sacred, *Swem* is reputed to be of both legendary and of religious importance to the Tiv people up till today. Akiga (1965:238) who visited the location called *Swem* in 1934 describes it as “a hill in the land of the Ukwese and Udir, the Bush Tribes through which the Tiv passed on their way down from the hills”. This presupposes that *Swem* is both a location (ancestral land) and a symbol of justice and truth. The Tiv pay allegiance to *Swem* as a religious symbol usually represented in a clay, native pot containing green *Ayande* leaves and ashes from a particular shrine,

(Ushima, 2002:4). As ancestral location, people take adventurous trips to the land at the Kwande/Cameroon Mountains (a mile away from the Cameroun border) to acquire magical powers or take the oath of allegiance regarding any contentious issue. According to Makar (1994:4):

The *Swem* Mountain, towering three thousand feet above sea level is easily identifiable. It has three ridges and one of its pinnacles is composed of a large prominent rock resting on three huge stone pillars, which from afar gives the semblance of a round hut. The physical appearance of this rock known in geography as *kopje* or decaying *inselberg*, has great significance to the Tiv. To (them) this is one of the mysteries of their ancestral homeland.

This ancestral homeland shrouded in myths was later known as *Swem Karagbe*, (ancestral mountains where *Karagbe* lived) ascribing it to one Tiv ancestral descendant, *Karagbe* (from *Nongov* lineage) who desecrated the *Ilyum* (Sacred) altar and was beheaded after refusal to be arrested to stand trial before the people for his crime.

Kor (bitter concoction) is a replica of *Swem* (ancestral mountains). It is a bitter concoction given to people to drink for the adjudication of justice, usually to unravel a mystery or separate the innocent from the guilty. Like the *Swem*, *Kor* is prepared by certain elders who have the mastery of Tiv tradition or *akombo* (ritual emblem). The bitter and liquid substance is given to people who have been accused of a crime or serious offence to drink. Those wrongly accused are expected to vomit it, while the guilty would not vomit but eventually exhibit the symptom of protruding stomach and finally die.

Ivom (mounting of the heap) or *Amar amilin* (dance celebration) is another Tiv folkloric tradition in this regard. It is the celebration of one's achievements or prestige characteristically accompanied by rigorous dances with highly melodious music. *Ivom* (mounting of the heap) is a Tiv cultural festival that has as its climax the dance display by couples to showcase their worth in the society as mark of achievements. Also as part of Tiv

folklore classification are *Anza akaa* (wisdom laden Tiv proverbs) and *Ukikyaa* (Tiv riddles). The two have close affinity but have different expressive tendencies. Tiv proverbs are usually used by elders in conversations on challenging subject matters to show sophistication and mastery of the tradition. Tiv riddles on the other hand are used by both adults and children for impartation and cultural education, and are strictly based on socio-cultural peculiarities of Tiv people.

Tsav (witchcraft) is another mythic tradition that is an integral part of the Tiv folklore. The notion of *tsav* can be conceptualised under the purview of *Tiv* religion, which centres on three fundamental (beliefs) things; *Aondo* (the Supreme Being), *Tsav* (witchcraft), *Adzov* or *Mbataregh* (spirits). However, *Akombo* (magic emblem), described by Ubwa (2013:5) as “some unique mystical forces” is a unifying symbol through which Tiv religion in general and *tsav* in particular is practiced or expressed. The concept and institution of *Tsav* is viewed generally as an internalised potency in man as part of his personality. However, different levels of *Tsav* exist, ranging from the seemingly mild to the chronically fierce type. A mild *Tsav* (witchcraft) gives the possessor some awareness of the supernatural, without necessarily practicing it through the instrumentality of *Akombo* (magic emblem). For instance, virtually all Tiv elders (both male and female) are believed to be *Mbatsav* (witches and wizards), owing to their wealth of experience, coupled with tendencies of chronic and desperate wizards and witches to use their words or decrees to inflict malevolent powers on others.

Notably, most Tiv folkloric forms have the folktale as their expressive medium. It is through the “tales” that knowledge of the other folkloric forms components are transmitted from generation to generation. Cultural aspects like storytelling, singing, dancing, farming, hunting, dressing, weaving, woodcarving, Clay moulding etc. are part of the traditional life of the people. As the matter of fact, Tiv people are known for their penchant and tenacity for

their culture and tradition. Evidence of this abounds in their stories of migration and subsequent resilience to oppression and alien cultures around them. This presupposes that there is enough potential regarding oral tradition as far as Tiv indigenous knowledge in the realm of folklore is concerned.

The pertinent question therefore is what is the place of cultural materials that are peculiar to Tiv folkloric tradition in artistic creations like plays and of what significance are they to cultural propagation and education if properly harnessed? A play is supposed to be a reflection of human experiences that have bearing on the society as seen by the playwright from a given cultural background. These “human experiences” connote folkloristic traditions and its significance to the people. Theatre is often described as a melting pot of culture, ostensibly because of the instrumentality of a play and its attendant significance. Through the play, cogent cultural materials are deployed for communication. According to Musa (2004:171):

Culture is theatre and theatre is culture because all cultural activities are essentially theatrical and that most theatrical events are moments of cultural re-enactments. While culture serves as the materials for the theatre, the theatre itself celebrates known and unknown cultures of the world through various performance forms as aesthetically designed or reflectively created by theatre workers....

If this submission is anything to go by, it is pertinent to submit that cultural materials inherent in the society, which constitute folklore, are greatly significant to the theatre artist like playwright to use in creating a play that would have cultural appeal on the people. The playwright as one of such theatre artists is one who through his artistic knowledge sees folklore as cultural bedrocks in his quest to bring to bear cultural education. In as much as some playwrights may not be interested in exploring folklore traditions in their plays as a yardstick of the stories, theatre through the art of playwriting serve as the media for the

conveyance of people's culture and tradition. Folklore could serve as the creative raw material with which the playwright creates his play.

The playwright derives his raw materials within the ambience of the cultural society (where folklore is deeply rooted). The importance of folklore here cannot be overemphasised as far as cultural education is concerned. As Asigbo (2013:12) rightly asserts:

The theatre, in any society, is a cultural house through which the totality of the ways of life of the people can be documented and presented over a given period of time. Its functions and values, its power as a weapon of mobilization, its function as a medium of communication and change are quite indisputable....

Theatre through the art of playwriting can document history of the people, legendary stories, myths, fables, proverbial assertions and so on for the purpose of cultural education. This could be done through artistic representation of the issues of interest to the artiste.

The practice of using folklore as materials for playwriting is not new in the theatre. What is probably new is the consciousness and deliberate theorisation of the practice in the past, leading to the present day practices. In the Greek theatre for instance, there was a transition of what is called "literature from stage to page". That is the situation where by oral traditional performances already known in that medium were moulded into scripts or play texts for performances in the theatre. The Greek classical drama or classical literature was the reflection of the Greek's worldview rooted in the oral tradition. Greek mythology; rituals, superstition, ancestral worship (gods), and occupational practices were folkloristic in nature. This was an indication of the use of folklore by the Greek classical playwrights as cultural materials in dramatic literature. Greek plays like Sophocles' *King Oedipus (Oedipus Rex)*, or Euripides' *The Bacchae of Euripides*, have served as models for African plays and the theory of Aristotle became a basis for dramatic criticism in Africa and other parts of the world apparently because of the deployment of cultural materials in those plays. Notable examples

are the transposition by the Nigerian playwright, Ola Rotimi, of *King Oedipus* by the Greek playwright, Sophocles, into a play in the Yoruba setting (but in English) called *The Gods are not to Blame* and adaption of Euripides' *The Bacchae* of Euripides by Wole Soyinka called *The Bacchae*. An example of the influence of Aristotle's theory is the analysis by John Pepper Clark (a Nigerian critic and playwright) of the Ijo saga of Ozidi (Etherton, 2012:68 & Idegun, 2009:70).

In the Elizabethan period, the people's folklore was reflective, especially in the plays of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. Folkloristic components are manifest in plays like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, (including many of his historical plays) and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and many other Elizabethan literary works. Papp and Kirkland (2003:17) state that, "Most Elizabethan households were well stocked with peculiar superstitions and strange practices". The use of myths, superstitious practices, histories, legends, and epic tales are usual occurrences in virtually all Shakespearean works and those of Marlowe (who were major dramatists) in the Elizabethan Literature. The wave of influence of the classical Greek, Elizabethan or Western literatures gave rise to amongst other things adaptations, and as Umukoro (2002:136) agrees, apart from the legendary Shakespeare, some foreign authors have featured on the reading lists of Nigerian schools at one time or the other, the development that gave fresh impetus to Nigerian dramaturgy.

The growth and development of African dramatic literature saw many African playwrights turning to their folklore or oral tradition to source materials for their dramaturgy. The rich potentials of their traditional society became a point of interest. In other words, they also imitated the Greeks in this regard, as Etherton (2012:69) observes that, "when Greek thinkers began to ponder the moral and social meaning of their legends and myths, they were actually

seeking to expand the significance of their ancient traditional culture so as to reach a truth about their own contemporary realities”.

There have been therefore many ground-breaking efforts towards the use of folklore as source materials for playwriting in African dramaturgy. Most of these efforts saw the playwrights projecting the communal, and mythic African ways of life and worldview. A cursory example brings to mind great efforts like John Pepper Clark’s *Ozidi* [1966] (from Nigeria), Efua T. Sutherland’s *The Marriage of Anansewa* [1967] (from Ghana), Mukotani Ruyendo’s *The Contest* (from Uganda) [1977], Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Megerere Mwangi’s *I will Marry when I Want* (from Kenya), amongst many others. J.P.Clark’s *Ozidi* for instance, wholly dwells on the oral, folkloristic tradition. It is derived from the traditional Ijo saga, or, epic, centred on Orua in the Delta region of Nigeria where it is still told and enacted today (Etherton, 2012:72). In this play, the people’s folklore having been harnessed as cultural materials for dramaturgical composition via playwriting.

The Marriage of Anansewa by Efua Sutherland is another effort in this regard. The play adopts the conventions of Akan story-telling tradition of the Ghanaian people in its story line, which is conceptualised as *Anansegoro*. It is a story-telling art called *Anansem* by Akan-speaking people. The name, which literally means Ananse stories, is used both for the body of stories told and for the story-telling performance itself. (Sutherland, 2005:3).The Akan story-telling (theatre) performance which is harnessed as raw materials for the making of this play is a culturally relevant material of the people of Ghana. In other words, it is the folkloric tradition of the people that finds expression in the play, *The Marriage of Anansewa*.

For Mukotani Ruyendo’s *The Contest*, the exploration of what he refers to as “popular” tradition of the people into a play script also underscores the efforts of African playwrights to use their oral, folk tradition to create dramatic literature. The play explores the well-cherished

traditional performances of the people in form of epic narratives with the aim of preserving some aspect of it Etherton (2012:92) The exploration of the people's folklore in a script format here is evidently significant as reflecting the folk tradition of the people.

On the Nigerian playwriting scene, there are notable examples of playwrights' use of folklore. This is evident in works like Femi Osofisan, whom Obafemi (2007:93) describes as "unquestionably the most articulate in terms of both ideological commitment and political aesthetics of the second generation Nigerian writers..." His plays such as *The Chattering and the Song* (1977), *Moruntodun* (1982), *Twingle Twangle a Twynning Tayle* (1993), amongst others attest to this claim. Osofisan's prolific disposition draws a lot from folkloristic tradition of his people, the Yoruba to help define his ideology in dramaturgy. Wale Ogunyemi's *Langbodo* (1989), *Queen Amina of Zazzau* (1999) amongst other worthy examples. The exploration of history, myths and legends is exemplary characteristics of his plays. The legendary story of Queen Amina deployed in this play belongs to the oral traditional archives. In other words, it is through the tales that the story found expression into our modern day life and history.

Sam Ukala is another pertinent voice in the realm of folk plays writing. He does not only write plays that reflect epic traditions but also theorises on them. His theory of folkism, exemplified in his plays like *The Slave Wife* (1985) and *Akpakaland* (1990) amongst others assert his ideological posture in Nigerian contemporary dramaturgy. Other examples in this regard include, Emmy Idegu's *The Legendary Inikpi* (1994), which dwells on the myth of *Inikpi*, the Igala legend who was believed to have been scarified for the liberation of the Igala people. *Yemoja* (2002) by Ahmed Yerima is also a notable example, including the three plays selected for analysis in this research: (Iyorwuese Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979) Saint

Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* (2002) and Yev Peter Gande's *The Rebound* (2012) amongst others examples.

What these playwrights have done as regards these plays is that, they have taken artistic look at the oral or folkloric traditions of their immediate societies and project their ideals via dramatic media. However, the treatments of folkloric elements in these drama masterpieces vary. For instance, while some playwrights like J.P.Clark with *Ozidi* (1966), Wale Ogunyemi's with *Langbodo* (1989) or Osofisan with *Twingle Twangle a Twynning Tayle* (1993) have the subject matters or plots of their plays dwelled on popular epic traditions, coupled with the deployment of folktale narratives by the use of the narrator to convey their stories. Others like Wale Ogunyemi with *Queen Amina of Zazzau* (1999), Ahmed Yerima with *Yemoja* (2002) or Emmy Idegu's *The Legendary Inikpi* (1994) harness historical facts, myths and legends without the deliberate deployment of folk tale narratives through the narrator to convey the stories. There are some others like Wole Soyinka with *Kongi's Harvest* (1978), and Bakare Ojo with *Rogbodiya* (1999), who use folk materials sparsely to assert socio-political messages. The three plays selected for this study; Iyorwuese Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979) Saint Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* (2002) and Yev Peter Gande's *The Rebound* therefore, have their subject matters dwelled on epic traditions of the Tiv people with the deployment of storytelling techniques through the narrator to tell the stories to the audience.

The deployment of folklore by Nigerian playwrights with varying tendencies propels questions as to what usage would translate to cultural education. In other words, how have playwrights who choose to write from a given cultural background taken the issue of cultural education seriously? Indeed, culture as a way of life is imperative to the people in defining the people's identity and value orientation. This is why Gbor (2006:1), describes culture as

that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The practice of these complex elements that constitute culture by man in a given society therefore requires knowledge of patterns and modes of preservation and transmission in order to communicate the ideal cultural values to the people. It is against this backdrop that cultural education is anchored. The traditional roles of culture in the society, such as technological aspect, that enables humans to exploit their environment through the development of tools for man's use. The sociological aspect which emphasises the relationship between and amongst humans, and ideological or philosophical aspect, which deals with the systems of beliefs, attitudes, sentiments, and values is at the core of cultural education (Gbor 2006:12). According to Iji (2004:13), "It is the cumulative effect of different generations in history of different societies in terms of what they have been able to create, that express their culture as well as their level of development". This portrays culture as a yardstick of development in the society. The efforts that aim at communicating or asserting given cultural tendencies be it technological, sociological or philosophical to the people connotes cultural education. The world acclaimed international cultural organisations such as UNESCO recognised the need for cultural education by declaring the World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD) from 1988. In the words of Iji (2004:13), "The essence of the UNESCO's cultural re-orientation is to draw attention to the necessity to search for solutions to various national issues by looking inwards to the indigenous cultural traditions of the various people". Those indigenous cultural traditions connote the people's folklore, which is imperative in this regard in achieving culturally relevant education.

The medium through which cultural materials in the realm of folklore are communicated is equally significant. In other words, the deployment of cultural materials within the ambience of folklore in a medium like literature, which traditionally entertains, informs or educates

portray literature as a veritable tool or vehicle of facilitating value orientation, which is synonymous to cultural education.

Language as a means of communicating the cultural values to the people is also a key component in cultural education. Hence language is said to be “a window unto culture” (Buratai, 2009:20), the need for emphasis on the use of the “popular” language of the people to assert or communicate culture is an important component that will endear people to culture and its values. Specifically, the documentation of the people’s history, ancestral background, values, norms and mores artistically in a medium of a play is instrumental in communicating cultural education. The play in this light is a veritable media of communicating cultural knowledge, using folklore as raw materials.

In spite of the significance of folklore in achieving cultural education of the people through the medium of playwriting, the use of it in some modern plays leaves much to be desired as far as folklore tradition is concerned. There is a marked difference between deploying stereotypical cultural elements, and symbols like characters’ names, places, songs and music, dressing, linguistic variable like code switching and so on. And deploying epic traditions like *Swem* (ancestral location), *Kor* (judicial concoction), *Tsav* (Witchcraft system), *Ivom Uden* (mounting of heap dance festival/celebration), or The Saga of Ozidi (in J.P. Clark’s *Ozidi*), *Abgekoya* Uprising (in Osofisan’s *Moruntodun*), *Langbodo* myth (in Ogunyemi’s *Langbodo*), *Anansem*-Akan Storytelling Tradition (in Sutherland’s *The Marriage f Anansewa*), amongst other examples. There is also a significant difference between harnessing these folk traditions in their original indigenous languages and learned languages like English as expressive medium.

The question is, why would playwrights who choose to harness the folklore milieu not deploy basic epic traditions of the people in their peculiar forms using the folk tale narratives to

assert their cultural messages, and what medium of expression (indigenous or foreign language) would the playwright best communicate culture to the people? This is the propelling factor for this study, to see the extent to which the basic folkloric traditions (of the Tiv people) are deployed in accordance with their unique significance by the three playwrights; Iyorwuese Hagher (With *Swem Karagbe*), Saint Gbilekaa (with *Prized Chickens are not Tasty*) and Peter Gande (with *The Rebound*) to achieve cultural assertion and education. Theatre or drama generally has evolved over time transcending mere entertainment and is been focused on issues of human development and advancement in the society. Cultural promotion which drama through playwriting can facilitates is significant in achieving sustainable development in the society through culturally relevant education.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

The need for cultural education in the society like ours can never be overstated owing to complex socio-cultural processes of colonisation and globalisation. Pervasive foreign cultures have adversely affected our indigenous cultures, to a point of imminent extinction. Colonisation, for example sought to denigrate our African cultural values such as language, dressing and festivals, which define our ways of life. More recently, globalisation through the medium of cultural imperialism has also provoked deed-rooted cultural maladjustment, resulting in further denigration of indigenous traditions. The introduction of cable satellites television and related mass media of communication for instance has continued the onslaught almost unhindered. Although, efforts have been made toward cultural promotion, a lot still need to be done in this regard.

In the light of the foregoing, cultural education through folklore with the use of play as medium is imperative in harnessing the folkloric forms imbedded in the people's tradition for preservation, propagation and transmission. This underscores the essential nature of folklore

as cultural materials and drama as medium of communicating them with a view to achieving cultural education. It is therefore in view of this significance, and of course attempts made by some playwrights regarding the use of folkloric forms in the play medium that underscores an appraisal of such forms as vehicle for cultural education. The pertinent question therefore is how have the playwrights been using the media of plays to address cultural education by the use of folkloric forms as vehicle given the efficacy of the play as medium of communication? Moreover, what language of expression in the play texts could best endear the people to the cultural issues dramatised in the text thereby culminating in cultural education?

1.4 Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to determine the effective use of folklore as vehicle for cultural education in *Swem Karagbe*, *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and *The Rebound*

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

- (1) To identify the playwrights' deployment of folkloric forms in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*, Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and Gande's *The Rebound*.
- (2) To elicit the role of the folkloric forms in the plays for the effective communication of themes in relation to cultural education.
- (3) Ascertain the effectiveness to which the Plays serve as Media of Cultural Education through Folklore.

1.5.1 The Research Questions

Accordingly, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the forms of folklore used in *Swem Karagbe*, *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and *The Rebound*?
- (2) What are the Roles of folkloric forms in conveying the playwrights' messages in the three plays?
- (3) To what extent have the three plays served as media of facilitating cultural education with folklore as the vehicle?

1.6 Scope of the Research

The research examines or attempt a critique of the use of folk traditions that would engender cultural education of the people in a number of Tiv modern plays; Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*, Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not tasty* and Gande's *The Rebound*. This is needful in order to arrive at the goal of this research, which is to determine the effective use of folklore in the selected plays for cultural education and development.

Analysis of data in this research will accordingly be confined to the three drama texts, which are written in the realm of folklore from the Tiv cultural background. The analysis of data from these texts will be based on the extent to which the playwrights have deployed the folkloric traditions in the three plays under consideration. This is because the three plays under consideration unlike others available to this researcher have their storylines dwelled on the basic forms of folklore in the society on which the totality of the people's worldview revolves.

1.7 Significance of the Research

The study, which beams its light on the efforts of some playwrights who explore folklore as source materials for their drama automatically, stresses the need for more research to be

carried out into our folk culture for the production of dramatic scripts that could be described as peoples oriented or having great appeal on the people. This therefore indicates that students of arts and oral tradition, teachers of creative writing and arts administrators will stand to benefit from a research of this nature, which has propelling impetus for re-examination of folk culture and tradition for more artistic documentation that would facilitate cultural education. It is a wake-up –call research, apart from the fact that it is a general contribution to the body of knowledge in general and academic research in the area of evaluating the use of traditional, folk materials for cultural education.

1.8 Research Methodology

This research, which is an appraisal of folkloric forms in a number of Tiv plays is qualitative by nature and as such would generate non-quantitative (narrative) analysis in order to gain insights into the main objectives of the research. This would eventually culminate in the production of verbal synthesis through data presentation and analysis. The research is being carried out with an aim to determine effective exploration of folklore in the plays of Hagher, Gbilekaa and Gande as vehicle for achieving cultural education. The study in this regard will be situated within the confines of the three plays; *Swem Karagbe*, *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and *The Rebound*. The information gathered from the “worlds” of these literary texts shall constitute the basis for data presentation, analysis and findings in this study.

This research being qualitative will adopt content analysis, as main technique or tool of data gathering and analysis. Content analysis will be based on the three selected plays, to examine how folkloric materials are used in the three texts and whether or not they achieve culturally relevant education. The data or information gathered because of the use of the adopted technique will be analysed based on verbal description method in order to come up with findings and conclusions as well as recommendations that would meet the objectives of the study.

1.9 Definition of Operational Terms

The definition of terms for this research is operational and contextualised. They are defined within the framework of this study for better construct and precision. Some of the terms and concepts worth conceptualising for better comprehension of this research include:

1.9.1 Folklore: In the context of this research, folklore is viewed as those forms such as folktales, myths, historical facts, legends, fables, artefacts, chants, performances, and proverbial assertions, jokes, and riddles, curses, traditional conventional sounds amongst others usually transmitted orally from generation to generation for the purpose of cultural propagation, preservation and education (Dundes 1965:3). To this end, folktale in this context is regarded as an aspect of folklore. However, it is also viewed as the expressive medium of other folkloric traditions.

1.9.2 Cultural Education: In the context of this study, cultural education is viewed as a deliberate practice of inculcating or imparting cultural values, norms and heritages into other people through a given medium such as play with a view to getting them enlightened and acculturated. In other words, the deliberate use of aspects of the people's culture (both material and immaterial) to project the identity and ideal life of a certain group of people is aimed at achieving cultural education. Specifically, the documentation of the people's history, ancestral background, their values, norms and mores artistically in a medium of a play is instrumental in communicating cultural education.

1.9.3 Tiv Plays: Plays in terms of dramatic literature written from the Tiv cultural background, which reflects their worldview. In this light, the worldview is synonymous with folklore. Tiv folklore therefore entails the traditional folktales, myths, legends, symbols, dance festivals, and other socio-cultural activities that are told and performed to teach morals and cultural education and indoctrination. Examples of Tiv folklore are based on the myth of *Swem* (ancestral place and symbol of magical powers), *Kor* (closely related to *Swem*, a

concoction meant to ascertain justice), *Tsav* (witchcraft) practice which are integral parts of Tiv religion. All these are usually intertwined with tales of animals with the trickster hero, *Alom*, (the Hare) with his wife, *Anjieke*, tales of human characters, animals and spirits involving usually the adventures of kings and their elegant princes or beautiful princesses. All these stories are narrated orally through folktale or storytelling amidst music, songs and dances through the mastery of a traditional raconteur or narrator.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to review the available, related, and relevant literatures within the matrix of this study in order to put issues into their proper perspectives. Specifically, the chapter reviews concepts and definitions regarding the topic of the research, such as folklore or Tiv folklore, playwriting and the notion of cultural education. Additionally, the related theories and paradigms that are in consonance with the objectives of this research as well as perspectives and arguments advanced by scholars in folk culture and oral tradition are reviewed and interrogated accordingly. The chapter then emphasises the empirical works done in similar areas with a view to arriving at the objectives of this study.

In order to properly capture the essence of a review of this nature the chapter focuses on folklore in general and folklore from Tiv cultural background in particular. This is in order to conceptualise relevant meanings of concepts and ideas, and how they are knitted in plays for the purpose of cultural assertion and education. This is done through articulate subheads; Meaning and Nature of Folklore, Relationship between Folklore and Plays, Categories of Tiv Folkloric Tradition and Tiv Folklore and Playwriting for Cultural education as well as a concluding analogy that underscores the purpose of this research.

2.2 Meaning and Nature of Folklore

Folklore as a term is undoubtedly all encompassing. It covers virtually everything within the realm of indigenous knowledge that relies on oral tradition to find expression in the society. Darah (2014:5) describes folklore in this light as “an omnibus term that embodies nearly everything in oral cultures”. However, folklore is common to all people (Ezeigbo, 2013:1). The universality of folklore tradition is exemplified in its definitions, usually as a cultural or

traditional potpourri comprising of diverse forms, elements and sub elements depending on the societal or scholarly background from which it is being defined.

Owing to the multifaceted nature of folklore, it is tasking to evolve a universally acceptable definition. Bunza (2014:33) affirms that “of all the fields of modern scholarship, folklore remains one of the most difficult to define”. This is apparently the reasons why scholars provide seemingly different definitions to best suit their field work on the subject matter or to best describe their perception of the folkloric traditions. For instance, Ezeigbo (2013:1) views folklore as “a body of expressive culture within a particular population comprising the tradition of that culture, sub-culture, or group”. Abrams (1981:35) defines it as “the collective names applied to verbal materials and social rituals that have been handed down solely, or at least primarily, by words of mouth and by example rather than in written forms”. By this he refers to amongst other things, folktales, riddles, proverbs, myths, songs, legends, and superstitions.

The above conceptualisations provide a common ground that folklore is understood as a gestalt, with varying expressive compartments. The first description by Ezeigbo accordingly emphasized the cultural milieu within which folklore as a collective body operates. However, the description is silent on the mode of expression (whether verbal or non-verbal) by which folklore can operate in the society. The other definition is quite conspicuous on the issue of the medium of transmission and scope as comprising verbal materials and social rituals, even though it also could not succinctly make reference to the setting of those materials within the framework of a society. According to Gbenga (2014:37):

Folklore can simply be referred to as a particular tradition that belongs to a given people within a geographical area. This tradition is usually differentiated from other traditions through intangible cultural values as exhibited in oral histories, folktales, legends, myths, beliefs, fables and proverbs.

The description of intangible cultural values in the above definition suggests that emphasis are on the non-material aspects of the people's culture as folkloristic, at the expense of tangible or material aspects of culture like dressing, farming, poultry, weaving, blacksmithing and so on. In the words of Obadiogwu (2009:153), "Most folklore reflects a kind of occupation. They often teach children skills such as farming, crafts, dancing, and rituals and so on". Accordingly, a more endearing conceptualisation of folklore is provided by Encarta (2009: DVD) in which folklore is viewed as:

General term for the verbal, spiritual, and material aspect of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation. People sharing a culture may have in common an occupation, language, ethnicity, age, and geographical location. This body of traditional materials is preserved and passed on from generation, with constant variations shaped by memory, immediate need or purpose, and degree, of individual talent.

This definition more than the others captures a genuine picture of the folklore tradition even though it does not satisfactorily capture all the forms within the domain of folklore. However, the inclusion of non-verbal cultural materials portrays the conception as having wider scope. In his opinion, Dundes (1965:3), one of the leading folklore researchers in Africa provides a more broad-based view of folklore as thus:

Folklore includes myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas...It also includes folk costume, folk dance, folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music (e.g. Fiddle tunes), folk songs, folk speech, and names...The list of folklore forms also contains games; gestures; symbols; prayers...practical jokes; folk etymologies; food recipes; quilt and embroidery designs; house; barn, and fence types; street vendor's cries; and even the traditional conventional sounds used to summon animals or to give them commands.

This near exhaustive definition is more broad based than that of the other scholars, and has provided a practical sample of folkloric forms to create a picture of a more articulate definition and scope of folklore in the society on one hand and scholarship on the other. It also captures the African notion of folklore including Tiv folklore hence the folkloristic

tradition in Africa entails a wide ranging cultural and traditional materials that are highly symbolic in essence and meaning. In Africa for instance, the identity and transmission of folklore is embodied in the folktales. The expressive tendencies of a native culture are imbedded in the folk stories. In the words of Obadiogwu (2009:153), “most folklore follow storytelling and performance techniques. Therefore, they contain elements of enactment, song and dance, elaborate costume, and make-up”. This submission underscores a distinct type of folk tale, which has developed into what we referred to as storytelling theatre.

2.3 Folklore and Cultural Education

Folklore is an integral aspect of culture, and it has tendency of transmission from one generation to another through certified media of expression. Cultural aspects such as myths, folktales, dressing, arts, music songs renditions, symbols, and sounds among others are folkloric and their medium of expression is largely oral. According to Gbor (2006:1), culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Piddington (1950:3) on his part opines, “The culture of a people may be defined as the sum total of the material and intellectual equipment whereby they satisfy their biological and social needs and adapt themselves to their environment”. The practice of these complex elements that constitute culture by man in a given society therefore requires knowledge of patterns and modes of preservation and transmission in order to communicate meaning to the people. It is the ability to harness cultural elements by man in his society that constitutes “material and intellectual equipment”, which are explored to address social and other needs. It is upon this premise that cultural education is anchored.

The above conceptualisations of culture are akin to certain traditional roles culture generally plays in the society. These include technology, where the human persons exploit their

environment through the development of tools for man's use. The sociological aspect, which emphasises the relationship between and amongst humans, and ideological or philosophical aspect, which deals with the systems of beliefs, attitudes, sentiments, and values. These are at the core of cultural education (Gbor 2006:12). According to Iji (2004:13), "It is the cumulative effect of different generations in history of different societies in terms of what they have been able to create, that express their culture as well as their level of development". This portrays culture as a yardstick of development in the society. The efforts that aim at communicating or asserting given cultural tendencies be it technological, sociological or philosophical to the people connotes cultural education. The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have since recognised the need for cultural education by declaring the World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD) from 1988. In the words of Iji (2004:13), "The essence of the UNESCO's cultural re-orientation is to draw attention to the necessity to search for solutions to various national issues by looking inwards to the indigenous cultural traditions of the various people". These indigenous cultural traditions refer to folklore. The epic traditions such as celebrated myths, rituals, legends, folktales, symbols and artefacts constitute the springboard for cultural education.

However, one other significant factor in achieving cultural education is the medium and mode of communicating culture. Usman (2013:33) paints a mind picture by inviting readers to:

Take some time out and travel back to a period before television and radio, a time when families would gather around a crackling and spitting hearth and granddad or grandma or uncle or antie would delight and captivate the gathering with stories passed on to them from their parents and grandparents from time immemorial.

This picture reminisces the traditional mode of transmission of folkloric culture from generations to generations by words of the mouth. It can be argued that the folktale has been the expressive medium of most folkloric elements. Knowledge about traditional/religious

myths, symbols, artefacts and legends have been passed from one generation to another through folktales. Moreover, festivals, rituals and other forms of renditions combine performance and storytelling modes to achieve their purpose.

The mode of transmission and medium of expression of folklore in the contemporary society has changed significantly. According to Usman (2013:33-34), “this beautiful picture painted...no longer exists today and the fairly old people, who are the repositories of oral literature, are fast disappearing”. He further argues that the folktales therefore need to be reduced into writing mainly for a number of reasons, which he gives as presentation through multimedia for the enjoyment of many to promote cross-cultural understanding. It is attempts at reviving the age-old tradition of telling children instructive tales in order to preserve into writing the best kinds of stories. Provision of reading materials for both the young and the old, thereby complimenting foreign materials. However, this paradigm shift here is not only concerned with transmission from oral to written. The medium of communication such as language is automatically another factor. Hence language is said to be “a window unto culture” (Buratai, 2009:20), the need for emphasis on the use of the “popular” language of the people to assert or communicate culture is an important component that will endear people to culture and its values. Specifically, the documentation of the people’s history, ancestral background, values, norms and mores artistically in a medium of a play is instrumental in communicating cultural education. The play in this light is a veritable medium of communicating cultural knowledge, using folklore as raw materials.

The idea of documenting folklore into written accounts therefore did not only place it on a multimedia platform for easy accessibility, but more specifically offers more premium to drama or theatre, owing to its close affinity to cultural materials of which folklore is an integral part. Theatre through the instrumentality of play harnesses folk materials as bedrocks for dramatisation and thereby documenting oral tradition into written forms. Doki (2004:143-

144) argues in the light of the symbiotic relationship between culture (folklore) and theatre that:

Culture is transmitted from one generation to another. And it is this transmission that has as direct bearing and latitude with theatre. Theatre on the other hand is widely known to be a structured performance before an audience. The nexus between culture and theatre is largely transportational. While culture generates codes on which a peoples behavioural pattern is anchored, theatre provides the vehicle with which these codes are passed from generation to generation.

This is in tandem with Musa's submission on the fusion and complimentary roles of culture and theatre. According to him:

Culture is theatre and theatre is culture because all cultural activities are essentially theatrical and that most theatrical events are moments of cultural re-enactments. While culture serves as the materials for the theatre, the theatre itself celebrates known and unknown cultures of the world through various performance forms as aesthetically designed or reflectively created by theatre workers... (Musa 2004:171).

It is pertinent to submit that cultural materials inherent in the society, which constitute folklore, are the bedrocks of the playwright's creative enterprise, and he uses them to communicate his preconceived messages. In other words, he brings to bear cultural education. This presupposes that theatre through the fundamental art of playwriting is a veritable instrument of communicating culture. The playwright in this light is a cultural communicator who deploys the epic traditions along with certain cultural nuances to assert his message(s). He must therefore, do that within the matrix of a given cultural peculiarities because according to Ukala (1999:160):

We have been brought up to see drama with the eyes of the white man. We tend to be not thorough-going when we want to reflect our own cultural sensibilities; our own cultural practice for producing performances. That is what has happened to *The Marriage of Anansewa* and *Ozidi*, because, actually, the two playwrights are people who have investigated African folklore, especially folktale creation and performance, well ahead of me.

Cultural education is therefore anchored on the premise that the playwright deploys folklore as an integral aspect of culture to provoke the cultural sensibilities of the people thereby propelling them to become conscious and informed about issues and values as a basis of

making sound judgements. The epic stories like the ones dramatised in J.P.Clark's *Ozidi*, Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ogunyemi's *Langbodo*, Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* amongst many others have become viable cultural materials for pedagogy. The need to document more of such epic traditions peculiar to certain group of people in a medium of dramatic literature will endear more people to cultural education and justify the significance of play as vehicle for culturally relevant education.

2.4 The Relationship between Folklore and Playwriting

Etymologically, "playwriting" is got from an archaic English word, "Wright", meaning a craft man or builder. It also suggests someone who has "wrought" words, themes and other elements into a dramatic form. In other words someone who creates plays.

Playwriting also means the art of dramaturgy-which entails the art of scripting a play (text) to be realised or performed on a live stage in the theatre for the benefits of the audience. He usually puts his play on a live stage in the theatre, either by himself or by a much more knowledgeable, or commissioned artistic director who can professionally work out the artistic nuances in a production for the audience. Similarly, Agoro (2001:72), also says, "The playwright's objective is not met with merely scripting a play. It is only when the script is staged before a live audience that the playwright's objective is achieved". Akorede (2006:55) provides a picturesque description of a playwright or dramatist quite succinctly when he submits that:

The dramatist is the watch-man in his society. He is the people's secret police. It is his duty to shift out information and to bring the culprits to the people's court. The court in this sense is the open theatre, there the hidden, the concealed and the guarded are exposed not for the people's pleasure but for their information and if possible necessary action.

The significance of the playwright and his craftsmanship is the ability to harness the cultural materials in the society and recreate them for the consumption of the audience through the play. That is why a careful study of his society is highly needed to be abreast of what

constitute the nucleus of the society's culture and tradition. The study would take him to the point of carefully observing the socio-cultural ingredients of his environment. He cannot afford to feign ignorance and become guilty of Soyinka's (1994:12) submission that: "Where the writer in his society can no longer function as a conscience, he must recognise that his choice lies between denying himself totally or withdrawing to the position of a post mortem surgeon".

Playwriting as an art of the theatre has as its roots in Western Europe, especially ancient Greece where the culture of writing plays for annual Athenian competitions amongst playwrights was a well-cherished national tradition. The most outstanding, surviving works of the ancient Greek era are those of dramatists such as; Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. Their works had a great influence on the emerging development of the art of playwriting as we have it today.

Playwriting in Africa is usually characterised by a hybrid of Western and indigenous African forms. Apart from deploying the Western, (colonial) language in African texts, the style of infusing African cultural elements like songs, narratives, chants, dance and so on is indicative of the western influence. The fusion here is an evolving style in reaction to the long held tradition western literature learned in schools through the colonialists. For instance, Gbilekaa (1997:50) argues that the colonialists viewed literature as the necessary tool of "civilising and humanising Africans". It was therefore this same literature that African intellectuals later used as a weapon to launch intellectual attack on European colonialists or imperialists. That is why Ker (2004:20) is of the opinion that, "African writing (generally) first asserted itself as protest literature". This category of writing exists in Africa, side by side with the indigenous, traditional forms of drama, describe by Clark and Ogunbiyi as sacred and secular dramas or the traditional and literary forms (Clark, 1981:1 and Ogunbiyi, 1981:3). However, as far as the

art of playwriting in the theatre is concerned, it is the exclusive preserve of the written form of literature, christened by scholars as literary drama.

The question is therefore, where and how do playwrights derive materials with which they create their plays? According to Ebo (2012:83), “The playwright’s inspiration for writing... stems out of observation of events and activities as they unfold in their environment”. It is therefore right to state that the playwright does not write at variance to the socio-cultural or socio-economic realities of his (or her) society, hence the raw materials available to him lie within the society. Agoro (2001:72) in this wise submits that:

Playwrights derive their inspiration for their works from the direct and indirect experiences. Direct experiences come as a result of their involvement in several situations in the normal process of living in the society. Indirect experiences are derived from reading or from watching television, video programmes, or movies. Really everything in life could be analysed and imaginatively recreated in drama.

This is where folklore comes in as pertinent cultural materials within the environment of the playwright. Such cultural materials if properly harnessed would provide cogent information and attitudinal reorientation of the people.

The practice of using folklore as materials for playwriting is not new in the theatre. What is probably new is the consciousness and deliberate theorisation of the practice in the past, leading to the present day practices. In the Greek theatre for instance, there was a transition of what some scholars refer to as “literature from stage to page”. That is the situation where by oral traditional performances already known in that medium are moulded into scripts or play texts for performance in the theatre. The Greek classical drama or classical literature was the reflection of the Greek’s world view rooted in the oral tradition. Greek mythology; rituals, superstition, ancestral worship (gods), and occupational practices were highly folkloristic in nature. This was an indication of the use of folklore by the Greek classical playwrights as cultural materials in literature, and in this case dramatic literature. Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*,

Antigone and other classical plays asserted much influence in Africa from the point of view of the cultural materials used for the plays. As Etherton (2012:68) observes:

The influence of the Greeks on the development of African drama has been in two directions: (1) Greek plays have served as models for African play; and (2) the theory of Aristotle has become a basis for dramatic criticism. An example of the former is the transposition by the Nigerian playwright, Ola Rotimi, of *King Oedipus* by the Greek playwright, Sophocles, into a play in the Yoruba setting (but in English) called *The Gods are not to Blame*. An example of the influence of Aristotle's theory is the analysis by John Pepper Clark (a Nigerian critic and playwright) of the Ijo saga of *ozidi*.

This position is also supported by other scholars like Idegu who agrees that:

The contact of Nigerian theatre practitioners, as one may argue for the entire Africans, with foreign theatre practices has in no small way, greatly influenced the works of Nigerian authors. Whether by adaptation, adoption, or even transposition, there has been a fundamental presence of the Greek, Roman, and Elizabethan theatre practices in our literary creativity and appreciation (Idegu, 2009:69).

What seems to be interesting in the two submissions is that the folkloric forms incorporated into the play texts by the Greek classical playwrights influenced many African writers who studied them and later saw the value of producing their replicas within their cultural realities. The situation whereby Ola Rotimi for instance saw the manifestation of Greek mythology in Sophocles' *King Oedipus* and decided to replicate it into *The Gods are not to Blame*, to reflect his people's cultural realities showed the wave of Greek influence here. Even in the Elizabethan period, the people's folklore was reflective, especially in the plays of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. Folkloristic components are manifest in plays like Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo, and Juliet*, *King Lear*, (including many of his historical plays) and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and many other Elizabethan literary works. Papp and Kirkland (2003:17) state that:

Most Elizabethan households were well stocked with peculiar superstitions and strange practices: there might be a horseshoe over the door to ward off evil spirits, an astrological almanac on the table, a bowl of cream set out for the fairies every night, and a stockpile of charms to ward off ghosts and witches should they come a-knocking.

The description of ghosts and other mythic or folkloric forms in *Hamlet* is a usual occurrence in virtually all Shakespearean works and those of Marlowe in the Elizabethan Literature. Histories, Myths (or superstition), legends, proverbs, tales etc. have been explored by Shakespeare and his contemporaries in the Elizabethan period. The influence of Elizabethan drama, particularly Shakespearean works on Africans or Nigerians is not deniable. As Umukoro (2002:136) notes:

Apart from the legendary Shakespeare, Some of the foreign authors that have featured on the leading lists of Nigerian schools at one time or the other are: George Bernard Shaw (*Arms and the Man*), Oliver Goldsmith (*She Stoops to Conquer*), Richard Brinsley Sheridan (*The School for Scandal*), Oscar Wilde (*An Ideal Husband*) and even Bertolt Brecht (*The Good Woman of Setzuan*), and so forth.

This wave of influence from the classical Greek, Elizabethan or Western literatures gave rise to adapted works such as Wole Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* verse *The Bacchae* by Euripides, and his *Opera Wonyosi* verses John Gay's *The Beggars Opera* and Bertolt Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*; Femi Osofisan's *Who is Afraid of Solarin* verse Nicolai Gogol's *The Government Inspector* and his *The Midnight Hotel* verse George Feydeau's *Hotel Paradiso* to mention but few (Idegu, 2009:70).

The growth and development of African dramatic literature saw many African playwrights turning to their folklore or oral tradition to source materials for their dramaturgy. The rich potentials of their traditional society became a point of interest. In other words, they also imitated the Greeks in this regard, as Etherton (2012:69) observes that, "when Greek thinkers began to ponder the moral and social meaning of their legends and myths, they were actually seeking to expand the significance of their ancient traditional culture so as to reach a truth about their own contemporary realities".

There have been many ground-breaking efforts towards the use of folklore as source materials for playwriting in African dramaturgy. Most of these efforts see the playwrights projecting the communal, and mythic African ways of life and worldview. A cursory example brings to mind great efforts like John Pepper Clark's *Ozidi* [1966] (from Nigeria), Efua T. Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* [1967] (from Ghana), Mukotani Ruyendo's *The Contest* (from Uganda) [1977], Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Megerere Mwangi's *I will Marry when I Want* (from Kenya), amongst many others. J.P.Clark's *Ozidi* for instance, wholly dwells on the oral, folkloristic tradition. It is derived from the traditional Ijo saga, or, epic, centred on Orua in the Delta region of Nigeria (Etherton, 2012:72).

The Marriage of Anansewa by Efua Sutherland is another groundbreaking effort in this regard. The play adapts the conventions of Akan story-telling tradition of the Ghanaian people in its story line. In the words of Sutherland, "There is in Ghana a story-telling art called *Anansesem* by Akan-speaking people. The name, which literally means Ananse stories, is used both for the body of stories told and for the story-telling performance itself" (Sutherland, 2005:3). The Akan story-telling (theatre) performance which is harnessed as raw materials for the making of this play is a culturally relevant material of the people of Ghana. In other words, it is the popular folkloric tradition of the people that finds expression in the play, *The Marriage of Anansewa*.

For Mukotani Ruyendo's *The Contest*, the exploration of what he refers to as "popular" tradition of the people into a play script also underscores the efforts of African playwrights to use their oral, folk tradition to create literature, and in this case dramatic literature. In his production note of the play as captured by Etherton, he states that, "This play sets out to explore what can possibly be done to maintain the popular nature of the theatre". His idea of "popular" regarding tradition of the people as Etherton (2012:23) explains suggests that,

“traditional performances are by their very nature popular, because of their function in the society”.

On the Nigerian playwriting scene, apart from the pace setting efforts of the first generation playwrights, who used some elements of folklore in their plays. (Notably examples being Soyinka with *A Dance of the Forest* (1963), Kongi’s *Harvest* (1967) etc, Clark with *Song of a Goat* (1961), *Ozidi* (1966) etc., and Rotimi with *Kurunmi* (1970), *The Gods are not to Blame* (1971) etc.). There are more endearing examples from second, third and fourth or/and contemporary generations of playwrights, who have explored folkloric materials to document their messages in plays. Notable examples like Femi Osofisan, whom Obafemi (2007:93) describes as “unquestionably the most articulate in terms of both ideological commitment and political aesthetics of the second generation Nigerian writers...” His plays such as *The Chattering and the Song* (1976), *Moruntodun* (1982), *The Women of Owu* (1984), *Twingle Twangle a Twynning Tayle* (1993) amongst many others attest to this claim. Osofisan’s prolific disposition draws a lot from folkloristic tradition of his people, the Yoruba to help portray his socio-cultural society and define his ideology in dramaturgy. Wale Ogunyemi’s *Langbodo* (1989), *Queen Amina of Zazzau* (1999) et cetra. are other worthy examples of note. Although Ogunyemi’s lists of creative scripts also includes the likes of *The Vow*, (1971), *Sign of the Rainbow* (1971), *Partners in Business* (1988) and *The Divorce*, his striking exploration of history, myths and legends is a worthy example in his plays, especially *Langboo* and *Queen Amina of Zazzau*. In his words, “Queen Amina was a formidable woman credited with many spectacular feats romantically woven into legends” (Ogunyemi, 2009: iv).The legendary story of Queen Amina deployed in this play belongs to the oral traditional archives. It is transmitted from one generation to another usually through tales.

Sam Ukala is unarguably another pertinent voice in the realm of folk play writing. His theory of folkism, exemplified in his plays like *The Slave Wife* (1985) and *Akpakaland* (1990),

amongst others helps assert his ideological posture in Nigerian contemporary dramaturgy.

Asigbo (2014:24) aptly states that:

Indeed, there is a marked difference in ideo-aesthetics in the folk plays of Sam Ukala which style he theorises as “Folkism”. Folkism or the folk play is an adept use of story-telling idioms to interrogate and tackle folk problems. Being a uniquely Ukala contribution to dramatic theory on the continent, he explicated this new approach in his plays. Ukala’s theatre is therefore markedly different from those of his contemporaries in his unique appropriation of the characteristics of our folk tales, something akin to the *Anasegoro* of the Akan people of Ghana, popularised by Efua T. Sutherland, to connect and guy home his points to his audience.

The uniqueness and popularity of Ukala’s “folkist” plays stems from the fact that he has taken his time to theorise on the concept of folkism, which emphasises elements that constitute the folk culture of the people. His theory for instance clearly spells out plays that should be regarded as “folkist”, with their thoroughgoing application of the aesthetics of the African folktale may to remove or reduce the shortcomings therein. On the other hands, distinguishing such plays from those that have been made inaccessible to the audience not only by a difficult diction, but also through highly imaginative yet alienating distortions of their source material, an unusual abstraction of characters, or complexity and strangeness of structure (Ukala, 1996:285). The strangeness of structure here addresses plays that deploy cultural elements without taking into consideration the cultural sensibilities and realities.

2.5 Categories of Tiv Folkloric Tradition

Tiv folklore is anchored on the premise of “Tiv life” (philosophy) or worldview. The crux of Tiv folklore indicates a large reservoir of cultural or traditional materials woven in oral tradition and carefully put together for orientation, education and social interactions as well as harmony and egalitarianism in the society. Tiv word for culture is *Gbaaondo*, which translates as God’s creation, and simply means the origin of things since the time of God’s creation (Gbor, 2006:19). What constitutes Tiv folklore is substantially an integral part of the Tiv culture. The basic cultural aspects here are carefully organised, preserved and perfected,

and are usually presented through the oral traditional modes in the Tiv society. Interestingly, basic aspects of Tiv folklore which we shall be discussing below tie neatly into Tiv world view; religion, social interaction, art, occupation politics and economy.

There are therefore basic categories of Tiv folklore that form integral part of Tiv life. The Tiv folktale or storytelling art manifests in two broad forms: the *Kwagh-alom/Kwagh-hir* based on *Alom* (Hare) as the protagonist along with other characters including the human and spirits. The other is the kind based on Tiv myths; stories about the cosmological worldview of the Tiv people. There exist also cogent cultural or traditional symbols, artifacts, monuments, rituals and festivals that find expression through the art of storytelling for the purpose of induction of younger ones and cultural preservation.

The *Kwagh-lom/Kwagh-hir* (Folktale/storytelling art) is a very important and significant aspect of the Tiv life. This is because storytelling tradition generally is what defines the entire folkloric tradition of the Tiv people. The situation where traditional stories provoking critical reflections on the society's moral uprightness, justice and egalitarianisms are told and performed in the village squares, and in effect provoking other forms of oral narratives like songs is what defines Tiv folklore in general. Folktale in Tiv literary means *Kwagh-alom* (stories about the Hare) or *Kwagh-hir* (something magical). It is not just a bunch of traditional stories, but also a traditional theatre, highly performative, and replete with all the theatrical and cultural nuances. For instance, Hagher quotes Leo Frobenius, the famous traveller as saying as far back in 1912 that, "the Tiv were the best story-tellers he had encountered anywhere in Africa" (2003:49). This scorecard by this famous traveller during the colonial periods is anchored on the premise of performance dexterity, enactment and creative dramatization. This is what Finnegan (1987:54) asserts when she says that:

The art of storytelling, practised by individuals in community groups appears to be a significant indigenous performance mode throughout Africa. A most common form is that which includes songs, and in which the audience responds in chorus to the narrator. The concept of storytelling approximates dramatic forms because it is developed as narrative. The performance is theatricalised by the use of music and song and by participation of the audience as an involved chorus. This presentation by the storyteller requires the rendering of dialogue and representation, by means of gesture, expression, and voice of the characters involved in the dialogue.

The narrator or raconteur in African folktale in general and Tiv folktale in particular is the master of the event. The success or otherwise of the storytelling performance is highly dependent on him, through his dexterous mastery of mimicry of the various characters involved, and his knack to sustain the audience interest. We can also deduce other factors from the above submission about Tiv folktales (and African folktales in general), that is the theatricality made possible by the use of songs, music and dance as well as the bridging of gap between the audience and the performer(s) or story teller(s). Gbilekaa (2013:219), also lend his voice that folktale theatre sometimes referred to as the storytelling theatre is the common phenomenon in traditional African societies.

The thematic content of the folktales theatre encompasses all aspects of the traditional life of a given people. According to him, Tiv folktale is called *Kwagh-alom* (tale about the Hare) or *Kwagh-hir* (something of magic) because the *Alom* (the Hare) is the protagonist of the Tiv folktales. Furthermore, the feats performed by the Hare are so supernatural that he must be a magician to accomplish them. *Kwagh-alom* or *Kwagh-hir* therefore refers to the same thing. The nomenclatures refer to the tales told by a raconteur surrounding the exploits of the Hare and how he is able to outwit other animals and men who are physically bigger than him but are less intelligent. Hagher (2003:51) captures the characteristics of Tiv folktales events as thus:

The story-telling art is a communal art in Tivland, There are elaborate props and costumes to imitate the characters in the narration, There is a spontaneous audience response, which also offers criticism of the art, Songs and dances are the main musical events accompanying the narration, The narrators enlivened their art by dance, gestures, mimicry and mime, The story plot is structured by crisis, partial solution, renewed crisis, and final solution which latent ambiguities.

Apart from these stunning characteristics, there are also other important inherent features of the art, such as the use of an explosive opening glee, the audience willingness to contribute, audience response to indicate the success or otherwise of the art, and contribution of the local elders who serve as judges in the storytelling performance. Most of these storytelling elements are harnessed in the folk plays and their performance. For instance, the common captivating and motivation-prone opening glee of the Tiv *Kwagh-alom/Kwagh-hir* story telling (theatre) art goes thus:

(Tiv)

Kwagh-alom wam nahan ga oo!

Nahan Zeo (audience)

Nahan Zeo (audience)

Kwagh-alom wam nahan ga oo!

Nahan Zeo (audience)

Nahan Zeo (audience)

(English)

My folktale is not like the others!

Not like the others

Not like the others

My folktale is not like the others!

Not like the others

Not like the others

The repetition here is deliberate and significant, meant to capture the audience interests and asserts the narrator's confidence for the performance proper. We should note that this kind of explosive opening glee is easily usually turned into a song even from the very beginning, depending on the nature of the narrator and his creative ingenuity. The narrator can after the glee or song pose a rhetorically oriented call-to-response question, which Hagher (2003:54) refers to as "a core cliché. For example, "do you know why it is not good for a girl to keep saying "no" to her suitors"? Of course, this kind of question is answered in a thunderous negative, "no". The narrator would now brace up and begin". Once upon a time, the king had a very pretty daughter".... In some cases, an experienced and creative narrator would save the moral of the story until the end, apparently to allow room for suspense and other creative enterprise to the story. In this case, he (the narrator) would conclude, "and that is why it is not

good to be jealous”, or “that is how the sky left the earth”. Other endings in the words of Hagher are “more prosaic and admit no ceremony”. At instances like this the narrator could just state “that is the end of my story”, and an audience might just punctuate the ending with something like “Oho, which is why the mosquito is always coming to disturbing the ears”.

The culture of storytelling is so popular in Tivland that almost at every occasion; storytellers take advantage and engage the people with folk stories. This indicates that traditional stories from this cultural background are not told only occasionally at night (at moon light), but are told and performed at any time and place the occasions demand, including at night , before bed time. Describing the occasions where story-telling activities are performed Hagher (2003:52) enumerates six of such occasions. According to him:

During communal work, members of the community come together, whether to farm, or hunt, or build a road, Itinerant story-telling; where particular story tellers tour either as individuals or in groups, Story-telling competitions-these were organized by the clan for the sole purpose of knowing who excelled amongst the narrators, and to determine which groups in the district or clan had a superior artistry in story-telling. *Tyem Imongo* (sitting together at night); Story-telling where the narration of folktales when members of the compound come together for the task of spinning cotton wool at night, Domestic Household Stories-this is the sort found the entire world over. It is the kind of story telling which mothers or grandmothers told their children or grandchildren at night.

There are other instances where mothers tell stories to their children probably when men are not around at any time (especially when children demand for it) but mostly at night. Other instances also exist where children tell stories amongst themselves because of the impartation they have had from their parents. There are yet other scenarios that exist in schools, where students, usually of a given age group engage in storytelling during non-lesson hours. Sometimes their teachers would ask them to tell the “why” stories with a view to draw moral lessons, identify good orators or those possessed with excellent narrative abilities amongst students. Examples of such “why” stories include, Why the chameleon has a big scar across

his back, Why the He-goat has a very short tail, or Why the mosquito is always disturbing the ears and so on.

Furthermore, Gbilekaa (2013:220) also classifies folktales according to thematic focus. According to him, “Generally speaking folktales can be grouped, thematically, into three: these are: those that deal with the making and breaking of friendship, the dilemma type and the trickster type”. He further states in the light of the trickster classification that:

The trickster animal hero cuts across many cultures but the animal type varies such that amongst the Hausas and Ashantis it is the Spider. For the Yoruba it is the Tortoise while the Zande of South Africa has the “Ture”. For the Tiv and some other African nationalities, it is the Hare... The trickster hero in Tiv folktales is an idealised embodiment of the philosophy, emotions and moral codes of the people.

The idealised disposition mentioned here is based on the Tiv believe that their cosmology is co-habited by the spirits who represent the supernatural forces, the owners of the land who control the animals and aquatic life (Gbilekaa, 2013:221). Collaborating, Hagher (2003) also states that “the folktale characters can be classified into three categories corresponding to the composition of the Tiv world view:1.) Humans, 2.) Animals, 3.) Spirits (*Adzov, Mbakuv*) and other supernatural phenomena like giants, strange animals with strange characteristics like *Jongol*, whose anus sparkles like a well-made fire.

Both Hagher and Gbilekaa agree that *Alom* (the Hare) is the trickster hero in Tiv folktales and also interact with other characters and in all of this interactions the Hare always win or outwit all the other characters in the story. Some of these characters he (the Hare) usually interacts with include *Tor* (the Chief), *Nor* (the elephant), *huer* (iguana), *kurugh* (tortoise), *kpereketange* (the spider), and others like *Gbev* (the night jar) and *nomikyer* (the cockerel), the last two are sometimes portrayed as semi-trickster heroes, because there are a very few instances whereby the Hare could not outwit them. In addition to these human and animals characters, there are also spirit characters like *Ijov* (spirit) or *Adzov, Mbakuv* (plural); *Tor Ijov*

(chief of spirits), *Ngojov* (female or mother spirit) and so on. While Tiv folktales or story telling theatre dwelled or explored to a reasonable extent the *Alom*'s character as the trickster hero, there are other stories about myths, ancestral origin, religious and other educational or moral philosophies that do not even involve *Alom* (the Hare) as a character. This underscores the issue of categorisations, that will put into proper perspective the scope and nature of varying Tiv folktales, or story telling art in particular and Tiv folklore in general.

One interesting observation is that in all *Alom*'s tactics in outwitting other characters, he does not interact with the spirit characters like *Adzov* or *Mbakuv* in order to outwit them. This is apparently because of Tiv religio-cultural belief that spirits should be feared and respected such that nothing should be done to offend them. The spirit characters usually manifest through *Tor jov* (the chief of spirit) who is always prying pranks on human beings. The *Tor jov* is vindictive and not easy to be appeased or satisfied. Another is *Ngojov* (the queen spirit) who is always protecting her children from (human beings) men. She is very strict and can use magic to destroy her enemies.

Another important attempt at classifying Tiv folktales in particular and oral tradition in general views Tiv storytelling art from the general perspective of what is called Tiv oral literature. According to Dzurgba (2011:119), "Tiv oral literature is divided into five categories, namely, mythology, fableology, fairiology, teleology and proverbology. While each of the first four is a combination of prose, drama and poetry, the last one is poetic in nature". He further explains the terms in the light of Tiv oral tradition that:

Mythology refers to ideas or opinions, which people hold, but which are either wrong or not true....Thus, myths are narrated stories. The aim of a mythologist is to explain the sacredness of the origin of things. They provide explanations about the origin of things or how certain things came into existence. Tiv mythologists have explained why people die. A fableologist tells a story in which animals are actors with human speech and behaviour. The social experiences of the animals are the same as those of human beings. Animals hold an annual dance festival, compete for marrying a king's daughter or compete in games...Therefore; fableology is intended to teach moral lessons, especially through short stories or fables about animals. A fairiologist tells a story about fairies, known in Tiv as *Adzov* or *Mbakuv*. *Adzov* are capable of changing into any form at any time at will. Their community provides a model for an ideal human community. A proverbologist makes proverbs. The proverbs form an aspect of the oral wisdom literature in Tivland. For example, *Iyuhe ka mtuem* ("jealousy is ashes"). A taleologist tells a story of imaginary events. He provides a spoken description of an event or a situation that is often not completely true. A teleological story explains itself. For example, when the Hare plays tricks in order to take advantage of other animals, his own tricks get him into a serious trouble... (Dzurgba, 2011:120).

This particular classification more than others places Tiv storytelling art into more proper perspective, in that the concept of Tiv folklore can appear very illusive if not for the expressive medium of storytelling, involving the raconteur. In the words of Dzurgba (2011:119), "Tiv oral literature is stored in one whole body of ideas or information. Therefore, the class of literature cannot be known until the narrator makes a narration at the time of telling the story or acting out a story". Notably, the art of storytelling performance, which is akin to Tiv life and philosophy, and known with the people from time immemorial, has experienced some metamorphosis to transform into modern, indigenous theatre of conscientisation. Lending credence to the idea of the evolution of the new *Kwagh-hir* Theatre, Gbilekaa (2013:221) opines that, "It is this story telling theatre that generated the popular representational form of *Kwagh-hir* that we know today". Similarly, Akpede (2010:37) also submits that, "It was from this cultural background of story-telling that the new *Kwagh-hir* evolved as an advanced and indigenous theatrical form". In the word of Hagher (2003:49), a close look at *Kwagh-hir* story performances in Tivland would show that indeed the *Kwagh-hir* Theatre in its present form has close kinship with the folktale performance. In definitional terms, Hagher (2003:17) views *Kwagh-hir* as "an event, which

provides secular entertainment, education, and socialisation through the enactment of past and contemporary events by human performers, using puppets and masquerades. It is not a religious event. The actors do not assume the role of priests”.

Equally significant are some myth-oriented stories that find expression through the storytelling art. Notable amongst them is *Swem*, a place believed to be situated on the border between the present day Kwande Local Government of Benue State and the Cameroon Mountains. It is considered sacred as being of both legendary and of religious importance to the Tiv people up till today. Makar (1994:5) explains in his version the mystery and theory around the origin of *Swem*, and why it came to be known as *Swem Karagbe*. In his words:

The departure (from *Swem* hills) is ascribed to the desecration of the *Ilyum* altar by one Karagbe or Kalagbe from Nongov lineage. Karagbe threw the corpse of his son on the *lyum* altar. The resultant fear by the people resulted in the subsequent departure from *Swem Karagbe*. This was the serious crime the Tiv would popularly say Karagbe committed at *Swem*. He resisted arrest that would lead to his punishment. Those sent to arrest him therefore beheaded him. Karagbe preferred death to the shame of standing trial before the people. It was believed that Karagbe by his death had thus chosen to set a precedent on how criminals should be dealt with. From this incidence arose a religious cult of an *akombo* known as *Swem Karagbe*. It punishes evildoers who swear falsely.

This account of *Swem* here is though not a general view held about its origin however, its location and sacredness as stated above is common knowledge. In as much as the story of *Swem* is largely mysterious, its practice and significance cannot be erased from the Tiv memory, irrespective of the cultural changes and (indigenous) cultural relegation in our society today.

Some traditional Tiv people swear to *Swem*, instead of the Bible during court cases in Tivland. This might have necessitated the situation whereby Uhondo (1991:24) refers to *Swem* as “Tiv sacred Traditional Bible for swearing”. Agreeably, Makar (1994:10) also states that “*Swem* today remains an object of oath taking in two forms: *Swem Karagbe*, the most potent one, concocted by the community’s chief priest. *Orsoron tar*; and *Swemchia*, prepared

by a less distinguished priest”.Makar’s submission regarding the administration of *Swem* here owing to what he calls “chief priest” or “less distinguished priest”, does not necessarily suggest the same role “priests” play in other religions in Africa. In Tiv religion, the people referred to here as priests are *Orakombo* (medicine man or expert of ritual emblem) or *Mbaakombogh* (practitioners of medicine or ritual emblem), and they do not invoke ancestral spirits, or deities in their *kombo* acts. Closely related to *Swem Karagbe* is the practice of *Kor*. It is a bitter concoction given to people to drink for the adjudication of justice, usually to unravel a mystery or separate the innocent from the guilty. Like *Swem Karagbe*, *Kor* is prepared by certain elders who are custodians of Tiv tradition or *akombo* (ritual emblem).Although *Swem* and *Kor* are basically the same, their only difference lies in the fact that *Kor* is a substance to drink while *Swem* is represented in a similar pot for oath taking.

We also have in the category of religious myth *Tsav* (witchcraft), which is an integral component of Tiv religion and worldview, being another aspect of the people that defines them. Their belief system which religion is an integral part is akin to their ways of life. To define Tiv religion and place it in the right, comprehensive perspective is not a very easy task. This is due to unique intricacies in the religion that is somewhat a departure from the general held views on African religion, especially as regards ancestral worships and deities. In this light, Hagher (2003:24) observes, “One single factor which, controls the entire aspects of Tiv livelihood, and life, is their religion”. He however, points out “Attempts to define Tiv religion from familiar landmarks of definitions of religion are doomed to come to grief”. However, Tiv religion in its unique nature could be conceptualised under the purview of Pratt’s (cited in Hagher, 2003:24) broad-based definition of religion, which he defines thus:

Religion is the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities towards the powers which they conceive their interest and destinies-The religious attitude towards the Determiner of Destiny must not be “mechanical”-nor coldly intellectual. It must have some touch of that social quality which we feel in our relations toward anything that can make responses to us.

The reality of Tiv religion can be viewed within the framework of this definition, in that Tiv religion is not as fixed and static as prescribed by the western concept which indicate a firmly fixed relationship between the human and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute, or simply “God” (Hagher, 2003:25). This means that in Tiv religion, the notion of God is not distinct, or static. It is usually suggestive-referring to spiritual (non-human) force(s) co-existing with the human.

The notion of Tiv religion under which *Tsav* can be categorised is centred on three fundamental (beliefs) things; *Aondo* (God the Supreme Being), *Tsav* (witchcraft), *Adzov* or *Mbataregh* (spirits).Therefore, in Tiv religion, much emphasis is given to God in heaven (*Aondo u sha*).Even though the Tiv people also believe in the efficacy of *Tsav* (witchcraft) and other spirits (like *Adzov* or *Mbakuv*) who operate through the instrumentality of *Akombo* (ritual emblem).Their allegiances go to God through instances like *Aondo kume* (God thunders), *Aondo nyiar* (God causes lightning), *Aondo gba sha kon* (God’s lightning strikes a tree),*Aondo gba ura* (God gathers the cloud for rain) and so on. From these functions of God, in the words of Dzurgba (2011:121), the Tiv affirms His presence, authority, power and loving care. The point here is that, although Tiv people’s belief in *Tsav* (witchcraft) or *Mbatsav* (*Tsav* practitioners) and *Adzov* (spirits) is central to their religion, this belief does not amount to animism as assumed about other traditional religion, especially in African religions. Animistic beliefs are usually travelling companions with many other religious concepts and practices. For the Tiv people, they believe that the same land or habitat where they live is also co-habited by *Adzov* or *Mbataregh* who are spirits (in that they are not easily seen with ordinary eyes) that in the words of Geri (2012:41) hover around and are closely in

communication with the people. They also engage in the same activities with the people-like farming, marriage, meeting, and hunting. They are believed to retire back after their activities to places like the riverbanks, large tree trunks. This is why people in Tiv land whenever they go to the river, words are uttered in form of monologue to excuse the *Adzov*, *Mbataregh* or *Mbakuv* before using the river. The same way Tiv people usually put clothing round large trees for appeasement of these spirits. Hagher (2003:26) further provides insights into activities of their co-habitation with the people. In his words:

Most Tiv people believe in their existence, and proper care is taken not to offend them. It is taboo for the children to whistle at night, this might be construed by the *Adzov* as an insult. Women are forbidden to throw water from cooking pots outside huts at night, without first uttering excuses and warning *Adzov*, who may be coming that way. The *Adzov* sleep in the day and work in the night, which is their day. Men's activities like storytelling, take place at the confluence of the activities of men and *Adzov* (early in the night), who are expected to participate in the stories.

These analogies further underscore the uniqueness and complexity of Tiv religion. Unlike the dominant practice of ancestral worship which is at the centre of other African religions. Here you find the situation where spirits, who are non-human, engaging in human activities within the same space and environment. However, a much more complex aspect of Tiv religion is the concept of *Tsav* (witchcraft), or *Mbatsav* (possessors of witchcraft). Geri (2012:41) opines that:

Tsav has been deeply planted in the minds of the Tiv people...A man who is known to possess *Tsav* is called *Ormbatsav* and that means that he is deemed to be able to obtain good or exceptional result by means of his *Tsav*.

This is collaborated by Bur (1993:12) who submits that, "The Tiv traditionally believe in (*tsav*) and these elders who possessed these supernatural powers (*tsav*) were called *Mbatsav*. They were believed to be responsible for good and bad that happened to Tivland". The concept and institution of *Tsav* is viewed generally as an internalised potency in man as part of his personality (Ubwa, 2013:3). Bluntly, Bohannan (cited in Hagher, 2003:) describes *Tsav* as witchcraft substance, power, talent, and ability. He further argues that it is morally neutral

and can be deployed for either good or bad. If deployed for good, the society can be assured of a potent social control mechanism. If, however deployed for evil, individuals can be bewitched-leading to sickness and even death.

There are therefore different levels of *Tsav* ranging from the seemingly mild to the chronically fierce one. A mild *tsav* is akin to what Ubwa (2013:3) referred to as *Ishimainomsoor* (man's heart), which gives the possessor some awareness of the supernatural, without necessarily practicing it through the instrumentality of *Akombo* (magic emblem). For instance, virtually all Tiv elders are believed to be *Mbatsav* (wizards), owing to their wealth of experience, coupled with tendencies of other wizards and witches to use their words or decrees to inflict malevolent powers on others. *Bo utsa/Ibume utsa* (bad witchcraft) or *Tsav mbu atetan* (daytime witchcraft) is usually used to refer to fierce acts of *Tsav* and practitioners of this kind, to show detest for it. In this wise, Hagher sees *Tsav* as having two kinds; constitutional and unconstitutional ones. The unconstitutional *Tsav* according to him destroys the land, and is offset by the constitutional *Tsav* which is the one held by the *Mbatsav* elders to produce fertility, good health, and abundance in the land. It should be noted that this bad or unconstitutional kind of *Tsav* practice though not in conformity with the Tiv ideal traditional and religious life, it spread fast and usually invoke the use of high level *Akombo* (magic or cult emblem) which have malevolent consequences like premature deaths, crops failure, barrenness, ill luck, bad dreams, amongst others. Personal ownership of *Imborvungu* (ritual emblem) or *Ambooravungu* (in plural), *Ityogh ki Ayu* (head of a fish), and *Adudu* (storage box)-all of which figuratively called *Ikyav* (properties) is also attributed to this category of *Tsav*, and human sacrifices (usually foetal blood) are sometimes required to maintain them. Elders have constantly warned and accused the younger ones not to practice *tsav* based on borrowed *Akombo* (magic emblem). They believe this will amount to what they called *tar u vihin* (ruining the society). This warning is what apparently led to the emergence

of what Hagher (2003:36) referred to as anti-*Mbatsav* cults in Tiv land to help neutralise the chronically fierce *tsav*. He gives example of such anti-*Mbatsav* cults to include, the *Or-Adzov* cult (1912-around 2000), the *Haakaa* cult (1929), the *Hoyo* cult (2nd half of 19th century), and *Nyambuan* cult (1939) among others.

To further reiterate, that Tiv religion, unlike other African religious modes, is unique in nature. Moreover, contrary to the general conception that it is based on ancestral worship, is not tenable. Dzurgba (2011:85) argues in the light of what he calls *awambe a Tiv* (Tiv blood) which connotes distinction from other racial groups in Africa, who do not have cultures as descent as that of the Tiv people. They had practiced burying kings or monarchs with live slaves or servants, or fresh human heads, killing twins who were regarded as abomination, offering human sacrifices to ethnic deities, ritual killings to obtain spiritual evil power, and circumcision of female children as a religious act and so on. In his words:

European explorers, traders, missionaries, colonial administrators and scholars came and helped other Africans to eradicate human sacrifices and other evil cultural practices. The question still arise: were the cannibalistic gods on African continent killed or chased out of the African continent? In this matter of religion, also Tiv blood (*awambe a Tiv*) did not want to have cannibalistic gods who were always demanding that their worshippers should offer them sacrifices made up of men, women, boys and girls for purposes of appeasement, propitiation, expiation, adoration, glorification and thanksgiving to the blood-thirsty gods. Of all the gods (*akombo*) in Tiv nation, there is no single cannibalistic god or *akombo*.

When we say Tiv religion is unique though esoteric in nature, it is as the matter of fact devoid of deities or ancestral worship. Although the Tiv have many *Akombo* (emblems) that are central to Tiv religio-magical belief, these emblems possess no residing spirit and cannot therefore be called fetishism (Hagher, 2003:27). In other words, *Aondo* (God) is the only deity the Tiv people acknowledge. They however believe in the efficacy of *Mbatsav* (wizards) and *Adzov* or *Mbataregh* (spirits) and honour for the earth as food grows there and for the fact that the dead are also buried in the earth. All *Mbatsav* and *Azov* or *Mbataregh*

(both spirits) according to Tiv religious world view, are dependent on the will of *Aondo* (God) for their activities.

Tiv religion therefore centres on three fundamental (beliefs) things; *Aondo* (God the Supreme Being), *Tsav* (witchcraft), *Adzov* or *Mbataregh* (spirits). However, *Akombo* (magic emblem), refers to by Ubwa (2013:13) as some unique mystical forces deployed to ensure a balanced and healthy *tar* (community), is a unifying symbol through which Tiv religion is practiced or expressed. According to Geri (2012:40):

The Tiv,...believe in a supreme being-God (*Aondo*).To them *Aondo* is the high God. He is even sometimes personified, that is, he can be angry and exercises His anger even sometimes in his roar of thunder. He may also be indirectly and ceremoniously approached through one of the sacred *akombo*. *Aondo* is seen as the highest spirit. He is conceived as the creator and sustainer of the world. He is in-charge of all other spirits and forces including *Adzov* (or *Mbataregh*).

Owing to this complexity, Tiv religion is described as esoteric in nature, hieroglyphic in expression (Akpede, 2010:2 and Hagher, 2003:25) .Its composite nature, according to Hagher (2003:24) is where definitional problems become compounded, and investigators' conclusions are often similar to the story of the blind men that desired to know an elephant. In a similar manner, he argues, those who see animism in Tiv religion are only touching the elephant's tail.

Indyer, (wooden ritual gong) is an instrument characterised by mystical powers used to communicate classified information to the public when drummed with specially designated sticks. Gbor (2006:33) gives a comprehensive definition of *Indyer* as:

An instrument used to communicate information to the public on death of important individuals, announce special gatherings and enemy attack. It is caved out of a trunk of a tree and played with the aid of physically designed sticks, *asar*. A well caved out *Indyer* can be heard and interpreted some twenty kilometres away.

The mystery surrounding the tradition of *Indyer* is what informs its significance to the Tiv people. For instance, the ownership of this instrument is believe to involve some form of human sacrifice to complete the process of carving the wood and acquiring the sticks with

which it is played. Its mystery can also be seen in its ability to be heard miles away from the point where it is been played. Uhondo (1991:24) describes *Indyer* in a recommendation of it for the day of *Gbaondo u Tiv* (Tiv Cultural Day) as “Tiv Traditional Wooden musical instrument punctuated with twelve gun salutes at intervals”. The information conveyed by this instrument is so classified that it is not just played at will. The most common occasions, which *Indyer* is played, is the demised of a very influential person in Tivland, usually the one that owns the *Indyer*. The sound of it on this kind of occasion is therefore common as Hagher (2003:27) provides the lines for it as thus:

(Tiv)	(English)
Takuruku anyam azenga	<i>Takuruku</i> tiger cat
Tile jigh jigh	Stand still
Tile jigh jigh	Stand still
Keghen waningo	Wait for your brother
(Waningo ngu kondon)	(Brother on his way)
Sha kumun utamen	To the great ancient highway.

Even in the peak of this tradition, it was easy to count those who owned the *Indyer* across Tivland, hence it was not a common practice given its high rate of rituality. Many of such traditionally accomplished personalities like Late Akpene Asha from Torov, Ukum Local Government, Tor Ngibo from Ikurav, Katsina-Ala Local Government amongst others died with the tradition even before the phenomenon of cultural change became rampant in the Tiv Society.

Ivom Uden/Amar Amirin (mounting of the heap/Dance festival) is one aspect of the folkloric culture to which the Tiv people are closely attached. The *Ivom Uden or Amar Amirin* is one of the classical dance festivals that define the people’s culture and tradition. Tsevende et al (2013:6) opine that, “The concept of Tiv traditional dance is quite broad in nature and so entwined that a Tiv man does not talk about music, singing and dancing separately”. Practically, every aspect of Tiv life and society is accompanied by dance. The whole community engages in dancing from one occasion to the other (Hagher, 2003:67). This

presupposes that Tiv life is synonymous with dance and there are no barriers of restriction regarding who performs or watches dance in Tiv culture. Dancers, especially good dancers are held to a very high esteem in Tiv society. They are even envied by those who are not good at the art.

The symbiotic relationship between music and dance in Tiv culture makes very tasking to equate it with the western concept of music and dance. In fact, an earlier submission like Keil's (1979:45) argues that the word music does not exist in Tiv culture. In as much as this claim is quite misdirected, it may not be unconnected with the close synergy between Tiv music and dance. In this light, Hagher (2003:66) for the purpose of classification states that, "Music in Tiv does not exist solely for itself. It is used for dancing or singing or as a song as in *Imar* (flute) or leading processions". This unique concept is not exactly the same with western concept of music, as one would expect. In western concept, music exists as a distinct art form, which may or may not require physical response from the audience. Hagher further states that the Tiv word, which describes music, is *Ityoulov*, which is the total combination of the various musical and the melodic and rhythmic sounds they produce. In this light, there exist different *Ityoulov* (or music) for different kinds of *Amar* (dance). Tiv music (or *Ityoulov*) could be further divided into *Kwagh-kuhwan* (drummed music) and *Kwagh-tugwan or tongon* (flute or blown music) which translates in accordance with the functions they performed. Collaborating, Tsevende et al (2013:6) submit that "Tiv traditional music (*kwaghkuhan u Tiv*) is a form of music involving song (*Imo*), dance (*amar*) and music (*kwaghkuhan*) that originates from a Tiv man or Tiv people of any geographical location in the world".

It is interesting from the submission above that Tiv (traditional) music exists as a composite whole. Good examples of this *Ityoulov* (music) include, *Gbande* (the one sided open ended

drum with animal skin covering its front). It can be divided into *ngo gbande* (female drum, which is bigger sized) and *nom gbande* (male drum, the longer and slimmer sized), *Ajo* (hourglass drum), *genga* (the double skin ended round drum), *Ilu* (wooden large tree trunk hollow drum), *Indyer* (ritual wooden gong, like the *Ilu* but much bigger and functions exclusively in ritual and political realms). Others are blown music such as *gida* (algeita), *Imar* (flute), *kakaki* (the long metal algeita) and *alaketa* (very short flute with shrill and sharp sound). Looking at the nature of Tiv musical instrument and the rhythmic nature of their dance, it will be right to state that music in Tiv culture exists primarily or exclusively to propel dance. That is why Hagher (2003:67) concludes, “There is no dancing without music in Tivland”. *Amar* (dance), as earlier stated is an inseparable phenomenon from (*Ityoulov*) music. In Tiv culture, the closest word to dance defined in English as “rhythmic or patterned movement performance as an end in itself” is *Amar*, or *Ishol*. In the words of Hagher (2003:66), this Tiv concept of dance relates the phenomenon of dancing to a game hence, *Ishol* means game. He goes on to describe the concept of dance overly that:

The verb to dance is *vine*, which applies with *amar* as in *vine amar*, or in *vine ishol* to mean dancing or dancing the dance. Sometimes the verb *vine* is dispensed with altogether to describe specific dance styles employed by the dancers as in *Shav ishol*; or *cagh ishol*, both of which describe the aesthetic quality of serious dancing with one’s whole body and with measured force by the males. The opposite description of feminine dancing as *teleghe ishol* refers to the smooth coordinating of the whole body movements in a low down to the ground twisting, curving and straightening movement, matched to the music with precision and exactitude.

The vivid description of Tiv concept of dance here shows how exotic, rhythmic and smooth it is. Generally, many Tiv people (both men and women) are naturally very gifted in art of dance. We should however note that, apart from the concept of Tiv music, which combines musical instruments, dance, and songs, there also exist, songs (*amo*) as a separate art form. That which some authors like Amase (2013:23), Geri (2012:34) and Hagher, (2003:23)

describe as Tiv oral poetry. This form involves different composers of varying genres performing their songs through oral renditions.

Structurally, all the different dances in Tiv are categorised in their historical and artistic context by well-chosen names that relate them to their functions, history, or artistic requirement (Hagher, 2003:68). In this light, there are almost countless kinds of dances in Tivland. Many of them have historical connotations and later became less important after the historical situation that necessitated them was elapsed. Notable examples include *Diga* (labour implement), a mimetic dance for both men and women, which was introduced when force labour was introduced by the colonialists in the 1930s to build railways and mine the tin in Jos, the old Plateau. *Kuza* (mines) is another mimetic dance conveying the actions of mining-washing tin on the Jos Plateau of the same period as in *Diga* dance. *Asegh* (gourds), it is one dance that is a combination of both abstract and mimetic ideas. It emphasised mimicry of the gourd and abstract body movement. *Kati* (playing cards), as the name implies it is a dance that mimes the action of playing cards, which is a pass time activity for men usually after work. *Kapu* (big calabash), it is an exclusively women allegorical dance showing the rigours of fishing through bailing out water from the ponds. *Ihinga* (squirrel), this is also an abstract dance, which emphasise more on expressionistic movements of the bodies than the mimicry of the squirrel. *Ankeredede* (fast dance), it is also an exclusively women dance. Its movements are curvaceous or sharply taken with emphasised rhythm. *Ingough* (swollen stomach), exclusively for men, *Ingough* is a highly metaphoric and abstract dance that mimics a sick person with swollen stomach and legs who could be describe as walking corpse. Hagher (2003:23) notes that this exotic dance was debuted at the Negro festival in Dakar, 1964, and became very popular thereafter. It is also believed to be a metaphor of the agonising smallpox epidemic that terrorised Tivland in 1920-40s (Hagher, (2003:24). However, a much more convincing theory of the *Ingough* dance indicates that it was a

metaphor of the then highly endemic kwashiorkor disease. For example, Tsevende et al (2013) opines that “*Ingough* literally means kwashiorkor; a disease that makes one emaciate and develops a potbelly so fat and large”.

Other dances in this category include, *Dasenda* (police), women dance which is a mimicry of the introduction of the then Tiv Native Authority Police by the erstwhile Northern People’s Congress (NPC) regime of Late Sir Ahmadu Bello (premier of the defunct northern region) and the harassing and killing brutality it brought to the Tiv nation (Hagher (2003:23). The “police” dancers represent a metaphor of Tiv riots of 1960-1964, occasioned by the Native Authority Police. *Ifiam* (frog), a male dance mimicking the frog’s movements in ponds during the early rain when farmers are also tilling the land for the new planting season. *Gbercul*, an acrobatic dance for men. Other dances have war connotations. Such dances including *Girinyi* it is a war dance performed exclusively by men with cutlasses in their hands. *Gbaseela* (wolf), it is a mimetic and expressionistic dance demonstrating the wolf’s relishes for a fat kill. The ideal of this dance is to celebrate unique human achievements in hunting.

Although the Tiv have different cultural dances, those that fall perfectly within the ambience of ceremonies are *Ivom* and/or *Ibamegh* dances. Other dance categories like *Gerinyi* and *Gbaseela* can also feature at certain ceremonies. However, the *Ivom* and *Ibamegh* dances perform specific ritual functions that have both symbolic and heroic significance. According to Amase (2013:43):

The Tiv have several traditional dances, which are performed in their communities. These include: *Swange*, *Ange*, *Girinya*, *Ibyamegh*, *Ingough*, *Inyinya*, *Ivom*, *Inyamtwam*, to mention but a few. Out of these, *Inyamtwam*, *Ivom*, *Inyinya*, *Girinya* and *Ibyamegh* are regarded as prestigious (*shagba*) dances because they have the potential of enhancing man’s prestige.

The above postulation shows that of the numerous kinds of dances the Tiv have, not many dances can be singled out as festival dances (*amar amirin*). This is because those selected for festivals are heroic and function exclusively at ritual level. On the other hand the *Inyamtwam* dance is not a common festival dance across the Tivland like *Ibiamegh* and *Ivom*, and therefore not popular. As Amase (2013) rightly admits, “Its performance is mostly among the *Ikyurav-ya*, *Nanev* and *Ishangev-ya* clans of Kwande Local Government Area”. *Ivom* Dance fits more perfectly into the concept of *Amar Amirin* (Dance Festival), hence it is generally a celebration dance, built around heroic exploits and family values, with emphasised reference to successful marriage. In the words of Hagher (2003:45) The *Ivom* dances are wedding dances in which there is solo dancing of the bride and groom at the wedding feast. The couple also dances together to attest to their dexterity and proficiency of the dance”.

It can be observed that in all these views about *Ivom* dance festival, the emphasis is on the celebration of achievements. It is therefore not the dances that call for the occasion, it is rather reasons of heroism that are the main stay or necessitate the occasion of *Ivom* festival. The reason for it is also not solely “wedding”, but rather what the wedded man is able to accomplish with his wedded wife (or wives) which is considered prestigious and would warrant traditional honours. It is in this wise the celebration of one’s achievements characteristically accompanied by rigorous dances with highly melodious music.

The festival is climaxed by lavished refreshment done by the celebrant. As Amase (2013:36) puts it:

The end of the dancing session, the celebrant(s) now host the audience to a lavished feast. Cows, goats, pigs, and chickens are slaughtered and the celebrant’s wife distributes the meal to the invited guests”. The celebrant singlehandedly foot the bills of the entire festival, to justify his new status.

The most significant feature of the *Ivom* dance festival is the mounting of the heap (*ivom*) platform. This mounting has a number of significances, one of which is that the celebrant is elevated from an ordinary member of the society to a prestigious, enviable status. *Ivom* dance festival is therefore a cultural institution of the Tiv people. It slightly differ from *Amar Amirin* in that it is marred by ritual connotations, while the *Amar Amirin* has less ritual content. Apart from this, and of course the significant mounting of the heap, their similarities are highly overwhelming.

One other endearing aspect of Tiv culture that defines their folklore is Tiv proverbs known as *Anza akaa a Tiv*. They are wisdom-laden sayings usually used by elders in conversations on challenging subject matters and general showcase of language mastery. According to Dzurgba (2011:118), “Tiv proverbs have remained largely oral expressions which communicate perpetual and valuable ideas which are practically relevant successive generations without an end”. Hagher (2003:58) identifies four basic reasons for the use of Tiv proverbs:

As a speech level for elders discussing serious cases which require their exclusive participation, Used as opening glee during story-telling performances, in order to create rapport between the audience and the actors, To elicit situational response, Used for dialectical arguments.

All the categories are important to the Tiv socio-cultural behaviour, however, the first category is the most common and it cuts across different strata of life. Some example of Tiv proverbs in this regard include:

Tiv	English
(a) <i>Iyuhe ka mtuem</i>	Jealousy is ashes
(b) <i>Alom ye mye na nor ye mye na</i>	The hare has his eating measure, which is different from an elephant
(c) <i>Anshoho zenden aber a ura gbirin ga</i>	A toad does not travel in the drizzle for no reason.

The Tiv uses these examples of broad based proverbs with cosmological significance. In other words, they are culturally relevant within the ambience of Tiv folklore. There are also Tiv riddles called *Ukikyaa*. They like their proverbs have their meaning and significance rooted in the socio-cultural peculiarities of Tiv worldview. The *Ukikyaa* (riddles) too come in their varying categories. There are riddles with simple meanings, riddles with deeper proverbial meanings, riddles with phonological sounds or connotations, Tongue twister riddles and personal abuses riddles with proverbial connotations (Hagher, 2003).

2.6 Significance of Tiv Folklore and Playwriting

Folklore has always been the foundation upon which a culture is based. Thus, the folklorists have a duty to discover a people's heritage and pass it to others (Mohammed 2014:45). If the above observation is anything to go by, the importance of folklore in any society cannot be over stated. That is why Mohammed (2014:46) agrees that, "Not only is folklore an instrument for entertainment, it is indeed useful in such other things as literary and textual analysis, thereby expanding the limits of previous scholarship". The art of theatre generally (and playwriting in particular) employ the people's culture; human experiences in performance to make far reaching statements about their value orientation. According to Oamen (2014:464):

The playwright, as a creative manager manages his playwriting craft and embellish it with a view to educate as well as to thrill the audience. This include the identification of what to create, how to create it, timing, and how to make his creative work available to his audience, test run for quality assurance, and where possible measure impact through criticism.

This submission does not just underscores the importance of the playwright as a researcher, but his ability to assert his research experiences on the people via a play text, given the available cultural materials at his disposal. The play text becomes a yardstick of knowing the folkloristic tradition of a given people. A play written and produced in this realm performs the traditional roles usually ascribe to the mass media. That is to entertain, inform and

educate the people (audience), who are the target consumers of a play. The education is folkloric based, the information on values and norms together with their implications, and of course entertainment is the pot in which all the ingredients are cooked for a better taste.

Tiv folklore in particular is understood from the point of view of how it contributes to the development of the indigenous people in particular, and the nation at large for the purpose of development. There are many components that make up Tiv folklore, such that may not be exhaustively dealt with in this research. However, we have identified the basic ones like story-telling involving dance festivals, and myths like *swem*, (ancestral land) *kor*, (bitter concoction), *Tsav* (Witchcraft) amongst others. In order to identify the significance of Tiv folklore on one hand and how its imperatives can be harnessed in playwriting for cultural orientation and education on the other. The composition of Tiv folklore in its nature is a yardstick of human development. Hence, human development is anchored on the human person through his innate capabilities trying to find meaning to his activities in order to improve his standard of living. As Dandaura (1995:14) rightly summit:

A process of change, which should start with man himself. It should strive to raise his dignity, and intellectual abilities so that he can effectively transform his economic, social cultural and political environment into a better environment that meets his dreams and aspirations.

Tiv folklore, especially aspects that are occupational and performance-based embodies many activities that endear the people to artisanship, artistry, oratory, and other productive skills and talents. It is in this wise that Tiv people are usually described as excellent farmers, dancers, weavers and generally industrious full of strength and intellectual alacrity. The significance of these folkloric forms underscores the theatricality of the Tiv folklore, which could be explored in dramatic literature. The *Kwagh-hir* Theatre for instance, which has long gained world or international status as a modern indigenous theatre is a product of Tiv

people's craftsmanship, artistry and cultural innovativeness. This indigenous puppet theatre developed out of storytelling (performance) tradition of the Tiv people involving human, animals and spirits characters. The *Kwagh-hir* has had live performance tours of France, Italy, and other parts of Europe, in some other places via the electronic media. This is in addition to live performances in many African countries including Burkina-Faso, Morocco, Ivory Coast, Mauritania and Niger Republic. Hagher (2003) describes the composition of *Kwagh-hir* Theatre in the following words:

A lot of effort goes into the organisation of a *Kwagh-hir* event. Each group has a complex division of labour, but retains the same organisational structure, which is typical to all the *Kwagh-hir* groups. The organisational structure can be divided into broad categories: (a) The Management (b) The Performers (c) The Musicians and (d) The Sculptor.

These complexities only brings out the significance of this theatrical idiom which though largely oral till date is a manifestation of the people's traditional technology and artistry. For instance, a number of folkloristic *Kwagh-hir* puppet plays expressing Tiv nationalism include, (i) *Swem Karagbe* (Tiv ancestral place of origin) (ii) *Shawon* (ancestor of Tiv) (iii) *Ber Awuna* (supposed lake which is gateway into Adzov kingdom) (iv) *Kwase hunga Dyeregh* (Descended naked lady from the east),(v) *Ior Mbatsev* (Tiv elders from antiquity) (vi) *Adudu u Koson Amboravungu* (hand-woven basket of storing ritual emblems) (vii) *Kor u Man* (Traditional concoction for adjudication of justice). This is in addition to plays that showcase Tiv art like dancing, weaving and comic forms. Examples of such plays include *Alua Biam* Dancers (dancers in highest traditional title in Tiv called *Or-Biam*), *Anchonakupa* (comical military parades).The *Kwagh-hir* is very significant in that it is the melting pot of medley of cultural activities for showcase with a view to educate the audience.

Another category of Tiv folklore that is a gateway for other expressive Tiv folk cultures is the *Ivom* festival. The significance of this cultural event is anchored on the fact that it is the

conglomeration of dances, songs, music, merriment and prestige in the context of Tiv life.

Tyodoo (2014:16) observes with nostalgia that:

The Tiv people have a robust performing arts and culture whose potentials are yet to be harnessed for optimum benefits of Tiv people and the nation at large. They constitute the riches reservoir of knowledge and information on the people's heritage.

These robust performing arts include *Kwagh-hir*, *Ivom* and/or *Amo* and others, which indeed constitute reservoirs of information on culture and tradition of the people, which provides the necessary ingredients for development. A particular significance of *Ivom* festival is such that the origin of *Ivom* dance is not unconnected with the major occupation of the Tiv, which is farming. *Ivom* literally means a mound or heap of soil. Yam and other root crops of the Tiv are grown on mounds of soil. Farming is thus considered as the major source of wealth among the Tiv people (Amase, 2013:57). The host of the *Ivom* festival believes that his prestige will be more enhanced afterwards and guarantees his acceptability into the society as prestigious man (*shagbaor*) or man of means. *Ivom* dance festival is as potpourri of different art forms neatly fused into music and dance. Some of these art forms include *Tembeduen* (opening glee) which is similar to *Kwan yaren* (opening glee) in *Kwagh-hir* performance, song rendition or anthem, songs performances, and performance of various genres of dance including the grand dance by the host and his wife who is taking the prestigious title of *Shagbaor* (man of means).

The question that easily comes to mind here is that, why would playwrights, especially those of Tiv origin not explore this dance festival with great artistic and cultural potentials to create plays worthy of dramatic literature? Although there are plays written by certain playwrights, which contain partial and isolated Tiv folkloristic elements of this kind, much is left to be desired in this regard. However, One of the Tiv contemporary playwrights Yev Peter Gande has explored *Ivom* folklore tradition in his play, *The Rebound (Kpuul me Hide Awe)*, through a popular Tiv proverbial analogy, *Iyuhe ka myuem* (jealousy is ashes), usually used as a

metaphor of *Tsav* (witchcraft) which is synonymous with open jealousy in Tivland. The concept of *Tsav* itself (witchcraft) which is key to Tiv worldview, associated with the historical exchange marriage (*yamshe*) in Tiv and its attendant consequences together with dance ceremony have been explored by another Tiv contemporary playwright, Saint Gbilekaa in his play *Prized Chickens are not Tasty*. His play is also subject of analysis in the proceeding chapters of this work, along with Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* whose play dramatizes the religious myth of Swem Mountain vis-à-vis the relationship between the spirit and the human "world"

CHAPTER THREE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The importance of theory to the work of this nature cannot be overstated. This is because; it serves as a guiding framework that explicates the literariness and cultural relevance work. For a study that conceptualises folklore as significant cultural materials, harnessed for playwriting capable of eliciting cultural education, the use of theory is pertinent as prescription for varied analysis and interpretation. In the words of Nwosu (2014:95) “From Aristotle to Patrice Pavis, the major preoccupation of the theorist has been the emphasis on ‘how to write and produce a play’”. According to him, the tug-of-war like relationship between playwriting and critical theory cum theory and practice is the liberality that characterises play writing and practice and the restrictiveness of theory and practice. This is so apparently because of the fact that there is always a matter of debate about which comes first, between theory and practice.

The submission however, underscores the purpose and relevance of theory as regards playwriting in particular and theatre productions in general. In other words, the use of certain cultural elements to identify a dramatic script and place it within the matrix of African drama for instance is what informs a theory in this regard. For the purpose of this research, there is need to conceptualise a framework that would help put African drama scripts in their right perspectives in order to achieve the objectives of the study. We have a number of theoretical frameworks, or approaches that could be useful to this study. Notable examples include, Richard Schechner’s Theory of Performance that focuses on the performer and the performing environment, Efua Sutherland’s Theory of *Anansegoro* which explores the aesthetics of African storytelling tradition in contemporary theatre, Sam Ukala’s Theory of “Folkism”, which employs the socio-cultural lives of Africans as basis for analysis of literary

texts. In spite of these alternative approaches, this research adopts “folkism” by Sam Ukala, as a framework that guides this research, and how the theory helps in the analysis of data obtainable from the selected texts in this study.

3.2 Sam Ukala’s Theory of Folkism

Folkism, as propounded by Sam Ukala, is a theory that explores historical, cultural and social issues in African life as a yardstick for analysing dramatic texts to determine their cultural relevance in a contemporary society. In the words of Ukala (1996:285):

Most Nigerian literary plays draw their subject matter from the history, culture, concerns, and aspirations of Nigerians, and therefore achieve relevance. But many are made inaccessible to the audience not only by a difficult diction, but also through highly imaginative yet alienating distortions of their source material, an unusual abstraction of characters, or complexity and strangeness of structure. In all, it seems clear that a thoroughgoing application of the aesthetics of the African folktale may remove or reduce the shortcomings of Nigerian literary drama. Such an emergent aesthetic principle may be called “folkism”: the tendency to base literary plays on the history, culture, and concerns of the folk and to compose and perform them in accordance with African conventions for composing and performing the folktale.

Ukala’s conceptualisation of the term “folkism” here emphasises the need for distinction between one literary drama and another depending on how much it has deployed African conventions of theatrical or dramatic composition and performance. It also stresses the need for the suitability of this theory to analyse African plays in order to show the extent to which they have conformed to African performance aesthetics, or are regarded as western prototypes. In this light, Anigala (1999:45) describes folkism as a “dramatic concept derived from the African folktale narrative technique. It is a strategy of using traditional folktale aesthetics in creating a dramatic work that is reflective of the African way of life”. Accordingly, a play or dramatic script can be said to be a “folkist” play or script when it possesses the basic elements encapsulated in folkism theory. According to Ukala (1999:160):

We have been brought up to see drama with the eyes of the white man. We tend to be not thorough-going when we want to reflect our own cultural sensibilities; our own cultural practice for producing performances. That is what has happened to *The Marriage of Anansewa* and *Ozidi*, because, actually, the two playwrights are people who have investigated African folklore, especially folktale creation and performance, well ahead of me.

It is in view of this, and of course, the need to view African performances as uniquely African because of the elements they contain in tandem with the people's cultural idioms theorisation is anchored. Plays written in the realm of African folklore tradition like the examples above are expected to elicit huge responses from the audience during performance. This is based on a number of factors inherent in the performed play which Ukala (1998:285) describes as "Laws of Aesthetic Response".

The theory is unique and tenable, owing to the fact that he (Ukala) is able to experiment it with his plays like *The Slave Wife* and *Akpakaland* thereby making the theory assert its influence in African dramaturgy. As Asigbo (2014:24) rightly affirms:

Indeed, there's a marked difference in ideo-aesthetics in the folk plays of Sam Ukala which style he theorises as "Folkism". Folkism or the folk play is an adept use of story-telling idioms to interrogate and tackle folk problems. Being a uniquely Ukala contribution to dramatic theory on the continent, he explicated this new approach in his plays. Ukala's theatre is therefore markedly different from those of his contemporaries in his unique appropriation of the characteristics of our folk tales, something akin to the *Anasegoro* of the Akan people of Ghana, popularised by Efua T. Sutherland, to connect and guy home his points to his audience.

In view of this new approach, Ukala brought to bear on Nigerian theatre scholarship his contribution to literary theory that promotes African folktale narratives and performance. According to him, "these are crystallised from the conventional responses of the narrator and the audience to folktale performance as found by researchers, such as J.P.Clark, Efua Sutherland, Ruth Finnegan and Dan Ben-Amos in different parts of black Africa" (Ukala 1996:33) He prescribes eight laws as part of the theory. These eight laws of aesthetic response provide thus:

3.2.1 The Law of Opening: There is a style and convention for opening a folktale performance in Africa, sometimes call the opening glee. It serves three functions: arouses the audience; encouraging or stopping a prospective narrator, depending on the audience's rating of the narrator; introduces major characters and the temporal and spatial setting of the story. The audience may be aroused by a call, to which it responds, or by a song, which it joins in, may accompany with music and dance to.

3.2.2 The Law of Joint Performance: After the African audience approves a performer, they take the responsibility to co-perform with him by singing along, asking questions, passing comments and sometimes even take over the tale (performance) from the unimpressive performer. This law is difficult to observe in the African English theatre, especially giving the strict nature of the English drama script.

3.2.3 The Law of Creativity, free Enactment and Responsibility: Here the performer observes tripartite sub-laws: creativity, which entails the performer to, adopts new experiences to the tale and enhances its contemporary relevance as well as creates his variant from the original or even create an entirely new tale which he can call his own. Free enactment requires him (the performer or narrator) to engage in role-play without losing himself to the role. He impersonates characters in the story but withdraws to his own from time to time in the course of the tale. Moreover, the performer in African folktale takes responsibility for the success and failure of the performance that he leads.

3.2.4 The Law of Urge to Judge: The audience, especially when not co-performing, responds appropriately to the performance against the backdrop of traditional standards of performance. They detect errors and offer corrections through audible voices.

3.2.5 The Law of Protest against Suspense: The audience in this performance dislikes to be kept waiting and therefore ask questions or make comments to defuse the suspense, especially when not co-performing.

3.2.6 The Law of Expression of the Emotions: as listeners or spectators, the audience expresses emotions in form of grief, pleasure, scorn, fear and sympathy at appropriate events in the tale performance.

3.2.7 The Law of Ego Projection: Virtually every members of the traditional audience possess potential qualities of a good performer or narrator. Because of this, they naturally exhibit idiosyncrasies of interjecting occasionally in order to display their own skills.

3.2.8 The Law of Closing: The closing in traditional African folktales performance is interesting in that it usually contains the performer's valedictory statement of morals, which may contain the repeat of a known closing formula, and the audience response to the closing formula, in applauding or disapproving the performer's skills or the narrator and the audience singing a closing song.

"Folkism" as a theory is in consonance with the Akan term *anasegoro*, meaning the story of Ananse (wise spider) which Efua Sutherland explored in her play, *The Marriage of Anansewa*. According to Sutherland (2005:3):

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

Anasegoro here is a theoretical prescription derived from Ghanaian story telling theatre based on oral tradition. It is the experiment of the theory that has found expression in the play, *The Marriage of Anansewa*. The folk elements used are akin to Ukala's theory of folkism.

The theory of "folkism" is also in agreement with what Nwoso (2014:95) calls "African Postmodern Mythic-Folkism Theory". According to him, the "*Ichoka* Mythic-folkism African Postmodern critical Theory is simply –a guide on how to write and produce African postmodern plays. The theory enables the African postmodern playwright experiment with

theory; see the staging of his plays in his mind's eye". Postmodern plays here entail contemporary plays written in the realm of modern ideals and how they are interpreted in the modern society. The emphasis here is to put African performance milieu into proper perspective whereby there could be a deliberate harnessing of the rich oral tradition with high artistic qualities into play scripts for cultural education. In this case, a theoretical framework such as this for critical text and performance analysis could assess plays written by Africans from the background of folklore. Like Nwosu (2014:96) describes "the prescriptions as reflected in prescriptive theories...put in place a framework that enables the playwright attach flesh on the skeleton created by the theorist".

Looking at African performance milieu in the eye of the theorists, the role of the audience in creating communality and harmony of the performance is integral to African theatre. Playwriting from this perspective would usually propel the elements that make this communal life possible. Hagher (2003:51) in *Kwagh-hir* theatre, which metamorphosed from Tiv story telling tradition, makes some prescriptive assertions along these lines when he itemises that:

- (i) the story telling art is a communal art in Tivland (ii) there are elaborate props and costumes to imitate the characters in the narration (iii) there is a spontaneous audience response, which also offers criticism of the art (iv) songs and dances are the main musical events accompanying the narration (v) the narrator's enlivened their art by dance, gestures, mimicry and mime (vi) the story plot is structured by crisis, partial solution, renewed crisis, and final solution with latent ambiguities.

These characteristics are inherent in Tiv oral traditional performance; the story telling theatre, and many of the elements could be incorporated into the dramatic script for performance. Moreover, all the elements are retuned into its oral presentational mode *The Kwagh-hir* Theatre. Interestingly, the judges assessed the artistes under the following points: (i) an explosive beginning (ii) ability of the narrator to sustain audience interest (iii) audience response (iv) ability of the narrator to dance, sing or mime his narration (v) use of props and

costume. Interestingly, Hagher, Gbilekaa and Gande all explore these “folkist” elements in their plays; *Swem Karagbe*, *The Prized Chickens are not tasty* and *The Rebound*, like Sam Ukala does with his plays like *The Slave Wife*, *The Placenta of Death*, *Akpakaland*, amongst others.

The adoption of folkism theory is prompted by its apt nature and applicability in the analysis of dramatic scripts as African, Nigerian or Tiv-oriented, taking into close cognisance the “folkist” elements. The theory having underscores folk elements in a play as determinant of the cultural relevance of that play in the society makes it imperative and its choice justifiable in this research.

In this light, it (the theory) is of immense use to this research because it provides the basis for the identification and analysis of the use of folkloric elements in the three plays; *Swem Karagbe* and *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and *The Rebound* and how adequate and effective they are used to elicit cultural education. The folkloric elements the theory advocates for especially the roles of the narrator and the audience’s communality as well as the laws of opening and closing is key ingredients in Tiv storytelling tradition. In particular, these elements are replete in the three plays under consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR
ASPECTS OF FOLKLORIC FORMS IN *SWEM KARAGBE*, *PRIZED CHICKENS*
ARE NOT TASTY AND THE REBOUND

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data obtained from three selected plays; Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*, Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and Gande's *The Rebound*. The contents of these plays in terms of raw or cultural materials with which the playwrights create the plays is presented as data in this chapter. Accordingly content of the data collected was critically analysed to ascertain or determine how significant they are, and to what extent they are explored as vehicle for the effective realisation of cultural education. In other words, if the above dramatic texts use folklore as cultural materials, the onus in this chapter is to identify those materials that constitute folklore from the Tiv cultural background, their roles in the plays, which are used as media through which the folk materials serve as vehicle for cultural education. This is in order to arrive at our objectives in this research and eventually fulfill our aim, which is to determine effective use of folklore Tiv modern plays for cultural education and development.

4.2 The Synopsis of the plays

4.2.1 (i) *Swem Karagbe*

The play dramatises the mysterious trip to *Swem* Mountains, (also known as *Swem Karagbe*), the ancestral land of the Tiv people by a group of self-acclaimed leaders in search of fortunes, who are led by a slave guide. The play opens with the dexterous old man, the narrator who is thronged by several young men and women at night in a typical Tiv story telling setting. He begins as customary with a catchy opening glee to whet the appetites of his audience. In the story, the king of *Awuna* in consultation with his council of chiefs propose a trip to *Swem Karagbe* as a new criterion of choosing leaders for their community, especially as a

prerequisite for choosing who becomes their next governor. He who survives the rigour and horror of visiting the land and successfully returning would become their next leader. Three politicians; Yatwen, Gbabo and Fuusu with Ankpan, their slave guide agree to undertake the herculean trip in order to attract leadership fortunes. The trip to Swem is characterized by unforeseen rigour, trials and stress, having to face with temptations from spirit beings ranging from *Azov* and *Mbatarev* including goddesses. With the guide of Ankpan, the politicians finally come face to face with the god at Swem, except for Fuusu who is enticed with *Nyumugh's* (a spirit) food and is consumed on the way. They are asked to tender their requests both positive and negative. Yatwen ask for success and wealth for himself but misery for the people, just as Gbabo who ask to be the governor and head of everything in his community while the people wallow in obscurity, poverty and superstition. The god at *Swem* ask Ankpan to also tender his request and he asks for ability to serve with courage, humility and patience while the people multiply in wealth and health.

Their departure from *Swem* through an alternative route back to their community is smooth sailing until they encounter female contractors led by their queen, Mammywata. The remaining two politicians could not withstand the trial from the queen and her cohorts as they are enticed with alcohol and are eventually seduced by the female contractors. Except for Ankpan, their slave guide who feigns illness at first and later fights and overpowers the two female contractors assigned by their queen to destroy him. In the end, only Ankpan, the slave guide escape on the way from *Swem* to his community to tell the story. He is then crowned as the governor of his community, having stood the test of time on his trip to *Swem* and returning successfully.

4.2.2 The Setting of the Play

The play is set in a fictitious community of Awuna, with king Nyamazenga and his council of chiefs providing traditional leadership for their people through democratic principles. The events dramatized in the play as shown through the rendition of the narrator indicate the historical facts about folkloristic tradition of the Tiv people usually transmitted from generation to generation through the story telling tradition. This presupposes that the cultural setting here is that of the Tiv people of central Nigeria, however evidence in the play shows that the setting is used as a metaphor of Nigeria's socio-cultural and socio-political setting of the post-colonial period.

4.2.3 Characters in the Play

The characters in this play are metaphoric and significant to the socio-cultural setting of Tiv land in particular and Nigeria in general. The names of the three politicians and their slave guide who undertake a rigorous trip to *Swem* Mountains for instance have their names depict their characteristics or traits. Yatwen in Tiv for example connotes greediness, as it translates "eat alone". Gbabo in Tiv is translated as ill luck which connotes failure or misfortune. In a similar manner Fuusu symbolizes impatience and gluttony, just as Akpan the slave guide who accompanies the three politicians to *Swem* land is a direct Tiv word for a slave. These characters upon whom the plot of the play revolves have their actions and inactions portray or depict what their names tend to suggest.

The other characters in the play are no less allegorical or representational. For instance, the Narrator in the play is an old man who gathers his children (who in this case become the audience) under the moon light to relate to them or inculcate in them knowledge about their ancestral past. He is a storyteller who narrates stories as he is called by the playwright. Nyamazenger, the chief of Awuna village is a name of the great grant father of Tiv whose

son, Takuruku produce Tiv. He provides fatherly guide and wisdom in helping his people choose good leaders. Scribe as so called is his secretary who keeps correspondence for the community. He sometimes serves as mouthpiece of chief Nyamazenger and interprets issues his way. Teacher is another character in this regard. He is progressive minded and always trying to assist the king to achieve success in the community. We also have characters like 1st Elder and 2nd Elder who as their names imply are council of elders who help chief Nyamazenger in decision making for the Awuna community.

Interestingly, the other set of characters presented to us here are spirits who interact with the human from time to time. For instance, Nyumugh, who the playwright describes as grotesquely masked creature is one of such spirit (or *Adzov*) characters. He offers delicious meals to the travelers on their way to *Swem*. Others manage to resist it but Fuusu is enticed by it and is consumed as a result it (pp. 506). Mammywata, the queen in the (*Adzov*) spirit world is another spirit character with her daughter Litini and female contractors; Maimuna and Patience. The duo are the ones who destroy the two politicians after enticing them with alcohol and eventually seducing them on their way back from Swem on the orders of their queen (pp.516).

4.2.4 Major Themes of the Play

The play dramatises the quest for leadership, and how this propels aligning themes in the play. Leadership in this play can be viewed as a metaphor of Nigerian political leadership in general and Tiv socio-political leadership in particular. There are therefore a number of major themes we can deduce from the text.

4.2.5 Leadership/Democratic Practice: Right from the beginning of the play, the king of a fictitious Awuna community is seen convening a meeting of his prominent sons to come and

converge for a debate or healthy completion that would prove their leadership worth before the people of the community.

Chief Nyamazenger: Let them come and tell us here; prove to us their worth, while the people are here (pp 497).

This presupposes democracy. As the people have the legitimate opportunity to choose those to lead them and equal chances are given to all contenders to compete. Throughout the play, democratic ideas hold sway. That is why characters like Yatwen, Fuusu, Gbabo and even Ankpan who is seen as less significant as well as other representatives are given equal opportunity to compete for leadership.

4.2.6 Traditional Belief: Firm belief in culture and tradition is demonstrated throughout the play. For instance, *Swem* which is the ancestral land of the Tiv people is considered sacred and is acknowledged by all the characters in the play. The three politicians agreeing to take a trip to *Swem* to bring back fortune and ascertain their leadership ability is a confirmation of this fact. Akpan who guides the three politicians to *Swem* land is equipped traditionally by his father, 2nd Elder who is now too old to perform such physical tasks. This is an indication of traditional belief that cuts across generations.

4.2.7 Indiscipline: Lack of discipline does not only prevent those three characters that take a trip to *Swem*, but also get them consumed by the spirit beings including the female contractors who are sent after them. In fact, discipline is the guiding principle in this journey to the ancestral land.

2nd Elder: The hazards are the individual weaknesses that affect each person according to his character.

Chief Nyamazenger: Very good. This is the best test for leadership (503).

It is as a result of indiscipline that, Fuusu get destroyed first by Nyumugh's (spirit) food and Gbabo and Yatwen are later destroyed by female contractors in the queen's chamber. Only Akpan, the slave guide is disciplined enough to resist to the end and is able to return to the community alive.

4.2.8 Human versus Spirit World: According to Tiv religious worldview, the belief in the existence of Almighty God is juxtaposed by belief in *Tsav* (witchcraft) and *Adzov* or *Mbataregh* (Non-human spirits) who inhabit the same environment. This is what justifies the theme of human verse the spirits. The human characters in the course of interacting with the spirit should obey the rules or be punished severely. That is what transpires in the case of Fuusu verse Nyumugh, Gbabo and Yatwen verse Mummywata and her female contractors who deliberately tempt them to see if they can keep the rules or not.

4.2.9 (ii) *Prized Chickens are not Tasty*

Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* dramatises the mystery around the practice of *Tsav* (witchcraft) vis-a-vis the old tradition of exchange marriage (*yamshe*) and their attendant consequences on the individuals involved and the Tiv society at large. The play opens with the Narrator leading a song, which ushers in rigorous dances to whet the ground for a story telling performance. It is the story of the rise and fall of Shacia Tor-Agbande describe as a man of means and prosperity. It is in a *burukutu* (local beer) drinking joint owned by Abida that Jor-Gbaikyom, Shacia's maternal uncle exposes his hatred for him in the presence of other kinsmen/folks like Zenke, Akile, Tica and Igyuran-Alom by referring to Shacia as an impostor and debtor (pp 4).

As action in the play develops, Jor-Gbaikyom confronts Shacia demanding that he must pay him his debt of a female ward as exchange of his sister for Shachia's mother. However, Shacia challenges Jor-Gbaikyom insisting he owes him nothing. Jor-Gbaikyom being

diabolic and malevolent decides to take the matter to his *Mbatsav* (witches) cult for deliberation. The *Mbatsav* cult members, identified as 1st Bird, 2nd Bird and 3rd Birds disagree that the chicken he wants to offer as sacrifice would be bad meet because it is prized chicken. Nevertheless, Jor-Gbaikyom insists on destroying Shacia and the hesitation of his cult members leads to series of bad omens bedevilling Shacia. The chameleon blocked his path three times in a week, large owls hold court throughout the night in the house of any of his wives with whom he spends a night. Beside the nightmares he is having, his new wife picked a dead rabbit on her way to the stream a day before. The council of elders led by Wata does not act swiftly to avert the impending doom and eventually Shacia dies. The futile inquest by elders of the community that follows leaves much to be desired, and the youth led by Akende now rise to the occasion by declaring a bloody revolution against witches, wizards and their conspirators in the land.

4.2.10 The Setting of the Play

The play is set in an unnamed African village or community where the house hold tradition is very much cherished. The cultural background is that of Tiv socio-cultural setting where compound system that encourages communal living is practiced. Round, thatch houses describe in the play is a long standing folkloric tradition of the Tiv people that has been passed on from generation to generations.

The action in the play however alternate from place to place within the same locality like the Abida's *burukutu* joint, Shacia's homestead, Akende's homestead and a large opening in the thick of the forest are places that embellish the setting of this play. Again, the action dramatized in this play is a historical fact that has lingered in Tiv society up until today. The Practice of Exchange Marriage (*Yamshe*), which the colonial masters abolished due to its complexities an example. The exigencies of that type of marriage still exist because those

who were productions of it are still alive, even though the present generation can only get to know of it through folk stories as a historical fact. It is such historical fact the narrator is that was meshed with open jealousy through witchcraft that is been narrated here.

4.2.11 Characters in the Play

The characters in this play review much about the socio-cultural peculiarities of the Tiv people. Most of the characters are metaphoric and allegorical and thereby help to review the setting and themes of the play. Jor-Gbaikyom, who is Shacia's maternal uncle is literary translated as a "dirty well", meaning that he is someone who is an embodiment of evil. He is involved in evil schemes throughout the play. Shacia's name on the other hands connotes innocence. The name translates as "upon justice", even though justice does not eventually prevail over evil in his case in the play. His fame and prestige is cut short by Jor-Gbaikyom's malevolent schemes as a result of jealousy. The character of Tica represents the village teacher who serves as model for education in the village. Igyuran-Alom as the name of the character translates as "dangerous rabbit". The names of most of these characters depict their actions in the play. There is a dexterous narrator who tells the story to the audience.

Generally, there are three levels of character portrayal in this play; the young, the old and spirits characters. Characters like Akende, Boagom, Jimenor, Agia and Azua are Shacia's age mates, young men like him who gives him the needed support in the community to succeed. They are the ones who take matters in their hands and embark on a revolution to avenge for the death of their age mate, Shacia. On the other level we have characters like Wata (the oldest of the elders), Zenke, Haako and Akile as elders who are usually custodians of culture and tradition of the people. Their wisdom and watch could not stop the "hawk" from preying on the "chick", hence the reason for the youth revolt. The other level of characterisation reviews those operating in the spirit realm vis-a-vis the human. Jor-Gbaikyom is the leader of his *Mbatsav* cult who meets in their coven to plan their evil schemes. His cohosts are 1st

Bird, 2nd Bird and 3rd Birds who help him invoke evil on the human through magic powers. Jor-Gbaikyom for instance operate in the both the human and spirit realms. There are also female characters like Abida, Akende's wife and seller the local brewed beer, burukutu, Wankur, Shacia's mother who is a product of the exchange marriage (*Yamshe*) and Wan-Angih, one of Shacia's ten wives.

4.2.12 Major Themes in the Play

As the play focuses on open jealousy through witchcraft schemes as subject matter, the underlying message in terms of themes is obvious. We can identify major themes.

4.2.13 Evil/Jealousy: This theme is conspicuous in the play. In Tiv world view jealousy (*Iyuhe*) is regarded as a metaphor of *Tsav* (witchcraft). Jor-Gbaikyom develops strong jealousy over Shacia, his cousin whom traditionally he is supposed to protect from being harmed by others in the community. Usually jealousy comes with hatred. Jor-Gbaikyom: "Abomination! Why do you spoil good talk with bad news of impostors" (pp 4).

Akile: Certainly Shacia is not an impostor. How can you refer to him in such obnoxious terms (pp 4).

This mind set of Jor-Gbaikyom makes him to compel his *Mbatsav* cult members to bring Shacia down in the name of jealousy.

4.2.14 Traditional Belief is another significant theme in the play. The Tiv culture in focus here is being observed here strictly throughout the play, even when it is detrimental to the progress of the community. *Tsav* (witchcraft) as seen from the eye of the play is an institution in Tiv society; those who possess *Tsav* powers use them more for malevolent schemes, although elders are supposed to regulate their practices, through inquests and warnings. There is a traditional belief here that someone who is a product of your sister's exchange marriage

gives Jor-Gbaikyom the opportunity to bring down Shacia through his evil and the elders watch helplessly. He even bursts of it openly.

Jor-Gbaikyom: I am his source. He cannot run me down. He dares not (pp 5).

This indicates a strong belief in tradition by the people. The practice of holding inquest after someone's death by the elders is also an indication of traditional belief that manifests in the play. The youth in the play see this practice as an exercise in futility, and hence provokes them to revolt against the elders.

4.2.15 Fame and Prestige is also evident in the story. Shacia Tor-Agbande is described as a man of means and honour. He marries the tenth wife to show himself as a man of means and honour. Characters like Azua who is Shacia's age mate admit having twelve wives and still counting.

Azua: Yours is still a small homestead. I have twelve by today's count but can assure you that by next week, I will have the thirteenth (pp 13).

To a traditional Tiv man marrying many wives is a thing of pride and prestige among men as it is evident in the play. Another area of pride or showcase of fame is where Shacia's age mate turns the celebration of his new wife into a competition of "who is who" in the village. It was serious that Abida, Akende's wife raises alarm.

Abida: Men, men, when will you learn to bury your pride? I thought you came to rejoice with your age-mate and not to compete among yourselves.

Akile: It is part of it. A healthy competition is allowed in all civilized societies and you women are not averse to it.

4.2.1 6 (iii) *The Rebound*

Gande explores in his play the mythic practice of *Ivom Uden* (heap mounting) the Tiv traditional aesthetics symbolising success and *Kor* (bitter concoction) which is the Tiv

traditional practice for adjudication of justice vis-à-vis their attendant significance through the popular Tiv proverbial analogy; *Iyuhe ka mtuen* (jealousy is like ashes which comes back at you when you throw it).

The action of the play opens with Tyona, the protagonist of the story and Agwaza, his friend on a farmland tilling and singing before Koughwua, the antagonist in the story confronts him to challenge him for the piece of land. Tyona as a successful farmer is working hard and planning to organise a prestigious cultural dance festival *Ivom Uden* (heap mounting) for him and his wife. The festival signifies that the man as farmer has become a force to reckon with in his community and the dance ceremony that would see him and his wife dance on top of a constructed heap will enthrone the man into a class of wealthy and prestigious men in the community.

Koughwua who is Tyona's uncle suddenly becomes jealous of the young man and comes after him so fast. He wants to confiscate the piece of land Tyona is farming on and when he is challenged he threatens to deal with Tyona. Meanwhile Tyona is the only surviving son of his father, after both parents and his other sibling died mysteriously one after the other. The matter is taken to the council of elders on the advice of Agwaza, Tyona's close friend and age mate. The highly rated council of elders led by Aende vehemently oppose and warn Koughwua, reminding him of the Tradition, which gives Tyona the right to farm on his immediate past father's farmlands unmolested. All the elders are unanimous and now Koughwua who is the odd one out is bent on carrying out his evil scheme on Tyona.

The prestigious dance festival in honour of Tyona is taking place amidst cheers from mammoth crowd of traditional rulers, relatives, age mates, in laws, and well-wishers as Tyona and his wife does their aesthetic dance of prestige and honour to climb the heap top.

But this singular act of honour bestowed on Tyona further triggers more jealousy in Koughwua to take Tyona's matter to his *Mbatsav* and without delay they conspire to kill him. On the day of inquest by elders of the community, Koughwua remain defiant and tough taking to the amazement of every one. The youth champion by Agwaza apparently enraged by the death of their age mate and the manner the elders have handled Koughwua's thread that is executed before them, they reject elders' submission to consult an oracle to unravel the cause of Tyona's death. Instead, they resolve that *Kough* (bitter concoction) must be administered to unravel the death of Tyona, their age mates and other members of his family who also went the same mysterious way. The insistence of the youth leave the elders with no choice than to resolve to bury Tyona and set aside a day for that judicial exercise. When the day for the adjudication of justice to ascertain the person behind Tyona's death come, a number of persons in the village volunteer and test their innocence. Koughwua after much hesitant drink *Kough* (bitter concoction) the people, and unlike others who vomit as soon as they take, he begins to experience stomach rumbling. Having realised the enormity of the judicial exercise, he confess killing Tyona, his both parents and sibling out of jealousy he developed over them. He subsequently suffers a protruding tomy and eventually dies.

4.2.17 The Setting of the Play

This contemporary play, which dramatises the cultural institution of *Ivom Uden* (heap mounting) and *kough* (concoction) a symbol of adjudicating justice, is negotiating the history and the present regarding the culture and tradition of the Tiv people. The play is therefore set in a fictitious community of Wanza, which comprise of different households under it. The action of the drama revolves around different locations. Action opens on Tyona's farmland and alternates between his house and Aende's compound who is the leader of elders' council and head of Wanza community. Other important locations here are the courtyard where the

Ivom Uden festival takes place at Kuoghwua's house as well as the tick forest where he (Koughwua) meets with his *Mbatsav* cult members. The setting reviews a typical Tiv traditional setting where farming is the largest occupation and the age grade system is held in high esteem. It equally shows a communal, traditional life of the people where natural and traditional means of settling disputes and conflicts are practicable.

4.2.18 Characters in the Play

Names of characters in this play like the other two in consideration have many connotations to them. The tendency of characters exhibiting traits akin to their names is replicated in this play. For example, Tyona, the protagonist of this play connotes a chosen one who is blessed by his community, as "Tyona" means "clan blesses him". True to it, he happens to be the only one who attains the height of honour and prestige envied by others in the community, even though enemies of progress cut him off early. Koughwua, his rival is a very stubborn witch who thinks nothing can withstand his evil powers in the community. Through his *Tsav* (witchcraft), he eliminates Zuamo and his wife, Tyona's parents including his other sibling and eventually causes Tyona to go the same way. As his name interprets; "one who concoction kills" (*kough wua*), stubbornly subjects himself to drinking the substance thinking his *Tsav* powers would protect him but he dies of it as a lesson to his likes.

Agwaza is another character with allegorical meaning in the play. He is Tyona's close friend and leader of the youth. He is the one who propose the judicial system of *Kor*, which eventually expose and destroy Koughwua in the play. His name translates as "the popular one", and true to that, he is the leader of the youth and well known by everyone in the community including the witches and wizards. There are also other character portrayals in this regard. Targba who is Koughwua's friend is co-witch that meet with him in their coven to plan evil. He particularly encourages Koughwua to eliminate Tyona whom he says is the fire that must be extinguish in time before it consumes Koughwua and his immediate family.

“Society id doomed” (*tar gba*) as his name implies is a destructive schemer in the play. We also have Adooshe, Tyona’s beautiful and dutiful wife whom as the name suggests is extremely beautiful both physically and in manners. There are widows in the play whose names suggest their situation. For example, Kwaghtser and Kwelegh, which translate as “misfortune” and “lamentation” respectively, are some of the widows in the community like Afakwagh, Godo and now Adooshe joining the ranks. In summary, the characterisation in this play has three levels. We have the old (elders), the young (i.e. youth) and the women who are widowed in their young ages.

4.2.19 Major Themes in the Play

Thematic preoccupation here revolves around *Ivom Uden* and *Kor*, which are the subject matters in the play. Specifically, major themes dramatized in the play include:

4.2.20 Evil/Jealousy: this theme appears strongly in the play as dominant theme. Koughwua’s evil mechanisms and schemes are allowed to hold sway in the community and consequent upon that the entire household is wiped out as a result. He is clearly the odd one out in Wanza community, and the *Tsav* powers he possesses makes him believe he can crush anyone who stands on his way.

Koughwua: I am the lion and there is no mistake about that. You have just stepped on the tail of a viper and it will bite you. My fear is you can’t overcome my venom (pp. 7&8).

His threat to Tyona over a piece of land is not empty threat after all. Targba, Koughwua’s friend is also an embodiment of evil.

Targba: tonight the scorpion will sting on your wound; my pity is I wonder how you scratch the heat (pp 27).

Koughwua: Here is the *Igyato* (sum paid to eliminate one by witchcraft) you can have it” (pp 27).

Targba: You have done very well, this chicken must meet its death tonight. We will meet at the usual venue (pp. 27&28).

The circle of evil is eventually completed by eliminating Tyona, the prestigious son of Wanza community.

4.2.21 Honour and Prestige: Honour and wealth are well-cherished virtue in Tiv land where this play is set. The climax of one's worth and achievement is when he organises *Ivom Uden* (mounting heap) dance festival, which distinguishes him from ordinary people in the community. Tyona is able to work very hard to attain that height, thereby sparking jealousy in Koughwua, his uncle. The manner in which the entire community rally round him to celebrate him speaks of how much the tradition of honour and prestige is cherished in the play. Tyoor, the kindred head acknowledged on the occasion.

Tyoor: Tyona Zuamo is the real son of his father. May Aondo Abaver-jua (heavenly father), in his infinite mercy bless him with many more years (pp 23).

4.2.22 Justice: This theme appears prominent in the play. First justice is done regarding the piece of land. Aende, the head of the elders pronounce the decision.

Aende: That land belongs to Zuamo. In our tradition, the son is in a better position to inherit what belongs to his father. Koughwua, you are only a brother to Zuamo, so let Tyona who is a son inherit what belongs to his father. We the elders of Wanza have spoken (pp 18).

On the other hand, justice is achieved through the administering of *kough*, which is a judicial system recommend by the youth of Wanza community, led by Agwaza.

Agwaza: Mark you, we have decided that as we are here, *kough* of Tiv people must be administered, to reveal who killed him.

Age mates: Yes and that is final.

Agwaza: If you the elders cannot stop it through wisdom, then we the youths can call on *kough u Tiv* to help us (pp 35&36).

Eventually, the youth have their way and justice catches up with Koughwua. In the play the elders' council and *kough* are used as symbols of justice and egalitarianism.

4.3 Forms of Folklore in the Three Plays

The nature of folklore used in the three plays is that which is rooted in the Tiv culture and worldview. This manifests in three broad dimensions. That is the use of Tiv religion based on aspects like *Swem* myth (ancestral location with its potency), the spirits world (*Adzov/Mbatarev*), the institution of witchcraft (*Tsav*), and the bitter concoction as traditional judicial system (*Kor*) in relation to the Supreme Being (*Aondo*). The other dimension is dance festivals meant for celebrations that take different forms and kinds, encompassing music making, oral poetry, or songs renditions at occasions. There is also the dimension of complementary folkloristic elements like proverbs, folk occupations, and connotative or allegorical names. These folkloric forms harnessed in these plays constitute the theatricality of the play texts in that they form the basis of dramatisation in the texts. In other words, the folkloric forms conform to what Ukala in his theory of Folkism refers to as the “folkist” elements in dramatic texts when we are thorough-going in reflecting our cultural sensibilities (Ukala, 1999:160).

In the play, *Swem Karagbe*, Chief Nyamazenge, the king of Awuna community while trying to proffer solution to leadership challenge summons his elders and opinion leaders for deliberation. In the end they resolve that those seeking to lead them must henceforth take a trip to *Swem* and come back to prove their worth.

Chief Nyamazenga: My father spoke of a place he claimed was our original home, where our

god dwelt, and still dwells. Every year, since we left it, a few chosen men travel back to this original home and come into the presence of our god-head. Every year, on their return, they bring with them fortune and misfortune, sickness and health. For the past few years the land has been

without such breed of strong men. That is why we have had a strong continuous current of misfortune. My people, if anybody should desire leadership, he must go to *Swem Karagbe*, our original home (pp 502).

All: Point! Point!

Chief Nyamazenga: And bring back fortune. And bring us wealth.

Scribe: Elders of the land, the king has spoken. You may now depart.

This resolution set the pace for the rest of the action in the play, where a group of (politicians) people who desire leadership decide to undergo the rigour of travelling to and from the ancestral land. Accordingly, the trip to *Swem* or *Swem Karagbe* by a group of politicians to bring back fortune for their community is the preoccupation of the story. But the all-important journey turns out to be more heartrending as expected as their dialogue reveals:

Gbabo: So what is all this trekking in aid of? We have been on our feet for six days now.

Yatwen: My God, the things we do to show our leadership qualities!

Gbabo: I hope this blasted *Swem Karagbe* Mountain is at hand.

Yatwen: It passes my understanding why a man of my caliber should be tossed about by a senile chief. I could have gone in my helicopter.

Fuusu: This is a competition, not a goddamn exhibition of chauvinism.

The three politicians lament here on their way to *Swem Karagbe* Mountains at the time their slave guide is not with them. Upon his return, the journey continues as he urges.

Ankpan: Heh! You there. Be off. This is no place to rest (pp.505).

They spend months on the way but eventually get to their destination and the politicians present their requests before the God at *Swem*, including Ankpan, the slave guide who is also asked by the god to make his request which the narrator captures thus:

Narrator: At last, they arrive on the peak of Swem Karagbe. Everywhere was pitch darkness on the mountain. But their eyes were opened, and they saw a beautiful city of solid gold, and their god addressed them.

Narrator (as god): My sons, welcome to the land of your great ancestors am very happy indeed that your chief has, at last, hit the best way of leadership. I will today grant you anything you asked for yourselves, and for your tribe. Remember, for any good thing asked, you must also ask for a bad one.

Yatwen: *(steps forward)* Aondo, God hear me. I want to own all the biggest shops in the land.

Narrator: For your people?

Yatwen: Let there be famine. I want to have in my bed the most beautiful women of the land.

Gbabo: *(takes his place)* I want to be the governor and also the chairman of all the boards and corporations in the land.

Narrator: For the people?

Gbabo: Let development escape them. I want my name to be seen every morning in pages of newspapers, and heard on radio, and my face on television every hour.

Ankpan: *(in kneeling position)* I ask that I may continue to be the eye of the people; to serve with courage, humility and patience.

Narrator: And the land?

Ankpan: Let the people multiply and be healthy. Let prosperity reign and poverty and ignorance be banished in the land (pp. 511 & 512).

The three politicians who are later reduced to two (with Fuusu consumed on the way) with their slave guide now depart *Swem* land on the way back to their community. Upon their return to the community, they take a different route. The other dimension of Tiv religious worldview is dramatised here when the characters come face to face with the spirit “world” of *adzov* made up of their men and women.

Ankpan: This is no place to rest. It is a dwelling place of the man-eating *Ajikokos* who hunt in the day and sleep at night. As it is getting almost night, they should be back any minute. *(A little while later, the politicians run panting unto stage. Ankpan is the Last to arrive. They mime the action of pushing against a powerful wind or an invisible force. As the others begin to cry out, Ankpan bursts into incantations).*
Aondoooooo God
Oh Almighty God

God, sleep peacefully, don't stir.
God, be still. Don't God, be thus violent. (*The politicians feel relieved*).
He is soon going to be here.

Gbabo: God himself?
Ankpan: No, not God. This is the land of *Adzov*. Those spirits people that occupy the earth with us and take part in all human activities.

Yatwen: I can't believe it. (*An invisible partner slaps him on the mouth. He reacts sharply and cries out.*) I believe! I believe! I am feeling thirsty.

Fuusu
&Gbabo: We are feeling thirsty and hungry too. [*A huge grotesquely masked creature appears with various delicacies. He set them in front of the travelers*] (pp 506).

It is here that Fuusu gets lured and enticed with Nyumugh's (one of *Adzov* spirits) food, despite warning by Akpan, their slave guide. While the politicians and the slave guide are on their way back from *Swem*, the female contractors with their queen mother try to capture them with a lot of enticing pleasures.

Mammywata: Great men, great warriors and leaders, I am but a woman; but I promise you that even if you spend a year with me, you won't regret it. After the day's work, it is right that a man should relax. What better rest can you have than at my palace? We have little over one thousand women here, richly endowed with womanhood; all at your service.

The two politicians are already falling to the trick having seen the array of beautiful women.

Yatwen: (*to Gbabo*) Look at the paragon of beauty!

Gbabo: Strange things her eyes do to me. Are these the fruits of leadership?
Yatwen: Of course (pp.515).

Mammywata: (*sensing the men are drunk*) Now come, my naughty children (*she embraces them both*). What naughty things do you want to do? Would you like to crawl? (*She pushes them down, and they crawl like children. She turns to the audience*). These are your leaders. (*Beckons to some women*). Would you like to make little donkeys out of them?

Girls: Yes, yes. [*And they jump on the backs of the two, who are too drunk to protest, and only smile sheepishly*] (pp.516).

To these two, it is a test too inviting for them to resist and they are consumed by the queen and her cohorts, except for Ankpan, their slave guide who is able to stand the test of time against the female contractors.

Another example of the use of Tiv folklore in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979) is that of dance celebration or festival. In the play, the use of dance as a form of Tiv folklore appears on two occasions. The first is in Happening Three where the female contractors with their queen, Mammywata play host to the politicians and their slave guide who are descending from *Swem* Mountains back to their community.

Mammywata: My friends and lords please be seated. Let my band entertain you. (*Drinks and food are served*). Let us eat together in a bond of unequalled friendship. (*They begin to eat and chat merrily except for Ankpan who feigns sickness. Women dancers form a circle in front of the men and begin to dance the belly dance with erotic gestures*) [pp.515].

This dance the playwright describes here is folkloric in that Tiv people usually dance in circle and women dancers generally are known for waist and belly twisting while dancing, even though this particular dance is purposely targeted at seducing the male visitors to their "queendom". The dance here makes statement about the ability of the female folk in arresting the emotions of men. These are men seeking leadership of their community, and yet could not resist the ploy of Mammywata and her co hosts to bring them down. What the two men (except Ankpan, the slave guide who resist to the end) term enjoyment, turn out to be what they pay dearly for it.

Another place dance is used in the play is at the end of the play in Happening Four where Ankpan, having returned alive to the community is now crown governor of Awuna community, and dance celebrations are performed to grace the occasion.

Chief Nyamazenga: My governor I salute you. (*Several dance groups perform in celebration as group after group come to pay tribute*) [pp.527].

The dance here is typical of Tiv people celebration where different dance group feature in a ceremony of this nature. It is called dance celebration and can some time take the form of couple dance (*Ivom Uden*) or tribute dance such as the one the playwright describes here, which is a tribute to Ankpan who is just chosen as governor of Awuna community.

Other folkloric elements are also identified in the play to complement the ones used as main stay in the play. Notable example is the revelation of the people's occupation and proverbial assertion with cultural connotations as review by one of the elders:

1st Eder: Your majesty, elders, we are busy men; with farming, thatching of roofs in anticipation of rain, tending livestock, as well as our sick. The least of us is busy fathering children. Why do we have to condemn ourselves to hearing long speeches? A blind man's groundnuts don't burn in the frying pan twice (pp.499).

This example, coupled with names of characters with connotative or allegorical significance serve as complementary folkloristic elements for those used in the play as a gestalt.

In Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* (2002), we also see a composite use of Tiv folklore. The use of *Tsav* (witchcraft) as a religious myth with jealousy as its metaphor appears is reviewed in the play. Jor-Gbaikyom, Shacia's maternal uncle carries his *tsav* practice to the malicious extent, and it develops to the most deadly proportion. In Situation One, we see his jealousy and hatred over Shacia being reviewed.

Akile: But more seriously, a wealthy man who is also fashionable is identified by what he wear and when he matches it with character and personality like Shacia, then, he has what it takes to be an honourable man.

Jor-Gbaikyom: Abomination! Why do you spoil good talks with bad news of impostors (pp 4&5).

Abida, the burukutu seller quickly senses danger from the men's conversation and then raises alarm.

Abida: I say if you men are not here to drink, then go away. Leave...I will not have my place used for malevolent schemes (pp 6).

Moreover, the hatred develops fast. In Situation Two, where Shacia's age mates, and other elders come to celebrate with him for taking his tenth wife, they also smell a rat because of Jor-Gbaikyom's conspicuous absence.

Agia: But what disturbs me greatly is that his own householder and protector is not here. Did he not inform him of this occasion? My age mates let me not spoil your day. I only ask a question.

Akende: A good observation Agia has made. Let me answer for Shacia. All elders in this clan were invited (pp.16 & 17).

Jor-Gbaikyom's *tsav* spirit now takes him to an open confrontation with Shacia as he seeks the reason to use against him in his *Mbatsav* (witches' coven) cult meeting.

Jor-Gbaikyom: Shacia Tor-Gbande, great son of the soil, best farmer of the clan, handsome and elegant, husband of many beautiful wives. I salute you.

Shacia: Jor my brother, what manner of greetings is this? Have you also taken up praise singing lately?

Jor-Gbaikyom: Even if I were to take up praise singing, I won't compose my songs for upstarts, clowns and debtors.

Shacia: Meaning...?

Jor-Gbaikyom: You owe me a female ward as exchange of my sister for your mother.
Shacia: Oh!Oh! So it is true what I have been hearing?

Jor-Gbaikyom: What have you heard?

Shacia: That you have been complaining to your cult members that I owe you a female ward (pp 19 & 20).

His resolve to destroy Shacia, the successful man of that clan through his *tsav* (witchcraft) activities is clear. He has to convince his fellow *Mbatsav* (witches and wizards) cult members for him to strike the man down.

Jor-Gbaikyom: Birds of the night, who nobody rouses without cause, (*there is general Response of mhn*) I have a small matter to present to you.

1st Bird: Owl of the night, you know the penalty of rousing us up for no good cause. Make sure therefore that no matter how small the matter is, it is worthy of being presented before us.

Jor-Gbaikyom: Kite of the night, I am aware. Simply put, Birds of the night, a have a young cockerel for sacrifice to you.

2dn Bird: Good but what is the reason for the sacrifice.

Jor-Gbaikyom: It is showing dangerous signals. It is learning to crow before it is mature (pp 25).

Although, the acclaimed owner of the chicken here is not able to convince his fellow cult members, his persistence and desperation to eliminate “it” compel the cult members to accept the sacrifice to please their man.

2nd & 3rd Birds: Kite of the night, we still have our reservations but what do you feel as our leader?

1st Bird: Birds of the night, ours is a world of logic and reason. It is a world in which cult supremacy supersedes blood knots. The chicken has to be sacrificed.

2nd & 3rd Birds: Then let that has called for the feast strike the first blow...

1st Bird: Owl of the night, evoke the soul of your prized chicken and do as you have been advised (pp 40 & 41).

Jor-Gbaikyom: (*Looks inside clay dish and says his incantations as if in a trance*).Shacia Tor-Gbande, come, come to the valley of death, walk gently and steadily, come. (*His image now appears in the clay dish. Jor strikes him with a sharp object. As he falls, the other Birds also strike with their own objects*) [pp 41 & 42].

The playwright’s use of *Tsav* as Tiv religious myth tied neatly with a historical fact regarding exchange marriage (*Yamshe*).It provides grounds for Jor-Gbaikyom to craft evil against Shacia.

We see yet another example of basic folklore tradition used in this play. Dance festival or ceremony, which is at the core of Tiv folklore. Right from the beginning of the play the playwright describes the action thus:

The performers are surrounded by the audience. A roll of drums such as emit from the kwagh-hir groups, starts the drama, followed by a song (pp 1).

The narrator then picks up the narrative

Narrator: Ha, ha, haa. You hear them. Of course you did. They are very interesting dancers aren't they? Yes, always bending their backs, getting down with outstretched hands doing a diligent set of movements as if bones don't inhabit their bodies. I am certain you want to see them again. (*Narrator starts the same song. Dancing start and stops after a while*) [pp 1].

The dance here is used as part of the story telling performance to whet the appetites of the audience before the story itself. Much further in Situation Three, dance is used as celebration of Shacia's achievements. The playwright opens Situation Two with this catchy description:

The same venue as situation one. Shacia is dressed in kingly robes. Following him is a retinue of musicians. He walks majestically on to the arena synchronizing his movement to the rhythmic beats of the drums. In between the music there are verbal interactions by the commentator (pp 7).

This is just the opening glee for Shacia who is being celebrated to give his welcome speech. And the commentator takes over after the celebrant's speech to beckon for the real dancers to enter the arena.

Akende: Shacia Tor-Gbande, I salute you for your honest and frank talk. My age mates, we have come here to rejoice. Let us make merry. Call the dancers. (*There follows several kinds of dancers. The dancers are accordingly remunerated by Shacia. After a while the leader Akende stops the dances*) [pp.9].

The occasion for celebration here is that Shacia has taken a new wife, the tenth in the number of his wives. Other Tiv folkloric forms used in the play such as proverbs, symbolisms, round huts and rest huts compound system as well as character naming are complementary to the core folkloric forms; *Tsav* (witchcraft), Exchange Marriage System (*Yamshe*) and dance celebration.

In Gande's *The Rebound* (2012), there is the use of Tiv folklore, which follows the pattern of usage in the other two plays. The playwright also explores two religious/cultural institutions; *Tsav* and *Kor* which have far reaching implications on the society. Additionally, he makes

use of dance festival as traditional institution for celebration of one's achievements or attainments to tell his story.

In the play, Koughwua, Tyona's uncle is not just jealous of him but wants him destroyed just like his parents and sibling. He is searching for the slightest provocation as an excuse he will use in his witchcraft coven to destroy Tyona.

Koughwua: Beware! The way you are going about this land, you may not find it easy. You are heaping the firewood so high that you may find it hard to extinguish when the fire might have grown wide.

Agwaza: Please Koughwua, calm down. It has not come to that yet. You both are a family.

Tyona: Word, empty words. How many of such words can fill a basin? Go on, and make noise while I go with my farming.

Koughwua: We shall see. You have just stepped on the tail of a viper and it will bite you. My fear is you can't overcome my venom" (pp 7&8).

This kind of confrontation on Tyona's farm is not good omen for because Koughwua is looking for an opportunity to strike him down. His friend Agwaza's advice to take the threat to the elders' council did not stop the evil man. The playwright captures the forest where the witches meet to carry out their evil thus:

Koughwua: (*suddenly appears in black clothes in company of others performing ritual*). A man cannot run faster than his shadow. The cry of a chick doesn't weaken the claws of the hawk, neither does it stop the hawk from feeding on its prey. The child that says the mother will not sleep will not sleep either. It is ignorance that makes a rat to challenge a cat to a fight not knowing that it can become a meal for the cat after the fight. The same thing that you like can also kill you. (*Removes a charm from his pocket and speak to it*). My charm if I used the anus of a death man to sew you, then command Tyona to come forth and meet his death. Tyona, rise and come, I say rise and come, yes here he comes, keep coming (*touching the charm on his head*) now go and die in pieces. (*Koughwua puts back the charm in his pocket and continues chanting as he leave the stage*) [pp 29 & 30].

The playwright uses *Tsav* here as a weapon of destruction by those who possess it. It is the chronic type where practitioners see the progressive ones as their natural enemies that must be destroyed. Gande in this play collaborate the use of *Tsav* with another Tiv religious myth;

Kough (concoction). The bitter and liquid substance given to people who have been accused of a crime or serious offence to drink. It is a replica of *Swem* in that it is believed that some of the items used for its preparation are taken from *Swem* Mountains, and is usually prepared by certain elders who have the mastery of Tiv tradition. In the play, *Kough* is recommended by the youth of Wanza community as a last resort to unravel the mystery surrounding the untimely death of Tyona, their age mates when the elders want to stick to their usual tradition of consulting an oracle after the inquest regarding someone's death.

Agwaza: Nobody is going to the seer, cause of death is suppressed. Elders of Wanza, here lies the body of one of us and we are talking about *Shor* (Oracle). Tyona's mates have sworn by *Kough* that we must dig to the bottom of his death. Mark you, we have decided that as we are here, *kough* of Tiv people must be administered, to reveal who killed him.

Age mates: Yes and that is final (pp 35 & 36).

The elders are now convinced and to fix a day after Tyona's burial for *Kough* to be administered.

Akende: People of Wanza, today is the day that has been set aside to determine the cause of Tyona's death. We are all gathered here to break the melon to count the seeds. *Kough* is the symbol of our justice. But before it would be administered, I still want to warn that if any man here is responsible for the death of Tyona, he should step forward. If that is done, we as elders may proffer another solution. The wrath of *Kough* is not merciful on the guilty (pp 45).

In spite of the forewarning, nobody is willing to come out and confess that he is responsible for Tyona's death before Acham, the elder prepares the substance, even when accusing fingers are already appointing to Koughwua.

Acham: (*DSL prepares the kough*). Line up all of you and come before *kough*. (*A line is formed, Aende in the lead*) [pp 46].

Koughwua stubbornly lines up at last to take *kough*. While the rest of them vomit the substance, he falls down and begins to cry for help. At last justice catches out with him as he

confess being the black sheep of the family in particular and Wanza community in general. He dies of protruding belly.

Interestingly, Gande's *The Rebound* (2012) equally explores Tiv dance festival known as *Ivom Uden* (heap mounting). The dance festival that features different kinds and groups of dancers, and songs renditions including the grand dance by the celebrant and his wife to grace the occasion. The playwright captures the essence of the dance festival in Movement Four with this picturesque description:

(Court yard. It is Tyona's dance feast to honour his virtuous and pretty wife, Adooshe. The Ivom, heap is built at the centre of the arena. Ivom is a raised square structure about 10 to 11 feet above the ground. It has a level platform at the top and is wide enough to accommodate two dancers and drummers Well-wishers sit in groups at the arena, among whom are Tyoor (district head) and his mbatarev (kindred heads), Tyona mother's relatives, kinsmen, Tyona's peers, friends, different peer groups, numerous dance groups, folksingers, sisters and their husbands, children and Wanza women. The drummers for the special Ivom dance sit on top level platform. Different dances are going on) [pp 21].

Apart from other dances and songs renditions that feature on the occasion, it is only the couple in their grand dance that can mount the heap, which is the climax of the event.

4.4. Role of folklore in communicating Themes of Cultural Education in the plays

The three selected plays primarily have one thing in common. They are all written from Tiv cultural background. The raw materials harnessed by the playwrights are integral part of the cultural society where they have observed and choose to portray. As Agoro (2001:72) aptly submits:

Playwrights derive their inspiration for their works from the direct and indirect experiences. Direct experiences come as a result of their involvement in several situations in the normal process of living in the society. Indirect experiences are derived from reading or from watching television, video programmes, or movies. Really everything in life could be analysed and imaginatively recreated in drama.

This underscores the fact that playwrights do not create out of a vacuum. They create using what is considered to be of striking interest to them. For a folk playwright, he creates his play in accordance with the basic cannons of the people's culture and tradition. Basic cannons here are synonymous with folklore, which is rooted, in the cultural milieu of the society.

The use of folklore in the three plays appears in a composite whole. a pattern that is identified as Tiv religious (centered around myths of *Swem* or *Kor*, *Tsav* or *akombo* and *adzov* spirits in relation to *Aondo*, the supreme God) and the use of dance celebrations, *amar* (for celebration of one's attainment or tribute to one's status). These basic Tiv folkloric forms carry along with them other complementary compartments like proverbs, names, occupations like farming or breeding livestock, weaving, thatching and hunting, to drive home the playwright's message. Notably, this usage is significant in that it has a role in the effective deployment and communication of the playwrights' themes to the audience, thereby creating a tendency for cultural education. For example, the three plays have thematic preoccupations that are common. These include the themes of leadership, jealousy/evil, fame, Tradition, and justice. The three playwrights have therefore been able to communicate their messages through the use of Tiv folklore in the selected plays.

In Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979), the story is based on *Swem*, the Tiv ancestral land vis-à-vis the spirit world of *Adzov* or *Mbatarev* (spirits) who interacts with the human from time to time. *Swem* as the matter of fact is at the core of Tiv folklore tradition because they regard it as legendary and of religious importance. When Chief Nyamazenga, the king of Awuna community speaks of *Swem* in the play, it is clear from his tone how this ancestral land is of religious importance.

Chief Nyamazenga: My father spoke of a place he claimed was our original home, where our god dwelt, and still dwells. Every year, since we left it, a few chosen men travel back to this original home and come into the presence of our god-head (pp 502).

The mystery about this place of origin revolves around what it signifies in terms of religion. It is a place those who believe in its efficacy travel to obtain fortune. The general held view about *Swem* is that, it is a fertile land that is possessed by mysterious powers available for

those who seek to obtain them. It is in this light that Makar (1994:5) provides some insights regarding *Swem* land and its significance to the Tiv tribe:

To the Tiv, this is one of the mysteries of their ancestral homeland. It was here that the two sons of Tiv: *Ichongo* and *Ipusu* became aware of their Tivness. The descendants of *Ichongo* and *Ipusu* constitute not only the genealogical tree but also the basis of the social and political organization of the Tiv society.

The religious significance of *Swem* land provides the basis for dramatisation in this play as a story is built around it as celebrated myth. It is an elder member of the community (whom the playwright refers to as narrator), who is relating this story to the younger ones, as his father also told him about it.

The use of *Swem* as the main stay of the plot of this dramatic piece is good example of the use of Tiv folklore in playwriting. From the folkloric point of view, *Swem* as a religious myth is understood within the matrix of Tiv cosmological ambience, which is tied to their worldview. It is part of the oral traditions of the Tiv people that is passed from generation to generations usually through the medium of storytelling. The understanding of the land of *Swem* here as a religious myth is encapsulated in the general phenomenon of Tiv religion, which is complex and broadly conceived. Notably, “Tiv religion has various concepts like *Aondo*, *Adzov*, *akombo* and *tsav*. *Aondo* is seen as the highest spirit” (Geri, 2012:42). *Adzov* are such spirits that according to Tiv folklore interact with humans to either harm or reward them depending on their cooperation. In the play, we see this aspect of folklore manifest when the three politicians and the slave guard are on their way to *Swem* Mountain where they encounter the “world” of *Adzov*.

Ankpan: Aondooooooooo God
 Oh Almighty God
 God, sleep peacefully, don't stir.
 God, be still. Don't God, be thus violent. (*The politicians feel relieved*).
 He is soon going to be here.

Gbabo: God himself?

Ankpan: No, not God. This is the land of *Adzov*. Those spirits people that occupy the earth with us and take part in all human activities.(pg.508).

Ankpan's incantations reviews much about the Tiv religious system which recognises the Supreme Being (which the playwright is referring to in modern terms here as God Almighty) as the highest spirit to whom other spirits like *Adzov* and *Tsav* are all subject to. The tormented wind that attacks them before Ankpan's prayer is from the *Adzov* spirits and as he calls on the Supreme Being (God), there is calm immediately. The significance here stems from the evidence available in the splay that Tiv religion hables the belief that spirits occupy the same environment with man and are also involved in all the human activities as reviewed in the dialogue above.

On the one hand, the spirit world presented to us in this play is at two levels, the level of men spirit and that of women which are significantly different. On their way to *Swem* Mountains, they encounter these male spirits characters like Nyumugh, (who entices Fuusu with delicious food), Sergeant and Corporal (the two soldiers who arrest them as spies), General (their boss) and Convict (a detainee) [pp 508-510]. On the other hand, while on their way back, they now encounter female spirits; queen Mammywata and Litini, her daughter with the other female contractors; Maimuna and patience. Mammywata, the queen's interaction with her daughter reveals the nature of activities of the female spirit characters quite different from that of male spirit characters.

Mammywata: There is a class of men called leaders. They are a few men who like their egos to be fanned more than the others know when and where to fan them; and then, they authorize my payment vouchers.

Litini: Strange people. How can I meet these species?

Mammywata: Just go into the town. You won't walk for 20 metres before one of them picks you up for some place. They are your good friends. The married ones are better (pp 514).

Interestingly, the playwright's thematic preoccupation is anchored here on the premise of Tiv folklore deployed in the play. The use of Tiv folkloric forms like *Swem* and *Adzov* land (spirit world) which are understood under the purview of Tiv religion plays a significant role in communicating the theme of leadership. Notably, the play is a metaphor of leadership in general and Nigerian political leadership in particular. It is the desire for leadership by the people of Awuna community that results in the proposal that those seeking for leadership of the community must travel to *Swem* as a taste of their true desire to lead.

Chief Nyamazenga: My father spoke of a place he claimed was our original home, where our god dwelt, and still dwells. Every year, since we left it, a few chosen men travel back to this original home and come into the presence of our god-head. Every year, on their return, they bring with them fortune and misfortune, sickness and health. For the past few years the land has been without such breed of strong men. That is why we have had a strong continuous current of misfortune. My people, if anybody should desire leadership, he must go to *Swem Karagbe*, our original home (pp 502).

All: Point! Point!

The playwright here by the use this basic form of folklore is communicating the theme of leadership from different perspectives. First, traditional leadership of Chief Nyamazenga, who is the king of Awuna community. He and his chiefs- in- council demonstrate leadership qualities that depict patriotism in the play. Chief Nyamazenga plays the role of king maker when he proffers solution on the modalities of choosing the next governor of his community, where he is the traditional ruler. He chooses to rule through democratic ideals as evidence in the play shows. In other words, the theme of leadership here is closely tied to democratic practice in the text. Right from the beginning of the play, the king of a fictitious Awuna community is seen convening a meeting of his prominent sons to converge on the community for a debate or healthy competition that would prove their leadership worth before the people of the community.

Chief Nyamazenger: Let them come and tell us here; prove to us their worth, while the people are here (pp 497).

This presupposes democracy. People are given the opportunity to participate in the process that would lead to the choice of leaders. Throughout the play, democratic ideas hold sway. That is why characters like Yatwen, Fuusu, Gbabo and even Ankpan who is seen as less significant as well as other representatives are given equal opportunity to compete for leadership.

The other perspective makes us see the nature of political leadership. Those who go into it usually dam the consequences to acquire the power. They make bogus promises and carry boastful dispositions. Yatsen, one of the politicians reveals these attitudes as he addresses the people.

Yatsen: My people, I am not in politics for personal gains. As you aknow, I am already rich. The struggle is going to be strong and bitter. We are going to make a lot of enemies; we are also going to win friends. In the long run, the victory is ours. Throw your ballot paper in the right hole, and your ballot will become the cannon ball for me to fire the death shot at imperialism....

All: Yeah!

Yatsen: Corruption. All unfavorable "isms" will be our target.

All: Yeah! (pp 504).

The other politicians, Gbabo and Fuusu are not any different from Yatsen. They make people believe they are for them while they turn out to work against the people perpetuate themselves in power.

The playwright also makes us to see yet another dimension of leadership, which is natural leadership. The playwright refers to the character who leads the politicians to *Swem* land as Ankpan (slave), the slave guide.

Chief Nyamazenger: Very well. The one who draws attention to a problem should first proffer a solution. Your son, Ankpan, will accompany them.

2nd Chief: Your will is supreme! My son Ankpan will accompany them (pp 503).

The choice of Ankpan as a guidance to the politician to the land of *Swem* connotes natural leadership, which is about service to the people. There is clear difference here as it regards craving for power and having the natural ability to lead. The trip to *Swem* land by the politicians (which Ankpan leads) in search of leadership reveals much about their abilities and intents. By the time, they meet the god at *Swem*, it is clear who is a genuine leader, and who is merely seeking for political power as this dialogue reveals:

Narrator (as god): My sons, welcome to the land of your great ancestors I am very happy indeed that your chief has, at last, hit the best way of leadership. I will today grant you anything you asked for yourselves, and for your tribe. Remember, for any good thing asked, you must also ask for a bad one.

Yatwen: (*steps forward*) Aondo, God hear me. I want to own all the biggest shops in the land.

Narrator: For your people?

Yatwen: Let there be famine. I want to have in my bed the most beautiful women of the land.

Gbabo: (*takes his place*) I want to be the governor and also the chairman of all the boards and corporations in the land.

Narrator: For the people?

Gbabo: Let development escape them. I want my name to be seen every morning in pages of newspapers, and heard on radio, and my face on deletion every hour.

Ankpan: (*in kneeling position*) I ask that I may continue to be the eye of the people; to serve with courage, humility, and patience.

Narrator: And the land?

Ankpan: Let the people multiply and be healthy. Let prosperity reign, poverty, and ignorance be banished in the land (pp. 511 & 512).

They succeed in visiting *Swem* land and request from the god there what they want for themselves and the people. However, indiscipline selfishness, greed and is their bane, except the slave guide who is able to stand the taste of time. The use of *Swem*, *Adzov* spirits and dance celebration, coupled with allegorical names, proverbial assertions as basic aspects of Tiv folklore serves as a yardstick for communicating the theme of leadership by the playwrights.

The theme of discipline is also pertinent in the play through the use of folklore. The three politicians that agreed to take a trip to *Swem* are consumed by the spirit beings including the female contractors who are sent after them. As Chief Nyamazenga, and the 2nd Elder reveal, discipline is the guiding principle in this journey to the ancestral land.

2nd Elder: The hazards are the individual weaknesses that affect each person according to his character.

Chief Nyamazenger: Very good. This is the best test for leadership (503).

It is because of indiscipline that, Fuusu is destroyed first by Nyumugh's (one of the male spirits) food. Female contractors in the queen's chamber later destroy Gbabo and Yatwen. Only Akpan, the slave guide is proofed to be disciplined enough to resist to the end and is able to return to the community where he was celebrated with a ravished dance as governor of Awuna community.

Love for Tradition is another theme in the play, which relies on the use of Tiv folklore to find expression. Firm belief in culture and tradition is much evident in the play. For instance, virtually all the characters in the play acknowledge *Swem* land as sacred. The three politicians agreeing to take a trip to *Swem* to bring back fortune and ascertain their leadership ability is a confirmation of this fact.

Gbabo: So what is all this trekking in aid of? We have been on our feet for six days now.

Yatwen: My God, the things we do to show our leadership qualities!

Gbabo: I hope this blasted *Swem Karagbe* Mountain is at hand.

Yatwen: It passes my understanding why a man of my caliber should be tossed about by a senile chief. I could have gone in my helicopter.

Fuusu: This is a competition, not a goddamn exhibition of chauvinism.

The manners in which they lament here indicate that, if not for the sake of tradition, which requires that the fortunes they desire to obtain power lies with the god at *Swem* land. They would not embark on such a dreadful journey. His father, 2nd Elder who is now too old to perform such physical tasks, equips Akpan traditionally to guides the three politicians to *Swem* land. He is an embodiment of traditional leadership as passed to his by his father.

However, there is another angle to the activities of the *Adzov* spirits relating to men as the dialogue between Maimuna and Patience, the co-female contractors reveals how men, especially those in leadership are lured and made to commit abominable acts, thereby jeopardising their chances to lead the people.

Maimuna: (*still bending over Ankpan*) Sister, come. I think he is dead! What a waste. He is not dead yet.

Patience: Let's finish him off.

Maimuna: Bring the spears. Since he doesn't like a slow and painless death like his friends, we might as well make a meal of him.

Paatience: Sure. I'll take his balls.

Maimuna: And me, I'll take his intestines.

Patience: You are always taking the intestines.

Maimuna: Well, if you like some intestines, you should have those of that huge man who talks about being a leader.

Patience: You think the queen will allow us to make a feast of them today?

Maimuna: No, tomorrow will be more likely. Today, she will pamper their egos and treat them like celebrities.

Patience: But, tomorrow.

Both: They will become meat (pp 517).

In spite of this ensnarement, Ankpan is able to escape from the female contractors unlike the duo of Yatwen and Gbabo who true to the words of Maimuna and Patience, they end up as meat in the hands of the spirits.

Tiv religious worldview is also presented in Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* (2002) and Gande's *The Rebound* (2012) from the dimension of *Tsav* spirits. The two playwrights portray *Tsav* as a domineering spiritual force that has destructive tendencies. A number of characters in the plays acquire this power through magic emblems (*akombo*) in order to control and suppress the destinies of others. It appears usually come with strong feeling of jealousy and envy. Jor-Gbaikyom in *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and Koughwua in *The Rebound* use such powers against Shacia and Tyona, respectively, through their magical invocations and incantations.

Jor-Gbaikyom: Abomination! Why do you spoil good talks with bad news of impostors.

This statement by Jor-Gbaikyom at the beginning in Situation Two in a *burukutu* joint when his name is mentioned as a noble man reviews his ill feelings toward Shacia in *Prized Chickens are not tasty*. He now deliberately seeks a confrontation with Shacia in order to secure a ground to attack him.

Shacia: Get out of my house you devil, move out (pp 21).

Jor-Gbaikyom: I shall move out but you will see, you will certainly see me again. You have touched the tail of a cobra, and when it starts spitting into your eyes, do not cry out for help (pp 22).

The same manner Koughwua develops such ill feelings against Tyona, his cousin persistently in *The Rebound*. His bad blood as he also confronts Tyona while working on his farm and in an attempt to get a ground to issue a threat to him.

Koughwua: Beware! The way you are going about this land, you may not find it easy. You are heaping the firewood so high that you may find it hard to extinguish when the fire might have grown wide.

Tyona: Words, empty words. How many of such words can fill the basin? Go on, and make noise while I go on with my farming.

Koughwua: We shall see. You have just stepped on the tail of a viper and it will bite you. My fear is you can't overcome my venom" (pp 7&8).

Jor-Gbaikyom and Koughwua's threats here going by witches' operations are not empty words after all. They are already "chickens" to be slaughtered in the witches' coven, having challenged the two men.

The playwrights deploy *Tsav* (witchcraft) which is portrayed as an evil force in the two plays *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and *The Rebound* as folkloric materials to communicate the theme of evil. This theme is anchored on jealousy as the metaphor of *Tsav*, which is invoked through the use of *Akombo* (magic emblems). Jor-Gbaikyom and Koughwua in *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and *The Rebound* respectively possess *Tsav* (witchcraft) powers with destructive tendencies. They use the instrument of *Akombo* (magic emblems) to conjure the images of their victims, through which Shacia and Tyona are killed in the two plays.

Jor-Gbaikyom: (*Looks inside a clay dish and says his incantations as if in a trance*). Shacia Tor-Gbande, come, come to the valley of death, walk gently and steadily, come. (*His image now appear in the clay dish. Jor strikes him with a sharp object. As he falls, the other Birds also strike with their own objects*) [pp 42].

This similar manner of invoking someone's spirit to appear in the witches' coven as done by Jor-Gbaikyom here in *Prized Chickens are not tasty* is replicated by Koughwua in *The Rebound*.

Koughwua: *(suddenly appears in black clothes in company of others performing ritual)*. A man cannot run faster than his shadow. The cry of a chick doesn't weaken the claws of the hawk, neither does it stop the hawk from feeding on its prey. *(Removes a charm from his pocket and speak to it)*. My charm if I used the anus of a death man to sew you, then command Tyona to come forth and meet his death. Tyona, rise and come, I say rise and come, yes here he comes, keep coming *(touching the charm on his head)* now go and die in pieces. *(Koughwua puts back the charm in his pocket and continues chanting as he leave the stage)* [pp 29 & 30].

It can be seen from the above that while Jor-Gbaikyom uses debt of a female ward as exchange of his sister for Shacia's mother as an excuse to wreak havoc on him in Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty*, Koughwua capitalises on land tussle to destroy Tyona in Gande's *The Rebound*. The use of this folkloric tradition has a significant role in that the playwrights deploy it to project the theme of evil, which appears prominently in the two plays. The invocation of spirits in these plays represents the witches' ritual of scheming havoc on other people in the society using spiritual powers. The significance of this action is that *Mbatsav* (Witches and Wizards) always look for grounds from their enemies before attacking them. It is also general held believe in Tiv society that any death of a person is caused by *Mbatsav* who operate according to their spiritual laws in the cosmos.

In *The Rebound*, Koughwua's evil mechanisms and schemes are allowed to hold sway in the community and consequent upon that the entire household of Tyona is wiped out. He is clearly the odd one out in Wanza community, and the *Tsav* powers he possesses makes him believe he can crush anyone who stands on his way as he bursts here:

Koughwua: I am the lion and there is no mistake about that. You have just stepped on the tail of a viper and it will bite you. My fear is you can't overcome my venom (pp. 7&8).

His threat to Tyona over a piece of land is not empty threat after all. Targba, Koughwua's friend is also an embodiment of evil. He belongs to the same *Tsav* cult coven.

Targba: tonight the scorpion will sting on your wound; my pity is I wonder how you scratch the heat (pp 27).

Koughwua: Here is the *Igyato* (sum paid to eliminate one by witchcraft) you can have it” (pp 27).

Targba: You have done very well; this chicken must meet its death tonight. We will meet at the usual venue (pp. 27&28).

The circle of evil is eventually completed by eliminating Tyona, the prestigious son of Wanza community.

In Prized Chickens are not Tasty there is a replica of this evil machination. Jor-Gbaikyon’s resolve to destroy Shacia, the successful man of that clan through his *Tsav* (witchcraft) activities is clear. He has to convince his fellow *Mbatsav* (witches) cult members for him to strike the man down.

2nd & 3rd Birds: Kite of the night, we still have our reservations but what do you feel as our leader?

1st Bird: Birds of the night, ours is not a world of logic and reason. It is a world in which cult supremacy supersedes blood knots. The chicken has to be sacrificed.

2nd & 3rd Birds: Then let that has called for the feast strike the first blow...

1st Bird: Owl of the night, evoke the soul of your prized chicken and do as you have been advised (pp 40 & 41).

Jor-Gbaikyom: (*Looks inside a clay dish and says his incantations as if in a trance*).Shacia Tor-Gbande, come, come to the valley of death, walk gently and steadily, come. (*His image now appear in the clay dish. Jor strikes him with a sharp object. As he falls, the other Birds also strike with their own objects*) [pp 41 & 42].

Tiv religious myth is folkloric, and the playwright uses it to make a strong statement about its destructive tendency. They tied the issues neatly with a historical fact regarding exchange marriage (*Yamshe*), which provides grounds for Jor-Gbaikyom to craft evil against Shacia.

It is equally significant how dance is used in the plays to reflect Tiv socio-cultural society, and at the same time project the themes of Fame and Love for Tradition. Just as in *Swem Karagbe*, Mammywata, the queen of the female contractors first uses dance to celebrate the

politicians and their slave guide who are descending from Swem Mountains to her “queendom”. We also see the use of dance in the last Situation where Ankpan is crown the Governor of his community. The entire members of the community converge here for this dance festival/celebration.

Mammywata: My friends and lords, please be seated. Let my band entertain you. (*Drinks and food are served*). *Women dancers form a circle in front of the men and begin to dance the belly dance with erotic gestures*) [pp 515].

Chief Nyamazenga: My governor I salute you. (*Several dance groups perform in celebration as group after group come to pay tribute*) [pp 527].

This shows the use of dance as a celebration even though the queen of the female contractors also uses the same dance as a weapon to arrest the emotions of her visitors in order to entice them and lure them to destruction. The Narrator in *Prized Chickens are not tasty* opens his narration by describing the dexterities of the dancers and later on in the play dance is used to celebrate and pay tributes to wealthy Shacia, who has just taken a new wife to affirm his wealthy status in the community.

Narrator: Ha, ha, haa. You hear them. Of course you did. They are very interesting dancers aren't they? Yes, always bending their backs, getting down with outstretched hands doing a diligent set of movements as if bones don't inhabit their bodies.

Akende: Let us make merry. Call the dancers. (*There follows several kinds of dancers. The dancers are accordingly remunerated by Shacia. After a while the leader Akende stops the dances*) [pp 9].

The use of dance for celebration and tribute here achieves number of purposes; it provides general merriment for the people, it appeals to the emotions of the celebrant or the achiever of the moment. This is the same manner dance also used in Gande's *The Rebound*.

(It is Tyona's dance feast to honour his virtuous and pretty wife, Adooshe. Well-wishers sit in groups at the arena, among whom are Tyoor (district head) and his mbatarev (kindred heads), Tyona mother's relatives, kinsmen, Tyona's peers, friends, different peer groups, numerous dance groups, folksingers, sisters and their husbands, children and Wanza women. The drummers for the special Ivom dance sit on top-level platform. Different dances are going on) [pg.21].

The picturesque description of the dance composition by the playwright in this play involving Tyona with his wife signifies a dance ceremony in honour of the achiever of wealth, worth and prestige in the community like in the case of Ankpan in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* and Shacia in Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not tasty*. Notably, dance in Tiv as folkloric culture and tradition is highly significant in that dance, music and singing must always go together unlike the western concept of music and dance that exist as separate entities. Music and dance in Tiv culture and tradition exist for almost every occasion or event, including funeral ceremonies. In conveying the themes of Fame and Love for Tradition, which are replete in all the plays, the playwrights deploy this popular folklore tradition to communicate effectively these themes to the audience.

Overall, the use of basic Tiv folklore in these plays in terms of religious myths, and dance celebrations signifies the close affinity the people have regarding their folklore traditions and how these folkloric traditions harnessed as raw materials for these plays could translate to cultural education in terms of both literary materials and their productions before the audience.

4.5. Use of the three Plays as Media of Cultural Education through folklore

The use of folklore from Tiv cultural background in the three plays is conspicuous. The usage serves as vehicle of communicating culture to the people, the reception of which would culminate into or propels cultural education. In this light, the three plays serve as media through which the vehicle carrying folkloric forms targets or access the audience. Notably, the notion of cultural education is predicated upon three dimensions in the three plays. One is that each of the plays explores Tiv folkloric traditions to develop the plot of the plays. In other words, the story lines are based on epic traditions that are folkloric. Another dimension

of the use of folklore in these plays is that all of them deploy the folk tale narratives as techniques of telling the story to the audience. It is through the eyes of the narrators that we get to know the epic stories dramatised in the plays. This of course is in line with the characteristics of Tiv folklore earlier identified in previous chapters in that other folkloric elements have folktale as their medium of expression. Through the folk tales, other folk cultural elements find expression and transmission. Since the plays adopt the story telling tradition, the role of a narrator or raconteur and the participation of the audience become vital. This is in tandem with the theory of “folkism” through the “Law of Joint Performance”, where the African audience approves a performer; they take the responsibility to co-perform with him by singing along, asking questions, passing comments and so on. In Gbilekaa’s *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* for instance, the narrator who opens the storytelling performance is seeing handing costumes to members of the audience to play certain roles in the play.

The other level of usage is that both plays use basic Tiv folklores to negotiate historical (past) facts with the present. In other words, there are certain folklore traditions that appear in all the plays selected and it seems as if Tiv folklore is strongly attached to history. Moreover, this presupposes that history and folklore have symbiotic relationship that is difficult to separate.

The use of these folklore traditions can therefore be x-rayed by Ukala’s theory of “folkism” which vehemently advocates for the laws of aesthetic response like opening a story by the narrator and his dexterity in carrying his audience along in participation up till the closing which usually drive home the moral lessons inherent in the play. According to him:

In all, it seems clear that a thoroughgoing application of the aesthetics of the African folktale may remove or reduce the shortcomings of Nigerian literary drama. Such an emergent aesthetic principle may be called “folkism”: the tendency to base literary plays on the history, culture, and concerns of the folk and to compose and perform them in accordance with African conventions for composing and performing the folktale (Ukala, 1996:285).

His prescription here emphasises storytelling narratives as yardstick in driving home the message of a play text usually containing epic tradition or historical facts.

The manner of usage of folklore in these plays is deliberate. The plays serve as media through which cultural education is communicated to the audience by the playwrights. For example, the use of the Narrator in all the plays indicates a usual African storytelling tradition using a raconteur verses the audience. In Tiv cultural setting for instance, the storyteller is usually a multitalented and dexterous older person who is held to a high esteem by his audience. There is a demonstration of this in Hagher’s *Swem Karagbe* Thus:

It’s twilight. The head of the family sits on an easy chair, smoking. He has just finished the evening meal. His son comes out of the house, and with and with a horn and blows shrill notes. There is immediate response as several young men and women come together round the old man, the narrator. The African story telling performance is the setting (Happening One, pp 496).

The playwright’s description at the beginning of the play here set the tone for the use of the play medium to communicate culture, which is folklore to the people. The historical fact of *Swem Karagbe* dramatised here in this play is seen from the eye of the narrator as a well cherished tradition that has been there and is still there for the future generation. The head of the family who is relating the story of *Swem* to the younger members of his household is implying that basic knowledge of this myth is needed for preservation and further interpretations. The interpretations they are able to make in relation to their cultural values connote cultural education.

Chief Nyamazenga: My father spoke of a place he claimed was our original home, where our god dwelt, and still dwells. Every year, since we left it, a few chosen men travel back to this original home and come into the presence of our god-head. Every year, on their return, they bring with

them fortune and misfortune, sickness and health. For the past few years the land has been without such breed of strong men. That is why we have had a strong continuous current of misfortune (pp 502).

The dramatisation of the story of Swem Karagbe as a religious myth peculiar to the Tiv people underscores the theatricality of folklore in playwriting. The playwright who uses his artistry to document a story such as this makes use of his play as medium of communicating cultural education. It is interesting to note that the transmission of folk culture from one generation to another usually experience variations. The playwright use of Swem as Tiv religious myth here is shaped by his interpretation of it. For example, his conceptualisation of it as “Swem Karagbe” is an added dimension, in relation to other researchers who refer to the myth as “Swem”. His reference lend credence to Makar’s account ascribing Swem to one Tiv ancestral descendant, *Karagbe* (from *Nongov* lineage) who was sacrificed on the *Ilyum* (Sacred) altar before the migration to the present day Benue valley (Makar,1994:4). This underscores the significance of a medium such as play in communicating culture that endears people to relevant education in this regard education.

The religious myth of *Tsav* dramatised in Gbilekaa’s *Prized Chickens are not tasty* and Gande’s *The Rebound* also come to bear through the role of the narrators. The narrator in his dexterous manner opens the story with a song which is chorused by the audience amidst dance in *Prized Chickens are not tasty*. He now hands costumes to members of the audience to play roles in the story.

Narrator: Meanwhile, let me tell you a story. It is a story about Shacia, a man of means and prosperity. (Stops abruptly), no I have changed my mind. I am sure there are among us in the audience those who have heard of the story as well and can control their emotions to tell it better. Yes, can I have volunteers? Five in Number. (Hands each a costume) [pp.2].

The opening glee and dexterity of the narrator in this play reveals the fact that in African storytelling tradition, nobody is the sole owner of the story. Other members of the society

who may constitute the audience can challenge the narrator in the course of the performance if they are not impressed or satisfied. This is what Ukala's theory of Folkism advocates for regarding the laws of "joint performance" and "urge to judge". When the audience approves a performer, they take the responsibility to co-perform with him by singing along, asking questions, passing comments and sometimes even take over the tale (performance) from the unimpressive performer. On the other hand, the audience, especially when not co-performing, responds appropriately to the performance against the backdrop of traditional standards of performance. They detect errors and offer corrections through audible voices (1996:33). The narration also reveals a trend of how history rooted in the ambience of a folk culture can be preserved and transmitted for posterity. Again, the narrator relates the consequences of Tsav practice to the audience.

Narrator: This word is the juxtaposition of the tragic and comic. While other are thinking of how to make ends meet, how to make more money, how to ensure peace, others are busy planning how to pluck their fellow men down...(pp 23).

The narrator here is referring to Jor-Gbaikyom's resolve to destroy Shacia with witchcraft through jealousy and envy in *Prized Chickens are not tasty*. It is interesting also, to see in Gande's *The Rebound* that Koughwua who narrates his ordeals to the audience brings to comprehension where his *Tsav* practice lands him in the prologue.

Koughwua: "The evil that men do lives after them" so is the saying. But the reverse is the case. Today the evil that men do live with them. I Koughwua, a man of evil, a viper that destroyed many lives, was drunk in my evil ways and thought I was indispensable. Was that not why I accepted to take kough after killing Tyona? My evil landed me in this destruction. Listen to my story (pp 2).

The narrator in this case is narrating his own story after nemesis catches out with him. The religious myth of *Tsav* and *Kough* (concoction) is what is dramatised here through the eye of the narrator.

On the other hand, the playwrights through their plays negotiate the past with the future by juxtaposing certain historical facts with folklore traditions to make statements on the future.

Jor-Gbaikyom in *Prized Chickens are not tasty* reveals an instance of history thus:

Jor-Gbaikyom: It is my mother's womb that gave him breath. My mother's daughter was given to his father who exchanged her with Shacia's mother as wife. That was the practice in those days and up till today he has not paid that debt either to me or to any of my brothers or uncles (pp 5).

The debt of a female ward Jor-Gbaikyom is laying claim to here is such a complex issue that only the elders of the land who are direct products of *Yamshe* (exchange marriage) will untie its knot. It is the same claim Jor takes to the witchcraft coven as an excuse to eliminate Shacia. The playwright is negotiating the old marriage system with the new one thereby making a strong statement about its significance in the society. The exchange marriage system is a very old practice in Tiv society, which the British colonialists came to abolish because of its complications. Akpede (2010:2) gives insights into this old and complex system of marriage:

The typical Tiv man used to exchange one of his younger sisters with another fellow Tiv man. This system was called *Yamshe* (exchange marriage). This means that one must have a sister to give to another man as his wife in exchange for the man's sister who also became a wife. The two sisters involved ended up being wives of the two men who conducted the exchange respectively.

This form of marriage describes here was replaced by *Kem kwase* (marriage by bride price) following the abolition of the former by the colonial government.

A similar historical issue is revealed in Gande's *The Rebound*. The use of *kough* (liquid substance) as a judicial system is historical. Interestingly, it is the youth in the community through their leader, Agwaza that recommends this old system of justice, which is later carried out to fish out Koughwua as the killer of Tyona and others in Wanza community.

Akende: People of Wanza, today is the day that has been set aside to determine the cause of Tyona's death. We are all gathered here to break the melon to count the seeds. *Kough* is the symbol of our justice. But before it would be administered, I still want to warn that if any man here is responsible for the death of Tyona, he should step forward. If that is done, we as elders may proffer another solution. The wrath of *Kough* is not merciful on the guilty (pp 45).

The youth here object to the usual practice of consulting ineffectual oracles, of which their outcomes are sometimes manipulated. They feel that many of such oracles have proved nothing in the past and they would not take chances in seeking justice for their fellow age mate. Even in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*, the use of *Swem Karagbe* (the Tiv ancestral land) is a historical fact used in the play as a metaphor of leadership and justice in the society. As the Chief Nyamazenga, the king of Awana community states:

Chief Nyamazenga: My father spoke of a place he claimed was our original home, where our god dwelt, and still dwells. My people, if anybody should desire leadership, he must go to *Swem Karagbe*, our original home (pp 502).

The trip to *Swem Karagbe*, the original home as a price for leadership sends home a message of sacrifice, servitude, and adequate knowledge of the people's culture and tradition as yardstick for good leadership and governance.

The Tiv folkloric forms used in these plays reflect the cultural and tradition of the people. The harness of epic traditions, the use of the narrators to tell the story with the participation of the audience and the juxtaposition of history and folklore to reflect on the contemporary society all attest to recourse to the worldview of the people. Moreover, this has underscores the imperative of the plays as media through which folkloric traditions are communicated to the audience as members of the society.

However, the play as a medium of communicating culture offers more tendencies of effectively asserting culturally relevant education. The play as a theatrical medium is a melting pot of culture. One of the fundamental ingredients of culture therefore is language. In as much as the three plays explore the basic forms of Tiv folklore as vehicle of

communicating cultural education to the people, the question of accessibility still lingers. For instance, Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*, Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* and Gande's *The Rebound* have all been written in English language, which is a foreign language. However, the folkloric traditions harnessed in the plays are rooted in the Tiv cultural background. Invariably, the language of their transmission is originally Tiv. The question is thereby arisen as to how the people's folklore be effectively communicated with a view to achieving cultural propagation, preservation and education in a foreign language? As wa Thiog'o (1986:16) argues, "Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture: Culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values..." What language can then carries the Tiv culture from which folklore is rooted to the people, if not the indigenous language. In addition, in as much as translations may not be entirely the same with the original languages, there are no translated versions of the three plays known to the researcher for easy accessibility to the audience. This is therefore a significant lacuna in the use of playwriting by Africans and Nigerians in particular as medium of communicating cultural education. I agree with wa Thion'o's submission that,

We African writers are bound by our calling to do for our languages what Spencer, Milton and Shakespeare did for English; What Pushkin and Tolstoy did for Russian; indeed what all writers in world history have done for their languages by meeting the challenge of creating a literature in them, which process later opens the languages for philosophy, science, technology and all other areas of human creative endeavours (1986:28).

The language component as a means of communication here is essential to achieving the playwright's objectives. Giving the fact that playwriting as one of the fundamental arts of the theatre combines in a play both literature to read and performance to watch. A popular language of the people if deploys could assert cultural information more than a foreign language which in the words of Ukala renders the message inaccessible to the audience not

only by a difficult diction, but also through highly imaginative yet alienating distortions of their source material, an unusual abstraction of characters, or complexity and strangeness of structure (1996:285). The Tiv *Kwagh-hir* puppet theatre for instance, originated from the old storytelling tradition, and is made popular by the use of indigenous technology and artistry. It however remains virtually oral. A documentation of the numerous *Kwagh-hir* plays into a single script in Tiv language and translation of such a script into English for performance would go a long way in achieving cultural preservation and propagation, which translates to education. The code switching as a bilingual or linguistic variable the playwrights in focus here adopt cannot achieve the same results the use of the indigenous language and translation would do.

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The use of Tiv folklore in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe* (1979), Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* (2002) and Gande's *The Rebound* (2012) as vehicle for cultural education presents a number of artistic dimensions or approaches aimed at driving home the playwrights' messages. The manner of usage of folklore in the plays, which can be ascribed to Tiv culture and tradition, underscores the importance or significance as well as the effectiveness of those folk traditions in the lives of the people.

This means that identification of such folkloric traditions that are peculiar to the people, their significance and how effective they are used by the playwrights provides the focus for the researcher. In other words, in the light of this, the background of this study has been given to underscore the nature of folklore as veritable tool of cultural education through the medium of play.. The need to ascertain the adequate use of folklore in a number of modern plays written from Tiv cultural background, and how they serve as media to facilitate cultural education has been brought out in the analysis of the data obtained from these plays.

The data therefore, elicited the composite use of Tiv folklore in the selected plays. This composite use ranges from Tiv religious worldview to other socio-cultural practices built around myths of *Swem*, (Tiv ancestral land) *Tsav*, (Witchcraft) *Kough*, (Liquid concoction) *Adzov* (non-human spirits) in relation to *Aondo* the supreme God. The religious myths are dramatised side by side with socio-cultural events like dance ceremonies and celebrations of prestigious institutions like marriage and fame thereby bringing to bear the imperative of these materials to achieving cultural education.

5.2 Findings

The research, which is aimed at determining the effective use of folklore as vehicle for cultural education, has come out with a number of interesting findings. Generally, the research found through data analysis conspicuous use of folklore peculiar to Tiv people in the three plays. Specifically, the findings in this regard are summarised as follows:

- (1) The three drama texts significantly use Tiv folklore as composite phenomenon. That is, the researcher found the use of different dimensions of Tiv religious myths, such as *Swem* (ancestral location), *Adzov/Mbatarev* (non-human spirits), *Tsav* (witchcraft), *Kor* (concoction) and dance festival or celebration. These basic forms have been used in all the three plays. In other words, *Swem*, *Adzov* or *Mbatarev* as religious myths are used in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*. The *Adzov* or *Mbatarev* are portrayed in the play as spirits that interact with man to help or sometimes hinder him from achieving his aim. The spirits are categorised into two; the *Ajikokos* and *Mammywata*, being the male and female spirits respectively. To go to *Swem* land therefore, you must have the retinue of these spirits to contend with in the course of the journey. This explains why the three politicians in the play fail to return from *Swem* land except their slave guide. In Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*, *Swem* as religious myths is the main stay of the dramatic plot. *Tsav*, found in Gbilekaa's *Prized Chichens are not Tasty* and Gande's *The Rebound* is characterised by two main metaphors or tendencies; *Iyuhe* (jealousy) and *Ichia* (premise). Jor-Gbaikyom out of jealousy for Shacia is capitalising on the premise or ground that Shacia's father owns him a (sister) female ward. It is the reason he uses to attack Shacia, his enemy. Koughwua on the other hand, relies on this similar tendency to invoke evil on Tyona in *The Rebound*. After exhibiting a jealous disposition towards Tyona, he capitalises on the premise that the farmland Tyona works on belonged to him as the eldest member of the family. The recommendation of *Kor* as traditional adjudication of justice,

which Koughwua falls victim of in *The Rebound* is another myth found to be used in this regard. On the other hand, dance is used for celebration in all the plays. It is also an instrument of interaction of the people in the plays.

- (2) The basic folkloric forms used in the three plays form the respective subject matters or plots of the three plays. Through the use of folklore, important themes have been communicated to the audience. For example, *Swem* myth and the spirit world have been used to project important themes such as The Price of Leadership, Respect for One's Tradition, and Indiscipline as the bane of Success amongst others in Hagher's *Swem Karagbe*. Gbilekaa's *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* with the use of *Tsav* brings to bear the themes of Man's Evil machination to fellow man, The quest for honour and prestige, The young verses the old, amongst others. Just like the use of *Tsav* and *Kor* in Gande's *The Rebound* asserts the themes of Evil, Honour and prestige, Justice, and The young verses the old. The folkloric forms in these plays are found to be vehicles of communicating those socio-political and cultural themes in relation to cultural education.
- (3) The use of connotative names of characters, proverbs, occupation amongst others serves in the plays as complementary folk elements that compliment the epic stories dramatised in the plays. The facts that the plots of the plays are built on basic folkloric forms, aspects like proverbs, allegorical names, amongst others are not functioning on their own but are helping to compliment the basic forms.
- (4) Moreover, the research found the deployment of folktale narratives as a technique of telling the story to the audience through the eyes of the narrator. This tendency propels the juxtaposition of historical facts with given folklore tradition to negotiate history with the present and thereby underscoring the contemporary relevance of the dramatic texts. *Swem* is both of historical and mythic significance. It is in this light a historical fact connecting the ancestral origin of the Tiv people, being a place their fathers migrated

from to settle in the present day Benue valley. In *Prized Chickens are not Tasty* the use of *Yamshe* (exchange marriage) as ground upon which the *Tsav* practice is predicated is a historical fact that is reminisces its attendant complexities. *Kor* (concoction) practice, which, appears in *The Rebound*, is also historical. It reminisces the cruel protruding of stomach and eventual death of its victims before modernisation eroded its practice. Notably, the deployment of these historical facts through storytelling or narrative indicates the impartation pattern by the older generation to the younger generation cultural values for the purpose of education.

- (5) Another interesting finding in this regard is the use of bilingualism or linguistic variables in the plays. There are applications of code switching involving English (dominantly used) and the Tiv (minimally used) languages. The code switching as a linguistic variable the playwrights have deployed is a deliberate technique to domesticate the messages of the plays. However, this may not achieve as much results as the use of the indigenous language would do. This is therefore a significant gap found in the three plays as media of communicating cultural education. As wa Thiong'o (1986:18) submits, "Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other". The language component as a means of communication here is essential to achieving the playwright's objectives. A popular language of the people if deploys could assert cultural information more than a foreign language which in the words of Ukala render the message inaccessible to the audience not only by a difficult diction, but also through highly imaginative yet alienating distortions of their source material, (1996:285).

5.3 Conclusion

There is no denying the fact that cultural materials that constitute folklore are significant in the society, in that they serve as the yardstick or parameters of measuring the people's

identity and social interaction, governed by their worldview. Folktales, or storytelling traditions, myths, legends, superstitions, artifacts, and other culturally based occupational folklores are inherent in virtually every society. However, the significance of folkloristic traditions varies from one cultural society to another. This is because there are peculiar ways of interpreting and domesticating their uses and values. Tiv folklore in this light is understood base on certain peculiarities. These include the myth regarding their origin, which focuses on *Swem* Mountains and how this ancestral land is woven around religious beliefs and legendary. The other is based on understanding of their mode and events regarding social interactions such as ceremonies and rituals and rites as well as their significance. The use of language and other artistic styles would clearly tilt toward making profound statement with the cultural materials.

Owing to this fact, an artistic and creative writer who harnesses these cultural materials to create a play ought to do so with due recourse to the crux of the folk culture to provoke great appeal on the people. The efficacy of the play as a medium is imperative in cultural preservation, propagation, and transmission, which culminates in cultural education. The crux of Tiv folklore used in the selected plays therefore presents a wholly assemblage of cultural elements, woven into history, religion, and performance capable of provoking cultural reawakening which is needed in our contemporary society. The partial and isolated use of folk materials at the expense of epic traditions that are rooted in our culture and tradition would not yield much result that would translate to cultural reorientation. This has been clearly demonstrated in the analysis of data from the three plays and attendant findings in this research.

5.3.1 Recommendations

Owing to the findings of this research regarding the use of folklore in the three plays to achieve cultural education, which endeared the society to development, the research recommends the following:

1. Playwrights in their creative enterprise must do a comprehensive study of their cultural environment milieu in order to portray the actual ideals of that society. More importantly, if the playwright chooses to base his or her creative work on traditional practices or epic stories, adequate research is more desirable to harness the right cultural materials that would be true reflection of the tradition thereby capable of achieving cultural education. As Adelugba (2003:157) rightly opines “we have to wake up to the truth of the matter-which is that we are not isolated from the world; we are part of the world; our productions should continue to stress cultural authenticity, cultural relevance...”
2. The significance of cultural symbols, rituals, rites and other material and non-material cultures is of upper most importance. Failure to deploy them in such a manner that would not misrepresent a given culture is essential. Therefore, cultural institutions should commission or sponsor talented playwrights to research and document our epic traditions like Tiv Swem Karagbe, *Tsav* Institution, Exchange Marriage System, *Kough* Judicial System and so on in order to promote cultural education. In the same vein, I recommend that a documentation of the numerous *Kwagh-hir* plays into a single script in Tiv language and translation of such a script into English be done for performance in order to achieve cultural preservation and propagation, which translates to education.

3. Plays written in the realm of folklore such as these should be at the forefront of cultural studies in our schools. In addition, such plays if first written in English should be translated into the languages of the target communities for easy and more enduring accessibilities. This will enhance the need for more concerted efforts to research into our folk traditions to harness our cultural sensibilities as theatricalities for dramatisation in the play texts. This will therefore bring about effective use of our folklore traditions to achieve culturally relevant education and development.

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Interview with Professor Sammani Sani, Director of Centre for the Study of Nigerian Languages, History and Folklore, Bayero University, Kano on Monday 29th June, 2015.