OFI ANYIDOHO: Perhaps we should take it up from the latest thing that you've been involved in. I understand you just came back yesterday from Harare, Zimbabwe. What was the programme there?

KWAW ANSAH: Well, UNESCO felt there is a need for African film-makers who have not attained international status to share ideas with people who have actually been in the field for quite a while. So a three-week workshop was organized for me to take them through script designing and script development and then have a demonstration, a field demonstration. We finished with a nice product entitled The Mistress of the Game. Of course, the original title was what we called Double Dealing. That was the working title. At the end of the day you find the most appropriate title, which happened to be The Mistress of the Game. It was quite interesting.

What has participation been like? From where? Who...?
Film-makers from all over Zimbabwe were invited to Harare. People who have been working with various media, from television to films.

So this was actually limited to Zimbabwe?
Zimbabwe, yes. We had twenty participants.

You began by saying that "UNESCO felt." Does that suggest that the proposal for this came from UNESCO, or it was originated by someone in Zimbabwe and then UNESCO's sponsorship was sought for it?
Well. I think there is a unit that has been organizing workshops for film producers.

A unit of UNESCO?

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1 The interview was conducted on December 1, 1993.

© FonTomFrom: Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film, ed. Kofi Anyidoho & James Gibbs (Matatu 21–22; Amsterdam & Atlanta GA: Editions Rodopi, 2000).
UNESCO, Zimbabwe. And there have been a number of film-makers from the world outside Africa, you know, and I think it got to a time when the African film-makers felt that the sort of interaction they were having was not quite relevant to their situation and they would prefer an African film-maker to come and share his experience with them. That’s how come I was invited.

*Well, it’s interesting that we’re starting on this note, because obviously there is something very useful happening here. But there is also the question of initiative. Who should be organizing these things? Of course, UNESCO is partly run on our money, so we have every right to be beneficiaries of whatever they have to share. And the idea of an African film-maker being the one to lead these workshops, I think, is an important point we can come back to in our conversation. But I’d like to take it from there and suggest for instance that, given what is happening in Ghana now, is there any way we can make a case for that kind of workshop here?*

I am not sure why UNESCO has not thought of having such a workshop in Ghana. Perhaps because Ghana is considered as one of the old participants in the industry; and, you know, Zimbabwe attained its independence not quite long ago. Even during colonial days, we had this film unit where Ghanaians had already been trained formally to handle various positions. [Zimbabweans] had not had such opportunities. So that is why UNESCO felt the need for them to have this kind of experience. Now, I know in recent times the Friedrich Ebert Foundation has tried to organize a workshop by inviting Germans to come and run it. But I would have also thought that’s just like what happened in Zimbabwe, because you realize that the only thing that would benefit the Ghanaian film-maker is the classroom thing. But when it comes to the field experience, I think the local film-makers’ experience would be more relevant to our situation. In fact, at the last workshop which was organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, to which I was invited as a resource person because *Heritage* was used as the workshop resource material, the participants also raised the same issue.

*That’s, of course, part of the larger syndrome of the experts always coming from outside, being paid big money; and our local experts are, of course, not considered to be of world stature. I raised the issue of the need for something like that for Ghana specifically because of this new phenomenon, the video film movement. But before we come to that, I’d like to raise a point that comes out of the explanation you just gave. It has often been alleged that Ghana has extensive resources both in terms of personnel and infrastructure, perhaps more than any other country on the continent, in black Africa. Is this true?*