

KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI

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KNUST

THE ANLO WORK SONG AS A LITERARY PIECE

A Dissertation Presented to the Department of English, College of Art and Social Sciences, in  
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of a Master of Philosophy (English)

Degree.

BY:

GOKA YAYRA

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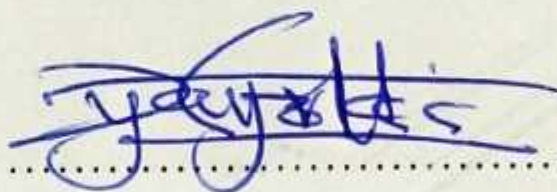


## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, except for references which I have duly acknowledged, this essay is the result of my own research and that this dissertation has neither in part nor whole been presented elsewhere for another degree.

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DATE



GOKA YAYRA


(STUDENT)

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I declare that I have supervised the student in undertaking this study, and I confirm that he has my permission to present it for assessment.

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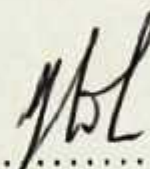


PROF. S.K. OKLEME

(SUPERVISOR)

19/04/13

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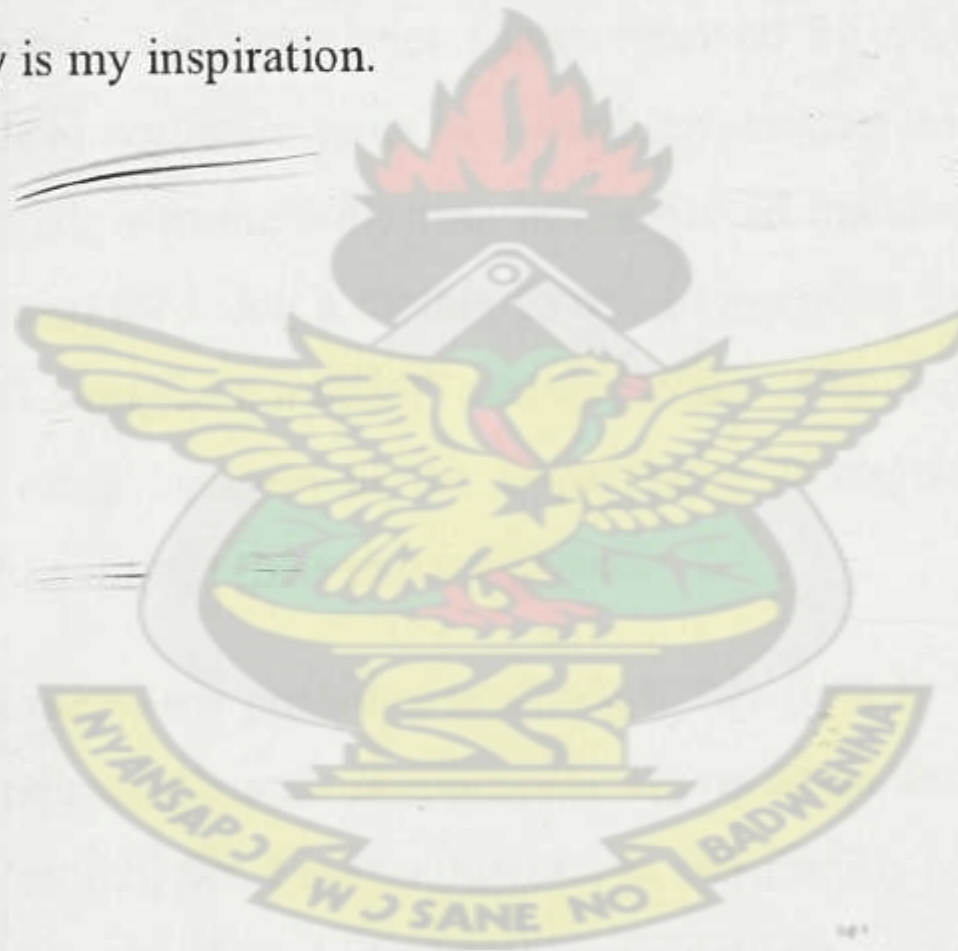
MR. K.O.O. ARMAH

(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to the cherished memory of my parents, Christian K. Goka and Christine A.

Asilevi, whose memory is my inspiration.





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## ABSTRACT

Anlo work songs continue to be sung by workers who are engaged in various activities. These songs are believed to impact those engaged in the activity as well as observers in several ways. For example, it is believed that the songs help reduce the stress of work, and inspire the worker to work harder. Apparently, the songs' rhythms alone may not be able to make these impacts. The ideas presented in these songs make a greater impact. In presenting these ideas, however, we realise that the composers of these work songs employ various literary techniques and style. Hence, the way the audience can adequately appreciate the value of these songs is when the songs are appreciated as literary pieces. The study, therefore, presents an examination of the Anlo work song as a literary piece.

The study reveals that Anlo work songs, like other literary works, particularly poetry, have subject matters, themes, style and language. The study identifies, for example, figures of speech, imagery, diction, mood, tone, suspense, and other literary techniques, as essential literary features employed by the texts of the Anlo work songs that have been studied. Based on these findings, it has been established that Anlo work songs are literary pieces that need to be appreciated as such.

The researcher, therefore, believes that there is the need for Anlo work songs, especially their texts, to be taught and studied as literary pieces. Also, since work songs have been identified as important literary pieces, efforts must be made to collect and document those that are undocumented, as a way of preserving them. These songs, which are originally presented in Ewe, also need to be translated to make them understandable to people who do not understand Ewe. In a nutshell, important African literature such as Anlo work songs must be promoted.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has been an important aspect of the culture of most people. This observation lends credence to the fact that literature has much value to society. It has, therefore, remained useful to most societies. Talking about poetry, for example, Dako *et al* (2005) indicate: "So far as we know there is no people that has not developed a form of poetry".<sup>1</sup> What it means is that every culture has some form of literature that it places value on. We can refer to African Literature, American Literature, Asian Literature and European Literature, which shows that even every continent in the world has its own literature.

African literature, which is the literature of the African people, has particularly caught the interest of many people, especially researchers over the years. One of such researchers who took keen interest in learning about African literature is Ruth Finnegan. After her research into various African literary forms, Finnegan wrote the book, Oral Literature in Africa, which has remained an important reference source to most researchers, to present the findings she has made about some African literary forms. One factor that makes the study of African literature an area of interest to many is how the various forms of literature found in the African culture have direct impact on and close connection with the lives of the people.

In fact, literature has remained an important aspect of African culture and tradition long before the coming of the white man and the introduction of formal education to Africa. However, literature in Africa, before the introduction of formal education, remained oral in nature. It was usually sung, recited and told or narrated. Today, fortunately, formal education has made it



possible for most of these originally oral literary pieces to be documented. The documentation of some of these oral African literary works has helped to promote the study and appreciation of the literary value of these works, especially in schools.

Ghanaian Literature, which is the literature of the Ghanaian people, is African Literature. In the culture and tradition of the Ghanaian people, we find various literary forms. Examples are stories (usually told by the fireside), songs, poetry, and riddles. Most of these literary forms, however, seem to be losing their popularity and relevance among most people today, and this can be attributed to factors such as modernism, western civilisation, Eurocentricism and westernisation. In fact, these factors have made many Africans less interested in some of their African values, including some of their literature, and to disregard the value of most of these African literary forms. In Ghana, for example, although a number of Ghanaian or African stories continue to be told and taught in schools, the culture of story-telling (by the fireside), which was commonly seen in most households, seems to have been lost among the people, including even those in the rural communities. This is an example of how African literature, particularly Ghanaian literature, is continuing to lose its value and is therefore making less impact on the people.

However, despite the fact that some Ghanaian literary forms continue to lose their value and popularity, one literary form whose value is continually recognised by most people as a result of which it is still used by the people are work songs. Work songs remain an important element in the culture of some Ghanaians. These songs are commonly sung by some people as they perform various activities. The Anlos of Ghana in particular sing work songs as an accompaniment to the various activities they perform. Apart from the Anlos, work songs are also found in the culture of the Gas, the Fantes and the Frafras. The culture of singing at work can be considered as largely universal since it is found in most cultures. Walt Whitman's poem:



*I Hear America Singing*

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand  
singing on the steamboat deck,  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he  
stands,  
The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at  
the noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of  
the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day – at night the party of young fellows,  
robust, friendly,  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs,

for example, vividly presents the culture of various workers in America singing various songs as they work.

Although work songs continue to hold much value to the Anlos generally, the impact of the songs is mainly felt by the people who sing them as they perform the various activities. Sometimes also, persons listening to these songs may also experience the impact of the songs. This is an indication that a lot more needs to be done to further promote this important Ghanaian literary form in order to enable it make a greater impact on many more people. The researcher believes that one of the ways to promote some of these important Ghanaian literary forms is by making them become recognised as literary pieces. As they are recognised as literary pieces and taught to many more people, their relevance would be effectively realised. It is important that Anlo work songs are made to serve more purposes apart from serving as a source of delight and motivation for workers who sing them during work. Matthew Arnold, in his essay, "The Study of Poetry," states that:



We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us.<sup>2</sup> (260)

The extra value of work songs, ultimately, can be realized through the study and the teaching of the work song texts as literary pieces. In this research, therefore, we set out to examine how the work song of the Anlos can be considered as a literary piece. The researcher believes that one way to ensure that the value of the work song is received by the people adequately is when the work song is recognised essentially as a literary piece that is worth studying and can or should be taught to people. Indeed, it is when these work songs are taught and studied as literary pieces that their literary values can be realised fully by the people.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

This study presents the Anlo work song as a literary piece that has enormous literary value for which reason it is worth studying. One objective of this study is to promote African literary forms, which are continuing to lose their usefulness, by giving them value and recognition. In other words, the research is intended to revive and reinforce the relevance of Anlo work songs in even today's world. This will be done by demonstrating how the literary qualities of the work songs lend them the capacity to significantly impact society just like other major literary works such as the novel, the drama and poetry, which have been recognised by many, over the years, as important tools that have much literary value to society. Consequently, the research will show the literary value of Anlo work songs particularly the song texts that will be examined in this thesis.



This research is further intended to project Anlo, and for that matter African cultural values. This objective will be achieved by stressing the need for important African cultural values like Anlo work songs to be recognised as important literary pieces that can be used to transform society.

Additionally, through this study, Anlo work songs, which have been projected, will be presented as another important area to which researchers need to direct their attention and efforts due to the relevance of these work songs to society. Of course, there have been several research works that have been done on other African cultural aspects, but not enough attention can be said to have been given to Anlo work songs. Therefore, through this study, which brings to light the literary value of Anlo work songs by placing this cultural value in the limelight, the attention of researchers especially will be drawn to Anlo work songs.

Also, as the study draws attention to the relevance of Anlo work songs, it will encourage more efforts to be made to preserve this important cultural value. For instance, it will encourage the documentation of most of the work songs which still remain undocumented, which makes them risk being lost unless they are efficiently handed down to the younger generations most of whom unfortunately now show little or no interest in most of these African values.

The study will further encourage the teaching and learning of Anlo work songs, and for that matter other important African literary forms.

### **1.3 Justification**

As the world develops, literary traditions also develop. Therefore more work needs to be done to develop African literary traditions such as work songs so that they can also be brought to the level of other literary forms that have received considerable promotion or formalisation as a result of which they are considered important literary works that make significant additions to



knowledge and other forms of human development. This is important especially since most of these traditional literary works which were mainly oral and were preserved only in the memory of the people have seen inadequate development in terms of documentation; therefore they need to be promoted in the written form.

This research serves as a step towards bringing this needed promotion to Anlo work songs. In the study, for example, a number of Anlo work songs, which have remained in the indigenous language, Ewe, will be translated into English. The translation of these texts, for instance, makes it possible for the texts to impact and appeal to not only those who understand Ewe but also people who are not speakers of Ewe. Nketia notes that "Concluding his essay on 'Music in the Gold Coast,' which appeared in the *Gold Coast Review*, W.E. Ward suggests that 'if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art more magnificent than the world has yet seen'"<sup>3</sup>. W.E. Ward's suggestion could have been drawn from his conviction about the effectiveness and relevance of African music generally. This suggestion, therefore, justifies the fact that Anlo work songs, among other African music, need further development.

It is equally important for the relevance of African cultural values to be discovered. These cultural values must then be made to continually make the notable contributions they have made to human life and society, especially in the past. This is important because the past must not be allowed to go with important traditional values such as Anlo work songs which are of relevance to society even today. This research, therefore, seeks to identify the relevance of Anlo work songs to society, and this is an effort directed towards the preservation of Anlo work songs as one of the important African cultural values that are worth preserving.



Furthermore, this research is relevant especially since it remains useful to many tasks or activities such as crop production, fishing, mining, carpentry, cleaning, gardening, sports, building and construction, just to mention a few. The researcher believes that individuals who engage in these activities, after work songs have been taught to them as literary pieces while they were in school, stand to benefit significantly from this research as their attention would be drawn to how the literary qualities of work songs help to impact their various activities and bring about efficiency. This way, the people who sing these songs to accompany their various activities will be guided by the illustrations in this study to obtain the full impacts of the songs they sing. Demonstrating the impact work songs make on Limba farmers, for example, Finnegan writes:

The drummer stands in front, beating his drum and leading the song. Next follow those who are scattering the seed. And finally the hoers come, perhaps sixteen or twenty of them, sometimes fifty or more, stretched across the hillside in a long line singing in reply to the leader. The whole line raise their hoes simultaneously, then strike together at the ground three times before the up stroke and pause as the hoes are raised once more – a marked rhythm of *dig, dig, dig, up; one, two, three, pause*, with strong emphasis on the first down-stroke. The beat and song keep the line exactly together, and there is a feeling of competition and excitement which keeps all in their places with no falling behind or faltering. In this way the huge farm gets hoed with incredible speed, and the Limba themselves point to the importance of the songs in adding both efficiency and pleasure. Their joy in the songs is very obvious (they even look forward to this season of exhausting work), and many of them make semi-dancing steps as they progress with their hoes up the hill”<sup>4</sup>. (232-33)

Ultimately, the impact of the work song on these farmers as identified by Finnegan, for example, is made by literary qualities such as rhythm, repetition, assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, parallelism, diction, meter, among others. It is, therefore, important to illustrate how these important literary qualities inherent in work songs, which many people tend to overlook, can help society better realise the literary value of these songs.



## 1.4 Research Questions

As we tried to identify how the Anlo work song can be considered as a literary piece, and how it can be taught and studied in that capacity and used to impact society, we asked ourselves a number of questions whose answers helped us identify this. First and foremost, we asked what qualities the Anlo work song must have for it to be considered as a literary piece. This guided us in identifying the literary qualities inherent in the work song texts that have been selected for the study. Of course, this question forms the thesis statement of the study.

Then, importantly, we were interested in finding out how the various literary elements in the song texts collectively bring the texts' impact to the reader. This also helped in the illustration of how the composers of these work songs have consciously employed various literary techniques to make work songs achieve the intended impact.

The next research question that helped us identify and appreciate the literary value of Anlo work songs is how Anlo work songs impart people. This question enabled the researcher to answer the question how songs can impart readers, performers and listeners, for which reason we can say that the work song texts indeed have literary value.

## 1.5 Research Methodology

A number of writings have been produced on African literature. Therefore, to ascertain the findings in this study, the researcher made reference to presentations in books as well as articles and essays from the internet. Other written works about the Anlos or Ewes and their culture, which provide us in-depth knowledge about the people whose songs are being studied, were also consulted. Knowing about the people and the values they have for work songs, for example,



afforded us an understanding of how the songs are expected to impact people. This helped us in further appreciating the literary value of the work song texts.

Literary qualities such as rhythm remain important to the research. Also, the actions that are inspired by the various literary elements inherent in the song texts are of relevance to the research. As a result, the researcher visited places such as homes, farms, beaches and other work places where work songs are usually sung to accompany the performance of the various activities. This offered the researcher a thorough understanding and appreciation of the performance of Anlo work songs. The researcher's presence on the grounds where the work songs are performed gave him a direct appreciation of the impact of the songs on the performers and other people present as the singing of the work songs and the performance of activities are on-going. This enabled the researcher to show how the literary qualities of the texts affect people.

Finally, elders or people who are well versed in the culture of the Anlos were consulted to share their understanding and experiences of Anlo work songs, among other Anlo cultural values, and also to assist in explaining some of the important cultural elements embedded in the song texts. The explanations of such cultural elements or ideas in the original song texts aided the investigator especially in doing a more accurate translation of the original Ewe texts into English. This knowledge also made it possible for the researcher to better appreciate these texts, carefully examining the various literary elements that together lend these texts literary value.

## **1.6 Literature Review**



A couple of works have been written or presented by some writers and researchers on aspects of Ewe culture which are worth reviewing in this study because of their relationship or otherwise with the study.

Firstly, in his book, *Numenyaduwo kple Nyadurɔɖɔawo* (Literature: Oral and Written), Abadzivor identifies the relevance of the oral literature of the Ewes of Ghana in general. He also talks about the values of Ewe work songs. The focus of this work, however, has not been on the literary qualities of these works which give them literary value.

Also, in his *Ewe Numenyaduwo*, Osei-Tutu also presents some work songs of the Ewes which have served importantly as materials for this research. However, like Abadzivor, very little effort is seen to have been made by the author to illustrate the literary qualities inherent in the works which together qualify them to be considered as literary pieces.

Furthermore, in his Masters dissertation, "Want the History? Listen to the Music! Historical Evidence in Anlo Ewe Musical Practices: A Case Study of Traditional Song Texts", which was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh in 2005, Gbolonyo examines Anlo Ewe music texts. However, his focus has been on how these texts present the history of the people. His analysis, however, has been done mainly from the musical point of view, where he seeks to show how the musical elements inherent in the songs help present the history of the people in the songs.

The above review makes us realise the relevance of this research, which examines the literary qualities and techniques inherent in Anlo work songs. This is because writers usually employ various literary techniques which when we fail to pay attention to, we will not be able to fully appreciate the literary value of most of their works. Anlo work songs also employ literary



techniques which are worth examining, and this will help readers approach these works as literary pieces which contain literary elements that must be observed critically. Unfortunately, the works identified in the review have failed to show this.

### 1.7 Outline of Chapters

The thesis is presented in four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, and it entails the background to the study, which is a statement of what informs the researcher's decision to conduct the study. The introduction also contains the objectives of the study, which is a highlight of what the research is intended to achieve. The introduction again presents a justification of the study, which is an explanation of how relevant it is conducting this research. This is followed by the research questions, which are questions that were asked during the investigation. Next in the introduction is the research methodology which outlines the various methods the researcher adopted in his investigation. This is then followed by the literature review which is a review of works that have been produced which fall within the area of the research. Finally, the introduction to the study also presents the outline of chapters, that is, what constitutes the individual chapters of the thesis.

In the second chapter, we will be looking briefly at the history of the Ewes. This, the researcher believes, will make it easier for us to better identify the people whose work songs are being studied. The people whose works are being studied and their background remain an essential part of the study. Again, since we are looking at occupational songs, we will also, in this chapter, consider some major occupations found among the Anlos. This helps us to identify and appreciate the various tasks or occupations whose performances are accompanied usually by the singing of these work songs which we will be examining. We will then continue to investigate



the values or perceptions of the Anlos about work. Over here, for example, we will be looking at the Anlos' perceptions about values such as hard work, bravery, creativity, being responsible, dutifulness, as against laziness and being irresponsible. Furthermore, we will also be analysing the primary responsibilities of Anlo men, women and children. All these will enhance our understanding and appreciation of particularly the various themes in these songs. After we have examined the different occupations of the Anlos and the Anlos' perceptions and values about work, we will continue to examine the different types of work songs found among the Anlos. This will then be followed by a brief study of the performance of Anlo work songs. Here, we will be investigating the specific moments when these work songs are performed, the people who perform the songs, their appearance as well as the actions or gestures that accompany the performance.

The next chapter, which is the third chapter, then presents a study of the various themes presented by the song texts. This examination will be done bearing in mind the fact that the literary style of these work song texts helps readers to adequately obtain the themes of the texts.

The fourth chapter continues to critically examine the language and style of the work song texts which have been sampled for this study. Over here, we will be looking at literary elements such as figures of speech, diction, mood, tone, rhyme, and other literary techniques which have been used in the song texts which give them literary value.

Then finally, to conclude our study, we will sum up the whole argument and recommend ways readers, for that matter society, can be taught to identify and appreciate the literary value of most of these work songs in order that they will be adequately impacted by the songs.



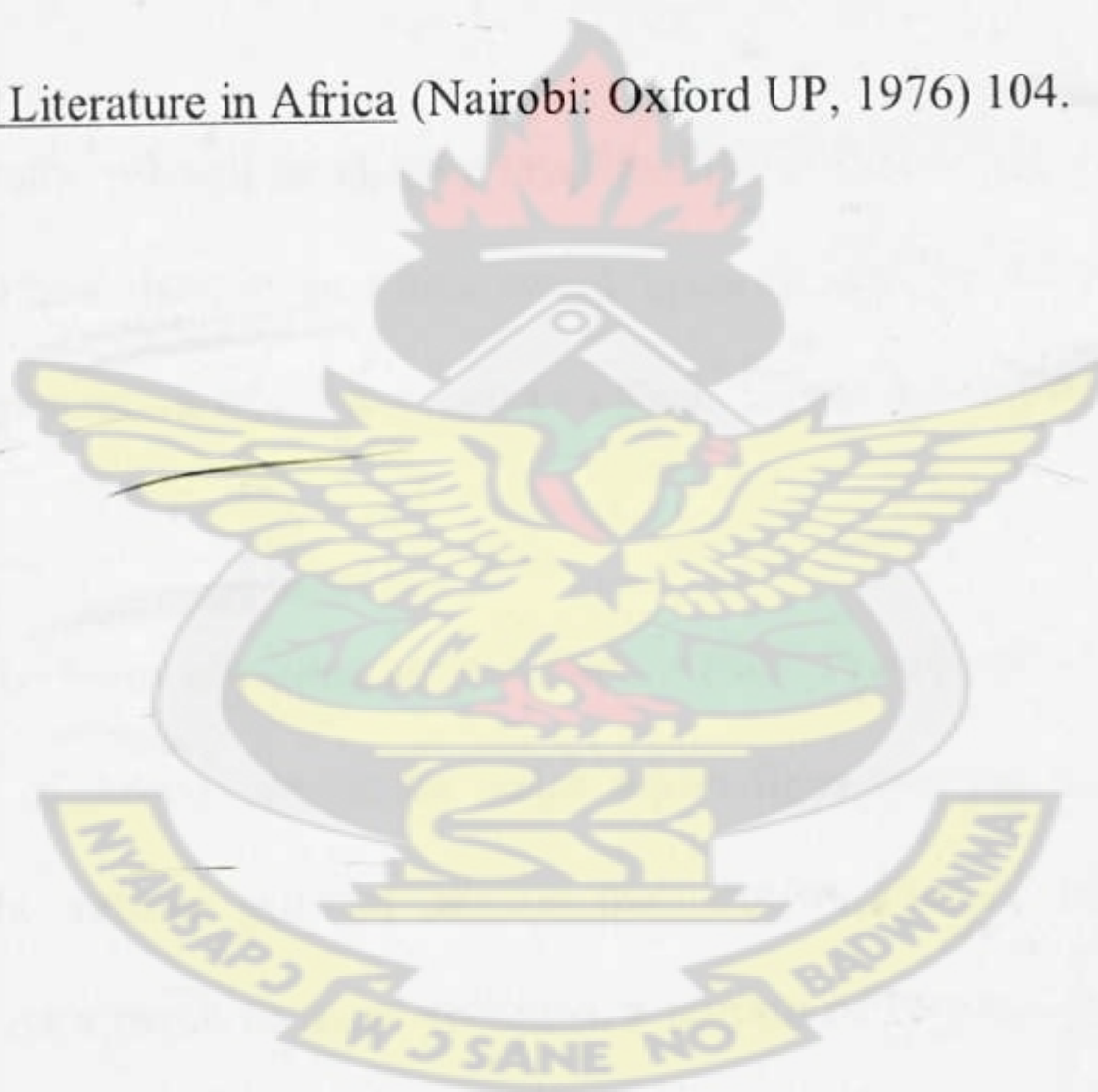
## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Kari Dako, *et al*, An Introduction to Language and the Language of Literature (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2005) 29.

<sup>2</sup> D.J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera, eds. "The Study of Poetry": English Critical Texts – 16<sup>th</sup> Century to 20<sup>th</sup> Century (London: Oxford UP, 1962) 260.

<sup>3</sup> J.H. Kwabena Nketia, The Music of Africa (London: Victor Gollance Ltd, 1986) 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 104.





## CHAPTER TWO

The previous chapter is an introduction to the study, where we looked at what informs the researcher's decision to conduct the study, what the research is intended to achieve, how relevant it is conducting this research, some questions that were asked during the investigation, the various methods the researcher adopted in his investigation, some works that have been produced which fall within the area of the research, and what constitutes the individual chapters of the thesis.

At this point of our study, we will be looking briefly at the history of the Ewes. By establishing who the Ewes are and how they, as an ethnic group, came to exist, we will be fostering a better understanding and appreciation of those aspects of their culture that are to be examined in this paper.

Before colonisation, the Ewes inhabited parts of West Africa. The advent of colonisation saw the compartmentalisation of Africa into nation states where there was the creation of boundaries which demarcated the various African nations into British, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese colonies. As a result of these divisions, a portion of Eweland went to Britain, some went to Germany and another went to France. However, after World War I, the portion of Eweland that went to Germany was given to Britain and France as mandated territories by the League of Nations. As a result, part of the Eweland came under the administration of the British while part was under the administration of the French. Those Ewes that were under British rule are those recognised today as Ghanaian Ewes whereas those that were under French rule are the Togolese and Beninois Ewes. These geographical boundaries which separate them notwithstanding, the Ewes continue to recognise one another as having a common ancestry as a



result of which they maintain their ancestral relations through language, music, dance, religion or beliefs, and so on.

The Ghanaian Ewes were administered by the British as part of the then Gold Coast, now Ghana. The administration of this portion of Eweland under British rule as part of Ghana was, however, brought about by a number of political controversies which necessitated the 1956 plebiscite which was a recommendation of a United Nations Mission that was led by Eduardo Espinoza. It would be recognised here then that the coming of the Ewes into the historical framework of Ghana was not too long ago. In his essay, *"The Land and the People and Their Notion of Criminality"*, Abotchie presents the fact that:

Geographically, the traditional boundaries of the Ewes are demarcated by the River Volta on the west and the Mono River on the east. The land stretches northwards from the Gulf of Guinea to about Lat 7°50' north in the East and Lat 7°20' north in the West. The territory covers the south-eastern quarter of Ghana and the southern half of Togo (Chapman, 1946:79).<sup>4</sup> (9)

The Ewes of Ghana, who occupy the Volta Region, one of the ten regions of Ghana, can be divided into two main groups. There are the Southern Ewes, who are also known as the Anlos, and the Northern Ewes, who are called the Ewedomes (*Ewedomes*). This study, however, focuses on the Southern Ewes or the Anlos.

According to history, the Anlos came to settle along the vast beaches of the Atlantic Ocean somewhere in the 15th Century, before the arrival of the colonialists, following a mysterious escape from their wicked king, Torgbui Agorkorli in Notsie. Ewe oral tradition maintains that when the Anlos reached what is presently known as "Anloga", their leader Torgbui Wenya, who was old, realised he had limited strength and energy to continue the journey. He therefore said to his subjects, *"Nye ya menlo; afi adeke yiye mega le nyunye o"* which literally means "I have



coiled; I cannot go any further". Since the others could not afford to leave him behind, they decided to settle there and call the place "*Anloga* (Anloga)" which means "Big or Main Anlo".

As noted by Abotchie in his essay, "*The Land and the People and Their Notion of Criminality*", "The Anlo comprise fifteen clans which include the *Lafe*, *Amlade*, *Adzovia*, *Bate*, *Like*, *Bamee* and *Klevi*. The rest are, *Tovi*, *Tsiame*, *Agave*, *Ame*, *Dzevi*, *Uifeme*, *Xetsofe* and *Blu*. The ancestral homes of all these clans are located at Anloga, the traditional capital, with the exception of the *Xetsofe* whose home is at Tsiame and the *Ame* whose home is Alakple".<sup>5</sup> (9) Anloga today remains the traditional state and the seat of the Anlo King.

The Anlos speak *Anlo(gbe)* which is one of the many dialects of the language of the Ewes, that is *Eve(gbe)* which literally means Ewe language. There are other Ewe dialects such as *Ewedomegbe*, *Mafigbe*, just to mention a few. Despite the differences in the various Ewe dialects which are usually identified in tone, pitch, vocabulary and mode of expression, the Ewe dialects remain quite understandable to the different Ewes.

Having identified or located the Anlos geographically, it is equally relevant that we now examine some of their values and perceptions which will further enhance our understanding of their work songs. The Anlos of Ghana, like other societies or ethnic groups, place much value on some elements in their culture. As such, the people have some perceptions about these things which make them value them. One of such aspects of human life which the Anlos place much value on is (hard) work. Work refers to "Physical or mental effort or activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something".<sup>6</sup> The Anlos therefore engaged in different efforts and activities aimed at producing a result.



The Anlos value work because they believe that work, first and foremost, makes it possible for human beings to make a living. In this respect, work is perceived by the Anlos as a factor that is critical to the survival of humankind. The Anlo culture therefore requires of every Anlo to be hardworking and responsible and make useful contributions that will ensure the survival of mankind. As such, the person who has exhibited these qualities of hard work and responsibility, among other qualities, is honoured by the society. On the other hand, the one who refuses to work is ridiculed by the society as he is considered lazy and irresponsible. Talking about the African culture, Gyekye indicates that “The ethic that hard work is a moral obligation and that human beings should acquire the habit of working hard is understood and practised in traditional African societies”.<sup>7</sup>(102)

The Anlos’ recognition of (hard) work as an important aspect of human survival and existence is evident, for example, in their ways of greeting as well as in their proverbs or other expressions. The Anlo proverb, “*Ne ɲu ke la ɲutsu de wòfoa ba hafi qua nu*” which literally means “When day breaks, a man must work before he eats”, for example, vividly demonstrates the Anlos’ emphasis on (hard) work as the proverb puts work ahead of even food. The idea presented in the proverb is borne out of the understanding of the Anlos that it is through work that food is got and so work must always come first before eating. The Anlos’ value for work, as identified earlier, is also evident in their greetings. When an Anlo meets people who are engaged in some work, he greets them, “*Miawoe le do dzi*” which is an expression of the person’s commendation of the hard work of the people who are engaged in that activity. This value for work may similarly be found in other cultures. Gyekye affirms that among the Akans of Ghana, for example, “When an individual comes upon people at work – whether farming, doing construction, or making cement blocks – he or she would say to them, in the Akan language: ‘*Adwuma, adwuma*’ (Work, work).



The response from those at work would be: '*Adwuma ye*' (Work is good or valuable)".<sup>8</sup> (102) Similarly, God in the Bible stresses hard work and discourages laziness among human beings when He says that the hand that does not work must not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10/Proverbs 21:25). The Anlos therefore value work and encourage hard work among their people.

The Anlos recognise work as a means of livelihood for human beings. Due to the importance Anlos have for work, their culture assigns to every Anlo some work responsibility. Each member of the Anlo society, perhaps with the exception of babies who are not yet walking, is given some work as his or her contribution to the sustenance of the family. Firstly, Anlo men who are regarded as heads as well as breadwinners of the family are required to work or engage in activities whose results will ensure the sustenance of the family. The Anlo men, therefore, undertake major tasks such as farming, hunting, fishing, building, weaving, felling of trees for firewood, and so on. On the other hand, the Anlo woman who plays the supportive role to her husband to ensure the sustenance of the family usually takes care of other tasks in the home while the man is away engaged in other activities to ensure that the family is able to make a living. The Anlo woman has the responsibility of cooking, cleaning, washing, setting the table for meals, just to mention a few. The Anlo woman also has the responsibility of selling the produce on the market. Children, in the Anlo culture, are not left out when it comes to the sharing of work responsibilities in the Anlo culture, since the Anlos hold the view that children must be trained in a manner that they will become hardworking and responsible men and women in the society. As a result, children also perform various tasks to support the efforts of the older people to sustain the family. Often, the girls are seen helping their mothers while the boys assist their fathers. Besides the boys helping their fathers and the girls, their mothers, the Anlo child may equally do any other work assigned him or her by his or her parents or other older people.



The Anlo culture of assigning work responsibilities to individual members – men, women, boys and girls – is portrayed in some of their practices. The Anlos, for example, have a rite called “*Tudedeasi*”, and this rite involves the presentation of a gun to the male child who has attained the puberty age. The presentation of the gun, which is a weapon for hunting, initiates the young male Anlo into manhood. From this time, he is expected, as a man, to work and contribute substantially to the survival of the family. In a similar vein, during “*Gboto*”, which is the puberty rite for the female Anlo, the girl is camped for a period and taken through lessons of how to perform various tasks as a woman by an elderly woman, usually an old lady. As we have seen, the Anlo culture assigns responsibilities to every member of the Anlo community – men, women and children.

We have earlier briefly examined some primary work responsibilities of the Anlo men, women and children. In this section of the thesis, we will be interested in the various works or occupations that are performed by the Anlos.

The Anlos, who place much value on work, engage in several activities. The different tasks performed by the Anlos are collectively expected to serve as means for ensuring the sustenance of human life and existence. Farming, for example, brings food and sometimes income for the family; cooking ensures that there is food for the household to eat to sustain them and to give them the energy to work; washing and cleaning ensure that individuals and their surroundings are clean; and so on. Therefore, the various activities engaged in by the Anlos collectively ensure livelihood.

Some major activities found among the Anlos are farming, animal rearing, fishing, hunting, (basket and “*kente*”) weaving, construction of huts and other structures, and so on. Commenting



on the occupation of the Southern Ewes in his essay, *"The Land and the People and Their Notion of Criminality"*, Abotchie noted that:

Economically, the people are predominantly agricultural, mainly fishers, farmers and animal husbandmen. Wide-scale fishing is carried on by the coastal *Anloawo* and by the riverside *Tonɔuawo*. Intensive subsistence and commercial farming is concentrated along the lagoons and areas with rich soil. For example, shallot farming, mainly a commercial undertaking, is carried on along the littoral. Animal husbandry, involving cattle, pigs, goats, sheep and poultry, also constitutes an important economic activity".<sup>9</sup> (10)

Similarly, Gadzekpo also indicated that:

On the Anlo peninsula onion was chiefly cultivated. Fishing was also a lucrative economic activity on the Ewe Coast and at the southern periphery of the Coastal Plains. Good pasture permitted hunting but there was rearing of cattle too. Salt manufacture was an important economic activity in the lagoon areas. Handicrafts like spinning, weaving, ironwork, pottery, carving, mat-plaiting, leather work, and masonry also brought enough income to the people.<sup>10</sup> (43)

Now, these major activities, which are often found among the Anlos, have other subsidiary tasks associated with them. Fishing, for example, may have other subsidiary tasks such as washing, drying and mending of the fishing net. Hunting, as a major work, may also come with minor tasks such as the proper killing and dressing of the animal that has been brought home as well as the cleaning of the gun and other tools used during this activity. Similarly, farming may also come with the sharpening of the hoes and cutlasses to be used in the performance of this work, the packing of other things to be taken to and used on the farm, as well as the cleaning of the tools and other things used on the farm upon return. Blacksmithing is also another important profession. The blacksmith makes and mends the farming tools. Essentially, the performance of all these activities by the Anlos may be accompanied by the singing of work songs.



Also, among the Anlos, there is what can be referred to as division of labour according to sex. Over here, some kinds of work are usually taken up or performed by the men while some others are usually performed by the women. As pointed out by Gadzekpo in his History of Ghana – Since Pre-history,

Farming, from planting and sowing stages to the harvesting stage, was also done by physical human labour. Even though both men and women engaged in farming activities, there was a clear division of labour between the sexes and sometimes between the main age groups. The felling of trees, clearing of bush, and the preparation of the plots for planting or sowing were done by men because of the physical exertion involved. Sowing, harvesting and carrying the harvest home were areas in which there was no division of labour according to sex or age. In fishing communities along the sea coast the actual fishing was done by the men while the women would buy the catch, for the market. The frying, smoking or drying processes of fish were usually the responsibilities of women. In riverine communities and those along lagoons and ponds, though the actual fishing was a male responsibility, it was engaged in by women too.<sup>11</sup> (60)

Usually, activities which are considered major and tedious are performed by the men while minor or less tedious ones such as washing, cleaning, cooking, fetching of firewood, fetching of water, petty trading (selling), among others, are usually performed by the women and children, even though the women and the children may sometimes support the men in the performance of the major activities such as farming, animal rearing, weaving and sometimes fishing.

Hunting, which has been mentioned earlier as an activity found among the Anlos, may, however, not be considered a major occupation of the Anlos. This is because it is rather an occupation that is more common among the Northern Ewes since they are surrounded mainly by forests and mountains which form the habitats of most animals. But since the Anlos mostly live along the coast (along the seas, rivers and lagoons) and in the desert (on less forest lands), they engage mainly in fishing and farming as their major occupations.



We have looked at some common tasks of the Anlos, and the performance of most of these tasks by the Anlos is usually accompanied by songs. J.H. Nketia, for example, noted that "... some societies make provision for a variety of domestic songs, or encourage the use of songs as an accompaniment to domestic activities".<sup>12</sup> (23)

As has been identified in the earlier section of the study, the Anlos, who place much value on work, engage in different kinds of work as their occupations. As identified earlier, some of the common occupations of the Anlos are farming, animal rearing, fishing, (mat, basket or "*kente*") weaving, and building of huts and other structures. Other activities common among Anlo women especially are washing, cleaning, cooking, fetching of water, fetching of firewood, petty trading or selling, among others. Since the Anlos find pleasure in singing (and dancing), they often sing as they perform these activities. In a paper which was submitted to the University of Pittsburgh, Gbolonyo asserts: "Among the Ewe..., music is everywhere. On any given day, while strolling through a village one may hear... a man singing a work song as he sharpens his machete or cuts down a tree for firewood..."<sup>13</sup> (23) This assertion, for example, shows how singing is an activity common among the Ewes. Similarly, talking generally about work songs in Africa, Finnegan says, "It is well known that manual workers often sing such songs to accompany their hard physical labour".<sup>14</sup> (231) She also identifies that:

There are co-operative songs for hoeing, weeding, mowing, launching a boat, sawing, hauling in fish-nets, pounding, floor-beating, throwing water up from deep wells in a human chain, carrying a chief in his hammock, hanging up beehives, or rubbing animal skins to make them soft; there are domestic and solitary songs for women grinding corn or pounding rice; there are gang songs for pulling trucks, for road work, for factory hands, and for miners.<sup>15</sup> (231)



Indeed, the Anlos have different songs that are variously related to the different work types, especially those considered major tasks. What this means is that among the Anlos, some major tasks have their own special songs that accompany their performance.

As noted by Nketia, "The social occasion on which a musical genre is usually performed or the activity, custom, rite, or festival with which it is associated may lend its name to the related music".<sup>16</sup> (25) As such, most of the various work songs of the Anlos take their names from the activities they accompany. Among the Anlos, therefore, we find work songs such as farming songs ("agbledehawo"), fishing songs ("tɔfodehawo"/ "dɔkplɔhawo"), hunting songs ("adehawo") and war songs ("aɔɔhawo" / "kalehawo"). But there are also those that may be referred to as general work songs. They are general since they are not exclusive to a particular activity but rather they may accompany any activity. These general work songs may be sung by an Anlo who is engaged in any activity, including washing, drying of things, cleaning, sweeping, cooking, grinding of pepper, just to mention a few.

Songs, as we have seen, become an important part of work as they have served as regular accompaniments in the performance of most activities engaged in by the Anlos. This close connection songs have with activities among the Anlos is what makes some of the work songs take their names from the works during which they are sung. The name, "farming songs" or "agbledehawo", for instance, is derived from the activity of farming, which is the activity that these songs accompany. Normally, work songs whose names are derived from specific activities are appropriate to those activities from which they take their names. The implication is that they may not be relevant to a different activity because the presentations in the songs are mainly relevant to the activities they are named after.



It would be realised in the study that most of the presentations in these song texts are consciously created by the poet or writer to have special impacts on especially the performers of those activities. Our study will therefore also be examining the special effects these songs have on the performers of the various activities as well as others who study these song texts and how these effects may help to promote development in society.

This section of the research presents what goes into the performance of Anlo work songs. In other words, we are looking at when the songs are sung, how they are sung as well as the various actions or gestures that accompany them, if any. This analysis will help us to better appreciate the value of these songs especially to those who sing them as they perform various activities.

In some African societies, the presentation of some songs comes as an organised performance. In such cases, we find these performances on specific and sometimes special occasions, where the date for the performance as well as the time is known to the participants prior to the performance. Again, there are usually specific roles assigned to and played by individual performers, and sometimes, the performances are rehearsed ahead of the actual performance. Such is the organised manner in which some songs are presented in some African societies or cultures. This kind of organised performance as found in some African societies is seen in the presentation of some traditional Anlo songs. Typical examples of Anlo songs whose performances are usually organised are war songs (“*avahawo*”/“*kalehawo*”), play songs (“*fefehawo*”) and insult songs (“*halo*”). Anlo work songs, however, do not have an organised performance.

Anlo work songs (“*dɔwɔhawo*”) may be presented either by an individual who engages in a particular activity, or by a group of people who are performing a particular task. In the case of



work songs performed by individuals, Finnegan acknowledges that "... there are also solitary work songs".<sup>17</sup> (237). In illustrating the performance of what she calls solitary work songs, Finnegan indicates that "Grinding corn, for instance, though sometimes done by several women, is also often performed by one woman alone".<sup>18</sup> (237).

Since the singing of Anlo work songs during work is usually not an organised performance, the individual who sings these songs, for example, may start singing at any time; either as he prepares to begin the activity, immediately he begins the activity, in the middle of the activity, or sometimes towards the end of the activity. This indefinite time for the start of singing may not be easily explainable. But one can say that the performer begins to sing when he gets the inspiration to do so. According to Plato, the poet receives inspiration to write at any time, about any subject. Perhaps the Anlo worker, who begins singing the work song at a time that is not predetermined, making it often difficult for him to explain what made him to suddenly begin singing, also does so by inspiration. Awoonor in his poem, "My God of Songs Was Ill", presents the Anlos' belief of the existence of a god of songs. This god, according to the belief of the Anlos, puts songs on the lips of people. In other words, the spirits make people suddenly burst out singing songs. This perhaps is the possible explanation of how the singer of the Anlo work song may begin singing at any time of the activity he is performing. Similarly, in the case of the performance of Anlo work songs by a group of workers, any member of the group may at any time of the activity start singing and the others may join in the singing either immediately or a few minutes later when they have also received the "inspiration" to sing. Normally, as the others join in the singing, a role that could be likened to that played by a chorus, a frenzied atmosphere is created.

This unorganised performance, however, is different from the case of the Frafras of northern Ghana, as presented by J.H. Kwabena Nketia in his book, The Music of Africa, where



... a player of the one-string fiddle and a rattle player accompany teams of men who cut grass. As they play, the workers swing their cutlasses in a concerted manner to the rhythms of their music, causing the slashing sounds of the blades to fall regularly on the main beats. This has a remarkable effect on the speed as well as the efficiency of grass cutting, for rhythmic movements that are properly organised in some regular basis appear to be less fatiguing than movements in which exertion and release of effort do not form an ordered sequence.<sup>19</sup> (29)

In the case of the Anlos, there is usually no one with the specialisation and sole duty of singing. Musical instruments are also usually not used in the presentation of Anlo work songs. Also, since the presentation of Anlo work songs is not usually an organised performance where the performance is thoroughly rehearsed, the actions or gestures that accompany the songs or the singing of the songs are often not organised or uniform. However, the same effects work songs make on the Frafras, which Nketia identifies in his assertion above, can be said to be experienced by the Anlos.

Furthermore, even though the presentation of Anlo work songs is not an organised performance where uniform and regular actions or movements accompany the singing of the songs, once in a while, an individual worker or the group of workers may make a gesture. Sometimes, the gestures are a demonstration of the meanings of some words that are in the song or the meaning of a particular part of the song. This shows the place of body language in the presentation of some Anlo work songs. In this study, therefore, we will be critically examining the poet's diction to help us better appreciate some of these gestures that the Anlos make during the singing of the Anlo work songs. Similarly, just as the starting of the singing of the Anlo work song by the worker may be attributed to some divine inspiration, the actions that often accompany Anlo work songs may be said to be drawn by the inspiration and delight the workers derive from the songs or from the words of the songs. Sidney in his essay, "An Apology for Poetry", demonstrates the



fact that poetry delights and moves people to act. Anlo work songs also delight the performer and move him to make the gestures that he makes.

Again, with regard to gestures that accompany Anlo work songs, the performer may pause briefly in the middle of the activity, make a gesture and then continue with the activity. A person clearing his farm, for example, may leave the hoe, rise up, make a gesture and continue the clearing. Sometimes, he may enthusiastically pause, raise his hoe or cutlass, point it to the skies briefly and continue to work. Clapping, which is one of the most common accompaniments to most songs, however, does not usually accompany the singing of Anlo work songs, even though once in a while, out of inspiration and delight, an individual may pause and clap briefly and continue the work. Clapping is not a regular accompaniment of the singing of Anlo work songs during work because the singer's hands are engaged with the particular work and cannot be engaged with clapping at the same time, which will be a hindrance to productivity. Similarly, even though "The various types of work songs can be seen to shade into songs for dancing,"<sup>20</sup> (237) dancing does not commonly accompany the singing of work songs. However, there are some tasks whose performance partially involves dancing or rhythmic movements. Weaving, paddling of the canoe and weeding are examples of tasks that are performed with partially dancing movements. As a result of this, the performer may be seen to be making movements that are equivalent to dancing.

Essentially what goes into the presentation of Anlo work songs is of relevance to the study because it shows the impact work songs can make on human beings. Therefore, we will equally pay attention to the ways the selected texts invoke various actions or reactions of human beings. This assessment will be done by the researcher bearing in mind the fact that writers consciously employ literary techniques or styles that help to make these impacts.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Chris Abotchie, "*The Land and the People and Their Notion of Criminality*": Social Control in Traditional Southern Eweland of Ghana – Relevance for Modern Crime Prevention (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1997) 9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* 9

<sup>3</sup> November 2011 <<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/work>>.

<sup>4</sup> Kwame Gyekye, African Cultural Values: An Introduction (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1998) 102.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* 102

<sup>6</sup> Chris Abotchie, "*The Land and the People and Their Notion of Criminality*": Social Control in Traditional Southern Eweland of Ghana – Relevance for Modern Crime Prevention (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1997) 10.

<sup>7</sup> Seth Kordzo Gadzekpo, History of Ghana – Since Pre-history (Accra: Excellent Publishing and Printing, 2005) 43.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* 60

<sup>9</sup> J.H. Kwabena Nketia, The Music of Africa (London: Victor Gollance Ltd, 1986) 23.

<sup>10</sup> Justice Stephen Kofi Gbolonyo, "Want the History? Listen to the Music! Historical Evidence in Anlo Ewe Musical Practices: A Case Study of Traditional Song Texts," diss., Pittsburgh U, 2005, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 231.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* 231



<sup>13</sup> J.H. Kwabena Nketia, The Music of Africa (London: Victor Gollance Ltd, 1986) 25.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 237.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* 237

<sup>16</sup> J.H. Kwabena Nketia, The Music of Africa (London: Victor Gollance Ltd, 1986) 29.

<sup>17</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 237.





## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 Themes of Anlo Work Songs

The previous chapter presented a brief history of the Ewes. We also looked at some major occupations found among the Anlos, some values or perceptions of the Anlos about work, primary responsibilities of Anlo men, women and children, the different types of work songs found among the Anlos, and the performance of Anlo work songs.

This section of the study presents an examination of the themes presented in the selected Anlo work song texts. As literary works usually present various themes, making the theme an essential element of literary works, this analysis of the themes of the selected Anlo work song texts will serve as one of the ways we can demonstrate that Anlo work songs are literary pieces. According to the definition offered by J.A. Cuddon in his A Dictionary of Literary Terms, "... the theme of a work is not its subject but rather its central idea which may be stated directly or indirectly".<sup>1</sup> (695) One function of literary works is that they contribute to our understanding of the world, especially through their themes, and this contribution is also made by Anlo work songs through the themes presented in the texts. In most cases also, since the subject of work songs is usually work, the texts present themes about the relationship between work and life. Of course, literature presents life, thus Anlo work songs present themes about life generally. This shows that Anlo work songs do have the didactic quality like other literary pieces, as they teach the reader through the themes they present.

In order to adequately demonstrate this presentation of themes in Anlo work songs, work song texts ~~would~~ be selected from some of the different categories of work songs found among the Anlos, which have been identified in earlier sections of the thesis. In this case, both songs that



are used during specific activities and those that may be sung during any activity, what we refer to as general work songs, will be sampled for study, beginning with the themes of the general Anlo work song text.

We will now begin to examine the themes of the text of the selected general work song. The song text is entitled "Survival Is for the Strong". This song falls in the category of those work songs we have referred to as general work songs since it is not exclusively sung during a specific activity, but may be sung during any activity. The song text, "Survival Is for the Strong", presents mainly some values which the Anlos deem relevant to (hard) work and which they uphold and encourage among members of the society. According to Finnegan, "Work songs can also comment on life in general ..." (240), and this is applicable to this work song of the Anlos. Often, in this case, the work songs present ideas about why people must work and the relevance of work to their lives.

"Survival Is for the Strong" presents to us the need for one to be strong to be able to survive in life. Strength, which is one of the values Anlos encourage humans to exhibit in their various activities, is here presented as a necessary quality people must have if they must be prosperous. Here, the individual is offered the moral lesson about the relevance of strength, and for that matter hard work to life. The central idea of this text is that strength and hard work ensure the survival of the human being. This theme is what is vividly presented in the title of the text that is, "Survival Is for the Strong". Since strength is what is presented here in this song text as the surest way to survival, it means that one may have other qualities, but one of the most essential qualities one needs to have and exhibit is strength.



This song text further presents the idea that individuals who eschew laziness and work with all their strength can be guaranteed their survival in the world. This, in other words, implies that the person who does not use his strength to work may not survive or may find it difficult to survive in this life.

In the first stanza, the line "Why are Mother Nature's works so incomprehensible?" expresses the persona's wonder about how nature makes the one who becomes rich through hard work remain rich but takes away from the one who is poor, due to laziness, the little he has. Presented here in the text is the idea that it is "Mother Nature" that has created the world and has dictated that people must work, with their strength, if they must survive.

The song text also presents to readers the fact that "Nature makes the rich continue to be rich / And takes away from the poor the little they have". The understanding here is that the rich, who have become wealthy as a result of their strength and hard work and who continue to use their strength to work, will remain rich as long as they continue to work hard. But, Nature, we are made to understand, will take away from the poor the little they have because it is not as though they cannot equally become rich but it is rather because they have failed to utilise their strength and talents to create riches for themselves. In this case, Nature will have cause to take away from those who remain poor the little they have because even people with disabilities have some form of strength which they can use to make their lives productive and prosperous. Even in the Parable of the Talents in the Bible (Matthew 25:14-30), God takes away from those who receive fewer talents and fail to use them and gives them to those who work hard to multiply what they receive. This is because, to God, the little strength or potential which one has, can and must be used to ensure his survival. This idea that God or Nature has given each and every individual some potential or strength, which is presented in this song text, essentially serves as a reminder



to individuals who are poor that they definitely have potentials that they can use to make them survive. The individual who gets this message is urged to go deep down himself, discover his potential, work with all his strength with the determination of also becoming rich so that Mother Nature will make him remain rich.

Furthermore, the text presents the idea that God or Nature disapproves of people who fail to use their potentials. That is why God will take away from the poor the little they have because He is disappointed in them for failing to use their God-given strength to work and also become rich.

Also, stanzas two and three of this work song text present the idea that survival, in this world, is for the fittest when the persona says:

Look at how seeds germinate together at a time,  
Yet, not all of them grow and survive;  
The weak ones die and become food for the strong to survive.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
Visit the big forests and see –  
All the trees do not grow to the same height;  
Some remain short,  
And even how to grow leaves becomes a great difficulty for them.  
This is because the strong have snatched all the leaves.

Here, the idea of some of the seeds and the trees growing faster than the others presents life as requiring some swiftness for a person to be able to thrive, just as the seeds and trees that have been able to grow better than the others. Additionally, by referring readers to the life of natural things such as the seeds and the trees, the song text demonstrates to readers the fact that a lot can be learnt from nature. This presentation can be seen as an ideal of Romanticism, which encourages the individual to make time to observe and admire nature. This exercise, which is recommended for man by the Romantics, is believed, besides teaching the individual, to also



reduce stress in humans as it relaxes the individual's mind. In a foreword to Howard Clinebell's Ecotherapy, Dr Thomas Berry, author of The Dream of the Earth asserts:

Finally, we begin to understand that the loss of the primordial forests, our inability to see the stars at night, our suspicion of the water we drink and the air we breathe – all this is something more than an economic or recreational or aesthetic loss. It is a soul loss. We lose ourselves. It is difficult to see how we can possibly be saved without the beauty and wonder and numinous presence that come to us in our experience of the natural world about us. Only there do we come to ourselves in our integral being.<sup>3</sup> (215)

This assertion essentially presents the importance of engaging in the Romantic activity of observing and admiring nature and the benefits it has to the individual.

Also, these presentations in the song text about nature offer the individual education about nature and how it applies to life. Dr Howard Clinebell in his Ecotherapy identifies the fact that, “Carefully chosen poems and songs can be resources in ecoeducation and ecotherapy”.<sup>4</sup> (215).

Similarly, this song text presents the idea that the world is for those who are bold, creative and productive. This theme is presented to the reader in stanza four where the persona tells readers:

Look at man and his creativity;  
He has control over even the strangest things in the universe,  
Man flies in the air like a bird.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

In another part of the text, the persona tells the reader:

Survival is for the strong.  
That is the unchangeable truth.  
Man has turned the depth of the sea into his place of relaxation,  
And he goes into the earth's stomach to collect riches.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
See how the blacksmith,  
With his strength,  
Melts the metal and moulds it into useful things.



Has Mother Nature not made it  
That survival will be for the strong?

The above presentation shows how some individuals, out of their determination, strength, bravery and creativity, have made very significant discoveries. Men have been presented here to have used their intellectual strength to make a lot of things which may seem impossible. Thus this song text encourages other men to likewise be creative and use their mental and physical strength to accomplish great feats. It can be said that it is such qualities of boldness and creativity that have led to the discovery of oil in the depth of the sea in Ghana, like other places in the world. This message essentially challenges the individual to be strong, brave, adventurous, innovative and creative.

Another theme we find in this work song text of the Anlos is that there is no need for humans to be jealous of one another simply because they do not possess the same qualities; rather each person must just work in his own capabilities. The persona, over here, cites the example of the fingers where, "Some are big and tall, / Some are small and less strong, / Yet, none is jealous of the other." The idea is that instead of one sitting down and wasting his time remaining jealous of a person who has used his strength to become a greater person than him, he should channel his energy into also working hard to become who he wishes to be and not necessarily become exactly like another person since the fingers are never the same and cannot be the same.

Finally, we deduce from the Anlo work song text, "Survival Is for the Strong", the idea that no individual can change the ways of Nature, which makes it a waste of time if one tries to do so.

And it is further shown that:

It is the evil person who tries to change Nature's arrangements.  
It is Nature herself that makes it so –  
That the rich continue to live,  
And the poor also continue to live,



To show that survival is for the strong.

What we find here in this theme is moral education of the individual which helps to develop the individual's personality as he is taught to endeavour to be morally upright even in his effort to make a living. The researcher believes that should the messages in this work song be effectively taught to people particularly the youth today to help them realise the literary value of this text, the problem of fraud or "*sakawa*", for example, can be reduced. The problem of cyber fraud is on the rise today because first, most of the people who engage in this practice fail to identify their potentials, and secondly, most of them are reluctant to use their strength and creativity to make their lives productive to enable them survive. Going against the admonishment in this song text and trying to change the ways of nature, which we are made to understand cannot be changed by anybody, such persons engage in evil practices which, in the end, make their lives miserable. This assertion, for instance, demonstrates how such work songs of the Anlos can help improve society.

Generally, the Anlo work song text, "Survival Is for the Strong", presents to us the idea that everyone on this earth has some strength which he definitely can use to ensure his survival. The themes presented in this work song text, as we have realised, present this work song of the Anlos as a literary piece that has much literary value to readers.

The above analysis has focused on the type of Anlo work songs, which may be referred to as general work songs because they, unlike the other categories, can be used to accompany any work. We will now begin to examine Anlo work songs which accompany specific activities and the themes presented in them, since literary pieces usually present themes.



We will begin this analysis by first looking at some Anlo farming song texts. Firstly, farming, as we have identified, is a major occupation of the Anlos. Being a major occupation, farming requires the exertion of much energy. For this reason, during farming activities such as the clearing of the land, the sowing or planting of the seeds, weeding and harvesting, among others, the individual who is engaged in these activities sings work songs to reduce the stress of performing such tasks. Finnegan discovers that "In rural areas, agricultural work provides the occasion for work songs".<sup>5</sup> (231) In his book, *Eve Numenyaduwo*, Eugene Osei-Tutu asserts, "*Gake nusi le vevie le ha siawo dzidzi me lae nye be amesi le hawo dzim alea la fe susu kuna de hawo fe nyagbewo nti ale be wòɔɔa fuwame gbogbo siwo na dɔwɔwɔ me la be vie vase de esime wòwu ... dɔa fe akpa ade si dze nkumee la nu*".<sup>6</sup> (48) What this means is that what is good about the singing of such songs is that the person singing the song usually concentrates on the diction of the text (the words in the song) so that he tends to forget about the suffering that comes with the performance of the particular activity.

One of such songs which fall in the category of Anlo farming songs is:

It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!  
 It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!  
 All the farmers will laugh and be happy!  
 All those who help on the farm will become so satisfied!  
 It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!

This song presents the fulfilment and joy that are brought about as the fruits of farming are realised by the farmer. It presents the atmosphere that surrounds the time when the crops are mature or at harvest time. It then could be said that this song, which may equally be sung at any stage of the farming, is sung usually during the harvesting of the farm produce.



This farming song text of the Anlos presents the idea that new crops and bountiful harvests bring fulfilment and joy to the individual. This idea is presented in the lines, "All the farmers will laugh and be happy! / All those who help on the farm will become so satisfied!" In addition to this idea of the individual deriving joy and fulfilment from their hard work, the song text also presents the idea that harvest, which is the result of hard work, brings gratification which translates into happiness. This presentation may serve as an encouragement to people who will want to take up a self-fulfilling occupation such as farming, which makes the individual happy to see the crops he has cultivated grow. This demonstrates the literary value of this work song text.

Also, from the line, "The new yam is out again!" readers get the idea that continuous and hard work yields results. This is essentially shown in the persona's choice of the word, "again", which shows that this is not the first yield but one of several others which have been the result of constant hard work. Constant work, of course, brings high yields. This theme teaches the person to work hard and constantly. Therefore, Anlo work songs are didactic as the various themes they present teach readers various lessons.

Universality is an important quality possessed by most literary pieces. This work song text, for example, remains relevant to other farmers besides yam farmers and the fact that the song may be useful to people engaged in other activities other than farming activities lends this and some other Anlo work songs the quality of universality.

Other farming songs found among the Anlos also express similar thoughts as expressed in the farming song text analysed above. The next song text whose themes are worth examining is "I Will ~~Weed~~ and Die". This farming song text has its subject matter as the need for one to work tirelessly.



Critically examining this text, we find the idea that work is something that is worth doing and even dying for. Again, the line, "The hand that labours will surely eat" shows that work brings food for men to eat; thus work ensures the survival of human beings. This is the reason it is worth working very hard, even if it means dying out of hard work.

Also presented in this song text is the idea that effective work requires concentration. The lines, "It is all about the hoe / It is all about the hoe stick ", imply that the worker's mind should always be on what he does and perhaps not on any other thing since focusing his attention on his work would be one of the surest ways he would achieve the best results of his work.

Then again, when people become too worried about the risk that a task may involve, they are sometimes discouraged from working hard. This assertion is perhaps supported by the view of some school of thought that too much emphasis on welfare discourages hard work. Hence, this farming song text, "I Will Weed and Die", presents in the lines, "Do not fear / I will do it and die / Work, I will do it and die, okay?" the idea that the person engaged in work, especially farming must be prepared to work tirelessly and not worry about even working hard to the point of dying. In these lines, for example, the persona urges his people not to express the least fear about how hard he works. In fact, some people fail to work as hard as they should because they are overly concerned about the risks that some activities may pose to them. But as this song teaches individuals to work tirelessly and devote their lives to what they do by being prepared to die working hard, individuals learn to work hard and with dedication. This theme which has been presented in this song text provides a moral lesson to readers. This idea of working tirelessly, even if it means dying in the process, is similarly found in Michael Thomas Sadler's "The Factory Girl's Last Day" where the girl who works tirelessly in the factory tells her poor father:

'Father, ...



.....  
To help us we've no mother;  
And you've no employ;  
They killed my little brother, –  
Like him I'll work and die!

The factory girl, here, shows her determination to work tirelessly, without worrying so much about her welfare, and she does not want the father to worry either. The researcher, however, acknowledges the fact that the context and purpose of Sadler's poem are different from those of the work song text.

The last farming song of the Anlos that we will be examining in this thesis is "My Grandfather, get me a charm for farming". This song text presents the situation of some individuals who, instead of utilising their God-given strength to work, go searching for charms and other means which they believe will enable them perform the particular activity with little or no difficulty. Such people have been represented by the persona in this text who asks his grandfather to get him a charm for farming, but his grandfather reminds him of the fact that there is no such thing as a charm for farming. Commenting on the features of war and hunting songs, Finnegan identifies that "... boasting, challenge, and specialised ability (sometimes supplemented by magic) are frequent elements in both".<sup>7</sup> (208) Magic and charm may be presented in war and hunting songs of the Anlos as a factor that helps the people to fight and hunt more efficiently because the Anlos believe that there are charms for such purposes. For example, the Anlos have a charm called "*akpoka*" which saves the individual from sustaining injuries or cuts that may be inflicted by weapons such as arrows, knives and swords. There is another charm found among the Anlos which is believed to make the bullet from the enemy's gun turn into water. Again, the researcher, through the investigation, discovered that there is a charm found among the Anlos that is believed to enable a hunter who is unable to find his way out from the forest back home,



because it is dark, and has to sleep in the forest to turn himself into an animal. This is believed to save the hunter from being eaten up by wild animals in the forest. Perhaps these beliefs have misled the persona into thinking that there is a charm for farming, hence the need for the old man, who is a repository of wisdom and morality, to remind him that there is no such charm that would, for example, either clear the farm or cultivate the crops for him.

The first theme presented in this song text is that God has given every individual strength which he can use to achieve whatever he wants to achieve. And since God has given everyone strength, it is hard work that a person needs and not charm. This is the idea that is presented here in this song text when the person tells readers: "My grandfather told me there is no charm for farming / Morning, morning is farming / Evening, evening is farming / It is hard work". Even though the old man reminds the persona that there is no such thing as a charm for farming, he does not necessarily deny the fact that there may be other charms for things other than farming, which requires physical effort more than spiritual intervention.

Furthermore, when the persona says, "I bought a drink for the earth to drink", we are made to understand the fact that it is fruitless for a person to rely on supernatural powers to work for him when he should have used his strength to do the work. Today, some people waste their productive time pursuing non-existent things such as charms that will help them work. There are common instances of fraud ("*sakawa*") where able-bodied individuals, instead of working hard, engage in this practice which they deem an easier and quicker way of becoming wealthy. Some students, especially West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (W.A.S.S.C.E.) and even some Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.) candidates, instead of studying hard for their examinations, are believed to go in for charms which they believe would make them study or answer questions in the final examinations very well and pass their examinations,



even if they do not study. Similarly, instead of just improving upon their selling activities such as selling quality items and ensuring good customer relations, some sellers go in for charms or “juju” which they believe will make them sell their goods or attract people to buy from them. Individuals, over here, are taught to avoid wasting their time, pursuing cheaper ways of doing things, for example, going to look for charms. Rather, they are encouraged to use their God-given strength – mental or physical – to work hard.

Lastly, the presentation of the old man in this text as a guide to the persona shows that the elderly are considered in the culture of Anlos as repositories of wisdom and moral standards. This is so in most African cultures. The Anlos, for example, have the proverb, “*Devi sue ta gā menyaa nu awu ametsitsi ta sue o*” which literally means that even when the child’s head is bigger than that of the elderly person, the child cannot be wiser than the elderly person. This buttresses the important place of the elderly when it comes to wisdom and knowledge. The elderly who have lived for long and have much more experience about life are seen as the repository of knowledge and wisdom. Other cultures also have proverbs that attest to this fact. In his essay, Translating Ghanaian Culture: A Reading of Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments*, S.K. Okleme notes that:

... many Ghanaian proverbs attest to this fact. For example, a Dangme proverb which affirms this notion states, literally, that ‘once a person is older than you, his mouth emits a richer odour than yours.’ And the following translations of Akan proverbs also reinforce this notion: ‘It is not an easy matter to speak face to face with an elder’; ‘The words from the mouth of an old man are better than any amulet’; ‘It is on the elder’s head that an axe-head is knocked off (the shaft)’; and ‘An old man was in the world before a chief was born’ (Rattray 110-112). All these proverbs reinforce the notion of the elder’s experience, wisdom and ability to solve complex problems, for which reasons he deserves unqualified respect and reverence.<sup>8</sup> (260)

It is the reason the persona goes to consult his grandfather, and not his peer, to ask for a charm since most elderly people are also believed to possess much knowledge about herbs or charms.



The essential themes usually presented in Anlo farming songs, as demonstrated in the farming song texts analysed here, remain equally relevant to other works, making their literary value assume some universality.

Having examined the themes in some Anlo farming song texts, we shall now shift our focus onto fishing songs which are known by the Anlos as "*Tɔfodehawo*". They are so called since they are normally sung during the performance of fishing activities. Finnegan, for example, indicates in her book the fact that, "Canoeing songs are common among many riverain and coastal peoples".<sup>9</sup> (234) These songs are also sung during the hauling in of the fishing net.

Fishing, like other occupations of the Anlos, requires a lot of hard work and energy. The principal fishing activities of pushing the (big, heavy) canoe which has no tyres under it from the shore of the sea or the bank of the river through the sand onto the water; paddling the canoe on the sea sometimes against the direction of the wind and the tidal waves; and finally, hauling in the net, which contains the harvest and sometimes big stones and other heavy substances, require a lot of hard work, and much stress. For this reason, as in the case of farming, songs which the Anlos believe help ease the pain in performing these activities are sung by persons who are engaged in the fishing as they carry out the task.

The first fishing song text that would be examined here is "Paddle It Fast! Let the Canoe Come!" This fishing song text presents a call on the fishermen who are in the canoe and paddling it on the water to perform this activity of paddling with all their strength and as fast as they can. Consequently, this offers them the morale to perform this task with all their strength to ensure a successful sail and abundant catch.



Several themes are presented in this fishing song text of the Anlos. First, when the persona repeatedly says, "That is work! ... / That is work!" there seems to be the suggestion that hard work (in fishing) is what can be called real work. This presentation is to make readers realise the fact that hard work is what can really be considered as work. Through this presentation also, readers are encouraged that no matter how difficult the work seems, they need not give up but rather they need to persevere because their hard work will, at the end of the day, give them self-fulfilment as they will become proud of themselves for engaging in and successfully executing what can be called real work, that is after the abundant catch has been made. The challenge offered here to individuals to engage in activities that are worth considering as real work will encourage them to take up challenges and engage in activities that are considered demanding and which very few people will be prepared to take up.

Additionally, the line, "Let everyone raise his paddle!" presents the idea that there is strength in unity. People coming together to undertake a particular task usually brings improved results. This is the reason the persona entreats all hands to be on deck to make the fishing activity a successful one. By asking everyone to raise his paddle and paddle the canoe, the persona is acknowledging the fact that one person's raising of the paddle will not have been enough.

So far, we have focused on fishing songs that are sung by fishermen who are fishing in the canoe on the sea or river; it is now necessary to discuss some fishing songs of the Anlos that are usually sung during another major activity in the fishing occupation. Anlo fisher folk who are engaged in the hauling of the fishing net, which contains the harvest, out of the sea or river also sing some fishing songs to help them carry out this activity.



Usually a rope or ropes are tied to the net that is far in the deep water. The pulling of the fishing net out of the water with the aid of the rope, just like the paddling of the canoe, which we have examined earlier, requires much strength and endurance. Songs are therefore sung by persons engaged in this activity. These songs are believed to inspire the fishermen to endure the stress and the pain they feel especially in their palms and in their legs as they haul the nets onto the shore.

One of such songs the Anlos sing during this phase of the fishing activity is:

Some people have taken off their shirts!  
Even we the owners of the fishing nets have taken off our shirts!  
Your hollow back!

Firstly, the line, "Some people have taken off their shirts!" demonstrates the seriousness and the determination with which this activity is usually performed. Usually, most of the men who engage in this activity take off their shirts and sometimes tie them around their waists. Similarly, this line also shows that fishing, which is a serious activity, is perhaps not a beauty contest where one dresses to showcase his gorgeousness. Rather, the individual is expected to display his physical strength which is expected to be seen in the muscles on his bare chest, back and arms, and the sweat on his body is also deemed to show how hard he works. The theme presented here is that fishing as well as other forms of work must be done with all seriousness. This theme essentially serves as an encouragement to the workers who sing this song during their work to eschew laziness and commit their maximum strength to the work.

Similarly, people engaged in work must work diligently without any form of shyness or pomposity since, according to the persona, "Even we the owners of the fishing nets have taken



off our shirts!" The idea is that pomposity must not be part of work. In other words, there is the need for all persons to put away pride and work tirelessly.

Another fishing song text of the Anlos that falls within the same category as the one analysed above and which presents relevant themes, one of the literary qualities which make it a literary piece, is:

I have thrown the net into the sea just once  
And it has become trouble for me!  
The sea is not for your father!  
The storm is not yours!  
I have thrown the net into the sea just once  
And it has become trouble for me!

This song presents the joy of an overwhelmed fisherman who makes reference to his abundant harvest, which he ironically refers to as trouble because the bountiful catch has made the hauling in of the fishing net difficult for him.

In this song text, we come across the lines, "The sea is not for your father! / The storm is not yours!" The idea presented here is that no human being can claim ownership of or control over nature, especially the sea and the storm. With this presentation, where individuals are made to acknowledge and appreciate the awesomeness of God by pondering over nature, an activity advocated by the Romantics, this fishing song text would be seen to teach readers some moral lessons.

Additionally, as the individual is taught to recognise and appreciate the fact that it is God who controls the sea and the storm, he is taught to expect difficulties which he may encounter in an occupation such as fishing, an activity that is carried out in water bodies, which are controlled by nature. Individuals, therefore, are encouraged to press on with whatever they do and never give



up when there are difficulties since nature must be allowed to take its own course. Indeed, these are educative and motivational themes which remain relevant to individuals and society.

Fishing, as we have identified, requires a great deal of hard work, hope, optimism, perseverance, among others. One other fishing song which is sung by the Anlos to inspire and motivate themselves during their fishing activities is "Big Fishes Are Coming". This song presents the hopefulness of the fisher folk to have a good harvest.

Turning our attention to the themes which have been presented in this work song text, the line, "Big fishes are coming", which is expected to create in the fishermen the prospect of catching big fishes even though there is none in sight yet, indicates that patience and hopefulness are important qualities workers must possess to be able to work to the end of the activity so as to get the desired results.

We have looked at examples of farming songs ("agbledehawo") and fishing songs ("tɔfodehawo") of the Anlos. Since all the produce from the activities of farming and fishing are not always only for domestic consumption, some may be taken to be sold (in the market). The Anlos – usually the women – therefore engage in another occupation which is trading or selling. Other items apart from the produce from fishing and farming are also often traded. Among the Anlos, selling at the market is traditionally considered an occupation reserved for women. This takes us to the next section which is an examination of the type of Anlo work songs which are known as "asitsahawo" or selling songs.

It is important to point out that it has been realised from the study that unlike the other work songs, selling songs ("asitsahawo") do not normally follow regular song patterns or rhythms. As a result, in their presentation, they may sound more as recitations rather than singing. The selling



songs are also not any different from advertising jingles, since they are mainly used by the seller to advertise her wares. Another feature of the Anlo selling song is that is worth noting is that it is usually a short verse. The shortness of the verse makes it is similar to the verse form known as haiku, which is "A Japanese verse form consisting of seventeen syllables in three lines ..." <sup>10</sup> (300) The Anlos believe that these selling songs contribute positively in various ways to their selling activities.

The first song text we would examine under selling songs ("*asitsahawo*") is:

It is hot *abolo*!  
If you eat one, you will eat two!  
Let the child cry to the mother!  
Let the father buy it!

This is a song that is sung by the Anlo woman who sells "*abolo*". "*Abolo*" is a type of food that is common among the Anlos, and it is loved by many. It is prepared from corn and served usually with hot pepper and fried fish. Due to its sugary taste, it is liked by children and who often would prefer it to "*dokunu*" or "*kenkey*". This fact perhaps is what informs the seller's trick of enticing the child to cry to the mother that he wants to eat "*abolo*" when she says, "Let the child cry to the mother".

When the persona says "Let the child cry to the mother", she is not necessarily urging the child to cry to the mother, but this is just the seller's skill of injecting some creativity and skilfulness into the activity she engages in. This selling song text of the Anlos, therefore, presents the need for the sellers as well as other individuals to inject some creativity and skilfulness into whatever activity they engage in. The skilfulness that is required of the (Anlo) seller especially and which she demonstrates usually is similarly presented in S.K. Okleme's "Industrious Woman" where the persona whose mother prepares "*fante dokono*" to be sold refers to her "marketing skills" as



what do the rest at the lorry station. She says, "After the cleaning and the washing and the cooking / We patiently prepare *Fante dokono*, master of foods. / My marketing skills doing the rest at the lorry station".

Also, the line, "If you eat one, you will eat two!" presents the idea that there is the need for sellers as well as others who cook to prepare tasty meals so that after eating one and two, the people will even go for the third and fourth times. The theme of the need for people to prepare tasty meals will, in effect, also help improve nutrition.

Furthermore, the lines, "Let the child cry to the mother! / Let the father buy it!" present an education about the culture of the Anlos in which we find the division of labour. In this song, the man is presented as the one who has the responsibility to provide for the needs of the family. Some men today, out of irresponsibility, shirk some of their basic responsibilities, and this has often resulted in numerous problems in some homes. This song text, therefore, presents this cultural education essentially to help correct some of these situations by making the man accept his responsibility as the main provider of the financial needs of his family.

Furthermore, the song text presents the need for food that is served to be hot, which makes it more hygienic. Thus, the persona says, "It is hot *abolo*!" where there is an emphasis on the hotness of the "*abolo*" which is an example of several other meals that need to be kept and served hot. The literary value of this selling song text is realised as this theme offers the reader education that remains relevant to human life and society. The consumption of hot food is considered one of the ways to reduce food contamination and the spread of diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, just to mention a few. One major objective of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP), for example, is to provide a decent hot meal to some school pupils. A



statement signed by Mr S.P. Adamu, National Coordinator of the Ghana School Feeding Programme indicates that "... the basic concept of the programme was to provide children in public primary schools of the most deprived communities of Ghana with one hot meal, prepared from locally grown foodstuffs, on every school-going day".<sup>11</sup> This objective of the Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) to serve the students hot meals, for example, shows the importance of serving and taking in hot meals. In other words, this shows how crucial the consumption of hot meals is to the health of human beings.

Similarly, the idea of the need to sell and buy or consume food that is hot is further emphasised in the Anlo selling song:

It is hot *agawu*!  
Soft, soft *agawu*!  
Warm your stomach!  
To ensure life.

The emphasis here is on the quality of the food that is being sold. This song makes reference to "*agawu*" which is the food being sold by the seller who sings this song while selling her goods. "*Agawu*" is fried food made from beans and usually eaten with porridge. What the seller essentially makes prospective customers realise is the fact that the "*agawu*" is soft and also, it is hot, hence its hotness warms the stomach and ensures good health for the one who buys and eats it. These are the two main qualities of the food the seller is selling which she uses to advertise the food or persuade people to buy her food. This apparently is because, to the seller, these are two of the most important qualities of food that ensure good health in individuals.

Like the two selling song texts which have been examined, the Anlo selling song text:

It is hot porridge!  
Come and warm your stomach!  
It is really thick and nutritious!



also presents the idea that it is important to take in hot food, especially as breakfast as it emphasises the fact that "It is hot porridge!" In addition, the line, "It is really thick and nutritious!" presents the need to take in nutritious meals.

The Anlo seller also sings the song:

The homeward-bound lorry is leaving!  
Come and take and go!  
Cheap! It is cheap!  
Just a little forms my profit!

One of the central themes of this selling song text is the need for a person to do what he has to do at the best time, which is now and not later. This theme is built by the persona as she reminds her addressees: "The homeward-bound lorry is leaving! / Come and take and go!" This theme presents the *carpe diem* notion. In fact, procrastination often denies many people the chance to accomplish a lot of things. In Africa, for example, efforts are being made by some individuals and groups to remove the "African time" notion which is believed to encourage procrastination among most Africans.

The seller also considers herself to be virtually giving away her products free-of-charge to people because, according to her, just a small proportion forms her profit. She says, "Just a little forms my profit!" This idea of the seller not being concerned about making so much profit teaches individuals to eschew such negative qualities as greed and selfishness which hinder the progress of a society and be more concerned about the welfare and survival of others.

The various themes presented in Anlo work song texts, as we have identified in the above analysis, are essential in helping readers appreciate these work songs as literary pieces and



realise their literary value. There is, therefore, the need for these works to be appreciated and taught as literary pieces in order that these themes can be adequately realised by readers.

Having examined the themes of the texts of the selected Anlo work songs in this chapter, we will, in the next chapter, examine the language and style used in presenting these themes.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> J.A. Cuddon, A Dictionary of Literary Terms Revised Edition (Middlesex: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1979) 695.
- <sup>2</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 240.
- <sup>3</sup> Howard Clinebell, Ph. D, Ecotherapy (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996) 215.
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid.* 215
- <sup>5</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 231.
- <sup>6</sup> Eugene Osei-Tutu, Ewe Numenyaduwo (Ewe Oral Literature) (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2002) 48.
- <sup>7</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 208.
- <sup>8</sup> S.K. Okleme, "Translating Ghanaian Culture: A Reading of Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments": The African Novel: Critical Essays (Kumasi: Setsu Educational Books, 2005) 260.
- <sup>9</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 234.
- <sup>10</sup> J.A. Cuddon, A Dictionary of Literary Terms Revised Edition (Middlesex: Andre Deutsch Ltd., 1979) 300.
- <sup>11</sup> November 2011 <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=219119>>.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 Language and Style of Anlo Work Songs

In the preceding chapter of this thesis, we have examined the themes presented in some Anlo work song texts. The analysis in that chapter presents themes as an important characteristic element of literary pieces. In this chapter, we will continue to examine the language and style of the work song texts.

Literary writings are usually distinguishable from other writings by virtue of their literary characteristics and artistic forms. Literary writers, in their efforts to effectively present the subjects and themes of their works, consciously employ several literary styles which lend their works the literary quality they usually have, making their works distinct from non-literary writings. These literary techniques essentially help literary writers to achieve their artistic intents.

From the above assessment, it would be realised that style is an important feature of literary works. Arnold, in his essay, "The Study of Poetry," identifies style as an essential part of poetry. According to him, "The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner".<sup>1</sup> (270) In this section of the thesis, we will examine the language and style of the Anlo work song texts because the identification of these literary elements in these work song texts will further show that Anlo work songs are artistically composed. These literary qualities of Anlo work song texts, which will be identified in this examination, will then present Anlo work song texts as literary pieces which need to be taught and studied as literary pieces in order that their literary value can be adequately appreciated by readers. We will, in this study, look at



figures of speech, imagery, diction, language, sound devices such as rhythm and repetition, attitude, tone, mood and other literary techniques, all of which form style.

The first Anlo work song text whose themes we examined in the preceding chapter of this thesis is "Survival Is for the Strong". In this text, various literary techniques have been employed by the composer essentially to help readers realise the ideas presented in the text, some of which we have looked at. Firstly, the need for the individual to use his strength is clearly seen in the persona's use of the refrain, where "... survival is for the strong" is repeated at the end of each stanza. The refrain is consciously employed by the persona to reinforce the importance of this theme of the need to be strong.

Also, in the first stanza, the persona employs the rhetorical question, "Why are Mother Nature's works so incomprehensible?" to express his wonder about how nature has made the arrangement such that the rich continue to be rich while it takes away from the poor the little they have. The understanding is that the rich who have become wealthy as a result of their strength and hard work will remain rich as far as they continue to work hard. The use of the rhetorical question, which makes the reader try to understand and answer this question in his mind, also helps the reader to further ponder over this and come to understand the need for him to work with his strength so that Nature will make him continue to be rich.

Another literary device which has been employed in this song text is biblical allusion. The idea of Nature, for that matter God, making the rich continue to be rich while He takes away from the poor the little they have is very much in line with what is presented by the Bible. In the Bible, according to the Parable of the Talents, God takes away from those people who were given fewer talents ~~these~~ talents and adds them to those of the others who receive more. This is because, to



God, the little potential which one has, can and must be used by the individual to enable him survive. This presentation essentially serves as a reminder to individuals who are poor that they definitely have a potential which they can use to make their lives productive. It also makes the reader further realise the need to use his strength to work since God Himself disapproves of laziness.

In addition to their strength, the song text, "Survival Is for the Strong", urges the reader to be creative and brave. The persona in the fourth stanza says, "Look at man and his creativity" and also goes on to show how "Man flies in the air like a bird". Similarly, the individual is made to think about how "Man has turned the depth of the sea into his place of relaxation / And he goes deep down the earth to collect riches" and "... how the blacksmith / With his strength / Melts the metal and moulds it into useful things". The idea of men flying in the air like a bird perhaps symbolises the ability of humans to create aircraft which remain very useful today. Similarly, it represents other aerospace activities of men which have led to many discoveries. Men have used their intellectual ability to make these possible, and this song text encourages other men to likewise use their mental and physical strength to accomplish great feats. In presenting these ideas, the song text employs two major figures of speech, which are simile and hyperbole. The simile in the presentation of men as birds flying in the air further shows how the creative and innovative individual, with his strength and bravery, is able to do the extraordinary or the seemingly impossible since naturally, man, unlike the bird which has wings, cannot suspend and sustain himself in the air. Individuals are hereby encouraged to, with their strength and bravery, attempt the extraordinary. Also, the writer's use of hyperbole in "Man has turned the depth of the sea into his place of relaxation" presents to readers how the individual, with his strength and



creativity, can make the seemingly impossible to become possible as we imagine the human being relaxing under the sea.

Imagery has also been used by the poet to help the reader see, with his mind's eye, the picture of man bravely and comfortably sitting and relaxing under water, which probably is a representation of activities which are carried out under water that is, in submarines. Through the use of imagery in this work song text, where the reader has been made to imagine some of the brave accomplishments of man, individuals who have been scared of undertaking challenging ventures are encouraged to put away their fear, be brave and take up those challenges.

Again, we are made to, in the lines, "Some remain short, / And even how to grow leaves becomes a great difficulty for them. / This is because the strong have snatched all the leaves", understand the fact that while some of the trees are lofty, others remain short and, as Shakespeare puts it in his "Sonnet 12," "barren of leaves". Essentially, what is presented here is the idea that survival is for the strong or the fittest. The poet, in his diction, uses the word, "snatched", to present the idea of competition, where the strong usually win. This presentation of life and survival as a competition urges the reader to strive in order to achieve success.

The next song text we looked at, which is a farming song, is:

It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!  
It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!  
All the farmers will laugh and be happy!  
All those who help on the farm will become so satisfied!  
It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!

The literary style of this song text also helps to present the ideas of this text to the audience. First and foremost, the repetition of the line, "It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!", shows the persona's excitement, which is borne out of the fulfilment that comes when



the new yam is ready to be harvested. This fulfilment that is presented by the use of the literary technique of repetition serves as a constant reminder as well as an encouragement to both farmers and those who are not farmers. Essentially, the individual is reminded of the need to develop the love for farming since new crops and bountiful harvests bring fulfilment and joy to the individual.

Also, the persona's use of the word, "again" in the line, "The new yam is ready again" advocates the need for work to be undertaken regularly. "The new yam is ready again" shows that the crop was produced the last season and now it has been produced "again". This is an indication that constant work brings constant yields.

To conclude our examination of the farming song text, "It Is a New Yam! It Is a New Yam! The New Yam Is out Again!" it is important to point out that even though "yam" is the crop that has been presented in this text, it would be seen as a metaphor since it may as well represent other crops. It is, as a result, not unusual to find other farmers who produce other crops such as cassava, maize, onion, just to mention a few, singing this song as they cultivate or harvest the crop. However, farmers who cultivate crops other than yam, which is presented in this song text, would often replace the word, "yam", with the name of the crop they are cultivating or harvesting. For example, in the text, we have the line, "It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!" but the cassava farmer may sing it as "It is a new cassava! It is a new cassava! The new cassava is ready again!"

Similarly, in the next Anlo farming song text,

I Will Weed and Die  
I will weed and die  
The farm, I will weed it and die  
The hand that labours will surely eat



It is all about the hoe  
It is all about the hoe stick  
Do not fear  
I will do it and die  
Work, I will do it and die, okay?  
The hand that labours will surely eat

which has been examined in the preceding chapter, we find that a number of literary techniques and devices have been employed. In this text, when the persona declares, "I will weed and die" he is implying that he will weed until he dies. The literary device employed by the writer here is hyperbole since the persona is merely indicating his preparedness to work tirelessly and not necessarily killing himself. He also only means that he will not stop working even when he is dying, not to talk about when he is just tired. Death is, therefore, used here to the effect that it is only when one is dead that he cannot do anything. This shows that when one is sick or even disabled, he can still do something.

In the structure of this text, which forms part of the literary style, the composer presents "I will weed and die" as the very first line of the text. The relevance of this is that it shows that from the very beginning of the work, what the persona sets out to do is to work tirelessly until he dies, where death is presented as the only obstacle that can stop the persona from working. The idea of working extremely hard, even if it means killing oneself, is also repeated in the third line of the text, where the persona goes on to say, "The farm, I will weed it and die". Over here, however, the persona introduces the antecedent, "The farm", where he mentions categorically what exactly he intends to weed until he dies. He indicates here unequivocally that it is the farm he is going to work on (or weed) tirelessly. This is further an indication of the persona's recognition of farming as one of the activities that are worth engaging in with all hard work. This value which the persona attaches to farming is obviously due to his acknowledgement of the countless benefits farming brings to living beings, especially humans. Furthermore, the lines, "I will do it and die /



Work, I will do it and die, okay?" are repetitions of the persona's determination to work hard, even if it means dying in the process. The repetition employed in this text constantly reminds the reader about the need to work tirelessly.

Also, we find in this work song text of the Anlos the use of repetition in the line, "It is all about the hoe / It is all about the hoe stick ..." Over here, the text emphasises all that the worker needs to focus on. According to the song text, all that individuals should be concerned about should be using the farming tools such as the hoe, the cutlass, among others to work. The repetition constantly reminds the reader that all that he needs to focus on is the working tool. In other words, the individual is urged to work always. The "hoe" and the "hoe stick" may also represent other main tools that are used in other activities. For example, schooling as an activity will mainly be about books as farming is all about the hoe and the hoe stick. This lesson, which has been presented in this work song text, is intended to help transform poor attitudes towards work, where some individuals go to work with little or no preparedness to actually engage in the work by focusing on it.

Finally, in this farming song text of the Anlos, there is the use of a proverb. We come across the Anlo proverb, "*Alɔ wɔdɔ metsia dɔ me o*" which has been used repeatedly by the persona. This proverb essentially carries the understanding that the hand that works will definitely touch food. In other words, the person who works always definitely gets something to eat. Firstly, this proverb further makes the persona see reason in working tirelessly to the point of even killing himself in the process, since he can be sure of definitely reaping the benefits of his labour. Commenting on the relevance of proverbs, Finnegan mentions the fact that "... there are several different senses in which proverbs can fulfil educational functions".<sup>2</sup> (413) This proverb presents



to the individual a moral education as he learns to use his hands to work to ensure his survival. The individual, by virtue of this, is taught to eschew such negative qualities as laziness and be hardworking. Also, the use of the proverb in this song text makes the reader realise the vital place of proverbs in the discourse of the Anlos as well as other African communities. Achebe states that "... proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten".<sup>3</sup> The individual, who becomes familiar with these proverbs, is subsequently encouraged to learn to use proverbs in his discourse to develop his speaking skills.

The last farming song text whose themes have been examined in the preceding chapter of this thesis is:

My Grandfather, Get Me a Charm for Farming  
I woke up in the morning and went to my grandfather  
My Grandfather, get me a charm for farming  
My grandfather told me there is no charm for farming  
Morning, morning is farming  
Evening, evening is farming  
It is hard work  
I bought a drink for the earth to drink

Like the other farming song texts, this text also employs a literary style which is worth studying.

According to the persona's grandfather, "Morning, morning is farming / Evening, evening is farming" which implies that farming is all about working hard on the farm every morning and every evening. The repetition of "morning" and "evening" is intended by the persona to show how regularly and consistently individuals must work to achieve the best results. Working every morning and every evening indeed requires hard work and dedication from the individual. Early in the morning or at dawn when the farmers usually go to the farm, the weather is mostly cold; and the dew remains fresh on the grass and wets the bodies of the farmers. Also, waking up from bed the next morning, after the previous day's tiredness, appears a great discomfort to many farmers. These and many other inconveniences make going to the farm in the morning regularly



something that can be done only out of hard work, discipline and dedication. Similarly, in the “evening”, which is just a couple of hours after the farmers have returned from the morning’s work, the farmer needs hard work and dedication to be able to defy the tiredness and go to work on the farm again. This presents the fact that farming has nothing to do with charms but has everything to do with hard work, discipline, dedication and sacrifice.

Having examined the style of song texts from the category of general work songs and farming songs of the Anlos, we shall now turn our attention to the style of some Anlo fishing song texts.

The first fishing song text whose style will be examined here is:

Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!

Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!

That is work!

*Yee! Ee!*

That is work!

*Aaa! Yee!*

Let everyone raise his paddle!

Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!

Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!

*Vru! Vru! Vru!*

The text begins with a repetition, that is, “Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come! / Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!” This essentially is a call on those who are in the canoe and paddling it on the water to perform this activity of paddling with all their strength and as fast as they can. The repetition here reinforces the urgency of the situation and the need to work hard. The repetition is further seen towards the end of the text, and this shows that the work must be done effectively, with the same amount of energy, to the end when the task is accomplished. The enthusiastic tone of the song text also depicts the energy with which the individual is expected to work. This literary effect is particularly achieved by the writer’s use of exclamations at the end of each of the lines. This tone demonstrates the enthusiasm with which work ought to be done.



In this fishing song text, the persona asks that "Everybody should raise the paddle!" By asking those paddling the canoe to raise their paddles as high as they can in order that the paddles can go very deep into the water to paddle the canoe more efficiently, the persona is teaching and encouraging the audience to put the best of their effort in any activity they undertake by applying all their strength. A fisherman, for example, narrated to the researcher how a song they were singing one day while they were paddling the canoe on the sea during fishing inspired and energised him to raise his paddle so high that when he dipped it in the sea and paddled the canoe, the paddle suddenly broke into two. He, however, indicated that the paddle might have broken because it was quite old. But this shows how relevant some of these work songs of the Anlos are to helping individuals gain the delight and energy they need to carry out some activities more effectively.

Again, when the persona repeatedly exclaims, "That is work! ... / That is work!" there seems to be the suggestion that hard work is exclusively what can be called real work. The persona's use of this literary technique is intended to let readers realise that hard work is what is worth considering as real work. This is intended to serve as encouragement to individuals that no matter how difficult the work seems, they need not give up but rather they need to persevere because their hard work will, at the end of the day, give them self-fulfilment as they will become proud of themselves for engaging in and successfully executing what can be called real work. To the persona, fishing is what can be referred to as work. In fact, apart from the strength that fishing requires, it is one of the risky occupations since there may be different forms of accidents. The researcher recalls, for example, the case of his father who, for his love for fishing, joined some fishermen to push the canoe from the shore onto the sea. Unfortunately, his foot slipped under the canoe, and the canoe ran over it and scraped the skin off his foot; an injury



which did not heal after several months until he eventually passed away, although his death may not be linked to this injury. Indeed, in the light of the stress and the risk involved in fishing, it is “real” work anyone engaged in it ought to be proud of.

Furthermore, to encourage hard and efficient work among individuals who are engaged in a work, the song text tries to remove the boredom that may come with the performance of relatively difficult work such as fishing. In this case, we find interjections such as “*Yee! ee!*” and “*Aaa! Yee!*” which are used to inject some excitement into the work and make the individual enjoy the activity he engages in. This essentially makes the individual work regularly and to the best of his ability since the activity gives him joy. This also provides entertainment for the individual, thereby presenting work to the reader as something that brings joy and excitement to people.

Last but not least, there is the use of onomatopoeia in “*Vru! Vru! Vru!*” as this represents the sound that is produced when paddling is done rhythmically and effectively, with much energy. The diction creates in the fishermen an excitement and zeal to paddle the canoe more vigorously in order that their paddling will also produce the exact sound presented by the song, that is “*Vru! Vru! Vru!*”. As identified by Finnegan about the Chikunda people, for instance, “... their boat songs are excellently designed to accompany the rhythm of their paddling”.<sup>4</sup> (234) The rhythmic sound of “*Vru! Vru! Vru!*” is therefore relevant to make fishermen paddle the canoe or haul the nets at a regular pace. As the fisherman pursues a successful reproduction of this sound with his paddling so as to get self-fulfilment and joy, he works more vigorously and this could bring about an increase in productivity. Subsequently, Finnegan indicates that “The function of rhythmical music in encouraging people to work harder, faster, and with more enjoyment has frequently been noted”.<sup>5</sup> (239) This shows the indispensable effect Anlo fishing songs, which are



mostly rhythmical, have on fishing activities. Likewise, individuals who study this song text are taught to learn to enjoy whatever work they engage in.

Another fishing song text whose style is worth examining is:

Some people have taken off their shirts!  
Even we the owners of the fishing nets have taken off our shirts!  
Your hollow back!

In this text, when the persona refers to those hauling in the net as having "... hollow back" he appears to be teasing those who are engaged in the pulling of the ropes, with their bare chests and backs. Although this may seem a mockery, it rather puts the workers in a mood of excitement where they playfully laugh at one another, and it also takes away any shyness that the individual may have, working with a bare chest and back. Subsequently, the shyness is rather replaced with excitement. Also, the expression "Your hollow back!" tends to create some level of competition among the fisher folks as the belief is that the person with the deepest hollow on his back is the one putting in the most energy. Thus this expression draws the interest of the individual workers to want to see who has the deepest hollow on his back. Individuals are taught by this song text to work with all their strength perhaps until a hollow is created on their backs.

Furthermore, the line, "Even we the owners of the fishing nets have taken off our shirts!" expresses the idea that even those who are considered the superiors have also taken off their shirts and are taking an active part in the activity. This presentation may seem an exaggeration since the owners of the nets often may not engage in the fishing even though sometimes they may be present. The effect of this technique, however, is that it presents to readers the idea that even if the owners of the nets are ~~not shy~~ to be seen bare-chested and engaged in the activity, then the others have no excuse to be shy, arrogant or lazy. This presentation of even the owners of the net working tirelessly demonstrates the need for all hands to be on deck to work with



diligence to bring about the desired results. Additionally, the individual is taught to eschew such negative qualities as arrogance and laziness and exhibit humility and hard work.

The next fishing song text whose style is relevant to conveying the messages of the text adequately to the audience is:

I have thrown the net into the sea just once  
And it has become trouble for me!  
The sea is not for your father!  
The storm is not yours!  
I have thrown the net into the sea just once  
And it has become trouble for me!

When the persona says, "I have thrown the net into the sea just once / And it has become trouble for me!" he may be seen to be in a sad mood, lamenting. However, the persona is rather joyous because he is overwhelmed since what he refers to as "trouble" is the bountiful catch which has made the net difficult for him to pull out the fishing net alone, and it has become too heavy for even others to pull. The persona, in this presentation, employs irony as a literary technique. But even should we take these expressions as truly representing the persona's frustration rather than his joy, where he is seen to have encountered many difficulties on his first attempt at fishing, this would equally serve as an encouragement for others who have had similar frustration but have given up never to give up but carry on with the fishing since success does not come without setbacks.

Also, in this text, we find the use of exaggeration in "I have thrown the net into the sea just once" where the persona implies that he has spread the net onto the sea just once. By declaring that he has thrown the net just once but has had such overwhelming harvest, the persona is first indicating his skilfulness, and secondly, he is letting others realise how lucky one may be. This is intended to serve as an encouragement to those who feel reluctant to work and those who are



contemplating giving up a particular work because of perhaps their disappointment which is drawn from previous experiences of failing to attain significant results. This encouragement motivates the audience to keep up hope and go on to also try his luck. The importance of this expression of joy by the persona and the encouragement is further seen in the repetition of the lines, "I have thrown the net into the sea just once / And it has become trouble for me!" at the end of the song text.

Language and style have also helped in making the audience adequately appreciate the literary value of the fishing song text,

Big Fishes Are Coming  
Big fishes are coming  
Big fishes are surely coming  
Big fishes are coming  
Big fishes are coming  
*Kliya kliya*  
Big fishes are coming, okay?  
Big fishes are coming  
Big fishes are coming, okay?  
*Kliya kliya*  
Big fishes, okay?

As the fisher folk are constantly reminded by this song of the fact that the big fishes are coming, suspense is created. The suspense which is created in the fisher folk, who cannot wait to catch and see the big fishes, motivates them to work harder. One major effect of the use of this literary technique of suspense is that it offers workers the encouragement and the hope with which they must continue to work, especially at times when one seems to have lost the hope to continue the activity he is engaged in after his efforts have yielded no encouraging results. To really inspire the fishermen, the song consciously presents to the fisher folk the prospect of catching not just any fish but very big ones, perhaps those that are worth their hard work. Furthermore, the text employs hyperbole to help achieve this effect of inspiring the workers. To make this impact on



the reader, the song text consciously presents not just one or two big fishes perhaps among some smaller ones but rather, many big fishes.

Additionally, the use of parallelism in this song text lends it a rhythmic quality that inspires actions which follow the rhythmic pattern which has been created by this literary technique. The actions that are inspired by the rhythm of the song text remain relevant to creating in the audience the desire to work since the melody that is created from the rhythm presents work as exciting.

Similarly, the repetition of "Big fishes are coming" is intended to constantly keep those engaged in the fishing activity expectant and hopeful and to constantly remind them of the need to persevere. This literary technique, likewise, helps to keep the workers and the audience hopeful of good results in whatever activity they engage in.

Then also in this song text, we realise the use of onomatopoeia in "*Kliya kliya*" which represents the sound produced by the movement of the big fishes. The fishes walk "*kliya kliya*" because they are so big and have difficulty in walking, as a result of which they virtually drag their bodies in the sand under the water. Also, the sound produced by the onomatopoeia, as a literary technique, may represent the sound that will be produced when the net which contains the big fishes is being dragged onto the shore. There is the use of imagery here as the reader can, with his mind's ears, hear this sound of the movement of the big fishes. Again, the image of the sizeable fishes, which has been created in the mind of the reader, also reminds him of the benefits of work.

The last type of Anlo work song whose style is going to be examined is selling songs, and the first selling song text whose style we would be examining is:



It is hot *abolo*!  
If you eat one, you will eat two!  
Let the child cry to the mother!  
Let the father buy it!

When, in this text, the persona says "Let the child cry to the mother" she may seem to be urging the child to cry to the mother, where the seller, who is an elderly person, may appear to be teaching the child a bad thing. However, "cry" here may merely imply "beg" or even "ask". A market woman who was asked by the researcher if she did not think that this statement from the persona would make a child start crying and worrying the mother laughed and sharply said, "For the child to have known the deliciousness of the '*abolo*' and for him to have been able to understand the message of the seller asking him to cry to the mother, that child would have passed the breast-feeding stage which makes him a rational being. And a child who is mature and who is reasoning would not just begin to cry because some seller has asked him to do so". Therefore, the seller, who, in this selling song text, asks the child to "cry" to the mother, is merely being creative and skilful in her selling activity. Even today, there are some advertisements on the television in which a child may be "crying" to the parents to buy the product for him. Similarly, such advertisements cannot be considered to influence other children to also worry their parents to buy the products for them. Rather, this presentation, which we have seen in this selling song text of the Anlos, is a demonstration of the need for the seller as well as other individuals to inject some creativity and skilfulness in whatever activity they engage in.

The need for individuals to be creative is further demonstrated by the persona's use of exaggeration when she says in the text, "If you eat one, you will eat two!" What it means is that the food she is selling, that is the "*abolo*" is so tasty that if you eat one, you will ask for more. The effect of the use of this figure of speech is that it lures customers, who become interested in tasting that delicious food which is able to make someone ask for more, to buy the food.



We also would be interested in the style of the selling song text.

The homeward-bound lorry is leaving!  
Come and take and go!  
Cheap! It is cheap!  
Just a little forms my profit!

In this text, in order to persuade people to buy her foodstuffs, the seller who sings this song employs imagery and tries to create in the minds of the people the picture of the lorry that will convey them home setting off soon. The fear and urgency created by this imagery enhance the efforts made by the seller to persuade people to buy her wares. This technique mostly works for the seller since most smaller towns and villages, before now, had a limited number of vehicles that conveyed the people to and from the market and other destinations. As a result, it was quite difficult for a person who missed the (last) bus to get back home. Therefore, the customer who is reminded by the seller through this song that he or she risks missing the last bus is made to buy the goods that are being sold by the seller.

Also, the image of the lorry leaving the people very soon, if they do not hurry and buy what they have to buy, presents the *carpe diem* notion. This is so since, should the individual miss the only vehicle in the community, she may not get another to convey her to her destination. This presents to readers the need for a person to do what he has to do at the best time, which is now and not later. The imagery found here in this song text may be likened to Andrew Marvell's presentation of "Times winged Charriot hurrying near" in his poem, "To His Coy Mistress" where the chariot is presented as approaching as soon as the lorry in this song text is leaving.

Essentially, our examination of the language and style of the various types of Anlo work song texts has vividly demonstrated Anlo work songs as literary pieces which have employed various



literary elements which help in presenting the ideas in the texts. We therefore have illustrated style and language as important literary features of literary works generally.

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## ENDNOTES

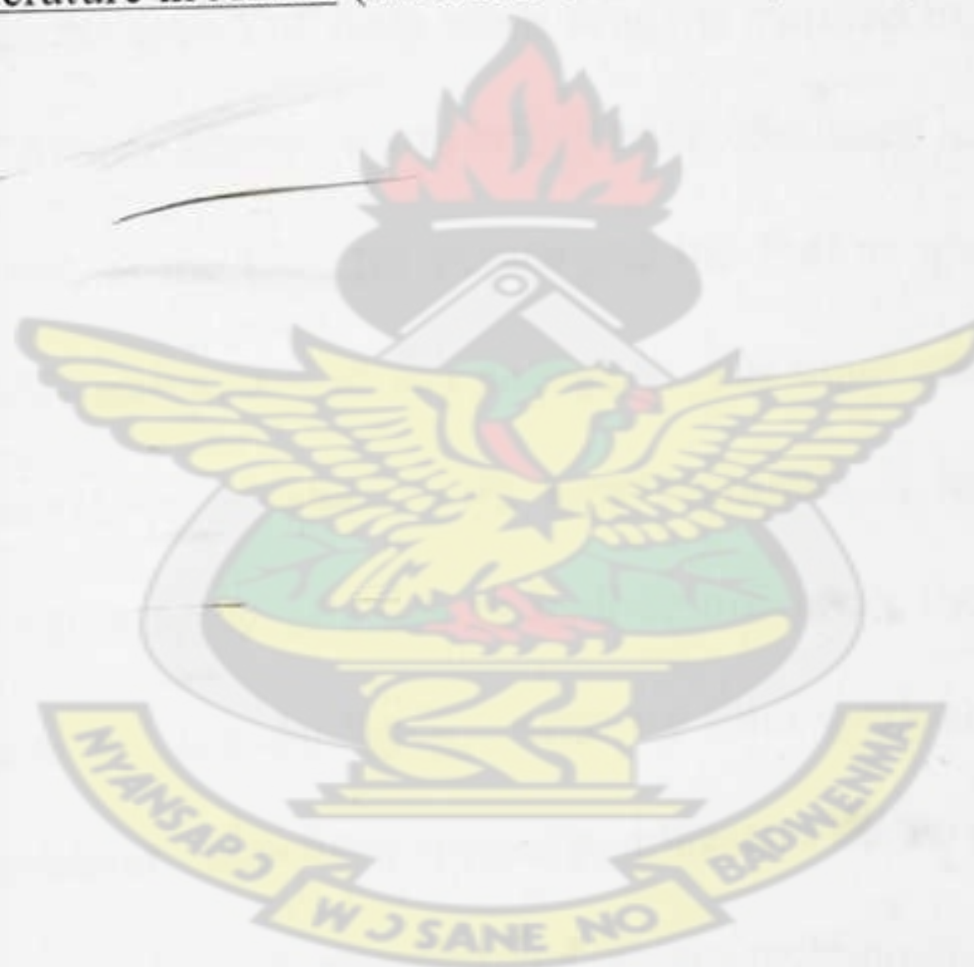
<sup>1</sup> D.J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera, eds. "The Study of Poetry": English Critical Texts – 16th Century to 20th Century (London: Oxford UP, 1962) 270.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 413.

<sup>3</sup> Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (Oxford: Heinemann, 1958)

<sup>4</sup> Ruth Finnegan, Oral Literature in Africa (Nairobi: Oxford UP, 1976) 234.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* 239





## CONCLUSION

To conclude, let us first recap what the research has sought to establish. The major objective of the researcher is to demonstrate that the texts of Anlo work songs are literary pieces which can equally be studied and taught to people as literary works. In this thesis, therefore, the texts of Anlo work songs have been presented and critically examined as literary pieces.

First and foremost, this investigation of Anlo work songs is inspired by the fact that Anlo work songs are one of the few African literary forms which have continued to be useful to many Anlo societies. Other people such as the Gas, the Fantes and the Frafras also continue to sing work songs to accompany various activities that they engage in. The other motivation for this research is that, as a result of the relevance which work songs continue to have to many people and societies even today, which is apparently due to their significance, there is the need for many more people to be made to acquire the literary value of Anlo work songs especially. Most of these work songs have, however, often been appreciated literally by the people who sing them, in which case little or no attention is paid to the various literary techniques and style of these works. The researcher believes that the best way the literary value of these works can be adequately realised by most people is when the song texts are appreciated and approached not as just any ordinary pieces of writing but as literary pieces.

The second chapter of the thesis, in which some values and perceptions of Anlos about work have been examined, makes us appreciate how the composers of these work song texts present in the texts ideas which represent some of the ideals and perceptions of Anlos about work and life. The analyses in this chapter, therefore, help us to identify the various subject matters and themes of the work song texts.



In the third chapter, we identified themes as essential literary elements which are found in Anlo work song texts. Since literary works usually present various themes, the identification of themes as important components of the Anlo work song texts makes them literary pieces that can be carefully studied and taught to people to help them adequately realise the themes of these work song texts.

More so, our investigation of the literary qualities of the Anlo work song texts, in the fourth chapter, has revealed the fact that the song texts have been consciously and artistically created with literary language and style. In this investigation, we came to the realisation that various figures of speech, diction, imagery as well as other literary techniques and style have been employed by the composers of these song texts to help them present the various subject matters and themes of the texts to the audience. In the Anlo general song text, "Survival Is for the Strong", for example, it has been realised that the composer employs refrain, rhetorical question, biblical allusion, symbolism, simile, hyperbole, imagery and a particular diction. The next song text we looked at, that is "It Is a New Yam! It Is a New Yam! The New Yam Is out Again!" which is a farming song also uses repetition and metaphor. Similarly, in the next Anlo farming song text, "I Will Weed and Die", hyperbole, repetition and proverb are some literary techniques employed by the writer. The last farming song text, "My Grandfather, Get Me a Charm for Farming", also uses repetition. Moving to the fishing song text, "Paddle It Fast! Let the Canoe Come!", we discover the use of repetition, exclamations at the end of each line of the text, the enthusiastic tone, hyperbole, interjections, onomatopoeia and rhythm. Additionally, we find sarcasm, exaggeration and the mood of excitement in the fishing song text, "Some People Have Taken off Their Shirts!" The next fishing song text, "I Have Thrown the Net into the Sea Just Once", employs the mood of sadness, irony, exaggeration and repetition. Suspense, hyperbole,



parallelism, rhythm, repetition, onomatopoeia and imagery are also literary techniques used by the writer to help readers adequately attain the literary value of the fishing song text, "Big Fishes Are Coming". We continued the study with the examination of selling song texts, and it has been realised that the writer of "It Is Hot *Abolo!*" uses connotation and exaggeration. We also looked at "The Homeward-Bound Lorry Is Leaving!" and we have discovered that it contains imagery. Based on these realisations, we can conclude that Anlo work song texts cannot be seen as just any pieces of writing but as literary pieces that need to be taught and studied as such.

Now that it has been established that Anlo work song texts are literary pieces which can be studied and taught to people as such, the researcher recommends that, to further promote the work song texts, work songs which have not yet been documented but have remained in the oral form and are stored in the memory of the people be collected. There could be the establishment of an African oral literature bank in literary studies departments to promote the collection and preservation of these works. Also, these work songs need to be transcribed so that they can easily be accessed and studied as important literary pieces by more people, who may not necessarily be interested in the music but in the texts. The work song texts must also be translated into various languages, as has been done by the researcher who translates the Ewe texts into English, to increase their literary relevance to even people who do not understand Ewe, the language in which the Anlo work songs are originally presented. There is also the need for efforts to be made to include the study of work song texts as literary works in the academic curricular at the various levels of literary study in order that the texts can be taught and studied in schools to enable many more people appreciate the literary values of these works. Finally, this research also ought to inspire the conduct of other researches to help discover further usefulness of work songs especially to other areas apart from literature. It is the hope of the researcher that similar



researches will be conducted to achieve this purpose of identifying other ways by which African literary works such as work song texts can be made to contribute significantly to society and life.

In his essay, "The Responsibilities of Scholars of African Literature," Chinweizu identifies the fact that "... scholarship would do well to exhume and study Africa's classical traditions, clarify and disseminate them, so they can be useful to us today"<sup>1</sup>. The researcher, therefore, believes that this research is in line with this call on scholars to study Africa's classical traditions, an example of which is Anlo work songs, in order to clarify them as important literary pieces and disseminate them so that they can be useful to many readers today.

Literature contributes in many ways to the development of society. Besides their function of delighting people, literary works also instruct the individual. Songs, for that matter poetry, delight and teach, and the lessons, which are often presented in the themes of the songs and conveyed to the audience mostly in a literary style and language, help in impacting and developing society. This fact makes this study one that is relevant to the development of Ghana especially. Development is defined as "The process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions".<sup>2</sup> The study as such recognises Anlo work songs as one of such cultural and environmental factors that are relevant to development or to the process of economic and social transformation.

Work songs, today, remain useful to most tasks, especially major ones such as farming, fishing, selling, blacksmithing, construction, and mining which contribute greatly to the nation's economy. Persons engaged in these works often sing work songs as they work, making these work songs relevant to these activities. The study, therefore, presents a more effective way people can adequately appreciate these work songs which they depend on to impact the various



activities they perform. It has been demonstrated in the study that Anlo work songs are literary pieces whose important themes and lessons may not be adequately appreciated by the audience, unless attention is paid to the language and style employed by the composer in presenting these ideas. Approaching these work songs as literary pieces can bring to the worker and the activity he is performing greater impact which can help improve productivity. Society can also develop by virtue of the impact of these work songs on the people. Anlo work songs, therefore, need to be appreciated as literary pieces to enable the audience to adequately appreciate their value.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Bernth Lindfors ed., Research Priorities in African Literatures (München: Hans Zell Publishers, 1984) 14.

<sup>2</sup> November 2011 <[http:// www.businessdictionary.com/definition/process. html](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/process.html)>.

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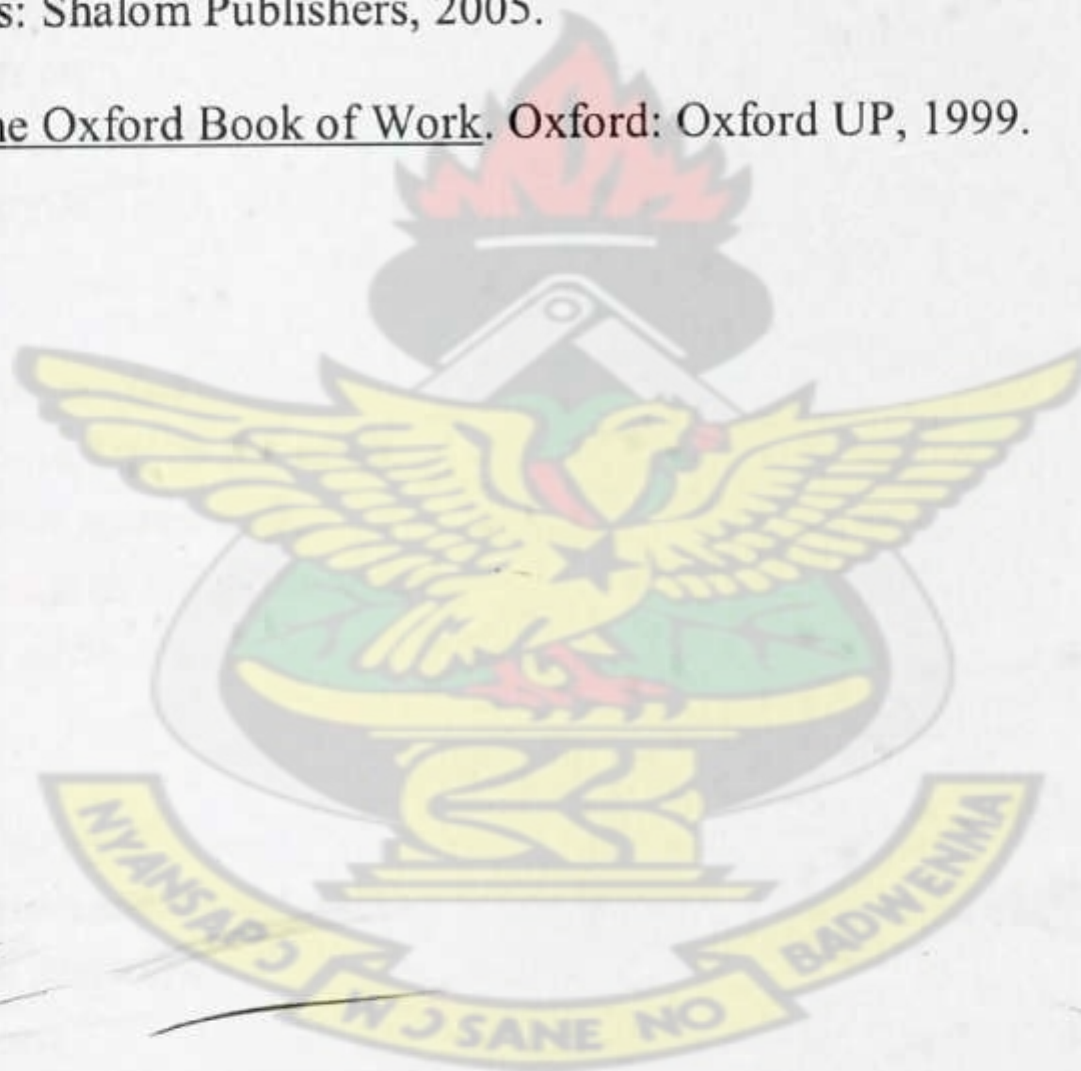
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## APPENDIX

This appendix presents the sampled Anlo work song texts which have been used for the analysis in this thesis. Also, since the texts are originally presented in Ewe, which is the language of the Anlos, an English translation of the texts, which was done by the researcher, has been provided in this appendix.

### a. General Anlo Work Song

1.

#### *Dusêto Lae Tsia Agbe*

*Aleke Daa Dzadzome fe dɔdɔwo  
Wo nuku vevie ale?*

*Ewo nunasito be nu nanɔ esi daa;  
Ke sue si le manasito si la,  
Ele be woagaxo eya hã le esi.  
Vavã, nusêto lae tsia agbe.*

#### *Dusêto lae tsia agbe*

*Esia nye Daa Dzadzome fe dɔdɔwo.  
Kpɔ alesi gbekuwo miena fũu zi dekae da,  
Ke menye wo katãe tsina nyona o de.  
Beliawo kuna hezua nuɖiɖi na nusẽnɔɔawo  
Elabe, nusêto lae tsia agbe.*

#### *Dusêto lae tsia agbe.*

*Di tsa yi de avegãwo me kpɔ-  
Menye atiawo katãe kãna sãna o de!  
Dewo nãa kpuie hezua atikɔmetiwo;  
Dadɔdɔ hã zuã dɔ na wo,  
Elabe, nusêtoawo xɔ da dɔ de wo nu.*

#### *Dusêto lae tsia agbe.*

*Daa Dzadzomee de nenema.  
Kpɔ amegbetɔ kple efe ayemɔwo da,  
Ekpɔ nusê de xexemenu klitsuwo kē hã dzi;  
Yame wòdzona tona abe xedzodzoe ene,  
Elabe, nusêto lae tsia agbe.*

#### *Dusêto lae tsia agbe.*

*Esia nye nyatefe matrɔ.  
Amegbetɔ tsɔ tɔgɔme wɔ yaxɔfe*



Eye anyigba fe dōme ke,  
Wòfɔa efe nunyonamewo tsonɛ;  
Elabe, ɲusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.

Dusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.  
Kpɔ alesi zudala tsɔ efe  
Dusɛ dana ɔɛ gayibɔ dzi,  
Tunɛ, hewɛ wòzua ɲudɔwɛnue ɔɔ?  
Ɖe Daa Dzɔdzɔme mewɔ nuwo ale be,  
Dusɛtɔ la natsi agbe o ma?

Dusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.  
Amegbetɔ, lé ɲku ɔɛ wòà 'sibidewo ɲu kpɔ!  
Daa Dzɔdzɔme tsɔ esia le nu fiam wò –  
Ɖewo tri hekɔkɔ,  
Ɖewo le sue hele wudɔwudɔ;  
Ke ɔɛke mevɔà ɲu nɔvia o,  
Elabe, ɲusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.

Dusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe baa:  
Eyata nɔvi, ɔɔ eye naga ɔɔ,  
Be nawɔ wò nutete katàa ɲudɔ,  
Abe alesi Daa Dzɔdzɔme na wò 'ne.  
Ke wò esia ɲu wɔvɔ manɔmee,  
Elabe, ɲusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.

Dusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.  
Abe alesi Daa Dzɔdzɔmee ɔɛ 'ne  
Màte ɲu awɔ wu Dzɔdzɔme katà o  
Esi wu esia la, vɔɔtɔ la gbɔ wòtso  
Dzɔdzɔme ɲutɔ ɔɛ:  
Nunɔsitɔ nanɔ anyi  
Manɔsitɔ hã nanɔ 'nyi,  
Atsɔ fɔa be, ɲusɛtɔ lae tsia agbe.

G.W.K. Kwasikuma

### **Survival Is for the Strong**

Why are Mother Nature's works so incomprehensible?  
Nature makes the rich continue to be rich  
And takes away from the poor the little they have.  
Indeed, survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
Such are the arrangements of Mother Nature.  
Look at how seeds germinate together at a time,



Yet, not all of them grow and survive;  
The weak ones die and become food for the strong to survive.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
Visit the big forests and see –  
All the trees do not grow to the same height;  
Some remain short,  
And even how to grow leaves becomes a great difficulty for them.  
This is because the strong have snatched all the leaves.

Survival is for the strong.  
Mother Nature has made it so.  
Look at man and his creativity;  
He has control over even the strangest things in the universe,  
Man flies in the air like a bird.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
That is the unchangeable truth.  
Man has turned the depth of the sea into his place of relaxation,  
And he goes into the earth's stomach to collect riches.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
See how the blacksmith,  
With his strength,  
Melts the metal and moulds it into useful things.  
Has Mother Nature not made it  
That survival will be for the strong?

Survival is for the strong.  
Man, take a close look at your fingers and see.  
Mother Nature is using this to teach you something –  
Some are big and tall,  
Some are small and less strong,  
Yet, none is jealous of the other.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is simply for the strong.  
So, my brother, you need to strive and strive,  
So that you can utilise all your abilities,  
Which Mother Nature has given to you.  
But do this, void of jealousy.  
This is because survival is for the strong.

Survival is for the strong.  
Just as Mother Nature has ordained,  
One cannot change the ways of Nature.  
It is the evil person who tries to change Nature's arrangements.



It is Nature herself that makes it so –  
That the rich continue to live,  
And the poor also continue to live,  
To show that survival is for the strong.

## **b. Farming Songs (Agbledehawo)**

1.

*Te yeyee! Te yeyee! Te yeyea gado!*  
*Te yeyee! Te yeyee! Te yeyea gado!*  
*Agbledelawo pete, pete adzɔ dzi, ako nu!*  
*Agbledzɔviwo pete, pete aɖi fo 'le keke!*  
*Te yeyee! Te yeyee! Te yeyea gado!*

It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!  
It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!  
All the farmers will laugh and be happy!  
All those who help on the farm will become so satisfied!  
It is a new yam! It is a new yam! The new yam is out again!

2.

### ***Meɲlɔ Ge Ahaku***

*Me' 'ɲlɔ ge a'ku*  
*Agblea, me' 'ɲlɔ ge aku 'ee*  
*Alɔ wɔɔ metsia dɔ me o.*  
*Kodzitia koe 'ee*  
*Akpatsatia koe, megavɔ, migavɔ o*  
*Mewɔ ge maku*  
*Dɔa me'wɔ ge maku 'see*  
*'Lɔ wɔɔ metsia dɔ me o 'ee.*

### **I Will Weed and Die**

I will weed and die  
The farm, I will weed it and die  
The hand that labours will surely eat  
It is all about the hoe  
It is all about the hoe stick  
Do not fear  
I will do it and die  
Work, I will do it and die, okay?  
The hand that labours will surely eat

3.

### ***Tɔgbuinye, Sa Agble Ka Nam***

*Mefɔ ɲdi yi tɔgbuinye gbɔ, a*  
*Tɔgbuinye, sa 'gbleka nam 'a*  
*Tɔgbuinye 'agbleka meli wosana o*



*Ŋdi, ɲdie nye agble'o dede*  
*Xetrɔ, xetræ nye agble'o dede*  
*Zã do mamlɔ anyi 'ee.*  
*Medz' aha 'nyigbãa kɔ no 'ee.*

**My Grandfather, Get Me a Charm for Farming**  
 I woke up in the morning and went to my grandfather  
 My Grandfather, get me a charm for farming  
 My grandfather told me there is no charm for farming  
 Morning, morning is farming  
 Evening, evening is farming  
 It is hard work  
 I bought a drink for the earth to drink

### c. Fishing Songs (*Tɔfodehawo*)

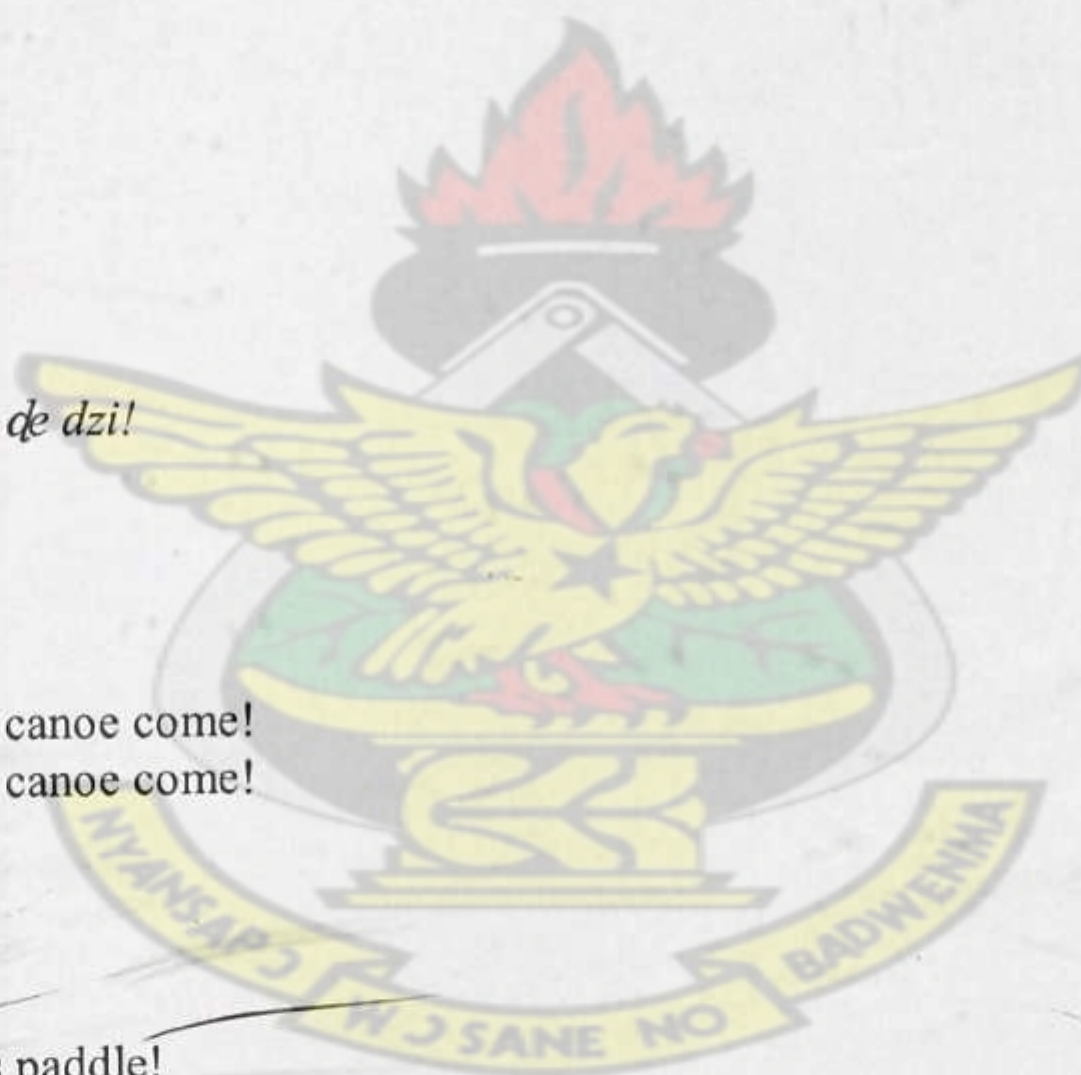
1.  
*Mikui bla! Uua neva!*  
*Mikui bla! Uua neva!*  
*Eyae nye dɔwɔna!*  
*Yee! ee!*  
*Eyae nye dɔwɔna!*  
*Aaa! Yee!*  
*Amesiame nedo utia dɛ dzi!*  
*Mikui bla! Uua neva!*  
*Mikui bla! Uua neva!*  
*Vru! Vru! Vru!*

Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!  
 Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!  
 That is work!  
*Yee! Ee!*  
 That is work!  
*Aaa! Yee!*  
 Let everyone raise his paddle!  
 Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!  
 Paddle it fast! Let the canoe come!  
*Vru! Vru! Vru!*

2.  
*Amewo dɛ awu dɛ!*  
*Miawo dɔtɔwo dɛ awu dɛ loo!*  
*Dzime globo wo!*

Some people have taken off their shirts!  
 Even we the owners of the fishing nets have taken off our shirts!  
 Your hollow back!

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3.

*Ɖo meda zi 'eka,  
Wòzu nya nam loo!  
'Tsafu menye mia fofo fe nu o!  
Ahoyoa menye mia tɔ o!  
Ɖo meda zi 'eka,  
Wòzu nya nam loo!*

I have thrown the net into the sea just once  
And it has become trouble for me!  
The sea is not for your father!  
The storm is not yours!  
I have thrown the net into the sea just once  
And it has become trouble for me!

4.

*Lā Gāwo Gbɔna  
Lā gāwo gbɔna  
Lā gāwo gbɔna 'a  
Lā gāwo gbɔna  
So lā gāwo gbɔna ɖa  
Kliya kliya  
Lā gāwo gbɔna 'ee  
Lā gāwo gbɔna  
So lā gāwo gbɔna 'ee  
Kliya kliya  
Lā gāwo 'ee*

#### **Big Fishes Are Coming**

Big fishes are coming  
Big fishes are surely coming  
Big fishes are coming  
Big fishes are coming  
*Kliya kliya*  
Big fishes are coming, okay?  
Big fishes are coming  
Big fishes are coming, okay?  
*Kliya kliya*  
Big fishes, okay?

#### **d. Selling/Trading Songs (Asitsahawo)**

1.

*Abolo dzodzoe 'ee!  
Èɖu ɖeka, èɖu 've!  
Vi nefa 'vi-n'enɔɔ!*

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*Fofoa nefleee!*

It is hot *abolo!*

If you eat one, you will eat two!

Let the child cry to the mother!

Let the father buy it!

2.

*Agawu dzodzoe!*

*Agawu bòlò! bòlò!*

*Dome nexɔ dzo!*

*N' agbe nava.*

It is hot *agawu!*

Soft, soft *agawu!*

Warm your stomach!

To ensure life.

3.

*Akatsa dzodzoe!*

*Miva de dzo domee!*

*Eto ku de 'me!*

It is hot porridge!

Come and warm your stomach!

It is really thick and nutritious!

4.

*Afevua dzodzo gee!*

*Miva xɔ, miadzo!*

*Bɔɔlu! Bɔɔlue la!*

*Sue aɔe koe nye tɔnye!*

The homeward-bound lorry is leaving!

Come and take and go!

Cheap! It is cheap!

Just a little forms my profit!

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