

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



PROVERBS IN THE DIRGES OF NANA ABENAA ASANTEWAA OF  
PANKORONO IN KUMASI

BY

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partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy  
Degree in Ghanaian Language (Asante Twi).

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date .....

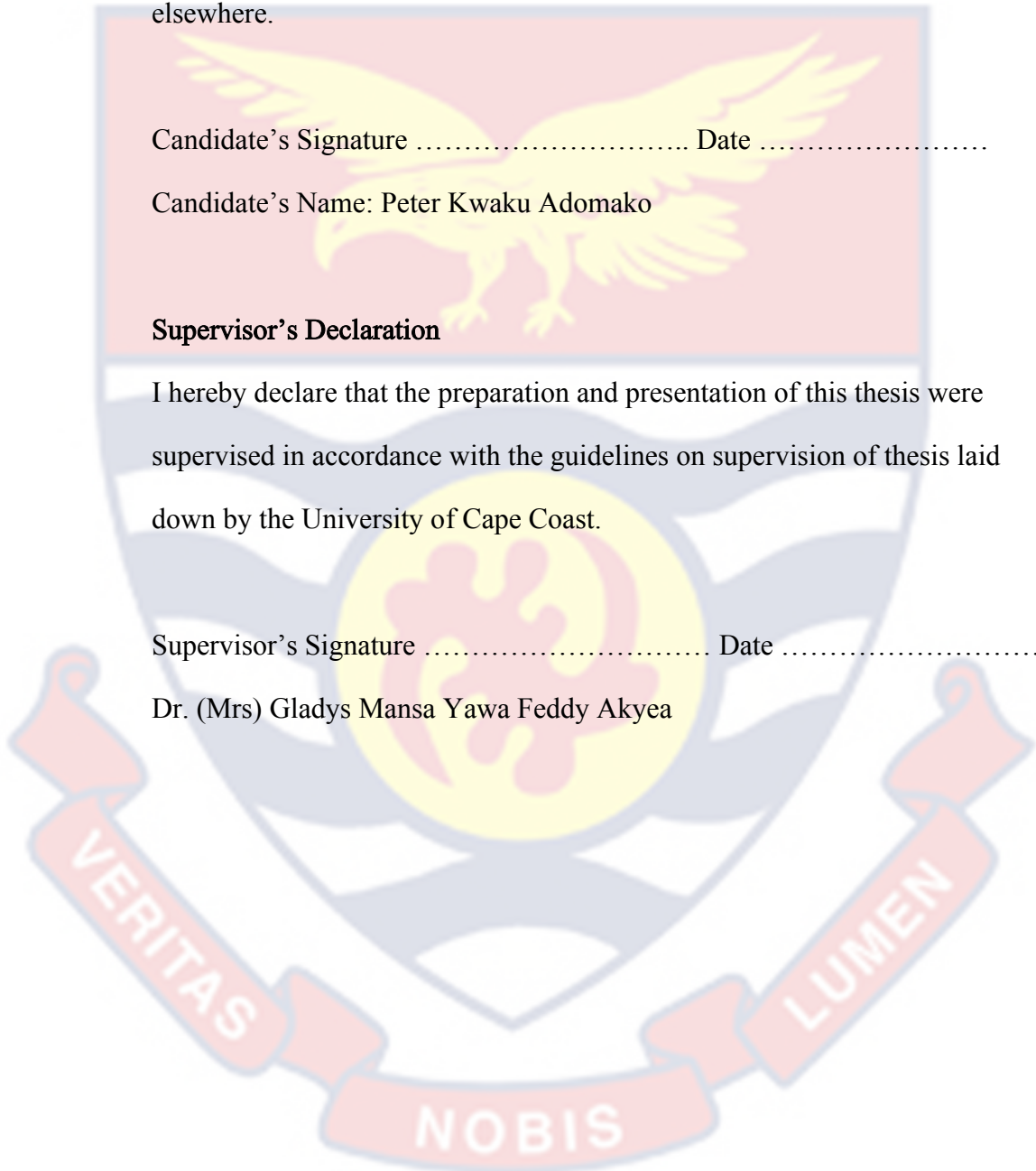
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### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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## ABSTRACT

The Akan of Ghana, have their unique cultural practices which are vital to their existence as a people. Among them are birth rites, puberty rites, marriage rites, and funeral rites. Funerals or funeral rites are a core function of any Akan society. This paper examines and analyses proverbs in the dirges sung by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono. It exposes the fascinating and cultural elements of dirges sung at funerals especially, the one sung by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa. The speech act theory by Austin (1975) was employed as a theoretical tool when analyzing data. Based on the three tiers Austin proposed, the data was analyzed. Thus, the locutionary act, illocutionary act and perlocutionary act. Aesthetic values were also examined in the use of the proverbs of the dirges. The study makes use of a qualitative research methodology. This is because of the work's anthropological nature. Thus, ethnography as a method for studying cultures and people in descriptive ways and as a portrayal of people. Most of the dirges were sung to praise and appreciate the life of the dead. However, there were other cultural connotations such as moral lessons, appraisal of the dead, philosophical reflection on life and aesthetic values (kindness, love, anger, growth etc).

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my lovely wife Mrs. Lily Adomako and my children;  
Aaron Yaw Adomako, Felicia-Anna Afia Adomako, and Peter Kofi Adomako.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This is the introductory chapter of the study and it is about the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and organization of the study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Okpewho (1992) is of the view that African Oral literature must be considered as one of the best in the world since one may not necessary need any 'special training' or formal education before one becomes perfect in its performance. According to him, anybody at all in the village without any formal education could therefore tell a story or proverb about something with all the necessary literary devices in it. Okpewho (ibid) however, explains that people who perform oral literature were seen ancient to be considered as artist in any regular sense of the word. Nevertheless, a closer look at the careers of these performers in specific social circumstances soon opened the minds and eyes of scholars to the level of creative and imaginative skills that are involved in an oral performance.

In Africa, every tribe or society has its own practices, customs and beliefs which usually explain the history of that tribe or society. It does also explain how the people in that tribe or society look like (Gyekye, 1997). These practices make people unique in their socio-cultural and political settings. This is no exception to the people of Pankorono who are believed to have unique practices.

African oral literature expresses the cultural, social, and political lives of their people. It contains their norms, vocations and talents; objects of

worship, food, marriage and values that dictate these cultural practices. Agyekum (2011) therefore concludes that Africans, their culture and oral literature are interrelated. The recognition and exploration of Africa's 'identity', one may say is embedded in African oral traditions which help the people to occupy a significant place in the continental and diaspora relationship. Efforts in this regard have largely contributed to making literature a convincing platform for and identity. African oral literature therefore creates a critical space for African identity and perceptions. The foundations of African oral literature are speech, structure of the speech, performance, games and folks, symbolism, composition, memorization, performer, voice, audience etc. (Agyekum, 2011).

Akan oral works encompass various symbols which communicate a lot more than the 'normal' language that is used. On this, Brockett & Ball, (2004:274) are of the view that, indigenous performance words are often the least important element since it captures the essences that do not only emblemize the spiritual universe but also the aesthetic particulars that describe the daily experience in the community. The Akan communicate with symbols the "essences" that do not only bring them together, but also portray their identity. Symbols may emphasize group identity. Fonime & Idaresit (2005), add that symbols also point to the essential qualities of each character, in a group thereby, fostering the indisputable interlinking relationship between communication and characterization. The comments on oral literature and leads to the culture of a people to expands the space for interrogating the Akan society where communication is often dominated by signs, codes, ethos, myths, symbols, mnemonic devices, anecdotal, expression, stylization and norms.

To the Akan of Ghana, Addo (2001) postulates that the use of visual symbolism in the daily lives in fabric designing, wood carving, painting, clay work and metal works is a practice that can be traced to antiquity. Some of these

symbols were and are still generated from proverbs and other wise sayings. The historical lives of the Akan are also incorporated into these symbols for documentation and memorization to hide secrets and facts that are open only to members of the community. The Akan, therefore, place much value on these symbols and so use them in most of their activities. In order to keep and maintain these traditions in our contemporary era, there is the need to frequently create and introduce new and innovative images from proverbs, wise sayings and the life stories of the people into their socio-cultural systems to help continue to discover, create, and promote the many aspects of visual literacy and learning in this modern society. However, one can genuinely say that, proverbs are also created from existed life experience in a society.

Akan oral works cannot be complete without memorization of the text to be performed; therefore, it is very critical for a performer to encode the text before its performance. Stern (1992:261), is of the view that "the concept of learning strategy is dependent on the assumption that learners consciously engage in activities to achieve certain goals and learning strategies can be regarded as broadly conceived intentional directions and learning techniques." Thus, for one to be able to perform any literary form very credibly, s/he has to memorize and dramatize the given text with all the necessary skills and strategies either consciously or unconsciously when processing new information and performing tasks in the language.

This shows that before a performer can perform very well, they need to encode all the actions they need to decode to the audience since there would be no written materials or script to look at while on stage. The decoding of the performing texts are sometimes not the exact word-for-word from the script; since oral works permit the performer to add and subtract from the given text. However, there are certain aspects of the text which can never be rejected

irrespective of how creative the performer is or will put out since that may hold the central ideas of the text. For example theme, plot, titles, setting, proverbs, names, and some specific history behind the said text, which when changed, would turn the whole performance into a different thing all together (Agyekum, 2011).

Akan of Ghana has a belief that nobody can claim the ownership of oral works since it was handed down from generation to generation (Addo, 2011, Agyekum, 2011). Nobody traces the particular person who brought the oral works. Which means we cannot mention a particular person whose name can be put on as the owner. However, recently many people have written some of the Akan oral works and have added some contemporaries to the old ones and are claiming the ownership of such works as their own. However, in reality, the written documents can be for these writers but works or sayings can never be their own.

Nkansah (2002) explores the relevance of the Akan religio-cultural heritage and its proverbs, for Christian theology. The author discusses the African religio-cultural heritage showing its impact on African Christian thought. He examines the cultural and religious contexts of the Akan people where he argues that Akan ontology and cosmology form the basis of Akan philosophical thought and epistemology and that Akan proverbs and symbols about God are the results of the Akan's reflection on their religious experience of God. Proverbs play a major role in religious teaching across all the tribes in Ghana, especially the Akan. Nkansah draws out the theological meaning of these materials (proverbs) in relation to God and looks at the theological themes that emerged by pointing out their implications for the doctrine of God. He points out that the Ancestor King Model in the Akan religion-cultural context

provides a new idiom and rich insights for Akan Christians to understand the nature and character of God (Nkansah, 2002).

Akyea (2016) asserted that the Ewes use their everyday life experiences in their totality, the fauna and flora, to create artifacts and literary texts such as nyadodo, proverbs, appellations, and songs to make statements about life in general and themselves. Proverbs are an integral part of the Ewe culture and nyadodo as a Ewe artistic genre has elements of proverbs in them. Oral literature is a powerful tool used by many tribes in especially the Ewes to communicate and educate their people. Proverbs are a very essential aspect of these forms of communication. The study discusses nyadodo as a genre that shares some small and big elements with other oral genres of the Ewe, even though it has a unique structure of attribution.

Yankah (1989) opines that proverbs are a very useful communication tool in Akan society. Proverbs are widely used in everyday conversation, dirges, popular songs, games, contests, sermons, and court oratory. Yankah gave examples of all of these uses. As a native Akan speaker, he argued that proverb meaning is dependent on context and usage, or as the Akan say, ‘Without sleep, there is no dream; without discourse, there is no proverb.’ He examined proverb use with respect to styles, performance, creativity, and authorship. He discussed how proverbs are registered as mementos and kept on a string by proverb custodians.

#### **1.1.0 Nana Abenaa Asantewaa**

The present study is on dirges composed and sang by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. She is currently ninety four (94) years of age but she looks very smart and strong. According to Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, she was born before the development in terms of infrastructure of Kumasi therefore she could tell the history of Kumasi and how

it came about. She was born in the year 1925 by Opanin Yaw Boateng and Maame Akosua Yentumi. She introduced that she could be the oldest in the town. She had no formal education however, she had informal education from her parents. Her father was a professional driver and her mother was a potter (*nkukuonwono*). Nana told me during her interview that she was the second born of ten children of her parents but all have died leaving her alone. She was married to Opanin Yaw Dua as a second wife. She had two children both died at their tender age and that made her divorce her husband. The food she likes best are; (*fufu*) with any soup, (*ampesie*), and marshed plantain (*borɔdeɛ tɔ*).

Nana said she did not learn the dirges from anybody and considers it as a gift from God. She admitted that what inspires her to sing dirges are the experiences she had had in life and how death has treated humans in general. She reveals that sometimes she looks at the love in a family between brothers and sisters and among friends who help each other etc. The generosity of people, the wickedness of others to people around, and human existence in general, shape the themes she expresses in the dirges she sings.

She gave examples of a parent who loves their children, provide them with the necessities in life but is suddenly without notice is taken by death. She further asked me to consider the painful loss of benefactors or people who care for the weak and poor are wickedly killed by death. Nana said when she thinks about all these then she becomes inspired to sing dirges. Thus the incidents of death and its consequences on its victims are resources she uses to compose dirges.

Nana Abenaa Asantewaa informed me that she started singing dirges at the age of sixteen (16) and she sings alone. I asked if she has some young ones who are being trained but she says no; since most young ones today are not interested and some even see it as something fetish. However, she said if some

young ones put themselves together and decide to learn, she is ever ready to train them. Nana said, aside singing dirges, she could also dance very well to the traditional funeral songs. She added that due to her age and her experiences, she is able to counsel couples with mental problems and other people who need advice.

Nana Abenaa Asantewaa informed me that apart from the financial and material benefits she gain from singing, dirges is a medium that reminds her of the past and also relate the past to the present. By so doing, she gets to know humans better and how nature has structured everything in this world. Nana explains that her dirges may not be easily understood by everybody or those she referred to as “ordinary person” because of the proverbs in them. She added that, the proverbs also depict the rich culture of that Ashanti. To add more, she said, “The use of the proverbs in her dirges are sometimes used to cover the meanings of some words to some people like children and visitors, that provoke them to learn more into the culture.”

At her leisure time, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa sings and listens to traditional songs like; *kete*, *adowa*, and *high life*. She is a prospective Queen Mother but due to her age, she decided to stay out for the young women to take over. Her position in the palace now is Royal Old Lady *Obaa Panin*. Her duty at the palace is to remind the chief and the elders of the special days for sacrifices and she cooks all food meant for sacrifices. Nana said there are no decisions that are taken at the palace without her notice and she has the right to choose and reject royals to be enstooled.

### 1.1.1 The Research Location - Pankorono

Pankorono is one of the numerous towns in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It is situated in the northern part of Kumasi in the Old Tafo Municipal Assembly off Asante Mampong road. According to Nana Abenaa Asantewaa (a



native), the town has three (3) divisions according to its traditional setting and rulings. These are; Dome, Atafoa and Pankorono. This research is situated in Pankorono because it is the traditional head of the traditional area. The family that rules Pankorono is Aduana clan and their totem is a dog with fire in its mouth. Oral tradition stipulates that the Aduana clan claims that they brought fire into the world. The main duty of the Pankorono people to the Ashanti kingdom is to produce eating or serving plates (*nkukuo*). Thus, whenever the King and his officials are going to eat, the Pankorono people are supposed to supply them with bowls or plates (*nkukuo*). According to Nana Abenaa Asantewaa (a native), the people of Pankorono migrated from a place called Akrofoso also in Kumasi where they used to bury dead bodies.

The people of Pankorono believe there is a Supreme Creator (*Onyankopon*) who created the universe. However, they also believe in the world of the dead (*asamanado*) and ancestorship. Therefore, great attention is paid to the dead, and the gods (*abosom*) who mediate between the dead and the living. The name of the god of the people of Pankorono is *Tano Kofi* who was born on Friday; they worship him on Fridays (*Fofie*) and Sundays (*Akwasidee*). According to oral tradition, it is a taboo for those who worship *abosom Tano Kofi* to eat goat meat (*aponkye*). The river they use for ritual bath is called *Aworo*. Oral tradition says that women who are in their monthly period dare not go to the river side as well as the special days mentioned earlier, else they will become barren. The main food for *abosom Tano Kofi* is white mashed yam (*bayereto*) with twelve eggs (12) and a white sheep for all sacrifices. All sacrifices are done on *Akwasidee*. After every sacrifice, royals who are closer to *abosom Tano Kofi* eat some of the *bayereto* and the eggs to signify their union with him. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa admitted that, *abosom Tano Kofi* was very powerful, lovely, caring and very understanding. He protects the royal

family as well as the entire community and disallows bad persons from entering the community. The traditional priest to *ɔbosom Tanɔ Kofi* was Nana Akua Adae who died almost sixty years ago and since then, they have not had any replacement.

The main occupation of the people of Pankorono was the making of earthenwares such as pots (*nkukuo*). However, farming and trading activities are also part of their occupations.

Nana Kwabena Acheampong formerly Atimatim chief who also come from Pankorono gave his side of the history of Pankorono. He said the chiefs were three (3) brothers thus; Pankorono, Dome and Atafoa. They came from Denkyira to Adum chief but he could not help them from their problems they went to Nkwanta Kɛse chief who helped them and because of that, they decided to serve him. Upon series of consultations, the then Otumfoɔ consulted Tafo chief and they obtained the land from Tafo chief. One of the brother called Dome had a disease and decided to separate himself from his brothers so that they will not be affected. When he was cured, he decided to live there and named that place *se wodɔ me a bra* meaning if you love me come. That came by the name “*Dome* thus love me”. The other one also named his village Atafoa and the last one is called Pankorono.

Pankorono practices polygamy which is common among the Akans. They also believe in communal prosperity instead of individual prosperity. Thus the wealth of an individual should benefit all. Oral tradition says that most men practised polygamy with the idea of showing their generosity and readiness to support a large family. The Ashanti communities were basically communal and the wealth of one should benefit all. The most common family system that is practised among the people of Pankorono is the extended family system which

is practiced across Ghana. This is to create a cordial relationship between the poor and the rich for financial assistance and other benefits or support.

The people of Pankorono like any other Ashanti practise matrilineal inheritance. Inheritance and succession are gender and age driven. Thus men and senior ones are the first promote to inherit or to become successors to a throne. Though there is also nephew-inheritance (*wɔfaase adedie*) it is not automatic that nephews (*wɔfaasenom*) are always successors to their uncles.

Funeral celebrations are very important to the people of Pankorono as we find in almost cultures in Ghana and elsewhere. Though it is the duty of the bereaved family to initiate funeral rites, the entire community provides support for the success of a funeral. One of the most important aspect of funerals in Pankorono is to mourn the deceased as a way of showing respect to the dead, the family and the community at large. Agyekum (2011) explains that, it is the duty of the females in the family to sing dirges (*nsuie*) while the men lament (*menabɔ*). The deceased is laid in state after s/he has been properly dressed. Friends, families and loved ones come to pay their last respect. Some people request from the deceased, children, successful marriage, prosperity, etc. All the activities that are performed before the main funeral is called *dɔteyie*.

The people of Pankrono speak a dialect of Ashanti Twi. Twi is very rich in proverbs, and proverb authorship is generally ascribed to “The Elders” *mpanimfoɔ*, though some proverbs authorship may be ascribed to a particular community/tribe. For examples; (*Ntim Gyakare asoa ne man akɔbɔ no wɔ Feyiase*) literary means Ntim Gyakari has sent his community to be killed at Feyiase. This proverb is mainly for people of Denkyira. In an interview with Nana Abenaa Asantewaa a native of Pankorono, she informed me that there are six major factors that motivate the Ashanti to use proverbs and these are; to

persuade, for social prestige, to embellish discourse, to establish moral principles, to reinforce cultural values and for entertainment.

In the use of proverbs, the speaker might want to cause a change in opinion or to reinforce an agreeable position taken by a listener; thus the speaker may resort to a traditional language whose satisfactory use will boost his social prestige. The use of proverbs is therefore a means by which wisdom may be effectively allied with pleasure, and the knowledge of proverb is a valuable social asset.

### 1.1.2 Definitions of dirges

Abrams (2005) defines a dirge as “a versified expression of grief on the occasion of a particular person’s death.” Generally, the dirge is a term that is closely related to death. In the African context, Ohwovoriolè (2010) defines dirges as “songs, poems or dances performed on the death or during the funeral of someone with societal recognition.” She explains further that the dirge can be “eulogic, satiric, lamentative, condemnatory or incantatory.” He considered the style of performing dirges as not the “normal” ways of performing poems even though it is considered as a poem. In Akan, some of the paralinguistic features that accompany the performance of a dirge include, putting one finger into the mouth at the same time waving the other hand, falling and rolling on the floor, putting both hands on top of the head, putting both hands at the back and beating the stomach and many more. All these body gestures make a dirge as a performance poem different from the “ordinary” poem.

Ohwovoriolè further stated that a dirge would typically hint at the reasons of death and the alleged villain in addition to expressing sorrow over the loss and extolling the virtues of the deceased. Since it is against Akan tradition for men to grieve in public, funeral dirges are often performed and sung mainly by the women. This is to say that when men cry in public, it shows

the level of their sorrow and emotional break down. However, men have a different ways of performing the dirge known as “*menabɔ*” in Akan. For example;

<b>Akan</b>		<b>English</b>
<i>Anya adwo o!</i>	1	It’s over o!
<i>Sensiasɔ e!</i>	2	Sensiasɔ e!
<i>ɔman bo adwo o!</i>	3	People are satisfied o!
<i>Me na meni o!</i>	4	Here I am o!

Akporobaro (2001) and Ohwovorirole (2006) agree that the dirge has poetic element that are performed through chants, recitations etc. Agyekum (2011) also adds that a dirge can be considered “as a sound that somebody makes when he or she is confronted with something terrible”. For example, death of a loved one and loss of property. In addition, at the collapse of a building, though nobody may die, but we realize that there is loss of somebody’s properties. The sound that the person makes over the loss of the said property is considered a dirge. Thus to Agyekum, one can conclude that a dirge is not only a song that depicts death alone but anything that brings about a sorrowful scene. The performer expresses sorrow in a sound that can be a song or poem to tell people how deep the pain s/he is going through.

From the few explanations and definitions on the dirge, one can conclude that a dirge can be defined as a poem, a song or lamentation accompanied sometimes with tears to describe the relationship between the dead and the bereaved as well as to tell the good works of the deceased. In addition, the performance of a dirge include body gestures or paralinguistic features that expresses its message and emotive quality that help us to get the imaginary view of the deceased. The aesthetic quality is realized through the use of appellations

and other tropes which describe the relationship between the deceased and the performer since the dirge is mostly woven around the entire life of the deceased and how s/he has impacted in people's lives.

### 1.1.3 Structure of Akan Dirges

The socio-cultural impact of dirges on humans is significant. It resonates deeply with the people to whom it is being sung at the funeral gathering. Traditionally, a dirge is mostly seen as a sacred entertainment performance with a moral and spiritual impact on both the deceased and the people gathered at the funeral (Anyidoho 2002). In the Akan setting, a dirge is a very important traditional element.

Nketia (1955), Anyidoho (2002) and other scholars have worked on various aspect of Akan dirges including its form, types and structure. Based on the themes they incorporate, Nketia (1955) distinguished some structural forms in Akan dirges. These themes determine exact types of dirge songs sung at funeral grounds. The way in which death is perceived and most significantly, the way in which grief is expressed as a result of the occurrence are distinguishing characteristics of the Akan dirge that are emphasized. Agyekum (2012) notes that Akan dirges follow three movements structurally. These are the Introduction or the Opening (*ahyɛaseɛ ne ɔfrɛ*), the Body (*mfimfini ne asem pɔtee a ɔsufoɔ no de reto dwa*) and the Conclusion (*awieɛ/ nkradie ne nkratoɔ*). In the Introductory part, (*ahyɛaseɛ anaa ɔfrɛ*), the singer starts the song by calling for audience attention. It is full of wailing, the use of formulaic expressions, mentioning of names of the deceased and other family members who have passed on. The words may not directly address death or make any claims or assertions about it; however, the circumstances described by these considerate words, such as the names of deceased ancestors, their ancestral

homes of origin, and the events connected with their lives, elicit the desired emotional response in the listener.

Analysis of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa's dirges reveals a similar structural arrangement. Most of the words she uses may not have specific meanings but as explained, it has both aesthetic and functional effects. For example, in one of her dirges, (dirge 2 lines 2-6) she introduced her song as follows:

<b>Twi</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Ee! Gyankrohenko ee! 2</i>	Ee! Gyankrohenko ee!
<i>Yaa Asantewaa ee! 3</i>	Yaa Asantewaa ee!
<i>Obaabasia a ɔto aperɛmo ano ee!</i>	A woman who stands at the machine gun
<i>Woayɛ bi a gyae oo! 4</i>	If you have done some stop oo!
<i>Yee! Obaa basia a ɔne nkramo na</i>	Yee! A woman fight with the warriors
<i>ɛdi asie woayɛ bi a gya oo! 5</i>	who have done some stop oo!
<i>Yee! Obaa basia a ɔne nkramo na</i>	Yee! A woman who fight warriors who <i>ɛdi</i>
<i>asie woayɛ bi a gya. oo 6</i>	have done some stop oo!

When the researcher enquired about the meaning of the above, Nana stated that these had no real meaning in the Akan language; it is just a song about Nana Abenaa Asantewaa and she just use that to call people to listen to her. In essence, this technique is to evoke a sense of awakening in the listeners; a kind of foreshadowing as well.

The second part which is the Body, (*mfimfini/ asem pɔtee a ɔtofoɔ de reto dwa*) contains the main message the singer wants to tell the audience. That is the reasons why she is singing the dirge about the deceased in question. This is where, most of the proverbs and other literary elements are employed to elicit the desired emotional effect. The singer mourns her relation with the deceased

and the hardships that the loss will entail. So here, she mentions a lot of the good deeds of the deceased to the family and the community at large to the audience. For example, the deceased might be someone who feeds her, clothes her, and provides her security, shelter and many more. Now that s/he is not available, it means the singer has no life at all. This may make the singer to question death and its power; sometimes, the singer may invokes curses on death and or whoever might have been the cause of the demise of the deceased. In one of her dirges, Nana asked Death to at least have mercy on her; in fact, she expresses the wickedness and unfriendly nature of death thus: (dirge... lines 1-3)

<b>Twi</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Wode yɛn yafunu kɔ oo!</i> 1	You have taking our stomach away oo!
<i>Wode yɛn ani kɔ oo!</i> 2	You have taking our eyes away oo!
<i>Aa! Agya te ase a anka yɛdidi</i> 3	If father is alive we would have eaten.

In the last segment of the structure of the dirge, the singer concludes the message to the audience. Here, the singer, after expressing the agony and sorrow she has gone through, may come back to address the deceased and ask for favour. Most dirge singers at this point, may ask for children, healing or good health, good marriage, wealth, good job, perfect security, and more. This is a demonstration of the Akan worldview concerning the relationship between the dead and the living. The ancestors can see what the living cannot see; when the living tell them their problems, the ancestors are able to provide the necessary support. For example, in dirge 4 of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa (lines 41-44), she asked the deceased to send her money.

<b>Twi</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Asamanado yɛ ɔman a mommane me oo!</i> 41	If hades is a world then send me something
<i>Maame ee!</i> 42	Mother ee!



<i>Mommane me sika o!</i>	43	Send me money o!
<i>Mommane me sika o!</i>	44	Send me money o!

The Akan people's perspective of the universe and their conviction that there is a permanent connection between the worlds of the living and the dead (*Asamanado*) can be seen in their attitude toward death. Undoubtedly, there is sadness and grief associated with death, but it also signifies a hopeful move of the same family and clan members from one residence to another. Although the dirge singer is grieving, neither her temporal nor spiritual lives are in peril. The above discussions reveal that Nana Abenaa Asantewaa's dirges follow the general structural arrangement of Akan dirges as explained by Agyekum (2012). The context of the songs and the deceased's age or social standing may determine whether lament predominates or otherwise

When reading these poems, it is impossible to miss the restraint and control in the picture choices. Death is painful, yet it is not depicted as a terrifying, depressing, or spooky event. In fact, the poems hardly use the word death. Dirges emerge out of women's wailing, following the news of a death, and mark the beginning of public mourning.

Nketia (1955) classified dirges into four basic forms and analyses the structure of each, giving examples in both English and Twi. They continue to be sung throughout the funeral in honor of the deceased. The singer mourns her relation with the deceased and the hardships that loss will entail. Dirges employ a range of metaphors for names and events. He looked at the dirges in their poetic, syntactic, class, and semantic forms. In a similar vein, Anyidoho (2002) was able to recognize "amoma" as a unique funeral eulogy. This is not just because Christian funeral rituals typically have it written and spoken, but this also is due

to the fact that this type of Akan lament draws on the poetry of royal appellations, ancient Akan dirges, and hunting songs.

#### 1.1.4 Types of Nana Abena Asantewaa's Dirges

Under the heading of Nana Abena Asantewaa's dirges, structural and sociological types can be examined. Each of the dirges was thoughtfully sung, and performed in remembrance to express profound sorrow, melancholy, and pain at the loss of a loved one. Sometimes, they are sung to also praise the dead. This happens when the deceased in question is an important figure in the society. The structure of the dirge has been linked to any other Akan dirge. First of all, Nana Abena Asantewaa's dirges are considered poetic. For instance:

<b>Twi</b>		<b>English</b>
<i>Barima ba ee!</i>	1	Eh! Son of man
<i>Nananom ee!</i>	2	Eh! Ancestors
<i>Ehe na moako yi oo! Heee.</i>	3	Where have you gone oo! Heee
<i>Etuo bene a esi barima bo.</i>	4	If a gun gets hot, it rests in the chest of man
<i>Efie da mpan!</i>	5	The house is deserted!
<i>Fituo da mpan!</i>	6	The household is deserted!
<i>Aa menko bafia!</i>	7	I am alone left behind!

There are objective ways of expressing emotions during the mourning of a deceased. The song's repetitions created a rhythm that the audience can learn and follow, which also makes it easier to emphasize certain parts of the song's message. The song uses metaphors to express its message, which is the moral of the story. The song is played multiple times for these two purposes in order to highlight the song's significance and to promote audience engagement. The song's repetitions created a structure that the audience could learn and follow, and they made it easier to emphasize message. The song's message is

expressed metaphorically and conveys the story's moral. The song is played multiple times for these two purposes in order to highlight the song's significance and to promote audience engagement.

Repetition is used to highlight specific passages in a text. Such emphasis highlights or draws attention to specific themes in a statement. It is important to note that repeated words have a beat or movement of their own that not only improves the rhythm of poetry but also produces aural effects that are enjoyable or even therapeutic for the listener (Fasan 2015, 116). The repetition employed in dirge songs create a pattern that the listener can learn and memorize, which also makes it easier to emphasize the content. The song's message is expressed metaphorically in the dirge, which also incorporates the song's moral. For instance,

<b>Twi</b>	<b>English</b>
<i>Obretuo Nana ee!</i> 1	A grandson of Bretuo ee!
<i>Aduana Nana!</i> 2	Grandson of Aduana!
<i>Memfà he nie o?</i> 3	Where should I pass o?
<i>Memfà he nie o?</i> 4	Where should I pass o?
<i>Moatu me so kyiniie o!</i> 5	You have taking an umbrella from me o!
<i>Hwan na zbehwe me?</i> 6	Who will care for me?
<i>Moremane me a, momane me</i> <i>yafunudee.</i> 7	If you are sending me, send me something of fetus
<i>Mommane me a, mommane me</i>	If you are sending me, send me medicine
<i>Aduro na me yare a mede ahwe me ho</i> 8	so that I can cure myself when I'm sick.

### 1.1.5 Types of Akan (Ashanti's) dirges

Agyekum (2011) puts Akan dirges into four main types, and these are;

### 1. Benabɔ/Mmɔnbɔ

In Akan, only women are noted for singing dirges except *benabɔ/mmɔnbɔ* which is also noted for men only. Singing of dirges comes with tears flowing from the eyes of the singer. However in *benabɔ/mmɔnbɔ*, singers do not shed tears, they only chant or sing in a loud voice to express their displeasures in a sorrowful manner. The singer normally exclaims to end every statement he makes. For example,

Twi		English
<i>Agyae e!</i>	1	Father e!
<i>Agyae e!</i>	2	Father e!
<i>Agyae mawu o!</i>	3	Father I'am dead o!

### 2. Agyaadwo

Agyaadwo is one of the Akan dirges which normally comes with repetition of the same word in a loud voice. It normally uses the sound 'ee, and oo' at the end of lines. For example,

Twi		English
<i>Agya e! Mawu o!</i>	1	Father e! I'm dead o!
<i>Obi nso me mu o!</i>	2	Somebody should help me o!
<i>Obi amma a, merewuo o!</i>	3	I'm dieing if nobody comes to my aid o!

### 2. Kwadwom

Kwadwom is another type of dirge songs that is sung normally at the palace to mourn kings and royals. On the other hand, some importance personalitie can also be sung. It is normally sung by both males and females without tears. The singer sometimes mentions some of the legacies of the deceased. For example;

**Twi****English**

*Obrempon a woma ohiani aduane e! 1* The mighty who gives food to the needy!

*Aden na woreko no woankra yen? 2* Why did you tell us about your departure?

*Wo dwuma nyinaa na aka yi hwan na abshwe soo?* All your works are left behind who will care for them?

**4. Nkankyee**

Nkankyee is a type of a dirge which is normally woven around the history of the deceased, his family, and his background. Normally tears do not come from the eyes of the singer. For example,

**Twi****English**

*Obarima Owusu*

The brave man Owusu

*Johoo a kuromani dan no*

A foreigner whose the native depend

*Agya! mane me*

Father! Send me

Dirge as it has been explained by many scholars above is all about sorrowful situation or mood; therefore, a dirge is not sung or recited at all times except occasions which are sorrowful. There are five (5) main settings of Akan dirges.

These are;

1. When somebody is laid in state.
2. During the main funeral celebration.
3. When somebody goes to somebody's funeral.
4. During death anniversary celebration of a person.
5. When there is a loss a valuable property

**1.1.6 Proverbs**

Paremiology, deriving from the Greek “Paroimia” which means “proverb” is the study of proverbs. Proverbs have been studied since the time

of Aristotle and paremiography (the collection of proverbs) has been done for millennia, from the classical period through the Sumerian cuneiform tablets to the middle ages up to the present times (Mieder, 1989). Several scholars have defined proverbs in diverse ways.

Mieder (ibid) however, admits that there are more definition attempts than proverbs, and Trench (2003) claims that the concept is the hardest thing to define. Taylor (1981) supported the above by stating that: “the definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking an incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that the other is not. These scholars have also pointed out that proverbs have currency in that they are known and often quoted in a small or large region in one or several linguistic communities or in a part of such community. But Mieder (1993) explains also that “proverbs have history, they come and go if not used any longer”. Trench (ibid) aptly notes that three cardinal points constitute the form of proverbs: shortness, sense and salt. While shortness relates to size, sense relates to the message, the content and the profound meaning underpinning proverbs, and salt refers to topics and aesthetics in order to make a pragmatic point about them. Therefore, a proverb could be thought of as an extremely potent and succinct phrase or statement that is utilized to replace something that might otherwise be communicated in a longer speech.

Proverbs can also be considered in terms of language as a stereotyped linguistic entity expressing a fixed idea (Mieder, 1989). On the surface linguistic level, the proverb provides an artistic picture; on the level of ideas, a judgment, as a work of art of folklore, it belongs to the secondary semiotic systems. It is also a communication system with a double code, a carrier of information at the level of language, but at the same time, the information carries another content too becoming an instrument of poetic expression (Vöö,

1989). In cognitive perspective, Honeck (1997:18) explains a proverb as a “discourse deviant, relatively concrete, present (non-past) tense statement that uses characteristic linguistic markers to arouse cognitive ideas that serve to categorise style or aesthetics: rhyme, metaphor, simile, alliteration hyperbole among other aesthetic devices with which proverbs are spiced or flavoured”. It is the combination of these elements or at least the presence of one that makes proverbs memorable. The conceptual characterization of proverbs inform the formal definition of proverb by Lau, Tokofsky and Winick (2004; 45) as “message passed between and among people ..., brief and pithy, wise and witty, rhetorically forceful, but discretely indirect”.

A proverb is further defined by Mieder (1993:14) as "a brief assertion of apparent truth that has had or will have some currency among the people. According to Finnegan (1976:389), it serves as a rich source of metaphor and concise language from which more complex forms might be derived. She also highlights some of the traits of proverbs, including allusive language, metaphorical structures, and symbolic terminology. She explains that a proverb is a saying that has a more or less fixed form and is distinguished by its brevity, meaning, and "salt" as well as the widespread acceptance of the truth that is succinctly represented in it. For the analysis of African proverbs, particularly Akan proverbs, Finnegan's perspectives on the proverbs provide some helpful guidelines. This is due to the fact that, in addition to their terseness and relative fixity, most proverbs are distinguished from more straightforward maxims in form by some sort of poetic character in their style or connotation. Yusuf (1997a:1) expresses a similar view to that of Finnegan; when he defines a proverb as a “short, witty, traditional, ideological – laden statement”. As a special form of language, Yusuf further explains that, functional values of proverbs can be viewed as compact expressions which are used to succinctly

convey truth and wisdom with a view to teaching, praising, commending, advising, correcting, indicting, warning, rebuking or castigating.

The discussion on the nature and scope of proverbs above are applicable to Ghanaian communities. In essence, proverbs in these communities, go a long way in defining their societal attitude and determining their way of life as a people. Along with their ideas and customs, proverbs convey their feelings and emotions. Proverbs have both functional and aesthetic values.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Scholars have looked at funerals and dirges from different perspectives. For example, as far back as Nketia (1955) He examined the Akan people's funeral dirges in Ghana and describes their function in the funeral ceremony, the themes of the dirge, the dirge as a literary expression and more. Alembi (2008) carries off from there by examining the oral dirge as a funeral poetry that is performed in escorting the dead among the Abanyole in Kenya. Alembi, (ibid) specifically analyzed some elements of context, sound, paraphernalia, costumes and make-up and how they help in our understanding of the concept of “escorting the dead”. Faber (1986) also investigated the religious and social contexts in which dirges are performed, analyzed their linguistic and literary properties, and offered examples of a variety of dirge texts. Woma, (2012) similarly examines the socio-political dimensions of Dagara funeral ritual which focused on the textual interpretations of *gyil* (xylophone) music and *langni* (lyrics) as a political discourse of Dagara in Ghana. Adegbite (2010) in his investigation into Yoruba people's literary and cultural expression through dirges, identified the literary qualities in dirges in a selected group of the Yoruba people (Awori). He further analyzed the socio-cultural impact of Yoruba dirges on the people. From the above and other available studies, it is clear that none of them has really focused on proverbs in dirges let alone proverbs in the dirges



composed by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa. It is against this background that the researcher is motivated to study proverbs that are embedded in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankrono in order to analyze the aesthetic and cultural values in her proverbs.

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify proverbs in collected dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi.
2. To analyze the aesthetic and cultural values of the proverbs that are embedded in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi.

### 1.4 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions;

1. What proverbs are embedded in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi?
2. What are the aesthetic and cultural values of the proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi?

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

Studies or researches are meant to solve a problem in a given area of investigation. It is for this reason that the findings of this study will significantly help readers to:

Identify proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi. Furthermore, readers will use it as a source of reference to appreciate the cultural values and functions of the dirges in Ashanti funerals. Lastly, it will serve as a platform to readers to learn and appreciate the culture and concept of Akan dirges.

### **1.6 Delimitation**

The work is focused on Asante Twi dialect among the Akan in Ghana. The researcher's reason for this choice is that it is the dialect that he can speak well and has better control than the other Akan dialects. In addition, he has taught this dialect for more than ten years in some Ghanaian schools. The research will also be limited to only Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankrono in the Ashanti Region. The reason for choosing Pankorono is that it is where a ninety four (94) year old woman, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa who sings dirges at funerals as a resource person lives. Therefore, choosing Pankorono will be of help to the researcher. Lastly, it will be limited to only proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa's proverbs at pankorono.

### **1.7 Limitation**

The main problem was getting the resource person on time since she sings at funerals. In addition, because of old age, sometimes she feels tired and thus unable to attend to the researcher. However, the researcher tried as much as possible to ensure that these limitations did not affect the authenticity of the work. Thus, the limitation did not in any form affect the outcome of the study.

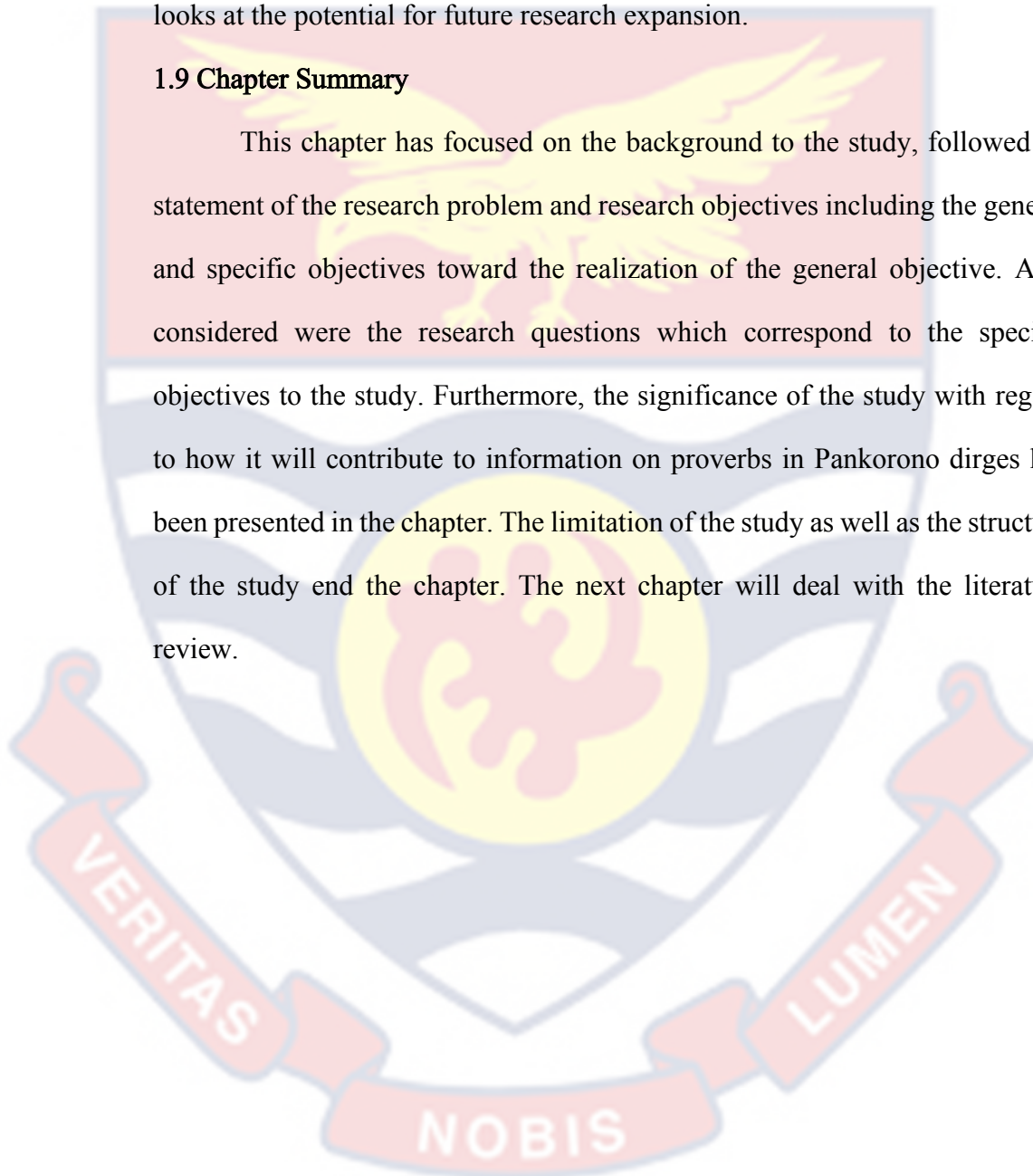
### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction that covers the background, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study and research questions. It also includes the significance of the study and the organisation of the dissertation. Chapter Two presents the literature review which comprises the concepts and theories essential for data analysis. The main topics included the definitions, components, major and related theories and logical framework of the study. Chapter Three contains the research methodology, consisting of the methodological outline adopted for the study. Thus, the research design, description of the study area, characteristics of

the target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments as well as data processing and analysis. Results and analysis from the study are presented in Chapter four. Chapter Five contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for resolving the issues that have been discovered. It also looks at the potential for future research expansion.

### 1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on the background to the study, followed by statement of the research problem and research objectives including the general and specific objectives toward the realization of the general objective. Also considered were the research questions which correspond to the specific objectives to the study. Furthermore, the significance of the study with regard to how it will contribute to information on proverbs in Pankorono dirges has been presented in the chapter. The limitation of the study as well as the structure of the study end the chapter. The next chapter will deal with the literature review.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related studies to the subject matter under investigation. It begins by examining the Speech Act Theory as postulated by Austin and the critical debates thereafter. It further discusses rituals and rites, funeral diriges, aesthetic devices and proverbs. Additionally, this review captures empirical studies on proverbs as well as emerging studies on diriges.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Frameworks are very essential in every study. It guides the researcher to fully understand and direct the nature of the study. Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in some cases to challenge existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. Thus, this study will work with the speech act theory.

#### 2.2 Speech Act Theory

This study has adopted the Speech Act Theory in the analysis of the data. In this section, a review is done on the theory to discuss its nature, scope and application. Speech Act Theory as one of the categories under the study of pragmatics has received a considerable amount of attention in the field of Linguistics. The Speech Act Theory considers language as a sort of action rather than a medium to convey and express ideas. That is, words do not only present information but also carry out actions. Speech Act Theory is associated with Austin who introduced it in 1975 in his well-known book *How to do things with words*. Austin claims that different speech acts are performed by speakers in a conversation (e.g. promising, refusing, (dis)agreeing, commanding etc.). According to him, people do not only use language to assert things but also to do things. The theory therefore emphasizes that utterances have different or

specific meanings to both the user and the listener other than its meaning. Austin divides his Speech Act Theory into three different categories, locutionary, perlocutionary and illocutionary.

1. **Locutionary Act** (the performance of an utterance) – He explains that this is the actual utterance and its meaning, consisting of rhetic, phatic and phonetic acts equating to the syntactic, semantic and verbal components of any statement that holds meaning. This in essence, explains the surface meaning of utterances to a listener other than the underlying meaning of that utterance to the speaker. For example, in Akan, when somebody says *odupɔn tutu a, borɔferɛ na esi n'ana mu* means when a big tree falls a pawpaw tree grow in its instead. The locutionary act of the above example or its surface meaning is that there is a big tree that has fallen and pawpaw trees have in its stead. Thus, this can be referred to what is said.
2. **The Illocutionary Act** however, refers to the semantics of the statement. It implies the actual meaning of the utterance. This is the opposite of the locutionary act because it explains the intended meanings of utterances rather than the surface meaning. It implies certain tones, attitudes, feelings, or emotions. In our examples above, *odupɔn tutu a borɔferɛ na esi n'anna mu*, the illocutionary act will offer the real meaning of the statement which is, when a great person dies, it becomes difficult to get an equal replacement of such person. It is important to note that the meaning of the speech act also depends on speech context.
3. **Perlocutionary Act** is that which brings about certain effects on the listeners through the statement that is uttered. The effect is usually particular to the situation and manifests in such processes as cajoling, entreating, frightening, educating, motivating, or causing another to do a thing or perceive something. The effects may be in the form of thoughts, imaginations,

feelings or emotions. Such effects could be intentional or coincidental. For example, *odupɔn tutu a borɔferɛ na esi n'anna* can cause the family of the deceased to either weep thoroughly or curse death upon realizing their great loss.

Austin (1962) proposed classes of verbs based on their illocutionary force. In each class, a list of verbs which typify the class were listed. These are: verdictives: “the giving of a verdict or judgment” (e.g. to hold, calculate, rank, convict, etc.), directives: “the exercising of powers, rights or influence” (e.g. to order, command, warn etc.), commissive: “making promises or giving undertakings” (e.g. promise, (dis)agree, covenant, contract etc.), expositives: “how utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation” (e.g. (dis)agree, deny, accept, object to, etc.), behabitives/expressive: (attitudes and social behaviour) (e.g. apologize, thank, congratulate, etc.)

The classifications notwithstanding, Austin admits that there is always an element of ambiguity. This is because “there are still wide possibilities of marginal and awkward cases, or of overlaps”. For example, the verb agree can be found in both expositives and commissives. Austin’s work has been met with many criticisms and it has been labelled problematic. Searle (1969) posits that the main arguments in Austin’s work have only one remarkable follow up work. However, the basic concept of this theory can serve as a good background to discuss the findings of this work.

Searle’s (1969) rejection of Austin’s classification of illocutionary acts is on the basis that Austin’s criteria fail to differentiate between speech act and speech act verbs and used the two terms interchangeably. Searle on his part argues further that it is possible for a speaker to perform a speech act without using a speech act verb. Based on this assertion, Searle proposes his remarkable influence to the speech act theory – a description and classification of indirect

speech acts (an act where one illocutionary act is performed by way of performing another). Searle's re-categorization of Austin's speech act is as follows:

- a. Presentatives: speech acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, e.g. reciting a creed.
- b. Directives: speech acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action, e.g. requests, commands and advice.
- c. Comissives: speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action, e.g. promise, oaths et cetera.
- d. Expressives: speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition, e.g. congratulations, excuses and thanks.

Declarations: speech acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration, e.g. baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty or pronouncing someone husband and wife. (Searle, 1979).

### 2.3 Funeral Rites and Rituals

Death, funeral rites, and rituals are prevalent in Akan culture. Akan death are classified into two main and these are: *Owu pa* (natural deth) and *Atɔfo wuo* (when someone kills somebody, knock down by vichecle etc). In other words, Akan can also classifies funeral as *Abremponyie* (royal funeral rites which are normally done for Kings, Chiefs, Queens and some high class people in the society. Sometimes almost a week is used to cerebrate such funerals. Others can be called 'ordinary' which are for all manner of people which normally takes about two (2) to three (3) days to cerebrate.

In the Akan worldview, death is not the end of life; rather, it is a transitional period during which the current earthly existence is terminated for another in the spiritual realm. The Akan pray for many blessings, but the most

important three are: *sika* (wealth), *mma/nkwadaa* (children) and *nkwa* (life). Participation in afterlife is conditioned by the nature of one's life and the nature of one's death. Oral tradition states that for the Akan, living is about acting on the word of *Obɔadeɛ*, the Supreme Creator, and advancing the good of existence. Humans are commanded by their creator God to spread goodness wherever they can. As a result, it is emphasized that one has a strong capacity for morality and personality. Personhood is an attained state assessed by the criteria of goodness to oneself, to others around you (the community), and to one's departed ancestors (Addo, 2011).

A reason to celebrate a life is when a departed person achieves something positive. The Akan are aware that while one may pass away early, leading a decent life and maintaining a good reputation are more vital. People make an effort to remember their ancestors on a regular basis since it is widely held that the ancestors have a great power to protect those they have left behind. This is referred to as "ancestor veneration," which some people have mistakenly labeled "ancestor worship". It is considered that the bond of love that exists between a parent and child here on earth should endure even after death because the parent has only transitioned to another realm of existence.

Rituals and rites are ways of bringing attention to a group of people's shared religious beliefs. There are therefore some religious and moral expressions in rituals and rites. They are ways to express one's experience of the super-sensible universe and supernatural creatures as well as ways to concretize and maintain one's belief system. In essence, they are rituals or forms of worship, communion, and interaction with the objects of one's worship. In all these rituals and rites, proverbs are mostly used to communicate indirectly to the people.



## 2.4 Funeral Dirge Structure

Death and some of the customs associated with it are as old as humanity. The dirge, also known as an elegy, requiem, funeral lament, chant, or song, has a long history that can be traced back to antiquity. The performance of this genre has undergone numerous metamorphoses. The Latin word “*dirige*”, which is a form of the verb “*dirigere*”, which means to direct or guide, is where the word dirge comes from. In the Office of the Dead *dirige* is the first word in the opening of the antiphon for the first nocturn of Matins: *Dirige, Domine, Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam, Direct, O Lord, my God, my way in thy sight.*

The part of the “Office of the Dead” that begins with this antiphon was named *Dirige* in Ecclesiastical Latin. This word with this meaning was borrowed into English as *dirige*, and was first recorded in a work believed to have been written before the year 1200 (Konekt 2012). *Dirige* was then extended to refer to the chanting or reading of the Office of the Dead as part of a funeral or memorial service. In Middle English the word was shortened to *dirge*. After the middle ages, the word took on its more general senses of “a funeral hymn or lament” and “a mournful poem or musical composition”.

However, the practice of performing funeral dirges has been a part of African culture in general and Akan society in particular since the beginning of the Akan race. It is still an active folk tradition today. A dirge is thought to be a way of expressing grief over the loss of a loved one. A funeral dirge, according to Akporobaro (2001), is a highly stylistic mode of expression that is controlled by particular poetic recitative rules and utilized to convey the mourners' emotions in a predetermined structure and performance style. In the Akan culture, dirges make deliberate use of proverbs for both their aesthetic and functional relevance and that is why the study is centred on proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa in Pankorono.

## 2.5 Proverb

Agyekum (2005) asserts that, In Akan, there are adages such as *εβε ne ɔkasa mu abohemmaa*, “the proverb is the most appropriate aspect of speech”, *εtwa asεm tia*, “it curtails matters”, *εnka asεm ho a, εnwie δε ye*, “without it, a speech does not acquire its seasoned nature”. Akan proverbs are aesthetic devices of vitality in speech, and the salt of a language, without which the real taste of the ‘language dish’ is not felt. A proverb is a short, highly powerful word or statement that is used to express something that could otherwise require a lengthy speech. Proverbs, in the words of the anthropologist, are "short, commonly understood phrases of the folk that convey wisdom, facts, morals, and customary ideas in metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and that are handed down orally from generation to generation" (Akorobaro and Emovon, 1994). Proverbs are an elevated type of language that people use to express their standards, convictions, attitudes, and worldview. Proverbs enhance speech occasions, accomplishing literature's dual purpose of amusing readers and illuminating the nature of existence.

However, the situational contexts of proverbs are very relevant because proverbs touch almost all aspects of human existence on earth. Since life is characterized by a variety of activities, it follows that each of these activities has proverbs that are relatively suitable to it or more compatible with it. The sense in proverbs is discernible from the varied meanings or multiple interpretations which they evoke in given situations. A proverb can have thus different meanings and perform different functions when used in different contexts (Surakat, 2010). This makes proverbs very important vehicles of expression in Akan, therefore, the trend and development of the language, lies so much on the constant use of proverbs in appropriate contexts.

## 2.6 Proverbs and their meanings

There are three levels of meaning of proverbs. These are literal, philosophical and conceptual (Emananjo, 1975). According to Emananjo, The literal level of proverbial meaning deals with comprehending or visualizing the actual statement or image being portrayed by the proverbs' phrases. This means that we interpret proverbs in their literal, common sense, devoid of allegory or metaphor. Proverbs can be understood literally by looking at the imagery that is utilized in them. By using the distinctive constituent elements, information can also be used as a source for the meaning at this level. This is due to the fact that proverbs serve as a community's repository for religious, historical, and socio-cultural information. This process will be highlighted with the aid of some proverbs in chapter four. It is also crucial to remember that interest in most proverbs begins at this level.

The second meaning level of proverbs is the philosophical; It is founded on an understanding of the people's beliefs and ideologies. In other words, it discusses the fundamental ideas that guide people's behavior and behaviors. Okonkwo (1977: p.54) comments on the philosophical meaning of proverbs and states, "The philosophical meaning bears the general truth and is very essential". When evaluating the meaning of any Akan adage, this is clearly proven.

The third meaning level of proverbs is contextual. The context or settings in which the proverbs are utilized determine the meaning at this level. Although relatively straightforward in their use of metaphor, proverbs are one of the most complicated genres and are very context-sensitive, according to Seitel (1976, p. 65). Seitel emphasises that proverbs cannot be understood in isolation and agrees with Emananjo (1979) that proverbs without contextual meaning are nothing but vague statements. Agyekum (2012) stated that proverbs are very valuable to modern Ghana which does not only reveal

thoughts and insights of the past but also serve as a greatly appreciated technique of verbal expressions. From his comment, it can be gleaned that proverbs are linguistically important to every culture due to the vital roles they play. Again, Agyekum re-echoes the value or importance of proverbs to African societies, in general, and the Ghanaian society, in particular. As a result, the study of proverbs in Nana Abenaa Asantewaa's dirges will analyze the many situations in which they are used. Understanding the meaning of any Akan proverb requires taking this into account, which is highly crucial. According to Okonkwo (1977), a specific circumstance, such as a narrative or parable, might be used to convey the context of a proverb. Akan proverbs reveal a lot about the Akan tribe and the Akan use proverbs to validate, legitimize, and lend credibility to a proposition or a contentious claim. These three levels of proverbs meaning ties in with the different stages that have been discussed under the section on Speech Act Theory. This supports the relevance of the theory to the analysis of my data.

## 2.7 The Nature and Structure of Proverbs

Three factors appear to determine the nature of proverbs. These are the universal or general, the local or cultural and the attitudinal or personal. A typical proverb must have been informed by a general observation, which can be universally acknowledged, made up of local or cultural beliefs and some measures of individual dispositions to people and phenomena (Adedimeji, 2007; 2010). Proverbs' universal or general nature refers to the commonality of specific natural phenomena. According to Oseni (2003:12), “the sky, the earth, the sea, fire, air, people, parts of the body, animals etc. are natural entities of which no nation or race can justifiably claim exclusive ownership”. Different people in different places compose proverbs around such natural entities and this reality accounts for the equivalent and near equivalent forms of proverbs.

Based on this factor, ideas expressed in many African proverbs are universal and Akan proverbs are not only, but “miniature literary forms which appeal to the wide public and the generality of mankind because they exploit the common reservoir of human experience and common sense” (Akorobaro and Emovon, 1994:10). Proverbs in some European countries such as. “All fingers are not equal”, “The illness of death has no medicine”, “One who trust God will never fail”, “if a young dog doesn’t know how to steal, the others teach him”, “misfortune and fortune are sisters”, “what is sweet kills”, etc. have equivalent and near equivalent forms in many African cultures, including the Akan.

Proverbs are used in expressing abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology that comes out particularly clearly in proverbs. Finnegan (2012) posits that ‘in many African cultures a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clearly in proverbs. The figurative quality of proverbs is especially striking; one of their most noticeable characteristics is their allusive wording, usually in metaphorical form. This also emerges in many of the native words translated as ‘proverb’ and in the general stress often laid on the significance of speaking in symbolic terms. Indeed, this type of figurative expression is sometimes taken so far as to be almost a whole mode of speech in its own right

Finnegan (2012) thus explains that a proverb striking characteristics is its allusive wording usually in a metaphorical form and the general stress often laid on the significance of speaking in symbolic terms. Proverbs, in short, are closely interwoven with other aspects of linguistic and literary behaviour. They overlap with other kinds of verbal arts, and they appear in certain specialized forms. Their use in the forms of “proverb names” is one. For instance, among the “Ovimbundu” of Southern Africa, the woman’s name “Simbovala” is a

shortened form of the proverb “while you mark out a field, death marks you out in life and this means that, in life you are in the midst of death. In Akan, the name *Kae da bi* is a proverb which means *remember the future*. It explains that nobody knows their future and it is known that future is built by today's life we are leading hence the name *Kae da bi* reminds us that whatever we are doing today in life, we will reap it tomorrow. Therefore, we should be careful in life.

Proverbs are also sometimes connected with artistic media such as the drum; especially; in most African cultures such as Akan or Zulu.

The literary significance of proverbs in Africa is also brought out by their close connection with other forms of oral literature and a distinction does not exist in terminology between proverbs and other literary expressions. Proverbs are closely related to anecdotes, so much so that anecdotes are sometimes just illustrations of a proverb. While a proverb is frequently an anecdote in a nutshell, for instance, the Nyanga proverb of South Africa “pity killed the francolin” is a direct allusion to the story in which the francolin came to the help of a python and was in return eaten by it. The Swahili poem about “silence” based on the proverb “much silence has a mighty noise” (still waters run deep) are elaborated and drawn out in its verses. Proverbs are also sometimes connected with riddles. They frequently occur in general conversation and in oratory to embellish, conceal or hint (Finnegan, 1976). In Akan, proverb *kasa dodoɔ ntɔ pɔnkɔ* means *too much noise cannot buy a horse*. This tells that if you go to market to buy something, it is the money in your pocket that speaks but not the long bragging you will have with the seller makes you buy what you want. This explains that in life, the more you talk about your problems will not solve it rather how you will find appropriate solutions to it makes you free from your problems.

The cultural factor accounts for the distinctiveness of some proverbs to certain cultures based on their peculiar experiences and socio-geographical location. For instance, African proverbs are distinguishable with reference to the plants and animals that are abundant in Africa (Adedimeji, 2010). Finnegan (2012) expresses that the phraseology of many of African proverbs has been influenced by the natural environment, which in turn influences the cultural attitude and systems of values. Proverbs are also drawn from the wide gamut of cultural experience which includes folklore, beliefs values, emotions, attitudes and the entire system of thought and feelings, flora and fauna and natural elements. In cultural attitudes, towns that are closer to the water bodies such as rivers will have proverbs connected with these. For instance, the Akan proverb, *nsuo a edo woɔ na ekɔ w'ahina mu*, translates as the water that loves you enters your pot. Ga proverb, *Faa ni obuu ke no ni shaa bo*, translates as the river that you disregard is the one that drowns you. Again in most cultures in Ghana where people carry out arable hunting, many of their proverbs are related to the hunter and the act of hunting. For instance, the Akan proverb, “*Okusie a ɔda ɔkwantempɔn mu no, se ɔni mmirika a na ɔwo akokoɔduro* means “the tat who sleeps by the road side, if it does not have speed then it is brave’. The Ga also have a proverb, *Kootse egboɔ ke ewaa na* meaning “the hunter does not retire with his skills”. In Akan, we say that *ɔde boɔ baako akum nnomaa mmienu*

Historical and anecdotal proverbs relating to specific personages and cultural events also belong to, and are conditioned by this category. For instance, the cultural practice of sacrificing fowls to deities to appease them underlines the proverb He has used one fowl to appease two gods; the English rendition of it being using one stone to kill two birds. In Akan, *ɔde boɔ baako akum nnomaa mmienu*.

The attitudinal or personal factor concerns individuals' reactions to issues and people. In this instance, proverbs may not have universal applicability and may not be borne out of cultural values; rather, they would show some people's attitude to others, which are often subjective or idiosyncratic, derived usually through hasty generalizations and faulty conclusions (Adedimeji, 2010). Among several Ghanaian ethnic groups, there are proverbs and proverbial expressions that are used to characterize, praise and lampoon others, even within the same large cultures.

The sources of proverbs may be dependent on cultural contents; however, one may note a common structural nature of proverbs across cultures. In terms of structure, a proverb may be a phrase, or a sentence, where the sentence itself can be declarative, interrogative, imperative or complete fragmentary structures, depending on the sense and the effect it is intended to communicate and create. Proverbs, across cultures, may appear in the form of short sentences, having a standard text, allowing sometimes some standard variants too, where the order of words may be changed or some of the words replaced by others that can be considered synonymous with that particular context. In his contribution on the structure of proverbs therefore, Omoloso (2007:10) adds that "proverbs may be simple, complex, compound, compound – complex or multiple sentences".

## 2.8 Functions of Proverbs

Functionally, proverbs are deployed to serve a broad spectrum of purposes and they are typically conversational and rely on figurative language to offer solutions to problems. It is in light of this that the Akan say that;

1. *Onyansani a ste be no, asiesie asem*, literary means a wise man who knows proverbs reconciles difficulties. Again, the Akan say that, 2. *Ebe ma asententen ye tia* literary means a proverb is the horse of conversation; 3. *se*



*nkɔmmɔ twa a, εβε na epagya no ba bio.* This means that there cannot be any effective conversation in the Akan language without proverbs because “it is the salt of speech. Any pot of soup without salt is tasteless as speech without proverbs is (Agu, 2009).

Mieder (1993) shares the same view when he remarks that proverbs exhibit semantic indefiniteness due to their hetero-situationality, poly-functionality and poly-semanticity. In the same vein, Parker (1974) maintains that proverbs also serve as moralizing, sermonizing and didactic tools in the hands of the user. The range of functions that proverbs perform is summarized by Krikmann (1985) as follows:

With the aid of a proverb, one can aim to provide an endorsement to... statements and opinions, forecast, something, express doubts, reproach someone ... accuse someone of something, justify or excuse somebody, mock somebody, jeer at somebody's misfortune, repent of something, advise against something or interdict somebody from doing something and so on, and so forth.

Finnegan (2012) corroborates this fact when she asserts that the most often mentioned is the oratory function of proverbs, particularly in law cases or disputes. In this situation, proverbs are often used by one or other of the parties to get at his opponent or try to make out a good case for himself by drawing some analogy through the image of a proverb. For instance, in one Anang Ibibio law case (Finnegan, *ibid*) the plaintiff managed to stir up antagonism towards the accused (a chronic thief) by alluding to his past record and untrustworthy reputation. He quotes a proverb *if a dog plucks palm fruits from a cluster, he does not fear a porcupine* i.e. if a dog can deal with the sharp thorns of the palm fruit; he is likely to face the porcupine's prickles. Similarly, a thief will not be afraid to steal again. As part of his defence, the accused quoted a proverb which

was influential in winning over the judge to acquit him, hinting at the way in which he alone had no sympathizers and supporters. He said, “A single partridge flying through the bush leaves no path” (Finnegan, 2012). Counsellors and judges also use proverbs to comment obliquely on the conduct of those involved. Telling lies, for instance, only makes matters worse. “An animal caught in a net, only entangles itself further with wild struggles”, and so a man is told in court that, “It is patience which gets you out of the net”.

According to an Akan proverb, *Ɔfotufɔɔ a ɔnim be no siesie ne nsem ntem*, this translates as a counsellor who understands proverbs soon sets matters right; and a difficult law case is often ended by the public citation of an apt proverb which performs much the same generalizing function of citing legal precedents in other societies. As Finnegan notes, among the Limba of Kenya for instance, an elder in court tries to persuade one party to a dispute not to be angry with someone younger by reminding them that one “do not shoot the chimpanzee for its ugliness” i.e. “one should not go to extremes in punishing a child, however bad”. Proverbs are also used to smooth over a disagreement or bring a dispute to a close. In stating the end of a dispute, the Akan would say, *mekɔ a memma bio, ye ka no nkwantia* meaning, you cannot stand in front of your enemies or authorities to decide your fate. In the same way, the Akan say that *wopam atades foforɔ a ehe na dada no korɔ?* meaning when you sewn new clothes, where did the old ones go?

Proverbs fulfil didactic functions like other verbal forms such as riddles. In some societies, they are used to lay emphasis on initiation ceremonies where the initiates may be instructed in the proverbs and aphorisms current in the society. Instructions through proverbs provide a means for relatively informal education and transmission of cultural traditions. Proverbs in this way are

suitable and succinct forms in which people verbalize socially prescribed actions and attitudes. Thus, the conveying of a people's experience and expectations can be performed in a particularly effective way through the use of proverbs in many African societies (Otakpor, 2009). They are consciously used not only to make effective points but also to embellish speeches in a way admired and appreciated by interlocutors. It is part of the art of an accomplished orator to adorn his rhetoric with apt and appealing proverbs. The Akan reputation for eloquence largely arises from their skilful use of proverbs. Apart from theory and educational functions, proverbs have literary functions.

The literary function of proverbs in ordinary speech is sometimes taken further and shades into more elaborate forms like the Akan drum proverbs. Proverbs like prose are not normally used specifically for entertainment but are more involved in everyday situations (Nwadike, 1981). Sometimes proverbs function as tools in the argument though mostly reserved for the elderly. The young may not presume to press a point with their elders (Ezirim, 2001). Proverbs often function to represent a people's philosophy. In proverbs, the whole range of human experience can be commented on and analysed, generalizations and principles are expressed in a graphic and concise form, and the wider implications of specific situations brought to mind. In all these contexts, proverb is a vehicle particularly suited to give depth and elegance through its allusive, figurative and poetic mode of expression (Finnegan, 1976).

Ogunjimi and Na'Allah (2005) summarize the functions of proverbs especially in Africa as follows:

- a. Give substance to speeches, since ideas are put in concrete terms through this medium;
- b. Show the depth of knowledge and wisdom in African heritage.
- c. Entertain, enlighten and educate the listeners;

- d. Command respect for the speaker and show his level of maturity.
- e. Expose and explore the socio-cultural realities and literary culture of Africa;
- f. Demonstrate the tradition of rhetoric and eloquence in the articulation of ideas by Africans.
- g. Help in settling disputes, explaining and expressing issues
- h. Provide warning, rebuke, praises, suggestions and advice,

### **2.9 Aesthetic Devices of proverbs**

Aesthetics is the study of beauty and taste, whether in the form of the comic, the tragic, or the sublime. Aesthetics has traditionally been part of philosophical pursuits like epistemology or ethics, but it started to come into its own and became a more independent pursuit under Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who saw aesthetics as a unitary and self-sufficient type of human experience. For Immanuel Kant, the aesthetic experience of beauty is a judgment of a subjective, but similar human truth, since all people should agree that “this rose is beautiful” if it is in fact is. Thus, aesthetics is the philosophy of art, beauty and perception. Aesthetics is a concept not easily broken down into simpler ideas, making it difficult to explain. When we speak of something that creates an aesthetic experience, we are usually talking about some form of art. The concept of aesthetic has been explained from different perspectives. According to Tadi (2005), aesthetics can be for example explained as the philosophical theory or set of principles governing the idea of beauty at a given time and place. That means aesthetics deals with principle of taste or style adopted by a particular person, group or culture in their activities. Thus, aesthetics is related to style. Malcolm (2004) is of the view that aesthetics is a branch of philosophy which deals with the nature of beauty, art, and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty. It concerns sensory or emotionally

values. Malcolm thus emphasises not only the nature of aesthetics but also their effects on the individual or group. Aesthetics involves elements or device and how they create beauty.

Aesthetic devices are the totality of the elements with which texts assume such “characteristics of situationally distinctive uses of language”. The devices used in attaining the literary and linguistic distinctiveness of texts as well as their effect on the emotion are the crucial components of stylistic investigation. The ability for me to employ these aesthetic devices to oral and written discourses as well as the capacity to identify and interpret them can be considered as “stylistic competence”. The definitions of (Crystal and Davy, 1969) seems to emphasise beauty and its use in a particular context as well as the effect it has on its audience.

The dirges for this present study are replete with proverbs that contain aesthetic devices that are culture specific that is about the people of Pankorono. The devices are drawn from the context of the people and the devices reveal some functional values. This means that Akan proverbs in general and those in the dirges that Nana Abenaa Asantewaa perform have both aesthetic and cultural values. The study of the various formal devices employed in their usage have revealed that apart from being the store house of the people’s wisdom, the dirges have distinctive use of language or elements that appeal to our various senses.

Similarly, Adeyemi (2010) notes that language full of proverbs and other literary devices is not enough, adequate use of aesthetic ornament is required. The presence of aesthetic features referred to as “salt” is fully present in proverbs. He maintains that the ‘salt’ of proverbs refers to the poetic and aesthetic features found in wise sayings including metaphor, hyperbole, simile, irony and oxymoron, etc, are some of the examples. Agreeing with Adeyemi,

Yakub (2019) explains that proverbial language is couched in rhythmic and metrical patterns, congealed images, mystified dictions, subtle metaphors, lexical cohesion, sound devices, symbolisms etc to evoke feelings, emotions, profound thoughts and ideas, marvellous admiration and enthusiasm in the listener/hearer/reader. These are achieved through a deliberate employment and manipulation of the resources of the language which serve as building blocks for constructing proverbs. In other words, proverbial language differs sharply from ordinary or everyday language. Consequently, the style and technique employed in proverbs shape the subject matter, the interlocutors and the roles they play in any communicative event.

Aesthetics is a principle of beauty or style adopted by a person, group or culture in doing things. Since proverb is a property of the culture of a particular group, it is necessary that there exist some styles of using them in different contexts of that particular culture, and in this present case the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono.

### **2.10 Emperical Studies**

Amuah and Wuaku (2019) analysed how proverbs are deployed as communicative tools against the backdrop of Ghanaian cultural sensibilities and the effectiveness of these proverbs from the viewpoint of audience perception and reception. Their methodology was based on a search from archives of selected composers and libraries to unravel compositions that use proverbs as the source of text. The research showed that the use of proverbs in choral music promotes effective communication as well as contributes to the sustainability of Ghana's rich traditional way of communication. Amuah and Wuaku established the fact that proverbs are used to send information to particular audiences. The present study is focused on the aesthetic qualities of proverbs used in the dirges

of the people of Pankorono. It will also establish the communicative reliance of the proverbs to the immediate audience of dirges and the community at large.

Kogri and Tangwam (2018) examined the structure of some selected Dagaaba proverbs and analysed the literary elements that are embedded in them. They adopted the purposive sampling technique to select the sample size. The sample size of the population was the chief and his elders of the Ulkpong Traditional area and three sections of the language community namely Konyaasɛn, Gompare and Gyepare in the Upper West Region of Ghana and two lecturers from the University of Education, Winneba. The instruments used in the study for data collection were unstructured interview and participatory observation. Their findings confirmed that Dagaaba proverbs have various structures in their compositions, varied literary devices and their aesthetic qualities were clearly identified. This study shows that proverbs have literary qualities that exposes various aspects of the life of the Dagaaba people. The difference between the current study and that of Kogri and Tangnan is that, the current study is interested in proverbs that are unique to dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa. Some cultural values are different, the present study will reveal not only the aesthetic qualities but also the functional import of the proverbs to the people of Pankorono.

Closely related to the study on Dagaaba proverbs is the study by Sanka (2010). She examined the literary and cultural backgrounds pertaining to the performance of the Sisaala dirge. The principal objective of her study was to emphasise the aesthetic, cultural, moral, and socio-political relevance that the Sisaala dirge, like many Ghanaian dirges entrust. Sanka, in her analysis showed that proverbs do not only provide the appropriate platform for mourning the dead, but that they also poetically reiterates cultural, moral, social, artistic, and historical values. She further argued that while Sisaala dirge may be distinct

from other local dirges in terms of how it is executed and who participates in its performance; it nonetheless celebrates national values such as respect for the aged, motherhood, motherliness, industriousness, moral correctness, and verbal creativity. These are values that transcend ethnic cultures and can therefore be used to further promote national unity and identity. Of equal importance is the ability of the dirge to serve as a medium for poet-cantors to pay homage to the “word”, and to further prove that “orality” is not the mere absence of writing but it is a system that is *suis generis* through which part of the trajectory of human development can always be traced.

Mutia (2003) also studied dirges among the Kpe (or Bakweri), a homogenous ethnic group of Semi-Bantu stock in the Southwestern region of Cameroon expose the fascinating language variety of the Kpe dirge form as poetry. The findings of the study demonstrate that the structure of the dirges, their chant and antiphonal form, the figurative language employed by the performers (including lyrical repetition, personification, symbolism, imagery, apt metaphors, and allusions) constitute some of the essential components that are utilized in the realization of this funeral poetry. He highlighted the use of a free rhythm that is most often enhanced by the collaboration of a lead singer and chorus in the performances of Kpe dirges. This rhythm is articulated by dance, the accompaniment of drumming, ringing of bells, and the playing of a host of assorted musical instruments. This element of rhythm demonstrates how the individual performer has the flexibility to treat the themes in her own way and, in so doing, expressing her emotions in the words and melodies she chooses. Mutia’s study is related to the current study because both studies examine dirges. The point of departure is that the current study focuses on proverbs used in dirges and their aesthetic functions.



Onu (2018), examined the aesthetic qualities of Igbo proverbs with a focus on the thematic structure, artistic and stylistic features. His study aimed at subjecting Igbo proverbs through, artistic and stylistic analysis. He used an unstructured questionnaire and face to face interview to collect a total of 30 Igbo proverbs for analysis. The data was analyzed using content analysis and was premised on stylistic model. The findings of the study were that rhetorical devices such as alliteration, assonance, personification, metaphor, allusion and analogy feature prominently in Igbo proverbs. Onu concluded that these stylistic devices make the proverbs pleasant to listen to as well as enhancing the effectiveness of the message. Just like Onu's work, the current study recognizes that proverbs make use of aesthetic devices. However, the current study is interested in finding out the aesthetic as well as functional qualities of proverbs in the dirges composed by individual artiste, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono.

Njui (2019) analyzed and explained the linguistic features that the Kenyang proverbs process. He equally discussed the functions and uses of proverbs taking examples from the Kenyang language. The findings demonstrated that Kenyang proverbs are characterized by linguistic features such as, metaphors, ironies and ellipses. The main functions of the Kenyang proverbs Njiai stressed are to criticize, advise, warn and to give measures. This study is quite similar to the current study on proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa. The linguistic features in Njui's work are what is referred to as aesthetic values. My study concerns the composition of an individual and not the generality of a people.

Ohwovoriola (2009) describes a proverb as a literary expression of wisdom which offers the speaker a medium for the projection and fulfilment of a variety of socially desired goals. Proverbs are thus instruments of cultural

transmission and its study can give a penetrating picture of the people's way of life, their philosophy, their criticism of life, moral truths and social values. Many proverbs abound in Urhobo funeral chants, songs and recitations and most of the proverbs have several meanings. One important observation that Ohwovoriolè made about Igbo proverbs in general which is true of the proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa is that the proverbs particular have three meanings: the literal, the philosophical and the contextual. Again, Ohwovoriolè's work ties in with the present study on proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa in the sense that both works emphasised the literal, philosophical as well as the cultural values that the proverbs espoused.

Similar to Ohwovoriolè's work is the study of Tobalase (2017) on the impact of funeral dirge in a selected group of the Yoruba people – the Awori's. His interest was to find out if funeral dirges still exist among the Awori people. Sidney's viewpoint which states that poetry is to delight, educate, and to teach humans to act virtuously guided Tobalase's analysis of data. Tobalase like others confirmed that funeral dirges were used and are still in use in Awori land and aside from lamenting the dead they are also important in moral education, social criticism, and philosophical reflection on life. The analysis also shows that dirge as an art makes use of aesthetic devices like metaphor, simile, anecdotes, repetition and these aesthetic elements are only attainable by means of intelligence and the exercise of imagination. Tobalase therefore concluded that dirges are literary expressions as they have all the features noticeable in a literary work be it drama, prose or poetry.

Another important work on proverbs that is relevant to the present study is by Omoera (2013). According to him, proverbs are symbolic expressions of people. His study on Nigerian proverbs also reveal that imagery in proverbs, their form and context of use as well as aesthetics reflect the peculiar natural

environment of the users; whether from the Northern or Southern regions of Nigeria where hundreds of languages are spoken or elsewhere in the world. Deploying Dell Hymes' 'SPEAKING' model of speech analysis, twelve proverbs from Southern Nigeria were randomly but purposively selected and subjected to content analysis in the study. The selected proverbs were investigated in order to demonstrate that they have aesthetic qualities and capable of performing certain socio-cultural functions of entertainment and education within communities of their significations. They make people in many Southern Nigerian communities conform to desired rules, mores and traditions of the land as well as teach a method of expressing life which is aesthetically flavoured. In all, the review on proverbs shows that proverbs are important to their practioners. Proverbs emanate from the experiences of the people and always in essence they possess both aesthetic and functional values.

### 2.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter extensively looked at the theoretical framework of the study. The Speech Act Theory by Austin (1962) was discussed in this chapter. The different dimensions of the theory was explained to suit the outcome of the study. Furthermore, the other elements such as funeral rites or rituals were also discussed in this section. This was brought to bare and given a through outlook. Dirges and proverbs were also discussed in this chapter. The works of several scholars in these fields were discussed. Finally, a number of empirical reviews were conducted, compared and contrasted for the analysis of data.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHOD

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the procedures that are applied in the study. According to Polit and Hungler (2004), method refers to ways of obtaining and analysing data. The discussion covered the research design, study area, population, sampling techniques and procedure, data collection methods, processing and analysis. Ethical issues were covered as well.

#### 3.1 Research Design

Saunders et al (2007) are of the view that research design can be qualitative or quantitative. Both designs are of equal significance and that no approach is more important than the other. However, the suitable design would be the method that will enable the researcher to undertake the study successfully while at the same time bearing in mind the objectives of the study. As Gill and Johnson (2010) also posited, the research design provides a plan which serves as a guide for an investigation capable of addressing the research objectives and to achieve the purpose of the study. The research design is therefore considered as the research strategy designed to meet the overall purpose of the research. Thus, so long as the focus and purpose of studies among researchers differ, research design would also differ. This suggests that there is no single and universally accepted research design.

The research design used in this study therefore is the qualitative type because the study is ethnographic in nature. Sambo (2005) describes ethnography as a portrait of a people and a methodology for the descriptive studies of cultures and people. It also means an in-depth study of a naturally occurring behaviour within the culture of a social group. The author observes behaviour as it occurs naturally without any simulations or imposed structure.

The research has to do with how proverbs are used by people to portray their culture and language. Edward (1976) as cited in Agu (2010) posits that proverbs are classified as ethnographic statements because they are knowledge that are available to members of a speech community which are used to categorize them, their place and activities.

Qualitative research design always seeks to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the totality of the research rather than breaking it down into variables (Agu, 2010). The method in this research has an interpretive character aimed at discovering the meaning events have on the individual who experiences the interpretation of the language by other users of Akan proverbs. Honeck (1998) summarizes the nature of qualitative research thus; it is subjective, holistic, phenomenological, anti-positivist, descriptive, naturalistic and inductive. Qualitative research can sometimes be subjective and mostly describes a given phenomenon in research studies.

### **3.2 Population**

Population refers to the sum total of a people or things from whom or which the needed sample is taken. According to Alabi (2003), population is defined as “designated part of the universe from which a sample is drawn. Royse (2011:23) also explains population as all of the individuals a researcher wants to learn about. This population can be a collection of individuals or group of individuals with specified characteristics that are of interest to the researcher.

In this study, all proverbs in the selected dirges constitute the research population. Since it is not possible to study all proverbs from the dirges, a sample is selected systematically. Therefore, a total of seventeen (17) proverbs have been selected from ten (10) dirges for analysis and this manageable sample size becomes a representative (sample) of the study. It is believed that the sample is a fair representation of all proverbs used in the selected dirges.

### 3.3 Sample Size

Bailey (1987:175) argues that correct sample size is dependent on the nature of the population and the purpose of the study. Usually, the size of the sample depends on the size of the population to be sampled (Champion, 1970:89). Sampling theory assures us that we are more likely to estimate the population mean correctly from the sample mean than estimates it incorrectly. Qualitative researchers do not worry about obtaining large representative sample size (Davidson, 1997:199). Forty (40) proverbs were elicited from the source mentioned earlier on, but seventeen (17) of them were presented. From the forty proverbs, seventeen were randomly selected for the analysis. It was believed that this sample size will help in bringing out an accurate finding of the research which will be used in generalizing the target population of the study.

### 3.4 Sampling Procedure

Sampling refers to the selection of a given number of objects or items from a defined population as a representative of that population (Orodho, 2003). A purposive sampling method was used because, the nature of the study demands proverbs from Akan dirges. The researcher used purposive sampling method in order to prevent unwanted data which might have showed up in the use of other methods. Again, the dirges were selected purposively by the researcher for relevance of the research topic. It also helped in saving time and money while collecting data.

### 3.5 Instruments

Instruments are very important in research works. One instrument that was employed in this study was interview. Gordon (1969) argues that, the semi-structured interview can sometimes be more valid than the highly thought structured interview. Again, Gordon (ibid), argues against the idea that a semi-

structured interview is sometimes dangerous because the interviewer is free to bias responses or interpretations. He further explains that bias can easily be built into a highly structured interview for that matter skilled, careful, honest interviewers can conduct unstructured interview that is relatively free from bias. A semi-structured interview was therefore used on the field for data collection. The semi-structured interview helped in the realization of the aim and objectives of this study. More so, because this study is a qualitative study, a phone-recorder was used to record the dirges in the collection of data. This aided in the efficient analysis of the data.

### 3.6 Method of Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering the factual information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. Data collection is important in research as it allows for dissemination of accurate information and development of meaningful programmes (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Data gathering is the precise, systematic gathering of information relevant to the research sub-problem, using methods such as questionnaires, interviews, participant observation, focus group discussion, narratives and case histories (Burns and Groove, 2003). Talbot (1995) asserts that data collection begins with the researcher deciding where and from whom data will be collected. The major methods of data collection in a qualitative research are observation, face to face interview and focus groups and the sample for a qualitative research is not expected to be very large. The following are the methods utilized:

- a. **Observation and recording of events:** Occasions or ceremonies where proverbs are used include traditional Akan marriages, festivals, funeral ceremonies, puberty rites, conferment of chieftaincy titles, etc. For the purpose of this study, the researcher attended a total of 2 funeral ceremonies in Pankorono within the period of September 2020 to

December 2020 and made recordings of dirges that were sung or recited by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa. Akan funerals are fertile grounds for the free use of Akan proverbs.

- b. Interviews:** Focused interviews that were based on open-ended questions were used. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa was interviewed. Some interviews were also carried out during funeral ceremonies in Pankorono. Elders in the Pankorono communities are considered as the custodians of cultural experience and identity. It then means that this work will be incomplete without interviewing them. Subsequently, ten (10) elders made up of six (6) men and four (4) women were interviewed. The reason why I selected those elders is that they might have known more about dirges and their importance and so they can fetch me with some vital information. Four (4) youths (2 females and 2 males) between 25-40 years were also interviewed. This is in a bid to corroborate the facts from the elders. The researcher established a good rapport with the respondents and assured them that the information was basically for academic purpose. If the respondents misinterpreted any question, the researcher followed it up with clarifying questions or statements. Such questions elicited more detailed answers which were written down by the researcher.
- c. Recorded dirges:** Recorded dirges of the great dirge singer in Pankorono, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa was recorded. Dirges from prominent funeral grounds were also recorded from the same person.
- d. Secondary Data:** Secondary data was collected from books and articles from Nketia (1969) and Agyekum (2017) for reviews on proverbs and dirges.



### 3.7 Data Treatment

After listening and recording the dirges in their original form, every dirge was sorted according to its style. Notes were then taken. Later, the researcher sorted, coded and organized the dirges into categories based on themes to provide a full description of the key words in the study. Austin's Speech Act Theory was used to interpret the proverbs to bring forth their importance in dirges. The researcher transcribed the phone-recorded information from Akan to English and examined the notes taken during the in-depth field interviews and observations to identify the major issues. Some of the transcriptions were direct/indirect transcription and translations. The researcher then assembled all the information collected and put them in forms that enabled the researcher to carry out the analysis and interpretation. The proverbs were selected based on their meaning and analysis. The selected proverbs are discussed to reveal their purposes; which means the actual lesson(s) that the proverbs are primarily meant to teach. This reveals the predominant illocutionary acts.

The data collected have to be properly transcribed; thus, a linguistic moulding has to be carried out. The study adopted Arewa's (1970) as cited in Agu (2010) method. The method presents the proverbs in the vernacular language, using the Akan Unified orthography. This is followed by the transliteration and the translation into English. In doing these, time, space and finance have been considered. In all, attempts were made to provide real, historical and hypothetical contexts in which most of the Akan proverbs are used.

### 3.8 Translation and Transcription

Newmark (1988) asserts that "literal translation is correct and must not be avoided, if it secures referential and pragmatic equivalence to the original"

(p.68). To him, “literal translation is the first step in translation” (p.76) or “the most important of the procedures” (p.81), only on the following conditions can a translator retreat from literal translation. That is a literal version is plainly inexact. A literal translation technique was chosen for the study because it is appropriate for the nature of the study. It brings the dynamism of the translated to bear. In most cases the literal translation did not take away the context of the proverbs which was translated into the English language.

### 3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at the research methodology. It covered the research design, population, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection procedures and the procedure for data analysis. The study is a qualitative research, which makes use of purposive and snowball sampling procedures to obtain a sample size of 50 subjects from the population. Instruments that were used to collect data were interviews, observation and secondary data. Data is collected by visiting the resource persons in their homes for interview. There were also observations from funeral ceremonies. The next chapter is analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation and analysis of the data. The data collected are presented in the Akan orthography followed by the literal translation into the target language which is English.

#### 4.1 Data Presentation

Ten (10) dirges and seventeen (17) proverbs are elicited from the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa and presented for analysis. This is because in the course of the presentation, the study discovered that there is homogeneity in the context and meanings of these proverbs. It is my belief that the result will reflect the postulations put forward for the study. The remaining dirges and proverbs are presented in the appendix; however, dirges that will be used to support the analysis will be lifted from the appendix into the main analysis for easy discussion.

#### 4.2 Data Analysis

The analysis of the proverbs is based on the Speech Act Theory. Austin (1975) argued that utterances have intended meanings other than their surface meanings. As the study looks at proverbs in selected dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, it is important to critically examine the different meanings these proverbs communicate. Thus, the analytical tools which are elements of the Speech Act Theory; locutionary (literal), illocutionary (intended) and the perlocutionary (effect of the utterance) have formed the basis of the analysis. The analysis further examined the aesthetic and cultural values of the identified proverbs in the dirges. Another important element of the analysis is that, several and sometimes specific contexts have been considered. The section is in two

parts; the first part answers research question one while the second section deals with the second research question.

#### 4.2.0 Research Question 1: What proverbs are embedded in the dirges of Nana Abena Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi?

Dirge 1 has 2 proverbs:

- a. *Dua baako ntumi nye kwae* translates as ‘one tree cannot make a forest’
- b. *Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina* translates as ‘one head does not take a decision’

Dirge 2 has 2 proverbs:

- a. *Obi nhwe obi ba nne* translates as ‘no one cares for another’s child’.
- b. *Okwakuo nte mma ne ba* translates as ‘a monkey does not pluck for another’s child’.

Dirge 3 has 3 proverbs:

- a. *Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina* translates as ‘two heads are better than one.’
- b. *Duakorɔ gye mframa a ebu* translates as ‘when one tree is hit by the wind, it breaks’
- c. *Ani bere a ensɔ gya* translates as when eyes become red it does not spark fire.

Dirge 4 has 2 proverbs:

- a. *Okodee ba ne akoko ba nnidi* translates as ‘an eaglet does not dine with a chicken’.
- b. *Kuntunu ahwan abɔ m,e na merekɔ he ni?* as ‘I am trapped, where I am going?’

Dirge 5 has a proverb:

- a. *Anomaa mfa dua abufuo*, translates as, ‘a bird does not get angry with a tree.’

Dirge 6 has a proverb:

- a. *Etuo bene a, esi barima bo* translates as ‘when the gun gets hot, it rests on the chest of a man’.

Dirge 7 has a proverb:

- a. *Odupon tutu a, borɔfere na esi n’anan mu*, translates as ‘when a big tree falls, it is a pawpaw which grows in its place.’

Dirge 8 has a proverb:

- a. *Abusua te sɛ kwaɛɛ ɛbom tuu nso wopini ho a, dua biara si ne siberɛ* translates as ‘a forest form one canopy when you stand afar, but when you go near, every tree has its own position’.

Dirge 9 has 2 proverbs:

- a. *Efie abɔ ama mmaa na wɔrekɔ ako* translates as, ‘the family has broken for women to go for war’
- b. *Owuo kura adeɛ a nkwan ntumi nye*, translates as ‘if death holds something, life cannot claim it.’

Dirge 10 has 2 proverbs:

- a. *Asomurofi dwo a, enna ɔkraman nya dabere*, translates as ‘a dog gets a sleeping place when the hearth is cooled down’.
- b. *Owuo ton adeɛ a, firi bi, na ɛdane sɛ boɔ a ɔde wo beko* translates as, ‘if death sells something, you should buy some on credit because no matter what you do it will take you away.’

#### 4.2.1 Research Question 2: What are the aesthetic and cultural values of the proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi?

From the data gathered, the researcher identified that aside the illocutionary meaning, most of the proverbs contained cultural and aesthetic values.

### 4.3 Dirge 1

The dirge to Nana Afia Kobo Ampem, the late Asantehene's Mother (Queen mother)

#### 4.3.0 Background

Nana Abenaa Asantewaa sung this dirge to commend the good deeds of the late Asantehene's Mother, Nana Afia Kobo Ampem (Queenmother). In an interview with Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, she talked about the good deeds of the Queenmother and how she had contributed to the Asante Kingdom. She explained how the Queenmother use to invite her to Manhyia Palace to sing dirges and dance to Adowa and Kete songs on some occasions. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa continues in this dirge to inform the audience that, human beings cannot live independent lives irrespective of their wealth and their differences (rich or poor). We all need support from others before we can live a meaningful life. She sings this dirge to appreciate the late Queenmother of the Asante Kingdom who had departed from her 'children,' the Asante. This dirge has two proverbs; proverb 1 line 22 *dua baako ntumi nyɛ kwaɛɛ* which translate as 'a single tree cannot live a forest' and proverb 1 line 61 *tikoro nko agyina* which also translates as 'knowledge does not reside in one person's head'

The main theme for the proverb, *dua baako ntumi nyɛ kwaɛɛ* is the bitterness of being lonely. The locutionary meaning is that a forest needs to have more than a tree before it can be called a forest. Forest Resources Assessment thus FRA (2010), looks a forest as a line spanning more than 0.5 hectares with trees higher than 5m and a canopy cover of more than 10% or trees able to reach these thresholds in situ. One can also see a forest as a combination of all kinds of trees in their natural homes. Those that are erect, those creeping on the ground, both tall and short trees and those which are fresh or dead all come together to make a forest. By this explanation, the illocutionary meaning of the

dirge *dua baako* (a tree) *ntumi nyɛ kwaɛɛ* (forest) is explaining how we should come together as one body to build ourselves as a family so that we can help provide for ourselves all the time. In other words, the illocutionary meaning is explaining to the audience how bitter it is to become lonely in this world. *Dua baako* and *kwaɛɛ* have been used metaphorically to emphasise the point that a single person cannot do it all alone in order to provide *kwaɛɛ* represents the development process. Therefore, looking at some benefits of a forest where the canopies of the trees cool the land for the animals, the leaves of the trees also serve as food and shelter for the animals and human beings. Traditionally, the leaves and the bark of some trees serve as medicine for herbal doctors. Hunters go there for games and other minerals are also found there. Culturally, some parts of the forest are used as the sacred places for the gods (nananom abosom). Therefore, looking at the above benefits of a forest, it tells that a single tree really can never live a forest. By this explanation however, whenever we put the needed benefits such as development, social integration and co-existence together, we can support every one. Line 28, 31, and 32 in the dirge support the explanations above, that a single person cannot do everything alone and survive; or bring the desired benefits.

*Nana ee!*                      28                      Queen ee!

*Nana ee!*                      31                      Queen ee!

*Yesan ba a, anka fa no bra oo!* 32 If we can come back then bring her back oo!

Here, the exclamation *Nana ee!* stresses the importance of the value of unity and support from all to make life worthwhile. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa exclaims to emphasise the fact that, the efforts of an individual is inadequate for success. Life is generally meaningful out of interdependency. From dirge 1 lines 31-32, she addresses the deceased drawing her attention to the fact that, the Queenmother has left her; she needs her to come back to support her. In line 28,

*yεsan ba a, anka fā no bra oo!*, here she complains to death that she is lonely in the desert, so it will be difficult for her to be a *kwaεε* a symbol of meaningful life. She needs the Queen to make it in life. She cries and begs death that if it is possible, it should bring the Queen back. Another cultural element is that we call for help from our departed relatives since they have a lot to offer us. In some cases, in the Akan culture, where the living think that they should have been told something about a hidden treasure, they call the soul of the deceased as *nsamanfrε*.

Line 50, she exclaims: *Aduana ba mεrefrεfrε wo sε Nyankonsoroma refrεfrε nsuo anɔpatutu ee!*. Thus, she refers the deceased as *Aduana ba* since she the singer belongs to the Aduana clan and that members of the Aduana people can help her. *Nyankonsoroma* is a star in the sky, she compares how she can call the Queen mother so that she can be lucky as the skies in the heavens. From line 58-59, she calls the deceased by repeating *εye a bεhwε w'akyire oo!*, literally, 'come and see what is happening after your demise' and how lonely she has become'. Culturally, the singer informs that the departed relatives can be called upon to help. The calling of the deceased informs us that the deceased have opened ears for us therefore, we could fall on them. It further explains a family as a collection of people who can be traced by blood. In the dirge, the singer describes how death has wiped out all the members in the family who provide food, water and shelter but now that they are no more. It means the family, 'the forest' has now been turned into a real desert. The family has lost their sources of income and has been left with nothing but pain as suggested in the following.

<i>Wokcεε mennaa da!</i>	10	I have never slept since you left!
<i>Wokcεε mennaa da oo! Hee!</i>	11	I have never slept since you left oo! Hee!
<i>Eno Hεmaa! Wokcεε mennaa da!</i>	12	Queen mother! I have never slept



since you left!

The intensity of pain and desolation are expressed in the repetition of *wokɔɛ*, the exclamation marks and ‘hee’ suggested a deep-seated pain that is difficult to let go.

The above lines, therefore confirm what the singer said about being alone; that is, there will be nobody to provide the family with food, water, clothings, succor, shelter and other necessities of life. The singer further informs the audience and sympathisers how helpless she has become. Aesthetically, the singer blended some literary elements like repetition, apostrophe and metaphor to make meaningful illustrations.

In dirge 1 line 37, she also uses personification in *owuo ampene anka mede me ho maa no*, which translates as death did not agree else I would have offered myself, thus; giving death an animate characteristic. With this, the singer wants to describe the kind of bond or the relationship between her and the deceased as explain in line 10-12 and 25-29 shown.

*Wokɔɛ menaa da!* 10 I have never slept since you left!  
*Wokɔɛ menaa da oo! Hee!* 11 I have never slept since you left oo! Hee  
*Eno Hema!* *Wokɔɛ mennaa da!* 12 Queen Mother! I have never slept since  
you went  
*Ee! Owuo dɛɛfo!* 25 Eh! Mighty death!  
*Ɔtɔ wo dɛɛben na woredaa me Nana yi ka?* 26 What did she buy from you and  
you are attacking my queen  
*Wode no kɔɛ akɔɛ oo!* 27 It’s a long time you send her oo!  
*Yesan ba a, anka fa no bra oo!* 28 Bring her back if we can come back.  
*Na sɛ woba a, na woaka wo ho.* 29 When you coming be hurry.

The singer also employed the literary device of apostrophe to talk to the deceased from dirge (line 10-12) who physically cannot hear her similarly in

lines 25-29. She talks to death as if it is standing in front of her. The Akan believe that though a deceased cannot hear physically, spiritually, they send messages to *asamanado* where all the ancestors are and they are believing to answer the requests of the living. At the perlocutionary level, upon listening to this dirge, the legacies of the deceased come to bear; thus, good to instill values and sense of togetherness in our lives since loneliness is bitter. Also, it makes the audience appreciate the achievements of the deceased and motivate them to do more for themselves before passing on to the next world.

Another proverb the singer adds in this dirge is in lines 61 and 68, *tikoro nko agyina* which translates as ideas do not reside in the head of one person. The main theme for this proverb is that it is better to collaborate with someone. Locutionary, the proverb may be understood as a single head that cannot take a decision, this may be at variance with the happenings in everyday's life; since one person taking a decision is almost a daily occurrence. This also confirms to the saying in Akan that *obaako were aduro a egu*. Literally means, when one peels medicine it falls. Thus, when one person decides to peel a medicine from the bark of the tree without any help from others, the bowl in which s/he peels the medicine into it will fall. That is we need people to think and do things with all the time to make perfect decisions in life. However, the illocutionary meaning goes to explain what the locutionary meaning denotes. It implies that, the deceased was a caring person who shares a lot of ideas with the family when she was alive. Now that she is not alive, the persona seemed to be left alone and that her ideas alone could not fetch her the support she might want in life. The deceased is described as a "pillar" of ideas and her departure will affect the family most. The singer, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, used this in her dirge to inform the sympathisers that she has nobody to share her problems with. The *tikoro* which means "ideas" have been used symbolically to represent the

numerous problems of the singer which she intends to share with the deceased. In our daily situations, we fall on other people and share our ideas and situations with them which in return add more to ours and make our lives more meaningful.

Culturally, the proverb exposes the value of unity and interdependency (obi dan bi) the essence of showing ideas. It puts emphasis on some cultural practices of the Akan; for example, during meetings for whatever reasons, elders meet to take decisions and set rules and regulations for their subjects. This practice is a form of democracy in our traditional setup. It further stresses the value of respect for each person's ideas in the society; since knowledge and wisdom do not reside in one person's head. The *tikorɔ nkɔ agyina* draws attention to the relevance of oneness and unity in life. The singer uses *Kakapenpen* as methaphor in dirge 1 line 84 to represent death as deceitful. *Kakapenpen* is a tree whose bark, leaves and roots are used for medicine. The singer thinks she could fall on this tree for medicine which also symbolies ideas; but she is disappointed. Therefore, she has no one to share her ideas with as represented in the following.

*Nana woagya yen hɔ kɔ yi hwan na yenka* Queen as you have left us whom  
*yen asem nkyerɛ no.* 63 should we tell our thought to

*Me tirem asem yi menka nkyerɛ hwan?* 64 Whom should I share what is in my  
 head to?

*Nana meso daeɛ a meyi ma woo o!* 65 Queen when I dream i tell you o!

In the above, the singer calls the deceased to explain the kind of vacuum her departure has created in her life. She asked the deceased whom should she tell her problems in life; especially, when she had dreamt. The dream here represents a lot of ideas she has in mind that she wants it to be materialised. In other words, perhaps she used to discuss her intensions with the deceased who normally offer her a help either financially or advice, now that he is no more

there, what can she do? By the use of these elements, it makes the dirge beautiful which attract the audience to listen and watch. Perlocutionary, the wickedness of death and its inconsiderate nature for status and substance of a person is stressed. The singer is inviting the audience's sympathy and support.

#### 4.4 Dirge 2

The dirge to the late Nana Yaa Asantewaa the Queen Mother of Edweso

##### 4.4.0 Background

The dirge was also sung to appreciate the good works of Nana Yaa Asantewaa the late Queen Mother of Edweso who led a delegation to fight against the British army for total freedom of the Ashanti. Nana said she did not come to meet her but history has it that she was really a brave woman who always wanted to offer herself for the life of others. Nana said, she wished the youth these days would be encouraged by the departed Queen's 'spirit' so that they could also offer good services to develop their communities. The proverbs identified in the dirge are two; that is line 30-31 *obi nhwe obi ba nne* which translates as no one cares for another's child today and line 31 *ɔkwakuo nte mma obi ba* which also translates as *a monkey does not pluck for another's child*.

The theme for the first proverb is 'favours are given to relatives in society' (whom you know). The singer of the dirge added this proverb to inform the audience about how human beings behave. They structure life between 2 groups of people, the rich and the poor. The rich relates with the rich while the poor goes with the poor. The locutionary meaning of this proverb is that, nobody looks after another person's child. On the other hand, the illocutionary meaning goes beyond this to explain the love and care that are expected from the society. It explains the struggles people go through even though there are people around who could help, but because they are not blood related, they are left to their fates. In most of our homes, people would have had better education, to live

good lives but they are denied of such opportunities as a result of discrimination. In addition, those in power instead of giving a helping hand to the needy, they rather favour people of their status and family. The singer sings this dirge to tell the deceased the happenings in the family after her death and how she is struggling to overcome her challenges. She expresses this in the following:

*Wokɔe ee, hwan na ɔrekɔ ɔko yi ama yɛn?* 19 when you left us who will go  
to for us?

*Ennɛ wɔadwane agya yɛn!* 20 Today they have run away and left us 20

*Mmarima bɛn na ɛwɔ ɔman yi mu?* Who are the men in this town?

*Yɛmfɛ hwan?* 21 Whom shall we call?

*Hwan na yɛmfɛ no yi?* 22 Whom are we to call?

In the above, the singer is asking rhetorical questions about who would lead the battle of life. Here, the *ɔko* (*war*) has been used symbolically to represent the hardships or struggles in life. Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the provider of life's necessity such as food, water, clothings, and shelter is no more. This means that the singer is going to fight the war of life all by herself. She asked for our sympathy when she cries and stresses that all those she had hoped will help her have all deserted her. She therefore refers to the bravery of Nana Yaa Asantewaa and asked in line 23 that "who are the men in this town?" The 'men' has been used here symbolically to represent bravery, courage and hardness in the face of danger. She alludes that since there is nobody to face the challenges of life for her then, there is 'no man in the town'. The singer continues from line 24-25 by asking the deceased whom should they call to solve all the problems (war) for them. The singer concludes with the proverb in line 29; *hwan na hwɛ obi ba ennɛ*, to inform the ancestors that the relatives who have deserted her in the war against life are not really her siblings. She justifies this by stressing that if she had real considerate relation, she would not have been deserted or

abandoned her to face life's struggles all by herself. The proverb in line 31 brings the stark realisation that *ɔkwakuo nte mma obi ba* that is in this world, nobody does it for another. Therefore, the issue of hard work emanates from the state where the monkey could deny its own child the feed, leaving the child to work and feed itself. In this case, the one to feed is dead therefore it behoves that the child has to feed itself at all cost.

*Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔni ba ee!* 31            The son of Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ ee!  
*Wofiri ɔman yi mu yi ee!*                    Since you left in this town who  
*hwan na ɔrekɔ ɔko yi ama yen bio?* 32      will go to this war for us again?  
*Enne akukumakunkum na ewɔ so?* 33      Today it is all about murdering

Lines 32-35 of dirge 2 additionally, stresses on the cultural elements apart from the value of hardwork. The belief system of the close relationship between the living and the ancestors is stressed. The singer therefore is able to send messages to the ancestors, demands answers to the rhetorical questions about life and the desire for a change in her situation.

*Aa! Krɔbea wobeba a, bra oo!* 38      Aa! Krɔbea if you will come come oo!  
*San w'akyi bra!*                                    39      Return and come back!

She confirms this in line 38-39 that the deceased should come back and help her. All these put together to inform the audience that the Akan do not do anything without their departed souls.

Aesthetically, the use of the literary devices in the language makes the work beautiful. For example, in the following,

*Yegyegye wo so!*      41            We pamper you!  
*Aa! Yegyegye wo so oo!* 42            Aa! we pamper you oo!  
*Yegyegye wo so.*      43            We pamper you

From the data, we can say that the repetition is to emphasise her plight. The more the singer stresses a particular word or line, the more she draws

people's attention to her plight and the desire for support. The aesthetic relevance of repetition below is realised in the following lines.

*Obi nhwε obi ba nne o!* 46 Nobody cares for anothers' child today o!

*Obi nhwε obi ba nne o! Hee!* 47 Nobody cares for anothers' child! Hee!

*Obi hwε obi ba nne oo!* 48 Nobody cares for anothers' child oo!

Apart from providing emphasise, the repeated lines provide rhythmic beat while the repeated exclamation stress pain and suffering.

In the Akan cultural setting, interdependence is a value that is cherished. No one is an island to themselves. However, it seems this value is being eroded and it seems selfishness is taking a deep root. Thus, the singer desires an urgent help from the ancestors. The diction and aesthetic elements that are employed in the dirge are important in eliciting the expected emotion that is sympathy from the audience.

#### 4.5 Dirge 3

A dirge to a beloved brother

##### 4.5.0 Background

Nana Abenaa Asantewaa told me about her beloved brother who supported her. She normally called him *Wɔfɔ* meaning uncle since he was doing what in the Akan cultural setting, uncles must do for their relatives. She added that the Akan is matrilineal therefore almost all the properties of the Uncle are given to the family. The brother who was seen as an Uncle was doing just that; hence; the name Uncle. Three proverbs are found in this dirge thus; line 1, 2 and 3 *tikorɔ nkɔ agyina* which translates as 'knowledge does not reside in one person's head', line 4 *duakorɔ gye mframa a εbu* which translates as 'a single tree breaks when it is hit by wind'. There is another proverb which is in line 30 *ani bere a ensɔ gya* which translates as 'when eyes become red they do not spark

fire’. Attention will be given to the second and the third ones since the first one has been discussed in dirge one already.

The main idea that the proverb from dirge 3 line 4 *duakorɔ gye mframa a ɛbu* brings out is ‘request for support’. In this proverb, the locutionary meaning implies that a single tree breaks when it is hit by the wind. The wind is very important for the growth and development of living things; especially, plants and animals. Also, where there is a single tree, and it is constantly hit by strong wind, it bends and later breaks. On the other hand, when the trees are many, no matter how strong the wind blows, it cannot break them all as compared to the single tree. Considering the illocutionary meaning, *duakorɔ* symbolises a single person while *mframa* symbolises the many problems that the vacuum created by the deceased has brought upon her. The singer, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono used this proverb to communicate to her audience how she had been left alone to face so many attacks and challenges in life. Again, she emphasised the role of the deceased as a protector and provider for her and the family; thus, losing them was hard to take. Therefore, she is informing the deceased and listeners to support her else she will “break”. Perhaps, the deceased who is described as “the pot” of the family has broken and that nobody is in the family again to support her. The ‘pot’ in the Akan setting is used to cook food, soup, stew, and women use it to fetch water from streams and rivers. This emphasises the relevance of the pot and its absence in the house may create a problem. People will go hungry or thirsty. Therefore, the departure of the brother (Uncle) ‘the pot’ in the house, has made the family to be falling apart.

The cultural value of this proverb *duakorɔ gye mframa a ɛbu* shows that the Akan cannot forget their departed relatives. The belief is that relatives at *asamanado* are more powerful than the living; therefore, the living fall on them for support. *Duakorɔ* has been used symbolically to represent the singer as being



alone so culturally, she is calling on the departed at *asamanado* to provide her the protection, she is helpless and hopeless. The deceased is portrayed as a provider of food, clothing, shelter, good counselling among others for the singer. The singer makes the audience aware that, since this great provider of her is no more alive, the singer, that is the *duakorɔ* is exposed to all kinds of *mframa* (*wind*) that is dangers. In other words, the singer has no protection at all. Perlocutionary meaning of the proverb *duakorɔ gye mframa a ɛbu* explains how the defence of the singer has broken, therefore, allowing problems e.g; financially, feeding, clothing, shelter and more to harm her. Aesthetically the use of some literary elements like apostrophe as shown below which describes the singer talking to the deceased portrays the cultural impression that the souls of the departed relatives are not asleep and they hear the living as shown below from lines 31-35

<i>Hee! Eno ee!</i>	31	Heeh! Eno eh!
<i>Maame!</i>	32	Mother!
<i>Maame ee!</i>	33	Mother eh!
<i>Woremane me a mane me denkyem</i>		When you are sending me send me
<i>berɛboɔ oo! na w'ni tua.</i>	34	Crocodile's liver oo! Because you know
<i>Aka me nko bafua oo!</i>	35	I'm left alone oo!

Aesthetically, *duakorɔ* which is a metaphor, stands for any member who has been exposed to suffering. *Mframa* has been used here to stress the type and nature of suffering or attacks that may befall a loner. The use of the literary device heighten interest and brings out beauty. Additionally, the repetition of proverbs in Akan, the cultural belief is that, when people die it does not end their lives, they go to a different world, *asamanado* where they join their ancestors. This brings the idea that those who have died pave a way for “new”

dead person to have a peaceful transition into *Asamando* (life after death). Therefore, when they request anything from them they listen. For example, lines 31-33

*Okumanini ee!* 31 The conqueror of warriors ee!  
*Yafunu kotoku asa oo!* 32 The stomach sack is empty oo!  
*Owuo deefoɔ gye sika a, anka metɔnɔn me ho* If the mighty death accept money,  
*mema no* 33 would have sold myself for him

The word *okumanini* an appellation to stress the essence of the deceased. The *yafunu kotoku asa* describes the deceased as ‘a pot of food’ for the her and now that he/she is not alive, the singer will find it difficult to eat. Therefore, the stomach sack is empty meaning she is hungry. In *Owuo deefoɔ gye sika a, anka metɔnɔn me ho me maa no*, death has been personified and that if it will accept money, the singer would have sold herself to pay for the deceased to live. The use of the literary devices mentioned above brings interest and the beauty of the song.

The singer, Nana Abenaa Asantewaa adds the third proverb from dirge 3 line 30 to her songs; *ani bere a, ensɔ gya* to tell the audience that seeing people performing their normal duties does not mean that they do not have problems to attend to. She encourages people to remain calm when they are confronted with problems and seek appropriate channels to solve them.

The main theme for this proverb is that no matter how hard the situation is, one cannot kill oneself to salvage. The locutionary meaning of this proverb in the dirge is ‘reddish eyes’ do not spark out fire and that is the first interpretation or literal meaning one may immediately give to the proverb. However, delving into the illocutionary level, it is realized that the departure of the deceased has left the family empty but she has been able to calm herself to make it seem as if nothing has happened as shown in the lines below.

*Yeyi me afiri mu oo! Enam se menni bi. 18* They have taken me out oo! Because

I don't have some

*Aka menko bafua! 19* I'm left alone!

*Aka menko bafua mesi amanfoo so. 20* I'm left alone on a deserted land

*Memfa he nie ee? 21* Where should I pass ee?

*Ani bere a ensɔ gya anka m'ani abere pa ara 16* When eyes are red they do not  
spark fire else you will see them

The singer uses the above lines from dirge 3 lines 18-21 to support her message that she has been rejected since she does not have money. She therefore calls the deceased in line 21 to show her where she could be found so that she the singer could complain to her. She uses the proverb from dirge 3 line 16 *ani bere a, ensɔ gya anka m'ani abere pa ara* to calm herself down since there is nothing she could do to bring back the deceased to life. She uses this proverb to advise the audience as a similar proverb in Akan says, *se ɔkɔm de wo se deen ara mpo a, wontumi mfa wo nsa mmienu nnidi*, which translates as 'no matter how hungry you are, you cannot use your two hands to eat' therefore, we should be patient at all times and cry unto our helpers.

Culturally, the Akan believe that there is a world beyond the physical world that we find ourselves in. More so, the ancestors also have "the biggest eyes" that could see everything that is happening in this world. Nevertheless, the singer is of the view that the ancestors have seen the agony she is going through and they are not doing anything to help her. Therefore, she is informing the ancestors that her reticence does not mean that she does not need help from them. The same message is also being sent to the listeners that they should not look at how calm she has become and ignore her. Aesthetically, the singer adds this proverb in dirge 3 lines 1, 2 and 3 *tikorɔ nkɔ agyina!* Though the relevance of this proverb has been explained already, in this context, it is sending a

different message. Even though she has been able to calm or manage herself to a certain period, she needs them (the ancestors) to discuss some issues with them. The use of repetition in lines 27-28 as seen below is aesthetically important.

*Enne dee yɛkɔ agyina a yɛmfɛ me ee! .27 Today when they decide on something they don't call me ee!*

*Enne dee yɛkɔ agyina a yɛmfɛ me ee! 28 Today when they decide on something they don't call me ee!*

Here, the singer uses repetition as a literary device to draw attention of the audience and to emphasise her frustration, pain and isolation. *Enne dee yɛkɔ agyina a, yɛmfɛ me ee!* is a complain to the deceased so she will be quick to support. Considering the perlocutionary effect, the body language and other para-linguistics features by the singer affectionately draws the listeners' attention to the fact that they need to help the singer. Similarly, the repetition of *ee! ee!* in the song attract the audience to share in the pain the singer is going through; therefore, offering her some help.

#### 4.6 Dirge 4

The dirge to the late Uncle Nkansa

##### 4.6.0 Background

This dirge is about a generous Uncle who feeds almost everybody in the family. This Uncle unexpectedly passed on; creating a great vacuum in the family. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa extols him in the dirge. This dirge has two (2) proverbs and each proverb will be discussed. The proverbs are; in line 5 *ɔkɔdeɛ ba ne akokɔ ba nnidi*, which translates as 'the eaglet does not dine with the chick' and line 35 *kuntunu ahwan abɔ me na merekɔ he nie?*, which translates as 'I have been stucked by a trap and where am I going?'

The main theme for the first proverb *ɔkɔdeɛ ba ne akokɔ ba nnidi* is loss of hope by the family. The locutionary meaning of this proverb is that the eaglelet does not eat with chickens. However, the illocutionary meaning exposes a deeper understanding to the proverb. The eagle is a very powerful bird which eats only flesh. Thus, it feeds on other animals. Eagles are high flyers, they have amazing eyesight and can detect their preys from far. A chicken on the other hand is a weaker bird. It cannot fly higher than the eagle and cannot protect itself from harm. It eats 'cheap' food and not as 'powerful' as the eagle. Indeed, it is in itself a prey to the eagle. In this case, they can never come together and dine, else the eaglelet will prey on the chicken. Therefore, comparing the persona's family to both an eaglelet and a chicken, it is a symbol of loss of hope to the singer. In other words, the uncle is compared to be the eagle, a great person who has raised the family members to be royals.

The eagle is a metaphor representing the Uncle as a sign of 'power', therefore, the family of the Uncle is the eaglelet, which by the power of their Uncle are also 'powerful'. The chicken here is also used metaphorically for the poor (powerless) which have no substance in the society. However, the vacuum that death has created for the family has now made the eaglelet powerless to the extent that they have to 'dine' with the poor (powerless) people in the society to survive. The singer uses lines 20 to 24 below to bemoan the problems of their family to the Uncle. Their present state is one of their powerlessness. In lines 20 -21, the singer reminds the audience that she was a royal but due to the Uncle's death, she is eating from the cooking pot instead of the royal bowl as shown below.

*Enne deɛ metaferɛ nkwansen mu ee!* 20 Today I lick from the soup pot ee!  
*Kanee na medidi apɔɔyowa mu ee!* 21 At first, I eat from the earth bowl ee!  
*Yɛayi me totwene! Hee! Hee!* 22 They have rejected me! Hee! Hee!

<i>Owuo dɛɛfoɔ ee! Na adɛn?</i>	23	Mighty death! Why?
<i>Awofoɔ agya yɛn mu.</i>	24	Parents have left us.

She confirms her rejection in line 22 by stressing that they do not call her for any decision making and this has rendered her powerless. In line 23, she screams to ask death why they have treated her so badly to the extent of bringing down the powerful eaglet to join the chicken. She concludes in line 24 that her situation is as a result of her parents leaving her behind.

The cultural significance of this proverb stresses the powerful nature of the ancestors. The Akan believe that how a person is on this earth, they die and go to the world of death *asamanado* the same. Therefore, if one is a king and dies, one will continue to live as a king. At the same time when one is poor, and die, they will also go the same. With this belief, it is known in Akan that *asamanado* contains a lot of good deeds therefore praising the ancestors with humility will let them have mercy on the living so that they can give us protection, babies, long-life, jobs, wealth and more as shown in the below dirge from lines 41- 44

<i>Asamanado yɛ ɔman a, mommane me o!</i>	41	If the hades are a town, then send me gifts o!
<i>Mommane!</i>	42	Send me!
<i>Mommane me sika oo!</i>	43	Send me money oo!
<i>Mommane me sika oo!</i>	44	Send me money oo!

In line 41, the singer reminds the deceased that if the hades are a world as the Akan belief teaches, then she needs some gifts. In lines 42-44 she mentions the kind of gift that is *sika* (money) and this shows that really there are some gifts there.

The beauty of the dirge lies in the use of personification in the proverb where eaglets and chickens are made to perform human duties as the deceased

and the family respectively. The use of repetition as a literary device in the dirge also puts more emphasis on the request of the singer. For example, lines 27-28 and 30 as shown below.

<i>Owuo ee!</i>	27	Death ee!
<i>Owuo ee!</i>	28	Death ee!
<i>Ee! Ee! Ee! Na adɛn ni oo?</i>	30	<i>Ee! Ee! Ee! why this oo?</i>

The aesthetic value lies in the act of how the rich come down to the level of the poor to dine with them when they lose their riches. The singer uses this proverb to remind the deceased where their departure has placed her.

The Perlocutionary act of this proverb shows the relationship between the rich and the poor, and confirms that the person being mourned was a wealthy person. It shows the gap between the powerful and the commoners. The eagle symbolises the rich, powerful, royalty while the chicken symbolises poverty and servitude. Another dimension is that the successor upon all the riches he has inherited, could not look after the family of the deceased.

The second proverb in dirge 4, line 35 *kuntunu ahwan abo me na mereko he nie?*, Translates as *I have been stuck by a trap and where am I going?* was sung for an old woman who had lost a relative who was taking care of her. As a result of that, she has been left alone. The theme derived from this proverb is that, the singer has been betrayed by the death. The locutionary or the first meaning to this proverb is how lonely and hopeless the singer has become. The deceased in question is the one who provides all her needs, protects her and clothes her. The departure of such a person has created a great vacuum in the life of the singer and nobody can replace that. The following lines 20-21 confirm the above.

<i>Enne, deɛ metaferɛ nkwansɛn mu ee!</i>	20	Today, I lick from the soup pot
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*Kane na medidi apotɔyowa mu ee!* 21 At first, I was eating from the earth  
bowl

*Yɛayi me todwene. Hee! heee!* 21 They have rejected me hee! hee!

From 4 lines 20-22, we reach that because there is no one to help, the singer calls for God's intervention so she can be protected from the vacuum created. She uses *nkwansen* in line 20 as a symbol of hardship that she is passing through. In line 21, she tells how she felt as a royal when the Uncle was alive. She explains herself in line 22 to the deceased that she has been rejected by the family due to his painful exit. She concludes with a rhetorical question since society does not care for the needy what can she do to live?

Culturally, *kuntunu ahwan abɔ me* in the Akan belief system emphasises the idea that nobody can be a friend to death since one day it will strike you. It confirms the saying in Akan that *owuo nnim aboa yarefoɔ* literally meaning 'death does not know a sick animal' that is it does not matter how troubled or happy you are, it will take you away if it desires. *Kuntunu ahwan abɔ me* also represents the deceased's departure; the singer has been terribly hurt by death. The singer asked, *na merekɔ he nie?* This explains how lonely she has become in the society; all the good things that she was enjoying from the deceased are no more. Again, it is informing the listeners that the singer is in a critical situation and she needs everybody's support else something more unpleasant would happen to her. In addition, it is explaining to listeners how difficult it is to lose a dear one who does all for you in life. Furthermore, the idea that life becomes challenging when you lose people like the deceased in question is stressed. Aesthetically, the language used by the singer to explain herself makes the work beautiful as shown below from lines 45-48

*Ee! wiase nie?* 45 Ee! Is this the world?

*Wiase abɔ oo!* 46 The world is empty oo!



*Ee! Wiase nie?* 47

Ee! Is this the world?

*Wiase abutu oo!* 48

The world has turn upside down

The use of repetition to put emphasis on what she is saying draws the audience's attention to her plight. Pephase how the world has turned against her. Perlocutionary, the choice of words and how the singer has arranged them together with the various body gestures will elicit the appropriate emotional effect and support.

#### 4.7 Dirge 5

A dirge to a mother

##### 4.7.0 Background

Nana Abenaa Asantewaa sang this dirge to express the value of interdependence of humans irrespective of wealth and social status. We all need support from others before we can live a meaningful life. She composed this dirge to appreciate the good deeds of a mother who had departed from her children. She counsels that even though it is very painful for somebody you trusted to harm you; we should have a place in our hearts to forgive the fellow. The proverb from dirge 5 is lines 1-2; *anomaa mfa nnua abufuo* which translates as 'birds do not become angry with trees. The main theme in this proverb is that the living and the dead are interdependent. In this proverb, the locutionary meaning tells listeners about how birds cannot be angry with trees. However, the illocutionary meaning of the proverb *anomaa mfa nnua abufuo* is explaining how intimate the birds and the trees are. Therefore, the singer adds this proverb to her dirge to tell the audience that no matter the vacuum the deceased has created, she cannot leave them. Thus, without the deceased, she cannot survive in life. Comparing the trees and the birds, we can see that a bird depends largely on trees (fresh or dead) for food, shelter, protection and everything of life.

On the other hand, when a tree does something wrong against the bird, there is no way the bird can be angry with the tree because of its dependency on the tree. Therefore, as the bird cannot live without the tree, so the living cannot live without the dead. Culturally, the singer places more emphasis on how valuable the departed are to the Akan; therefore, they can ask them for all kinds of support, believing that they are stronger and can see where the living cannot. In addition, the Akan belief shows that the departed souls are also a family who have a lot to support the living, for example, money, jobs, marriage, children, good living, long life, protection and more. Though their departure may have created a vacuum in the family, yet, they can never be forgotten for their good deeds. For example, the lines below from dirge 5 stress the pains the persona is going through.

*Agyei ee! Dwoo me e! Dwoo me e!* 20 Mother ee! Mother of my birth e! Mother  
of my birth e!

*Mogyaa me sen nie oo?* 21 How did you leave me oo?

*Mogyaa me sen nie oo?* 22 How did you leave me oo?

*M'ani abere oo!* 23 My eyes are have ripe oo!

In lines 20-22, the attention of the deceased is now being called to look at the vacuum she has created; there is nobody to support in providing food, shelter, clothing and others for her. The singer still sends a message to the deceased on how life has become difficult for the singer due to her departure in line 23. In the Akan culture, the belief that talking and mentioning the names of the deceased in the air sends messages to the world of dead *asamanado* where the departers are. Another cultural belief is that, the departed ears are so much opened to the extent that when we speak into the air they listen as expressed below in lines 17-18.

*Wodidi a, ma me bi nni ee!* 17 When you eat give me some to eat!

*Na wodidi a, ma me bi nni!* 18          So when you eat give me some to eat!

The above reveals the relationship between the dead and the living. Though the relatives are not with us physically, the cultural belief tells us that they are with us; therefore, no matter the pain or vacuum they have created through their departure, we will never be angry with them. We know that birds depend on trees for their survival. In addition, whether the tree is dead or alive the birds can still depend on it for shelter. For example, birds can perch on the tall, dead or fresh trees from being killed by hunters and other enemies. The singer uses this symbol to inform the deceased that she will never be angry with them in spite of their departure. Another cultural belief the singer wants to draw listener's attention to is that, there is a strong bond between the living and the dead and that should be recognized.

Aesthetically, in lines 1-2 *anomaa* a bird is a symbol which represents the singer while the *nnua* also represents the dead. Therefore, the use of personification, which allows inanimate objects like *nnua* 'trees' and *anomaa* 'birds' to act as humans concludes the message. Another device is repetitions in the song. For example, in lines 5-7, the singer uses repetition to bring listeners attention to the message she wants to send to the departed ones.

<i>M'ani abere oo!</i>	10	My eyes are red oo!
<i>M'ani abere oo!</i>	11	My eyes are red oo!
<i>Obi nsɔ me mu e!</i>	121	Someone should hold me e!
<i>Obi nsɔ me mu e!</i>	13	Someone should hold me e!
<i>Obi nsɔ me mu e!</i>	14	Someone should hold me e!

Aesthetically, repetitions of diction and grammatical items such as exclamation marks allows the audience to pay attention to the song and to share in the pain of the persona. It helps them to be involved. Another device that

makes the work beautiful is the idiomatic expression used by the singer. For example, lines 10-11, 17-18 and 24.

<i>M'ani abere oo!</i>	10	<i>My eyes are red oo!</i>
<i>M'ani abere oo!</i>	11	<i>My eyes are red oo!</i>
<i>Wodidi a, ma me bi nni ee!</i>	17	<i>If you eat give me some to eat ee!</i>
<i>Na wodidi a, ma me bi nni!</i>	18	<i>So when you eat give me some to eat!</i>
<i>M'ani atutu agu me nsam ee!</i>	24	<i>My eyes have falling into my hands</i>

The idioms above were used by the singer in order to hold her breath not to mention some words directly to the audience which also makes the work beautiful. Furthermore, the singer assures listeners that no matter the situation in which she finds herself, people who can be of help should be remembered at all times. Perlocutionary, comparing inanimate objects to human beings and giving them the opportunity to act as humans reveals that nature is ready to support humans in terms of difficulties and that makes listeners to appreciate and support the singer.

#### 4.8 Dirge 6

The dirge to a warrior in a village.

##### 4.8.0 Background

This dirge is about a departed warrior, According to Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, the warriors in the village/family have all died leaving the weak ones. She uses *etuo* (gun) as a symbol of attacks and problem which come upon the family/village members, without anybody to save them. She therefore calls on the departed for help. The proverb identified in this dirge is in lines 19, 37 and 46 *etuo bene a, esi barima bo* which translates as when the gun gets hot, it rests on the chest of a man. The main theme for this proverb is loneliness is hurtful.

The literal or locutionary meaning of this proverb is that a hot gun rests in the chest of a man. Ilocutionarily, the singer is comparing the bravado of the deceased to a warrior who defends his people at all times. Now that he is no more, there is nobody to defend them. In this context, the gun (*etuo*) can also refer to the many problems that the singer encounters, which hitherto were solved by the deceased. *Barima bo* that is the chest of a man symbolises a shield and connotes protection. On the other hand, the proverb also explains how the singer has become helpless after losing such a bravery person in question. Though she bemoans her loneliness, she ironically encourages others to be courageous in situations similar to what she finds herself in. In short, they should be guided by the Akan saying that *ɔbarima na ɔnom aduro a eye wono* literary means it is a man who drinks bitter pills.

The bullet from the gun which is dangerous and can destroy many lives within a short period of time is culturally symbolic; bringing to our notice that there are dangerous situations that need the brave people not just ordinary people. In addition, the cultural value in this proverb is a reference to aspects of the worldview of the people which stresses the close relationship between the living and the dead. It also reveals the level of superiority as far as spiritual power is concerned. In this case, the Akan believe that relatives who have departed to *asamanado* are spiritually stronger than the living therefore, they can offer help. In lines 60-64, the singer asks for help from the people in *asamanado*. She narrates her current state and how badly she needs them

*Aka me nko bafua o!* 60 I am left alone o!

*Obi rebo me a, mommɛgye me ee!* 61 Rescue me when someone is beating me ee!

Monim sɛdeɛ metee? 62 You know how I am?

Obi rebo me a, momɛgye me. 63 Rescue me when someone is beating me

*Memfa benkum anaase nifa?* 64 Should I pass left, or right?

Aesthetically, the singer makes a metaphorical comparison between the deceased and the chest of a man. Thus, in line 11 *fituo da mpan, bonwoma tua ano* which translates as deserted household spearheading is bitterness shows that it is not really true that the household is empty but it is explaining the functions of the deceased. No one can be compared to him in the family again. Line 5 *Amaado Buroni aka no ho abenedie ee!* translates as Amaado Buroni has reacted in agony! The *Amaado* here is an appellation used for death. That is whenever death strikes, it brings agony into human's lives.

In addition, the singer adds in line 80 *Moremane me a, mommane me denkyem mmerebo, na mannya gya a, mawe no mono* which translates as, if you are sending me something, send me crocodile's liver so that I can eat it fresh if I don't get fire. The *denkyem mmerebo* is a metaphor for a reddish corn found in the northern part of Ghana especially with the Dagbani tribe, they call it *konzira*. Its freshness looks like the cooked one, so whenever one is hungry and sees it, it gives hope. The singer uses this corn symbolically to inform the ancestors that at least if they have nothing, they should bring her that corn so that it will bring her some hope for the future.

<i>Ee! Aduana ba ee!</i>	92	Ee! Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Akyenkwa ba kokoɔdurofoɔ ee!</i>	93	The brave son of Akyem
<i>Memfa he na mahyia mo?</i>	94	Where should I pass to meet you?
<i>Obretuo Nana ba ee! Hee!</i>	95	The grandson of Bretuo ee! Hee!
<i>Ee! Baafɔ ba Akwasi ee!</i>	96	Ee! Akwasi the son of Baafɔ ee!
<i>Yɛde me rekɔ a gye me oo!</i>	97	Rescue me when they are taking me away oo!

Aesthetically, from lines 92-97 the singer is addressing a person in absentia (the deceased) with a lot of appellations. This brings us to the culture of the Akan where appellations are used to eulogise or praise. Functionally

appellations are employed to bring out the qualities of a person or item for a desired goal. We can also say that others reminisce the roles that their deceased members had played in the family and how much they missed these members.



## 4.9 Dirge 7

Dirge to a late linguist

### 4.9.0 Background

The dirge was sung in honour of a linguist the chief's spoke person. According to Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, this linguist had been very supportive to his King to rule his people successfully. In Akan, the linguist is seen as the wife of the King and that every secret of the King is known to him. To Nana, this linguist never revealed any secret from the palace and that made them successful. The proverb is in line 1 *odupɔn tutu a, borɔferɛ na esi n'anann mu* translates as, 'when a big tree falls, the pawpaw tree grows in its stead.'

The theme for this proverb is, equal replacement is very hard to come by. The locutionary or the surface meaning of this proverb is that when a big tree falls it is a pawpaw tree that grows in its place. The real meaning or the illocutionary meaning of this proverb is that pawpaw that grows in the stead of the mighty tree cannot be compared to it. Using *odupɔn* in this context means that the deceased who has fallen was a great person so whoever has filled or will fill his or her place must be as great and powerful as the deceased else the person is a pawpaw tree. The pawpaw tree is very soft in nature; therefore, taking the place of the mighty tree underscores how the singer has lost her dignity or recognition in the society. In the same way, this proverb *odupɔn tutu a, borɔferɛ na esi n'anann mu* is said when a successor is seen perform abysimally as compared to the predecessor's great performance. It is not said in a vacuum, where there is a comparison. The singer might have seen in the family that no person in the family can be compared to the deceased in terms of values, riches, leadership etc. The singer used *odupɔn* and pawpaw metaphorically to represent power and might as against weakness. The singer uses the above to lament that the successor is not able to match the strength of the deceased



therefore, she has become powerless. The singer continues to use this platform to report to the ancestors what is happening in the society they have left. She supports her complains in the lines below (12-18).

*Aka menko bafua oo!* 12 I'm left alone oo!  
*Na memfa he na mahyia mo?* 13 So where should I pass to meet you?  
*Memfa benkum anaa nifa na mahyia mo?* 14 Should I pass left or right to meet you?  
*Dupɔn atutu, efie abɔ!* 15 A big tree has fallen the family is broken!  
*Efie gya adum!* 16 The fire in the house is quenched!  
*Enne deɛ medidi kwansɛn mu ee!* 17 Today I eat in the soup pot ee!  
*Me ne obi nnidi apotɔyowa mu nne.* 18 I don't eat with someone in the earth bowl today.

In line 12, she calls the attention of the deceased about the effect of his death and in lines 13-14, she desired to know the location of the deceased so that she could ask for help. Here, the *dupɔn* symbolises the great person who has left the family; creating a hole in the family/home that is expressed in “*efie abɔ*”. She continues this idea further in line 16 that *efie gya adum*, literary means *the house's fire is quenched*. The “*egya*” is fire which we use to cook food for the family, warm the family when they are cool; now that such fire is quenched, there is no food for the family. It is also implying that the ‘cooking pot’ is broken; therefore, he calls the ancestors in lines 17 and 18 that she has been rejected and nobody eats with her any more.

Culturally, in the Akan tradition, successors's are not chosen immediately one dies in a family. The funeral rite is performed before a successor is chosen when all dust is settled. They waited till forty (40) days before the successor is chosen. It is 40 days because the Akan belief that it takes 40 days for the soul of the deceased goes home finally to rest. That person

should be responsible for the family of the deceased. S/he is expected to care for the immediate family members of the deceased. In some cases where the successor, either a widow or a widower is interested, they are allowed to marry themselves so that they could take good care of the deceased's family. In this however, the singer cries out to inform the listeners (both dead and alive) that the replacement in her situation is weak and cannot perform duties well. This is strongly represented as the pawpaw tree growing in the stead of a mighty tree (odupɔn). In addition, the use of repetition, rhetorical question and exclamations to catch the attention of the audience also adds a style in the song. For example, in lines 4-5 and 10-11, the singer uses the element of repetition for emphasis.

<i>Maame e!</i>	4	Mother e!
<i>Maame e!</i>	5	Mother e!
<i>Enonom e!</i>	10	Mothers e!
<i>Enonom e! Hee!</i>	11	Mothers e! Hee!

Additionally, the use of idiomatic expressions in the work that is; *ɔkɔdeɛ, enne deɛ yeapam me ee!* which translates as an eagle I have been sacked today ee!

Perlocutionarily, the blending of the various literary devices draw attention to the theme and elicits the desired emotional effect from the audience. Others will learn a lesson from it when it comes to choosing their successors. Again, it is a form of advice to the people to take good care of their family members so that they can also be praised.

#### 4.10 Dirge 8

Dirge to a late lovely brother.

##### 4.10.0 Background to dirge 8

This dirge explains how members of a particular family seem to be united; yet when a member's parent dies, members pretend they have not seen

the suffering the children go through. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa sung this dirge in remembrance of her brother who was a king and provided her with her needs and how those needs are not given any more by other members of the family. She laments that they have ignored her because they are not her real siblings; even though, they are all one family. The proverb found here is *abusua te se kwaee ebom tuu nso dua biara wo ne siberɛ*, which translates as, a family looks like the forest, they form one canopy but every tree has its own position.

The theme for this proverb is that members of a family look like a shelter/union but they pretend when you get into trouble. The locutionary meaning of this proverb is just a representative statement which makes a comparison between the family and the forest. A forest may be defined as a mixture of all kinds of trees at a particular place. The intended meaning which is the illocutionary is that when you stand afar, you will see a canopy made up of all the trees as one. However, when you enter the forest, then you will see that every tree has its own individual space as exemplified in lines 12-13 and 16-18.

<i>Na metwere kakapenpen.</i>	12	I was leaned against kakapenpen
<i>Kapenpen ayi me atwene o!</i>	13	I have fallen from kakapenpen tree o!
<i>Memfa he nie ee!?</i>	16	Where should I pass ee?
<i>Mekɔ m'anim a predwan!</i>	17	Am stucked when I go forward!
<i>Mekɔ m'akyi a predwan!</i>	18	Am stucked when I go backwards!

From line 12, the singer tells her Uncle how she had been deprived of happiness. The *kakapenpen* is a tree which is not strong and could break at any time. The singer uses that tree as a symbol to represent the people in the *kwaee* (family). She thinks she could lean on that tree for help but line 13 thus *mekɔ m'anim a predawn* confirms that the *kakapenpen* cannot provide that support. In line 16, thus *na memfa he na mahyia mo*, the singer calls the deceased to

show where she could find her so that she could lay all her problems before him. This means that she was leaning against a weak wall, she probably didn't know. And she would not know in the sense that nobody knows when they would die. For that matter, no one can beat the chest and proclaim invincibility. In line 16, she sees no stronghold to lean herself against any helper after the demis of the one she had she had wrong notion that he was strong invincible. In lines 17 and 18, *mekɔ m'akyi a predawn*, *mekɔ m'anim a predawn*, in Akan, *predwan* means trouble so in her effort to go forward, she meets trouble of going back too she meets trouble. She therefore expresses the loneliness of her search for support.

In line 19 *fidie ayi me ntentenoa* literally meaning she had been trapped at the extreme ends. The Akan adage says that *anomaa anitefoɔ afidie yi no ntentenoa* to wit, it is the wise bird that is trapped at the extreme ends of a tree. In context, the singer thinks she was secured not knowing that death knows no boundaries. She heavily relied on the deceased, little did she know she would will die so soon. Her hopes are dashed. All she had is gone that is *memfa he na mahyia mo o?* In this case, it has been used as a metaphor to represent how badly she is being treated in the family and how poor she has become. This really shows that one may come from a rich family but if the parents are not rich, they may suffer. This proverb brings to the fore the real attitude of some family members who may be aware of the predicament of a member but will never help. In other words, they will prefer seeing one suffer than to help. Aesthetically, in line13 the metaphor *abusua te se kwaeɛ* compares the family to the forest which when observed from afar, the forest looks very beautiful and united and interdependent. However, when one gets closer, it is there that one will realize the individuality of the trees. In lines 16-20 express this idea.

<i>Memfa he nie ee?</i>	16	Where should I pass ee?
<i>Mekɔ m'anim a predwan?</i>	17	Am stucked when I go forward?

<i>Mekɔ m'akyi a predwan?</i>	18	Am stucked when I go backwards?
<i>Fidie ayi me ntentɛnoa.</i>	19	Am trapped in the extremely ends.
<i>Na memfa he na mahyia mo o?</i>	20	So where should I pass to meet you o?

Line 16 explains that the uncle has carried all her food away meaning it was the uncle who catered for her. She continued from lines 17-18 that the Uncle is all that she had and therefore she depended on him for sustenance. She concludes with line 19 that now that the uncle is not there, it looks as if she had been trapped in life, while line 28, *mefa ha a, matɔ amena mu*, the *amena mu* has been used symbolically to represent the problems in life that none of the family members will help her to solve. The combination of these devices brings out the beauty of the work. The cultural value of this proverb is that we may be distanced from our relatives yet their good deeds continues to bring us together as shown below from dirge 8 lines 42, 46-47.

<i>M'awie no no oo!</i>	42	Am finished oo!
<i>Maka adwaamu oo!</i>	46	Am left in a trap oo!
<i>Hwan na ɔbeyi me oo!</i>	47	Who will rescue me oo?

From the above lines, we could tell from line 42 that it was the uncle who provided all her needs including food, shelter, clothing and more. Now that he is not there, it means she has finished in life. Line 46 describes the uncle as the protector of her life. That is why she said she had been left in a trap and in line 47 she confirms that she has no one to rescue her. This emphasised that one of the values of the Akan that is despite the value of interdependency, there is the need for the individual to be self sufficient.

The perlocutionary effect of the proverb is that it causes people to extend a helping hand to support the needy. It also makes us aware of our responsibilities as siblings in the family.

#### 4.11 Dirge 9

The dirge to the late warrior

##### 4.11.0 Background

The content of this dirge is about a warrior who has never been defeated in war. Nana explains how skilful and brave he was. He fought for his village and led them to occupy a vast land. Nana said his bravery made her to compose this dirge so that she could sing to remember him. This dirge has two proverbs, these are: in line 18, *efie abɔ ama mmaa na wɔrekɔ ako* which translates as ‘the house has empty for women to go to war the second one is *owuo kura adeɛ a, nkwa ntumi nye* from line 29 which also translates as when the death holds something, life cannot take it.

The main idea in this proverb is when the strong one is taken away the society is rendered weak. The locutionary meaning of this proverb simply means that women are going to war because there are no men. On the other hand, the illocutionary meaning of this proverb provides the deeper meaning other than the surface meaning. Here, the word *efie abɔ* which literally means the house is broken is not talking about the collapse of the building. It rather explains the bad activities of death to the entire family. The deceased in question could be someone who holds the family’s ‘cooking pot’; in other words, the pillar of the house and now that the person is not there, who then provides their daily bread. Thus, the absence of the deceased is now compared to a broken pot. The *mmaa* which is “women” is not pointing to the sex of a person rather the soft and ‘the calm spirit’ nature of women. Therefore, *mmaa* has been used symbolically to represent calmness, understanding, politeness, compassion, and more. On the other hand, *mmarima asa* has also been used symbolically to represent the absence of bravery, boldness, fearlessness, courage, strength and more. This means that presently, when somebody goes to the family, the person

will see a lot of people there but not of the calibre of men. For example, the lines below (line 56-59) clearly explain that the family is exposed in terms of protection.

<i>Hwan ne w'anamsini a ɔbeboaboa</i>	yɛn	56	Who is your replacement	yɛn ano
<i>ako ɔko no?</i>		56	that will gather us to war?	
<i>Hwan ho na yɛnko?</i>		57	Whom should we go?	
<i>Hwan na yɛɛbisa ne ho biribi?</i>		58	Whom shall we ask for something?	
Wɔfa adɛn na woama yɛn ani atutu aka			Uncle why have you made our yɛn	
yɛn nsam yi		59	our eyes falling into our hands?	

In line 56, the singer cries to ask the deceased who will lead them to war.

This means there is no 'war-like person' in the family again. Line 57, 58, and 59 describe the hollow nature of the family after the departure of the story from the family.

*Mmaa na wɔreko ako* literally means it is women who are going to war. Culturally, in the Akan tradition, women do not go to war; it is only men who go to war. Some reasons for this are that women are seen among the Akan as compassionate, emotionally weak and also not brave enough to kill their own enemies at the war front. In addition, most women are not courageous enough to see human blood which is a characteristic of battles. It is only in exceptional cases where when there are no men that we see women going to war. For example, in the case of the Queen Mother of Edweso, Nana Yaa Asantewaa. Therefore, the singer is right in the dirge to say that *mmarima asa ama mmaa na wɔreko ako* means men have finished and that has led women to go for war. To add, in Akan men are seen as strong and they can protect their families. That is why in Akan, when you hit somebody, the person can shout 'agya e!' that is; Father e! meaning the person is calling his/her father to come and rescue him/her. Akan cultural values concerning marriage teaches that it is men who

must work to feed and protect their families. Therefore, a man who cannot perform such functions is seen as ‘a woman’. On the other hand, the singer uses this platform through the deceased to inform the ancestors that when they give us children, they should consider those who are brave so that they can lead them to war as well as protect the family.

Aesthetically, the actions of the death as sung by the singer brings to the attention of the audience that death has really snatched all the brave and strong men who could go to war to protect the family away from harm. This has led women who are to be protected are now going to war. For example, the below lines 41-46 show.

*Owuo asesa yen pra nyinaa ko.* 41 Death has taking all our brooms  
*Yebesi den apra fie?* 42 How can we sweep the house?  
*Owuo afa Prae Abena ko ama fie adane* Death has taking Abenaa the  
*apotobibire* 43 broom away for the house to turn into spirogyra  
*Owuo akyekyere yen nsa agu yen akyi* 44 Death has tied our hands at our back  
*Wofa! wo wuo yi aka yen ano atom.* 45 Uncle! Your death has closed our mout  
*Enne wommɔ yen din bio.* 46 Today our names are not mentioned again

In line 41, the singer uses personification that is death acting as a human being to collect all the brooms from the house. She uses broom metaphorically to represent the deceased who is a warrior and death has taken away. In line 42 she uses the rhetorical question to inquire how they could sweep the house. The “sweeping” and the ‘house’ are both symbolic, representing ‘the war’. In line 43, *Prae Abenaa* and the *apotobibire* (spirogyra) are both symbolic representing the warrior (*barima*) and the war (*ɔko*) respectively. In lines 44 and 45 she continues to use personification where death ties the hands of the family at their back and closed their mouths. She ends it in line 46 that because of death, people do not recognise them any more.



Perlocutionally, the choice of diction by the singer, emphasise the values of the deceased and his/her importance to the family, and how deeply the family has lost him. This will make them sympathise for the family and contribute more to support them.

The second proverb in dirge 9 is *owuo kura adee a, nkwa ntumi nnye* which translates as if death holds something, life cannot take it. The central idea this proverb brings out is that death is inevitable. The locutionary meaning of this proverb is that, death and life are fighting over something which death has the power to take away from life. However, in this context, the illocutionary meaning evokes a different meaning of the proverb. According to Nana Abenaa Asantewaa, *owuo kura adee a*, represents the power that death has over on people to the extent that when death strikes, humans have nothing to do to save themselves. In the dirge, the singer stresses the power that death has over the life of humans. The lines below (lines 30-32) show the power of death over humans.

<i>Owuo yeyee wo deen nie?</i>	30	Death what did we do to you?
<i>Abusua aye wo deen nie o?</i>	31	What has the family done to you o?
<i>Wode yen tɔtɔ na worehye yen nyinaa</i>	32	Gradually you are killing all of us

From the above, the rhetorical question seeks to emphasise the pain and hurt death has brought to the family. The power of death is further stressed in the idea that “powerful death will not answer the rhetorical questions, no matter the number of times it is asked. Death is mightier than humans, she continues in line 32 that gradually death is taking all of them to stress the might of death, and that death does not take just one but any number it prefers.

The cultural value here is the power of death to control human life without any questioning. The singer again, instead of using everyday language, used the song to inform her listeners about how she had toiled for the deceased

in question and yet s/he could not survive. Perhaps, she might have spent a lot of money and might have sold the family's treasures just to save the deceased. Aesthetically, the proverb, *owuo kura adee a, nkwa ntumi nnye* is used as personification in the sense that *owuo* and *nkwa* are not humans yet they have been given human qualities to depict how strong, fearless, bold, and powerful the Akan see death. Again, the use of repetition from the first two words and last two words for example, *wode yen ani ko o!* literary means you have taken our eyes away o! is important in stressing the powerlessness of humans. The use of the exclamation marks is a call in the form of shouting to the hearing of the audience that she is really in a pain she cannot bear it alone; therefore, people should come and support her.

<i>Wode yen ani ko o!</i>	33	You have taking our eyes away o!
<i>Wode yen yafunu ko o!</i>	34	You have taking our stomach away o!
<i>Wode yen aso ko o!</i>	35	You have taking our ears away o!

Perlocutionally, the mannerism exhibited by the singer of the dirge shows how sorry and heartbroken the singer is knowing that she has spent a valuable treasure just to save the deceased but powerful death who has no ear to listen and eyes to see could not offer her the second chance. This elicit sympathy and emotional support from the audience.

#### 4.12 Dirge 10

The dirge to a late relative.

##### 4.12.0 Background

The singer sings this dirge to commend the good deeds of a relative who did almost everything for the family. He provided food, shelter, clothing, counseling, protection and more. His absence has brought a lot of problems to the family as some family members tried to appropriate some property. In short, death has created tension in the family. The proverbs in this dirge are two, line

5 *asomurofi dwo a, na okraman nya dabere* which translates as ‘a dog gets a sleeping place when the hearth cools. Line 11 *Owuo ton adee a firi bi na edane se boɔ a ɔde wo beko* which also translates as if death is sells something buy some on credit because no matter what you do, it will take you away.

The main theme for proverb in line 5 is that there is a vacuum in the family. The locutionary meaning is that when the hearth cools, a dog finds a place to sleep. However, the illocutionary meaning goes deeper to explain how society turns blind eyes to people who really need help; people who were on their own have become lonely because of the vacuum created by death and now they have to depend on others before they survive. No one is willing to extend a helping hand to their fellow human beings. The singer in this proverb cries out to inform the deceased that nobody can care for her like he used to do. She uses lines 2-4 and 7 as shown below to explain this to the deceased.

<i>Mame ee! Maame ee!</i>	2	Mother ee! Mother eh!
<i>M’ani abere oo!</i>	3	My eyes are red oo!
<i>M’ani abere pa ara!</i>	4	My eyes are really red!
<i>Maamenom te aseɛ na ente saa!</i> 7 It was not like this when mothers were alive.		

In line 2, the singer compares her situation to a dog in the house. The dog is seen among the Akan as protector of the house. It is brought to the house by the landlord to deter animals. It has no secret place to sleep to warm itself, it sleeps anywhere on the compound of the house. The hearth is always hot with fire which is not conducive for habitation for the dog. If the fire goes down and the hearth cools down, then the dog gets a place to warm itself. The hearth would represent the deceased whose presence make wicked family members uncomfortable to draw closer. The wicked family members would be represented by the dog. The demise of the person sees such people in the helm

of affairs-now taken over the place of the deceased. Those who litter were hovering around like dog in the house have found solace in the demise of the person and now find their way in the helm of affairs – (coo hearth). Such persons could be the successor. Things have turned around so you could see from the last line that it was not like this when mothers were alive. In this case, the singer tells the deceased that whenever the problems *asomurofi* cools down, the dog ‘the singer’ will get a sleeping place or freedom (*dabere*).

<i>Ɔkrɔbea Asante kɔtɔkɔ ee!</i>	12	Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ ee!
<i>Aa! M’ani abere.</i>	13	Aa! My eyes are red
<i>Enonom ee!</i>	14	Mothers ee!
<i>Enonom ee! Ee!</i>	15	Mothers ee! Ee!

In dirge 10 line 12, the singer is calling the deceased to come back to witness the consequences which her death has created for the family. She refers her to line 13 where she demands that the deceased should look at how helpless she has become. She is in real danger.

Culturally, the message the singer is sending to the deceased in *asamanado* is to inform the rest of the relatives. It also strengthens the bond or the relationship between the dead and the living. It increases our hope that we have people who are strongly standing by us to protect us in times of difficulty. In Akan culture, they are made to believe that one day they will also join the departed souls and tell all the happenings in this world to them. That is why when somebody is laid in state during a file pass in Akan, they give money and they put their requests like children, good jobs, long-life, good health and many before the deceased. The *asamanado* where they are going is a world of its own and great-great parents who love them are there and therefore all their requests would be granted.

Aesthetically, Line 16, she uses hyperbole in *menye deen wo wiase na m'ani atutu aka me nsam yi?* Meaning what should I do in this world that my eyes have fallen into my hands? There is no way somebody's eyes could fall into their hands irrespective of the problems they encounter. However, the singer uses that to project the level of her situation so that the audience will understand her predicament and support her. In addition, the use of repetition as a literary device also provides emphasis and rhythm as seen the lines in the lines 18, 19 and 20 below.

*Hwiremo awo me, memfa he?* 18 I have been pined by the thorns, where  
should I pass?

*Hwiremo awie me!* 19 Thorns have finished me!

*Hwiremo adi me awu o!* 20 I am doomed by thorns o!

The repetition of *hwiremo* (thorns) in the above lines quickly invites the audience to give a listening ear to the singer. In Akan, *hwiremo* is a dangerous poisonous thorn in the bush. As the singer continues making the audience aware that she had been destroyed by these thorns, she stresses the danger and solicits for empathy. All these devices truly make the work beautiful.

Also, the singer uses appropriate diction to inform the listeners that nobody in this world could be compared to his father (the deceased). Again, the singer informs the listeners that the father left her in the hands of no one. It also explains how inhuman society could be and what society could do to people irrespective of their problems.

The second proverb from line 11 is *owuo ton adee a firi bi na edane se boo a ode wo beko* which translates as if death sells something, buy some on credit because no matter what you do it will take you away. The theme for this proverb is 'death is inevitable or indispensable'. The locutionary meaning of this proverb means that it is best to borrow from death than to buy and pay. The

illocutionary meaning professes a deeper understanding as to why it is advisable to borrow from death. It explains that death is not a good friend and it does not show love to anybody. It can have all the fun it wants with you but will not pardon you when it wants to kill you. It does not matter if you buy from death and pay, it will still strike you whenever it wants to. It does not inform anyone when it wants to strike. It has no respect for humanity no matter one's class or status in society.

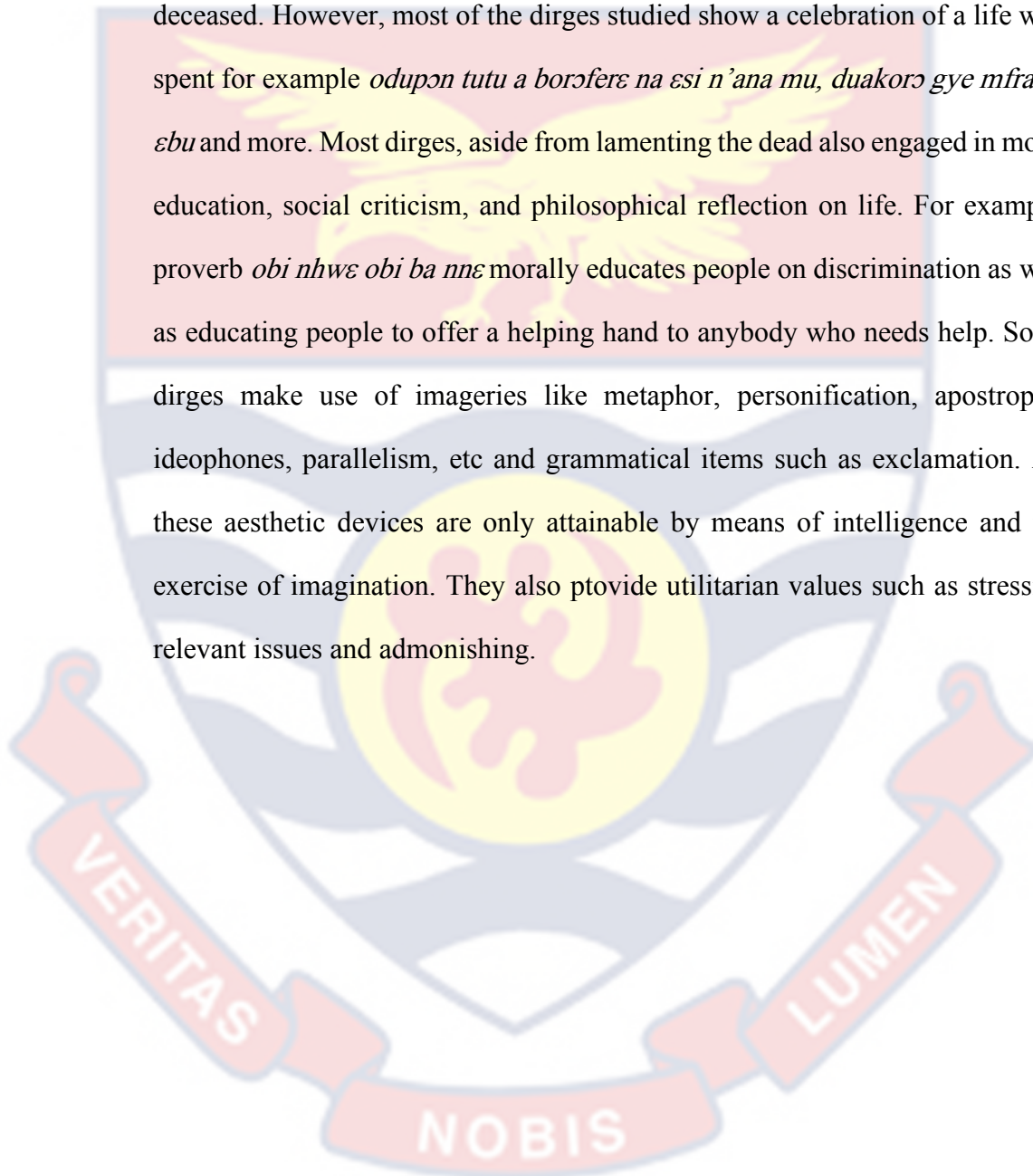
The illocutionary goes on to explain how unpleasant death is since nobody does anything to please it. Therefore, man should not waste time, energy and money on it. In other words, the family might have spent a lot on the deceased just for her to survive yet death places its cool hands on her. In life, some people are like death; it does not matter what you do for them, they will still do you harm. The value here is that death is stronger than life so there is a saying that *owuo kura adeɛ a, nkwa ntumi nnye* literally means 'if death holds something, life cannot claim it'. The Akan culture teaches that we should live good life since death does not ring a bell when it is coming. The beauty of the proverb lies in the images of borrowing from death. It is unimaginable that one can borrow from death who is not a person and cannot be seen or felt. In addition, in the lines below.

<i>Aka me nko oo!</i>	8	I'm left alone oo!
<i>Aa! Mmarima asa!</i>	9	Aa! Men have finished!

When the singer cries out that she is left alone, it does not mean that there is nobody in the family again but to stress the absence of strong and brave persons. Perlocutionarily, in context, the use of death as personification to communicate to the audience emphasises not only the hard heartedness of death but humans.

#### 4.13 Chapter Summary

In chapter four, an analysis of a funeral lament has the prevalence of the emotion of sorrow; has been dealt with. It shows that dirges are rendered to express the emotional turmoil the beloved have to face at the demise of a deceased. However, most of the dirges studied show a celebration of a life well spent for example *odupɔn tutu a borɔfɛrɛ na esi n'ana mu, duakorɔ gye mframa ɛbu* and more. Most dirges, aside from lamenting the dead also engaged in moral education, social criticism, and philosophical reflection on life. For example, proverb *obi nhwe obi ba nne* morally educates people on discrimination as well as educating people to offer a helping hand to anybody who needs help. Some dirges make use of imageries like metaphor, personification, apostrophe, ideophones, parallelism, etc and grammatical items such as exclamation. All these aesthetic devices are only attainable by means of intelligence and the exercise of imagination. They also provide utilitarian values such as stressing relevant issues and admonishing.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

This chapter is a summary of findings and the conclusion of this study.

It comprises recommendations for students and other researchers in this field of study as well.

#### 5.1 Summary

The focus of the study was on the proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abena Asantewaa of Pankorono. The study was motivated by the researcher's conviction that, there are proverbs in dirges and that these proverbs carry aesthetic values and several meanings to the audience at funeral grounds. The composition of these selected dirges was carefully chosen by the composers and is well arranged to convey the effects it has on the individuals. Proverbs were carefully chosen because of the aesthetic values they carry and the message they usually carry. Despite the important values the proverbs in the dirges possess, they also have various levels of semantics. These semantics levels are based on locutionary meaning, illocutionary meaning, and perlocutionary meaning respectively. The study was driven by two major research questions that include, what proverbs are embedded in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi and what are the aesthetic and cultural values of the proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono in Kumasi? These questions assumed that dirges as a genre of oral literature have some types of proverbs embedded in them and thus needed to be studied. Again, the communicative mode that emanates from these dirges clearly has some cultural and aesthetic values on individuals who attend funerals where these dirges are sung. This may affect both individuals and the community as a whole.

#### 5.2 Findings



In Africa, every tribe or society has its own practices, customs and beliefs which usually explain the history of that tribe or society. These practices make people unique in their socio-cultural and political settings. The foundations of the Africa Oral literature are speech, structure of the speech, performance, games and folks, symbolism, composition, memorization, performer, voice, audience etc. (Agyekum, 2011). Oral literature has been the bedrock of culture preservation of the African. The Akan have a symbolic use of proverbs. There are custodians of these proverbs in every Akan traditional home and it is their duty to pass them on to future generation. In most cases, proverbs uphold the moral fibre of most Ghanaian societies. In terms of performance and performers, African proverbs have carried traditional values from generation to generation. The uniqueness of these proverbs are also realised in dirges.

Funerals are important occasions in every single Ghanaian home. It is an occasion where families come together to mourn, celebrate and put to rest their deceased. Funerals bind a lot of people together. As part of funeral celebrations, dirges are performed for the deceased and the family. Dirges are believed to have some social and spiritual significance on the families of the dead. In most Akan cultures, the performing and singing of funeral dirges are left to the women as the main performers, since the Akan tradition forbids men to cry in public. The work looked at proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono. Nana Abenaa Asantewaa is noted for performing and singing dirges at high-profile funerals in the Ashanti region. Her performances have been praised over the years with excellent deliveries and connotations. The research used the Speech Act Theory by Austin to analyse the proverbs in the dirges sang by Nana Abena Asantewaa. The Speech Act Theory considers language as a sort of action rather than a medium to convey and express. It dealt

with the meanings or expressions associated with the proverbs in the dirges. The data was mostly primary since the dirges were collected from a first-hand source. Secondary documents in articles from Ghanaian scholars such as Agyekum, Yankah and Nketia were considered to help in data analysis.

One of the findings of the study was that, dirges have a lot of spiritual ramifications on both the dead and the family. In most Akan cultures, especially the Asante people, dirges are considered as a social and spiritual tool to usher the dead into the next life. The Asante people of Ghana call their ancestors *nananom* (singular: nana, a word that also means ‘grandfather’ or ‘grandmother’). Because the ancestors are no longer living and have become spirits, they are often referred to as “*nsamamfoɔ*“. The word “*nsamamfoɔ*“ is made up of two words. For example; *sa* means finished, *man* means society, the prefix ‘n’ and suffix ‘foɔ’ represent the plural form of the word. Therefore the name *nsamamfoɔ* the full phrase *nananom nsamanfoɔ* (ancestors) who have become spirits or ghost. The dead is praised, glorified and sometimes cautioned for the vacuum they have left in the family. By this assertion, proverbs are used to convey deeper thoughts and meanings to the life of the deceased on the family and the society at large. (Agyekum, 2011).

Again, Agyekum (2011) asserts that, there are four types of dirges in the Asante which are *benabɔmmɔnbɔ*, *agyaadwo*, *kwadwom* and *nkankyee*. All of these types of proverbs were realised in the analysis of the dirges. For example, the following dirge have the combination of all the types.

<i>Aa! Wɔfa!</i>	Aa! Uncle!
<i>Me dunsini soafɔɔ ee!</i>	The stamp that helps me carry my load ee!
<i>Akokɔnini kɛsee a ɔda abusua mu ee!</i>	The great cock in the family ee!

*Wɔfɔ hwan na ɔbeboaboa yen ano akɔ* Uncle, who will gather us in search  
*adidie?* of food?

*Enonom e!* 5 Mothers e!

*Mogo abasa a mogo mu brebre na* Swing your hands with care so that  
*mo nsa bewɔ yen ani.* your hand will not hurt our eyes.

*Wɔfɔ! Ampa mpanin se “odupɔn tutu* Uncle! It true, the elders said, “when  
*a borɔfrɛ na esi no anamu”* a big tree falls, the pawpaw tree  
grows in its stead”

*Wɔfɔ, enne yi, twa w’ani behwe* Uncle, today turn and see your back  
*w’akyi e!* e!

*Nsem a ense mfata enna wɔka kyere* Unprintable words are what they tell  
*yen.* us.

*Aa! Ogyam wɔ he?* 10 Aa! Where is Ogyam?

*Aa! Barima asa o!* Aa! There is no man o!

*Barima asa oo!* 12 Man has finish oo!

The proverb identified in this is *Wɔfɔ! ampa mpanin se “odupɔn tutu a borɔfrɛ na esi no anamu”* Normally such dirges are sung at high-profile funerals. *Wɔfɔ* could be a King or any prominent person or member in the society in this dirge. Thus, there is a wholesome representation of the deceased.

Another finding was that, every proverb in the dirge has an aesthetic value it conveys on the people at the funeral grounds. It was observed during one of the funerals that, people tend to relate to the dirges being performed in a special way to connect with the deceased knowingly or unknowingly. Aesthetic values such as love, pain, appreciation, love and so on are evoked during the performances of dirges. The proverbs in these dirges mostly contributed to these realisations. Families and the communities become very emotional when they hear some of these expressions in the songs.

It must also be noted that, there are a series of moral lessons in the dirges sung by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono. It was evident in some of the proverbs identified in the dirges. For example, the proverb ‘*obi nhwe obi ba nne*’ meaning ‘no one cares for another’s child’ morally educates people from being discriminated regardless of their social status as well as educating people to offer a helping hand to everybody who needs help. This shows that dirges are not sung only to mourn the dead but they also send messages of hope to the people.

### 5.3 Conclusion

African oral literature looks deep into the cultural, social, and political lives of the people of Africa. It contains their norms, works, animals, and talents, objects of worship, food, marriage and values that dictate these cultural practices. Dirges are very powerful tools that convey a lot of messages to people and individuals in the society in which a deceased have lived. It tells how well the deceased have lived his or her life on earth and what is being expected from him or her as an ancestor. A funeral has the prevalence of the emotion of sorrow where dirges are rendered to express the emotional turmoil the beloved have to face at the demise of a deceased. However, most of the dirges studied show a celebration of a life well spent for example *odupɔn tutu a borɔferɛ na esi n’ana mu, duakorɔ gye mframa ɛbu* and more. Most dirges, aside from lamenting the dead also engaged in moral education, social criticism, and philosophical reflection on life. For example, the proverb ‘*obi nhwe obi ba nne*’ morally educates people from being discriminated regardless of their social status as well as educating people to offer a helping hand to everybody needs held.

Some dirges make use of imageries like metaphor, personification, apostrophe, etc. and these aesthetic elements are only attainable by means of intelligence and the exercise of imagination. The proverbs identified in the

dirges have the locutionary, illocutionary and the perlocutionary expressions to them. There was a direct expression, an indirect expression and an effect the proverbs have on the individuals present during the performance.

#### 5.4 Recommendations

This study focused on the proverbs in the dirges of Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono. It identified and analysed proverbs in terms of locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary and aesthetic values. It is recommended that further studies must be focused on the literary devices employed in the proverbs of the dirges. There are some literary devices identified in the dirges and some of the proverbs used for this study. Researchers can also look at how these devices are used and their effects on the dirges. Again, a comparative study can be conducted on the same topic in a different Akan society. Studies can be conducted in a different Akan society so that there would be a comparative analysis on the various proverbs which will be identified.

Furthermore, studies can also be carried on the form Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono's dirges take in terms of language representation and use. There is a pattern in the language use by Nana Abenaa Asantewaa of Pankorono which has not been looked at critically. Thus, any researcher interested in this field can look into it to ascertain the language use in the dirges.

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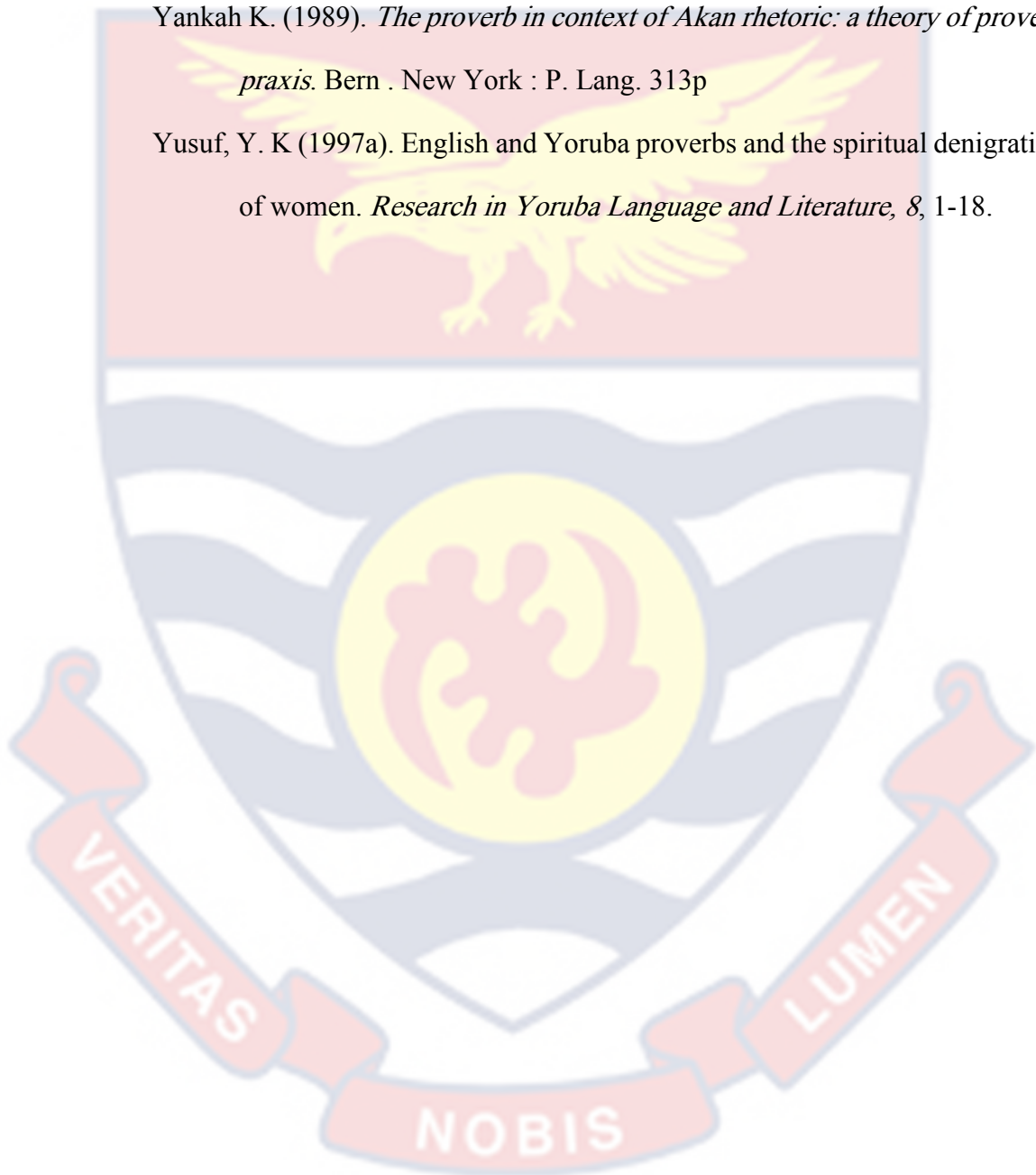
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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## The Semi Structured Interview

1. What is the name of your mother? Maame Akosua Yetumi.
2. How old are you? 98 years old
3. What is your father's name? Opanin Yaw boateng
4. How many siblings do you? We are ten (10) but all have died left me alone.
5. Where do you coming from? Pankorono
6. What is the name of your husband? Opanin Kwaku Dua.
7. How many children do have? Two but all died when they were young and because of that I devoiced my husband and I never married again.
8. What are the occupations of your parents? My father was a professional driver and my mother was a porter.
9. Who taught you how to sing dirges? Nobody and I see it as a gift from God.
10. At what age did you sing dirge? Sixteen (16)
11. What motivates you to sing dirges? How we enjoy life with families and friends and you woke up one day you cannot find them. This makes me put together words to sing dirges.
12. Do you have a group of people you sing dirge with? No, I sing alone and if others decide to come too I will teach them.
13. Do you have idea to form singing group? Not really but if others come too I will.

14. Apart from singing dirges, what can you do again? I can dance to traditional songs also.

15. Do you have any awards from your performance? Yes, I have won a lot of gift and awards and the current one is at Aseda House in Adum during this Christmas.

16. Do you sing outside apart from Kumasi? Yes, people use to hire me to Tema, Koforidua, Takoradi and even outside Ghana for funerals and other functions.

17. Why do you use a lot of proverbs in your dirges? To hid meanings from ordinary people and also to push others to learn the language. It's also made the language very beautiful.

18. What are some of the importance of the dirges to the deceased? It tells that the deceased is loved when he/she was alive and make listeners got to know how valuable the deceased is to the family/society.

19. Which people can we sing dirges to in Asante? Anybody except those who took their own life or those who have been cursed.

20. What is your duty at the palace? The Royal Old Lady (Obaa Panin) I cook the food meant for sacrifices and also remind the chiefs and elders the days for sacrifices.











## APPENDIX B

*Translation**Twi**English**Dirge 1**A dirge to the late Nana Afia Kobo**Ampem, the late Asante's**Queen Mother.*

*Ee! Nana Kobiri Hemmaa wote asee na mepɛ wo.* Ee! Nana Queen Kobiri I like you when you were alive.

*Wote asee na medɔ wo na wo nso wodɔ me.* I loved you and you also love me when you were alive.

*Nana! Kobiri Hemmaa wokɔɛɛ mennaa da oo!* Nana! Queen Kobiri I have never slept since you left oo!

*Nana ee! Kobiri Hemmaa hee!* Nana ee! Queen Kobiri hee!

*Nana! Sɛdɛɛ na wosi korɔkorɔ me e! 5* Nana! How you pampered me e!

*Sɛdɛɛ wosi frɛ me Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kotɔkɔ* How you called me Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kotɔkɔ.

*Obi te a, na ɔse Krɔbea gyae ma no nka na fã ma Nyame ee!* When someone hears it he says Krɔbea let it go and give it to God ee!

*Nana ampa mede maa Awurade oo!* Nana its true I gave it to God oo!

*Kobiri Hemmaa ee! Eno Hemmaa ee!* Queen Kobiri ee! Eno the Queen ee!

*Wokɔɛɛ mennaa da! 10* I have never slept since you went!

<i>Wokɔɛ mennaa da oo! Hee!</i>	I have never slept since you went oo!
	Heee!
<i>Eno Hemmaa! Wokɔɛ menaa da!</i>	Eno the Queen! I have never slept since you went.
<i>Nana! Mebɔ wo din a, wɔsekyere me.</i>	Nana! When I mention your name, they mock at me.
<i>Nana mebɔ wo din a wɔsekyere me oo!</i>	Nana! When I mention your name, they mock at me oo!
<i>Mebɔ wo din a, na mamee! Hee! 15</i>	When I mention your name, I become satisfied! Hee!
<i>Aa! Nana hee!</i>	Ah! Nana hee!
<i>Mede m'asem baa w'anim no, sɛdeɛ wosi yɛɛ me no?</i>	When I put my case before you how you did to me?
<i>Aa! Nana!</i>	Ah! Nana!
<i>Medwene ho a, na eyɛ me dɛ.</i>	When I think about it I became happy.
<i>Aa! Nana na wokorɔkorɔ me oo! 20</i>	Aa! Nana you were pampering me oo!
<i>Okobiri Hemmaa ee! Hee!</i>	Queen Kobiri ee! Hee!
<i>Nana wogyaa yen ho yi, wonim se dua baako ntumi ye kwae.</i>	Nana as you left us, you know that one tree cannot make a forest.
<i>Wogyina akyire a, ebom tuu nso wopini ho a, dua biara wɔ ne si berɛ.</i>	When you stand afar they are together but when you draw closer every tree stands on it own.
<i>Yee! Nana na wokɔ yɛɛ dɛɛn?</i>	Yee! Nana why did you go?
<i>Owuo Dɛɛfoɔ!</i>	25 Death, the benevolent one.
<i>Ɔtɔ wo deɛben na woredaa me</i>	What did she buy from you and you are

<i>Nana yi ka?</i>	attacking my Queen?
<i>Wode no kœe akye oo!</i>	It's a long time you sent her away oo!
<i>Yesan ba a, anka fa no bra oo!</i>	If we can come back then bring her oo!
<i>Na se worekɔ a, na woaka wo ho.</i>	If you are going then be hurry.
<i>Aa! Eno Kobiri Hema ee! Hee! 30</i>	Aa! Mother Queen Kobiri ee! Hee!
<i>Nana ee!</i>	Nana ee!
<i>Nana! Ee!</i>	Nana! Ee!
<i>Mafe wo oo!</i>	I have missed you oo!
<i>Nti na merebɔ wo abodin no.</i>	That is why am singing you appellation
<i>Owuo ampine anka mede me ho</i>	Death didn't agree I would have
<i>maa no.</i>	35 offered myself.
<i>Anka mede me ho maa no oo!</i>	I would have offered myself oo!
<i>Owuo ampini anka mede me ho</i>	Death didn't agree I would have
<i>maa no.</i>	offered myself.
<i>Baamo a wuo ɔtɔ wo desben na</i>	Great death what did she buy from you
<i>wode no kɔ yi?</i>	and you have taking her away?
<i>Me Nana ee!</i>	My Queen ee!
<i>Mafe no se sukɔm!</i>	40 I have missed her like thirst.
<i>Meda a, menna!</i>	I cannot sleep when I sleep.
<i>Yede no baee e, ene se merebɔ bena</i>	When they brought her is where I am?
<i>yi.</i>	lamenting.
<i>Bena na merehwe yi ee!</i>	I am lamenting ee!
<i>Mafe me Nana yi.</i>	I have missed my Queen.
<i>Okobiri Hemmaa ee!</i>	45 Queen Kobiri ee!
<i>Obaatam pa ee!</i>	Good mother ee!
<i>Eno Kobiri ee!</i>	Mother Kobiri ee!

<i>Eno Kobiri ee!</i>		Mother Kobiri ee!
<i>Bue ee!</i>		Bue ee!
<i>Aduana ba merefrɛfrɛ wo sɛ</i>		Son of Aduana am calling you like the
<i>Nyankonsonoma refrɛfrɛ bosuo</i>		clouds calling the morning dew!
<i>ɛtu anɔpa tutu ee!</i>	50	
<i>Me Nana kɔɛ mennidii da, menna</i>		I have never eaten nor slept since my
<i>da!</i>		Queen went.
<i>ɔhemmaa ba ee!</i>		Daughter of the Queen ee!
<i>Ee! Ee! Ee! Ee!</i>		Ee! Ee! Ee! Ee!
<i>Nana ee! Wokɔɛ mennidii da.</i>		Queen ee! I have never eaten since you
		went
<i>Agyei ee! Agyei ee!</i>	55	Fathe ee! Father ee!
<i>Nana awuo oo!</i>		Queen is death oo!
<i>Nana kɔɛ akyɛ oo!</i>		It's a long time Nana went oo!
<i>Eye a, bɛhwɛ w'akyire oo!</i>		Come and see your back oo!
<i>Nana bɛhwɛ w'akyire!</i>		Queen come and see your back!
<i>Aa! Nana! Heee!</i>	60	Ah! Queen! Hee!
<i>Nana tikorɔ nkɔ agyina oo!</i>		Nana one head does not decide oo!
<i>Nana Afia Kobi Hemmaa ee! Aa!</i>		Queen Afia Kobi ee! Aa!
<i>Nana wogyaa yen hɔ kɔe e hwan na</i>		Nana as you have left us whom should
<i>yenka yen asem nkyerɛ no?</i>		we tell our problems to?
<i>Me tirim asem yi menka nkyerɛ</i>		The thought in my head whom should I
<i>hwan?</i>		tell?
<i>Nana meso daɛɛ a meyi ma wo o!65</i>		Queen when I dream I tell you o!
<i>Aduana ba ee!</i>		Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Nana Kobiri Hemmaa ee!</i>		Queen Kobiri ee!



<i>Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina!</i>	One head does not agree
<i>Merefɛfrɛ wo sɛ nyankonsonoma</i>	Am calling you just like the clouds
<i>refɛfrɛ bosuo anɔpa tutu ee! 70</i>	calling the morning dew ee!
<i>Eno Hemmaa ee!</i>	Maame the Queen ee!
<i>Nana Kobiri ee!</i>	Queen Kobiri ee!
<i>Nana Kobiri ee! Hee!</i>	Queen Kobiri ee! Hee!
<i>Nana ee! merefɛfrɛ wo sɛ</i>	Queen am calling you just like rainbow
<i>Nyankonsonoma refɛfrɛ anɔpa tutu</i>	calling the morning dew ee.
<i>ee!</i>	
<i>Aa! Nana! Ɔdɛɛfo!</i>	Ah! Queen! The mighty!
<i>75</i>	
<i>Ɔhemmaa ba e!</i>	Daughter of the Queen e!
<i>Menyɛ dɛn nie oo?</i>	What should I do oo?
<i>Nana ee!</i>	Queen ee!
<i>Mafɛ wo sɛ sukɔm.</i>	I have missed you like thirst.
<i>Aa! Mafɛ wo sɛ sukɔm oo! 80</i>	Ah! I have missed you like thirst oo!
<i>Nana ee! Ee! Ee!</i>	Nana ee! Ee! Ee!
<i>Eno Kobiri hemmaa ee!</i>	Mother Queen Kobiri ee!
<i>Mekɔ agyina a, mebisa hwan?</i>	Whom do I decide with?
<i>Kakapɛnɛn ayi me ahwe</i>	I have been floored by kakapɛnɛn?
<i>Meso dae a menyɛ nkyerɛ hwan? 85</i>	Whom shall I tell my dream to?
<b><i>Dirge 2</i></b>	
<b><i>A dirge to the late Nana Yaa</i></b>	
<b><i>Asantewaa the late Qween</i></b>	
<b><i>Mother of Edweso.</i></b>	
<i>Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ Edweso</i>	Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ Queen of
<i>Hemmaa.</i>	Edweso

<i>Ee! Gyankrohenko ee!</i>		Ee! Gyankrohenko ee!
<i>Yaa Asantewaa ee!</i>		Yaa Asantewaa ee!
<i>Obaabasia a ɔto aperɛmo ano ee!</i>		A woman who stands before the machine gun.
<i>Woayɛ bi a gyae oo!</i>	5	You have done some stop oo!
<i>Yee! Obaabasia a ɔne nkramo na ɛdi asie woayɛ bi a gya oo!</i>		Yee! A woman who fight warriors you have done some stop oo!
<i>Yee! Obaa basia a ɔne nkramo na ɛdi asie woayɛ bi a gya.</i>		Yee! A woman who fight warriors you have done some stop.
<i>Yee! Obaa basia a ɔne nkramo na ɛdi asie woayɛ bi a gya.</i>		Yee! A woman who fight worriors you have done some stop.
<i>Obaa basia a ɔto aperɛmo ano woayɛ bi a gya oo!</i>		A woman who stands in front of the machine gun you have done some stop oo!
<i>Gyankrohenko oo! Yaa Asantewaa ee! Woayɛ bi a, gyae oo!</i>	10	Gyankrohenko oo! Yaa Asantewaa ee! You have done some stop oo!
<i>Yɛrema wo amoo!</i>		We are thanking you oo!
<i>Obaa basia a ɔne Aborɔfo na ɛdi asie woayɛ bi a, gyae oo!</i>		A woman who fought the white army you have done some stop oo!
<i>Obaa basia a ɔpam Aborɔfo e woayɛ bi a gyae oo!</i>		A womam who droves away the whites army e you have some stop oo!
<i>Gyankrohenkoo Yaa Asantewaa e woayɛ bi a, gya oo! Ayee!</i>		Gyankrohenkoo Yaa Asantewaa e you have done some oo! Ayee!

*Okokoɔdurofoɔ* The brave Asantewaa you have left us.  
*Asantewaa woadwane agya yen.*

15

*Enne barima ben na ewɔ wiase yi* Today who is a man in this world ee?  
*mu ee?*

*Ɔko reba a yeadwane agya mma!* They ran away and leave the women  
*Yeadwane agya nkwadaa.* and the children when there is war.

*Okokoɔdurofoɔ Yaa Asantewaa ee!* The brave Yaa Asantewaa ee!

*Wokɔe ee hwan na ɔrekɔ ɔko yi ama* Who will go to war fo us since you left?  
*yen?*

*Enne yeadwane agya yen!* 20 Today they have ran away and left us.

*Mmarima ben na ewɔ ɔman yi mu?* Who are men in this nation?

*Yɛmfɛ hwan?* Whom should we call?

*Hwan na yɛmfɛ no yi?* Who are we calling?

*Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ ba ee!* The son of Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔn ee!

*Wokum apem a, apem bɛba* If you kill thousands, thousands will  
 25 come

*Yensuro hwee.* We fear nothing.

*Wokum apem a apem bɛba.* If you kill thousands, thousands will  
 come.

*Enne wiase asɛe.* Today the world has spoiled.

*Enne hwan na hwɛ obi ba?* Who takes care of another'child today?

*Kwakuo nte mma obi ba nne* Monkeys do not pluck for anothers'  
 30 child.

*Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔni ba ee!* Krɔbea the son of Asante Kɔtɔkɔ ee!

*Wofiri ɔman yi mu yi yee!* Since you left in this community yee!

*Enne hwan na ɔrekɔ ɔko yi ama yen bio?* Today who is going to war for us again?

*Enne akunkumakunkum na ewɔ soɔ Wogyɛ kyim a, yɛabɔ wo abaa sɛɛ kawu.* 35 Today there is murdering all over If you challenge, they will hit you with a stick

*Aaa! Krɔbea wobɛba a, bra oo!* Aaa! Krɔbea if you will come come oo!

*San w'akyi bra!* Turn and come back!

*Yɛgyɛgyɛ woo o!* We pampered you oo!

*Yɛgyɛgyɛ wo so!* We pampering you!

*Me Nana Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ.* 40 My Queen Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ.

*Yɛgyɛgyɛ wo so!* We pampering you!

*Aa! Yɛgyɛgyɛ wo oo!* Aa! We pamper you oo!

*Yɛgyɛgyɛ wo so!* We pampering you oo!

*Wokɔɛ akysɛ, na bɛhwɛ wo nkyi.* It's a long time you left so come and see your back

*Enne deɛ wiase deɛ ayɛ no no aseɛ kora oo!* 45 Today this is how the world has been come it has spoiled oo!

*Obi nhwɛ obi ba nne o!* Nobody cares for another's child today o!

*Obi nhwɛ obi ba nne o! Hee!* Nobody cares for another's child today o! Hee!

*Obi hwɛ obi ba enne?* Nobody cares for another's child today?

*Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ* Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ

*Efie ahoma e!* 50 House rope e!

*Baamo a wuo ayɛ yen bɔne oo!* Mighty death has wronged us oo!

*Oo! Baamaoa wuo!*

Oo! Mighty death!

*Yɛmf̃a he na yɛahyia wo na yɛabɔ  
wo abaa no bi*

Where should we pass to meet you so  
that we can also beat you with the  
stick?

*Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ wokɔɛ  
wiase abutu! Wiase aseɛ.*

Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ world has turn  
upside down, when you left! The world  
has spoiled!

*Wiase abutu ɛntumi nnane bio! 55*

The world has turned upside down it  
cannot turn back again!

*Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ efie ahoma  
ee!*

Krɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ the house rope  
ee!

*Ɔbaa basia a ɔko aperɛmo ano e!*

A woman who stands in front of a  
machine gun e!

*Ɔne Aborɔfo na edi asie e!*

She fights the army of the whites e!

*Agyaei! Agayei! Maame e!*

Father! Father! Mother e!

*Ɔkrɔbea e! Kɔtɔkɔni ba e! 60*

Ɔkrɔbea e! The son of Kɔtɔkɔ e!

*Wiase abutu oo!*

The world has turn upside down oo!

*Enne obi nhwe obi ba o!*

Today nobody cares for another's child  
o!

*Obi nhwe obi ba enne!*

Nobody cares for another's child today!

*Obi nhwe obi ba enne nyanka no  
dɔso.*

Nobody cares for another's child this  
days the orphans are many.

*Na hwan na ehwe obi ba enne? 65*

And who cares for another's child  
today?

*Ɔkrɔbea Asante ee!*

Ɔkrɔbea Asante ee!

*Wowɔ wiase na wiase dwo.*

When you were alive the world was calm!

*Aa! Obaabasia a ɔko aperɛmo ano  
woayɛ bi a gyae oo!*

Aa! A woman who fight with a machine gun you have done some stop oo!

*Yɛrema wo amo!*

We are thanking you!

*Nana woayɛ bi a gyae oo! 70*

Queen you have done some stop oo!

*Gyankrohenkoo! Yaa Asantewwa  
aa! Yɛrema wo ayiko oo! Nana!*

Gaynkrohenkroo! Yaa Asantewaa aa!  
We thank you oo! Queen!

*Yee! Yaabaa ee! Yaabaa ee!*

Yee! Yaabaa ee! Yaabaa ee!

*Piaw! Piaw! Piaw! 74*

Piaw! Piaw! Piaw!

### *Dirge 3*

#### *A dirge to the ancestors*

*Maame ee! Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina*

Maame ee! one head does not agree

*Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina ee! Hee!*

One head does not agree ee! Heee!

*Ee! Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina*

Eh! One head does not agree

*Duakorɔ nso gye mframa a ɛbu oo!*

If one tree receives wind it breaks oo!

*Ee! M'anin nni bi m'akyire nni bi5*

Ee! my front does not have some and  
My back do not have some.

*Metɔ me pepa a, metɔ kyerɛ hwan?*

When I buy my peper I buy to who?

*Ee! Wiase nie? Dodoɔ kɔ agyina a,  
wɔmfrɛ me.*

Ee! Is this the world? When many  
decides they don't call me.

*Ee! Dodoɔ kɔ agyina a, wɔmfrɛ me  
ee!*

Ee! When many decide, they don't call  
me ee!

*Ee! Wonim se m'anim nni bi* Ee! You know my front do not have so  
*m'akyire nni bi.* my back too does not have some.

*Dua si ho a, kwae mu ee!* 10 If a tree stands it's a forest ee!

*Dua si ho a, kwae mu ee!* If a tree stands it's a forest ee!

*Wopini ho a, aka baako pe* If you get closer it has left with only  
 one.

*Nnipa dodoɔ yi moayi me afiri mu.* This many people you have taking me  
 out.

*Na memfa he nie? Memfa he?* And where should I pass? Where  
 should I pass?

*Ee! Ee! Aka menko bafua oo!* 15 Ee! Ee! I am left alone oo!

*Ani bere a ensɔ gya anka m'ani* Red eyes do not spark fire else you  
*abere pa ara* would have seen me well.

*Metɔ me pepa a mento ntwene* When I buy my pepa whom should I  
*hwan?* give?

*Yeayi me afiri mu oo! Enam se* They have taking me out because I  
*menni bi.* don't have some.

*Aka menko bafua!* Am left alone!

*Aka menko bafua mesi amafoo so* I'm left alone in the desert.

20

*Memfa he ni ee?* Where should I pass ee?

*Enne sika na yeɛde di agoro ee!* Today we use money to play ee!

*Sika na yeɛde di agoro.* We use money to play.

*Ahia me aden me,* Debt has overflows me.

*Ahia me aden me na awoɔ deɛ* Debt has overflows me and made me  
*daakodes* 25 childness

*Ahia me aden me na awoo des* Debt has overflow me and made me  
*daakodie* childless  
*Enne des yekoo agyina a, yemfre me* Today when they decide they don't call  
*ee!* me ee!  
*Enne des yekoo agyina a, yemfre me* Today when they meet they don't call  
*ee!* me ee!  
*Aka menko bafua oo!* Am left alone oo!  
*Ani bere a, ensoo gya anka m'ani* When eyes are red they don't spark fire  
*abere pa ara.* else you would have seen me  
 30 well.

*Okumanini ee!* Conqueror of warriors ee!  
*Yafunu kotoku asa oo!* The stomach sack is finished oo!  
*Owuo daefoo gye sika a anka meton* If death accept money, I would have  
*me ho me maa no.* sold myself to him.  
*Hee! Eno e!* Hee! Eno e!  
*Maame ee!* 35 Maame ee!  
*Maame ee!* Maame ee!  
*Woremane me a, mane me* If you are sending me send me  
*denkyem berebooo oo! Na w'ni tua.* crocodile's liver! Because you know it.  
*Aka me nko bafua.* 38 I'm left alone.

#### **Dirge 4**

##### ***A dirge to the late beloved Uncle***

*Siadondo ee!* Siadondo ee!  
*Siadondo ee!* Siadondon ee!  
*Siadondo ee! Oo aye!* Siadondo ee! Oo aye!  
*Siadondo ee!* Siadondo ee!



<i>Eyee deen na akodee ba ne akoko ba</i>		What has happened that an egelet eats
<i>na edidie ee?</i>	5	with the chicken?
<i>Dondon oo!</i>		Dondon ee!
<i>Dondon oo ee!</i>		Dondon oo ee!
<i>Siadondo ee!</i>		Siadondo ee!
<i>Aa! Ee! Awerēhoō oo!</i>		Aa! Ee! sorrow ee!
<i>Emu ye ya!</i>	10	It's painful!
<i>Yeee! Ayee! Yeee! Ee!</i>		Yeee! Ayee! Yeee! Ee!
<i>Hwe!</i>		See!
<i>Wiase nye sei na etee?</i>		The world is not like this?
<i>Wiase nye sei na etee oo! Oo!</i>		The world is not like this oo! Oo!
<i>Beretuo ba ee!</i>	15	Son of Beretuo ee!
<i>Aduana ba ee! Ee! Aye!</i>		Son of Aduana ee! Ee! Aye!
<i>Wiase nye see na etee?</i>		The world is not like this?
<i>Yewu gya wo a yeagya wo asem.</i>		When they die and leave you they have left you a big problem.
<i>Yeagya wo awerēhoō mu.</i>		They have left you in sorrow.
<i>Enne dee metaferē nkwansen mu ee!</i>	20	Today I lick from the cooking pot ee!
<i>Nkane na medidi apotoyowa mu ee!</i>		At first, I eat from the earthen pot ee!
<i>Yeayi me to dwene hee! Heee!</i>		They have thrown me out hee! Heee!
<i>Owuo deefoō ee! Na aden?</i>		Death, the benevolent ee! Why?
<i>Awofoō agya yen mu.</i>		Our parents have left us.
<i>Aden owuo deefoō?</i>	25	Why death, the benevolent?
<i>Aden na wosa mu?</i>		Why do you discriminate?
<i>Owuo ee!</i>		Death ee!

<i>Owuo ee!</i>		Death ee!
<i>Na aden nie oo?</i>		Why this oo?
<i>Ee! Ee! Ee! Na aden ni oo?</i>	30	Ee! Ee! Ee! And why this?
<i>Ee! Wiase nie?</i>		Ee! Is this the world?
<i>Wiase pa ara nie?</i>		Is this really the world?
<i>Na mosom afidie a, na moasum no nkwankyem.</i>		When you set a trap, you set it by the road side
<i>Enne dee afidie ayi abo me</i>		Today I have been trapped.
<i>Enne dee kuntunu ahwan abo me na merekɔ he ni? 35</i>		Today I have been trapped so where am I going?
<i>Ee wiase! Na memfa he nie a?</i>		Ee the world! Where do I pass?
<i>Ee na memfa ee!</i>		Where should I pass ee?
<i>Ee! Aduana ba ee!</i>		Ee! Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Ee! Na memfa he nie?</i>		Ee! And where should I pass?
<i>Memfa benkum anase nifa? 40</i>		Should I pass left, or right?
<i>Asamanado ye oman a mommane me oo!</i>		If the hades are a world then send me oo!
<i>Maame ee!</i>		Mother ee!
<i>Mommane me sika o!</i>		Send me money o!
<i>Mommane me sika o!</i>		Send me money o!
<i>Ee! Wiase nie? 45</i>		Ee! Is that the world?
<i>Wiase abo oo!</i>		The world is in array oo!
<i>Ee! Wiase nie?</i>		Ee! Is this the world?
<i>Wiase abutu oo!</i>		The world has turn outside down oo!
<i>Aa! Wote ho koraa a wiase nnye akɔnnɔ</i>		Aa! When you are there the world is not attractive.

*Yɛawu agya me! Hee!* 45 They have died and left me! Hee!

**Dirge 5**

**A dirge to a late beloved mother**

*Anomaa mfa dua abufuo* A bird does not vex with the tree  
*Ee! Anomaa mfa dua abufuo ee!* Ee! A bird does not vex with the tree  
 ee!  
*Na mefa he na mahyia mo oo?* And where should I pass to meet you  
 oo?  
*Oo! Aye! Ee!* Oo! Aye! Ee!  
*Adi aye me mpɛnu ne mpɛnsa* 5 Am affected by incurable disease for  
 twice and trice.  
*Adi aye me mpɛnu ne mpɛnsa* Am affected by incurable disease for  
 twice and trice  
*Agyei ee! Agyei ee!* Father ee! Father ee!  
*Maame ee! Maame ee! Maame ee!* Mother ee! Mother ee! Mother ee!  
*Adi aye me oo!* Am affected by incurable disease oo!  
*M'ani abere oo!* 10 My eyes are red oo!  
*M'ani abere oo!* My eyes are red oo!  
*Obi nsɔ me mu e!* Somebody should hold me e!  
*Obi nsɔ me mu e!* Somebody should hold me e!  
*Obi nsɔ me mu e!* Somebody should hold me e!  
*Aa! Hee!* 15 Aa! Hee!  
*Obi nsɔ me mu e!* Somebody should hold me e!  
*Wodidi a, ma me bi nni ee!* If you eat give me some eat ee!  
*Na wodidi a, ma me bi nni!* When you eat give me some to eat!  
*Oo! Na m'ani abere!* Oo! My eyes are red!

<i>Agyei ee! ɔwoo me e! ɔwoo me e!</i>		Father ee! Mother of my birth ee!
20		Mother of my birth ee!
<i>Mogyaa me sen nie oo?</i>		How did you leave me oo?
<i>Mogyaa me sen nie oo?</i>		How did you leave me oo?
<i>M'ani abere oo!</i>		My eyes are red oo!
<i>M'ani atutu agu me nsam ee!</i>		My eyes have falling into my hands ee!
<i>Na memfa he nie?</i>	25	So where am I pass?
<i>Aa! Obretuo nana.</i>		Ah! Grand child of Beretuo.
<i>Memfa he na mahyia mo ee?</i>		Where should I pass to meet you ee?
<i>Ee! Ee! Maamenom ee!</i>		Ee! Ee! Mothers ee!
<i>Adi aye me maka owuo akyi mrehunu amane.</i>		Am affected by incurable disease am left behind death I'm suffering.
<i>Maka owuo akyi mrehunu amane ee! 30</i>		Am left behind death am suffering ee!
<i>Boo ee! Boo ee!</i>		Boo ee! Boo ee!
<i>Awurade ee! Heee!</i>	32	God ee! Hee!
<b>Dirge 6</b>		
<b><i>A dirge to a late warrior in a village</i></b>		
<i>Enanom mokœe akye oo!</i>		Mothers it's a long time you left oo!
<i>Yafunu wura ee!</i>		Owner of the stomach ee!
<i>Mokœe akye o!</i>		It is a long time you left o!
<i>Ee! Na mogyaa me sen nie oo?</i>		Ee! How did you leave us oo?
<i>Amaado Buroni aka no ho abenedie ee! 5</i>		Amaado Boroni is awaken ee!
<i>Aduana ba, merefrɛfrɛ mo!</i>		Son of Aduana I'm calling you o!
<i>Bretuo Nana ee!</i>		Grandson of Beretuo ee!

<i>Mokɔɛ akye o!</i>		It's a long time you left o!
<i>Na eye a, momɛhwɛ mo nkyi.</i>		So! Come and see your back
<i>Aka me nko bafua o!</i>	10	Am left alone o!
<i>Fituo da mpan, bonwono tua ano.</i>		An empty house, bitterness in front.
<i>Moremane me a, mommane me denkyɛm mmerɛbo, na mannya gya a mawe no mono.</i>		When you are sending me send me crocodile's liver so that if I don't get fire I can eat it raw
<i>Aduana ba ee!</i>		Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Eno mmusuafoɔ ee! Hee!</i>	15	Mothers of ancestor's ee! Hee!
<i>Barima ba ee!</i>		Son of a man ee!
<i>Nananom ee!</i>		Ancestors ee!
<i>Ehe na mokɔ yi oo? Heee.</i>		Where have you gone to oo? Heee!
<i>Etuo bene a esi barima bo.</i>		When a gun gets hot its rest on the chest of a man
<i>Efie da mpan!</i>	20	The house is empty!
<i>Fituo da mpan!</i>		The house is empty!
<i>Aka me nko bafua!</i>		I'm left alone!
<i>Nananom menyɛ deɛn nie oo?</i>		Ancestors what should I do oo?
<i>Monim sɛ nkwanta dɔso.</i>		You know the junctions are many.
<i>Sɛ moremane me a mommane me denkyɛm berɛboɔ na manya gya a mawe no amono. 25</i>		When you are sending me, send me crocodile's liver so that if I don't get fire I can eat it raw.
<i>Moregu me ahahan a monngu me aboɔ na ahahan deɛ ebɛporɔ.</i>		When you are putting leaves behind me, let it be stones because leaves will get rotten.
<i>Bosomtwenom ee!</i>		Family of Bosomtwe ee!

<i>Aduana ba ee!</i>		Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Adi aye me oo!</i>		I'm affected with incurable disease oo!
<i>Bretuo Nana ee!</i>	30	Son of Beretuo ee!
<i>Kumaseni ba ee!</i>		Son of Kumase ee!
<i>Adi aye me oo!</i>		I'm affected by incurable disease oo!
<i>Akwasi Buroni ee!</i>		Akwasi the whiteman ee!
<i>Na wogyaa me sen nie oo?</i>		How did you leave me oo?
<i>Etuo bene a esi barima bo o!.</i>	35	When a gun gets hot, it's rest in the chest of a man
<i>Tete abe ee!</i>		The ancient palm tree ee!
<i>Obi rebo me a gye me.</i>		Rescue me when somebody is beating me.
<i>Enanom atu me so kyiniie awia na ebeke me.</i>		Mothers have removed the umbrella on me the sun will kill me.
<i>Okroba Asante Kotokoni ba ee!</i>		The son of Okroba Asante Kotoko ee!
<i>Me nsono mu oo!</i>		My intestine oo!
<i>Eye a mommane me!</i>	40	You should send me!
<i>Mommane me oo!</i>		Send me oo!
<i>Obi rebo me a mommegye me!</i>		Rescue me when somebody is beating me!
<i>Etuo bene a esi barima bo!</i>		When a gun gets hot, its rest in the chest of a man.
<i>Aduana ba ee!</i>		Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Bretuo Nana ee!</i>	45	Son of Beretuo ee!
<i>Memfa he na mahyia mo ee?</i>		Where should I pass to meet you ee?
<i>Adi aye me oo!</i>		I'm affected by incurable diseases oo!

<i>Obi rebo me a, momɛgye me ee!</i>		Rescue me when somebody is beating
<i>Aka me nko bafua na mesi</i>		me ee!
<i>amamfoo so.</i>	50	Am left a lone in the desert.
<i>Fituo rehunahuna me o!</i>		
<i>Dantuo rehunahuna me!</i>		The empty house is scaring me o!
<i>Memfa he na mahyia mo ee?</i>		The empty house is searing me!
<i>Suberɛntweni ba kokoɔdurofoɔ ee!</i>		Where should I pass to meet you ee?
<i>Asante Kotɔkɔ, Kumaseni ba dehye</i>		Brave son of Subrɛntwe ee!.
<i>kronkron ee!</i>	55	Asante Kotɔkɔ the holy royal son of
<i>Adi aye me mprenu! Adi aye</i>		Kumasi ee!
<i>mprensa.</i>		I'm affected by incurable disease for
<i>Na memfa he nie ee?</i>		twice! and trice.
<i>Aka me nko bafua o!</i>		So where should I pass ee!
		I'm left alone o!
<i>Obi rebo me a momɛgye me ee!</i>		Rescue me when somebody is beating
		me ee!
<i>Monim sedɛɛ metɛɛ?</i>	60	You know how I am?
<i>Obi rebo me a mommɛgye me.</i>		Rescue me when somebody is beating
		me
<i>Memfa benkum anaase nifa?</i>		Should I pass left, or right?
<i>Owuo dɛɛfoɔ ee!</i>		Death the mighty ee!
<i>Meyɛɛ wo deɛn nie oo!</i>		What did I do to you oo?
<i>Owuo dɛɛfoɔ ee!</i>		Mighty death ee!
<i>Yeyɛɛ wo deɛn nie oo?</i>	65	What did we do to you oo?
<i>Moto abasa a mongo mu brebre na</i>		When you swing your arms do it slowly
<i>mo nsa ammewɔ yen ani.</i>		so that you will not hurt my eyes.

<i>Mehunu barima a, na mesuro no ee!</i>		When I see a man, I become afraid!
<i>Aka me nko bafua ee!</i>		I'm left alone ee!
<i>Mehunu barima a, na mesuro no.</i>		When I see a man, I become afraid
<i>Enonom ee!</i>	70	Mothers ee!
<i>Mokɔɛ akyɛ oo!</i>		It's a long time you went oo!
<i>Eye a, momɛhwɛ monkyi.</i>		So, come and see your back.
<i>Owuo dɛɛfoɔ ee!</i>		Mighty death ee!
<i>Yɛtɔ wo dɛɛbɛn na woasesa yɛn</i>		What did we buy from you and you
<i>korɔ yi oo?</i>		have taking us oo!
<i>Mokɔɛ akyɛ oo!</i>	75	It's a long time you went oo!
<i>Na eye a, momɛhwɛ monkyi!</i>		So, come and see your back!
<i>Moremane me a, mommane me</i>		When you are sending me, send me a
<i>dɛnkyɛm berɛboɔ na mannya gya a</i>		crocodiles's liver so that if I don't get
<i>mawe no mono.</i>		fire I can eat it raw
<i>Obretuo Nana ee!</i>		Son of Beretuo ee!
<i>Aduana Nana ee!</i>		Grand son of Aduana ee!
<i>Memfa he nie o?</i>	80	Where should I pass o?
<i>Memfa he nie o?</i>		Where should I pass o?
<i>Moatu me so kyiniie o!</i>		You have removed the umbrella on me
		o!
<i>Hwan na ɔbɛhwɛ me?</i>		Who will take care of me?
<i>Moremane me a, mommane me</i>		When you are sending me send thinks
<i>yafunudeɛ.</i>		of the foetus.
<i>Momane me a, mommane me aduro</i>		When you are sending me send
<i>na meyare a, mede ahwɛ me ho. 85</i>		medicine so that when I am sick I can
		use to cure myself



<i>Obretuo Nana ba kokoɔdurofoɔ ee!</i>		Brave grandson of beretuo ee!
<i>Ee! Aduana ba ee!</i>		Ee! Son of Aduana ee!
<i>Akyenkwa ba kokoɔdurofoɔ ee!</i>		Brave son of Akyemkwa ee!
<i>Memfa he na mahyia mo?</i>		Where should I pass to meet you?
<i>Obretuo Nana ba ee! Hee.</i>	90	Grandson of Beretuo ee! Hee!
<i>Ee! Baafɔ ba Akwasi ee!</i>		Ee! Son of Baafɔ Akwasi ee!
<i>Yede me rekɔ a, gye me oo!</i>		Rescue me when they are taking me away oo!
<i>Kwaku Nkaa a ɔkyere abene ee!</i>		Kwaku kaa the conqueror of warriors ee!
<i>Yede me rekɔ a gye me!</i>		Rescue me when they are taking me away
<i>Asase Yaa e! Otwedumpon ee!100</i>		The earth mother! The reliable God
<i>Asase Yaa ee!</i>		The earth mother ee!
<i>Memfa he na mahyia mo!</i>		Where should I pass to meet you?
<i>Paapa ee!</i>		Father ee!
<i>Eno ee!</i>		Mother ee!
<i>Maame ee!</i>	105	Mother ee!
<i>Aka me nko o!</i>		I'm left alone o!
<i>Aka me nko o!</i>		I'm left alone o!
<i>Fituo rehunuhuna me o!</i>		The empty house is searing me o!
<i>Dantuo rehunuhuna me o!</i>	104	The empty house is searing me o!
<b><i>Dirge 7</i></b>		
<b><i>A dirge to a linguist</i></b>		
<i>Odupɔn a ste fie atutu borɔfere na</i>		The big tree in the house has falling and
<i>asi n'anan mu hee!</i>		pawpaw tree has taking in stead hee!

<i>Kane akokɔ baatan ne ne mma didi ee!</i>		In the olden days, the mther hen eats with her children ee!
<i>Enne deɛ yeayi me totwene.</i>		Today they have rejected me.
<i>Maame ee!</i>		Mother ee!
<i>Maame ee!</i>	5	Mother ee!
<i>Mese sankɔfɔ wɔ akyire kwan.</i>		I say going to the past is far.
<i>Enne deɛ, yeayi me totwene ee!</i>		Today they have rejected tme ee!
<i>Okodeɛ, enne deɛ yeapam me ee!</i>		The eagle today they have sacked me ee!
<i>Enne deɛ yeapam me oo! Hee!</i>		Today they have sucked me oo! Hee!
<i>Enonom ee!</i>	10	Mothers ee!
<i>Enonom ee! Hee!</i>		Mothers ee! Hee!
<i>Aka me nko bafua oo!</i>		Am left alone oo!
<i>Na memfa he na mahyia mo?</i>		And where shoul I pass to meet you?
<i>Memfa benkum anaa nifa na mahyia mo?</i>		Should I pass left or right to meet you?
<i>Dupɔn atutu efie abɔ!</i>	15	The big tree has fallen the house is doomed.
<i>Efie gya adum!</i>		The house's fire is quenched!
<i>Enne deɛ medidi kwansen mu ee!</i>		Today I eat from the cooking pot ee!
<i>Me ne obi nnidi apotɔyowa mu nne.</i>		Toad I don't eat with others from earth pot.
<i>Oo! Eye a na yeatwa me kotɔmoa de ato apotɔyowa mu.</i>		Oo! They normally give me a portion of into an earth pot
<i>Enne deɛ medidi kwansen mu.</i>	20	Today I eat from the cooking pot.
<i>Kwansen no si ho a na metafiri mu.</i>		I lick in the cooking pot when it is there.

<i>Maame ee! Hee!</i>		Maame ee! Heee!
<i>M'ani abere oo!</i>		My eyes are red oo!
<i>Memfa he nie o?</i>		Where should I pass o?
<i>Mekɔ m'anım a predawn</i>	25	When I go forward am stucked
<i>Mekɔ m'kyire nso apretom.</i>		When I go backwards am stucked.
<i>Aa! Memfa he ni? Hee!</i>		Aa! Where should I pass? Hee!
<i>Ee! Aduana ba me na m'awieɛ ni!</i>		Ee! Son of Aduana this is my end!
<i>Maame wote ase mehunuie</i>		Mother when you are alive I saw it.
<i>Enne dee yeayi me totwene.</i>	30	Today they have rejected me.
<i>Enne dee yeayi me totwene.</i>		Today they have rejected me.
<i>Ee! Enne menni sika.</i>		Ee! Today I don't have money.
<i>Enne sika na eka asem.</i>		Today it is money that talks.
<i>Hee!</i>		Heee!
<b>Dirge 8</b>		
<b><i>A dirge to a late brother</i></b>		
<i>Awo Yaa ee!</i>		Awo Yaa ee!
<i>Woremane me a mane me denkyem</i>		When you are sending me send me
<i>berɛboɔ na manya gya a mawe no</i>		crocodile's liver so that if I don't get
<i>mono oo!</i>		fire I can eat it raw oo!
<i>Maanya gya a mawe no mono.</i>		If I don't get fire I can eat it raw
<i>Woto abasa a gom berɛberɛ na wo</i>		Be careful when you swing your arms
<i>nsa bebɔ m'ani ee! Nkatia ba</i>		so that you will not hurt my eyes! Child
		of Nkatia
<i>Metɔ me pepa a meto metwene woɔ</i>		When I buy my paper, I throw it to you
<i>e!5</i>		e!
<i>Sɛɛ meto metwene woɔ e!</i>		So, I throw it to you e!

<i>Na metwere kakapenpen.</i>		So, I leaned against kakapenpen.
<i>Kapenpen ayi me atwene o!</i>		Kakapenpen has thrown me away o!
<i>Abusua te se kwae ebom tuu nso</i>		A family is like a forest, it forms one
<i>wopini ho a dua biara wo ne siberε.</i>		canopy but when go near every tree has
		its own place.
<i>Maannya dua ani m'ani see</i>		I didn't get any tree to hurt me but
<i>funtum5</i>		funtum.
<i>Kakapenpen ee!</i>		Kakapenpen ee!
<i>Memfa he ni ee?</i>		Where should I pass ee?
<i>Mekɔ m'anim a predawn!</i>		When I go forward am stucked!
<i>Mekɔ m'akyi a predawn!</i>		When I go backwards am stucked!
<i>Fidie ayi me ntentεnoa.</i>	15	I'm trapped in the extremely ends
<i>Na memfa he na mahyia mo o?</i>		So where should I pass to meet you o?
<i>Aduana ba e!</i>		Son of Aduana e!
<i>Ee! Ayee! Hee!</i>		Ee! Ayee! Hee!
<i>Ee! Adi aye me!</i>		Ee! I'm affected by incurable disease?
<i>Yee! Memfa nie ee? 20</i>		Yee! Where should I pass ee?
<i>Kotroka daafidie ayi Nkrumah oo!</i>		Kotroka's trape has trapped Nkrumah
		oo!
<i>Ee! Mefa ha kuntunu de me,</i>		Ee! When I pass here I am trapped.
<i>Kuntunu de me.</i>		I'm in a trap
<i>Mefa ha a matɔ amena mu.</i>		When I pass there, I fall into a pit.
<i>Fidie ayi me ntentεnoa!</i>	25	I'm trapped in an extremely ends.
<i>Na memfa he nie?</i>		So where should I pass?
<i>Obretuo Nana ee!</i>		Grandson of Beretuo ee!
<i>Aduana ba fidie ayi me ntentεnoa</i>		Son of Aduana I'm trapped in the

extreme ends

*Memfa bekum anaa nifa na mahyia mo?* Should I pass left or right to meet you?

*Monim se nkwanta yi dɔso ee!* You know there are so many junctions ee!

*Maame ee! ɔwoo me ee!* Mother ee! Mother of birth ee!

*Meto m'ani a entɔ obi anim* When cast my eyes it falls on no one.

*Yee! Yee! Aye!* Yee! Yee! Aee!

*Memfa he nie oo?* Where should I pass oo?

*Ee! Wiase nie?* 35 Ee! Is this the world?

*Anomaa bi wɔ kwae mu ɔsu oo!* There is a bird in the forest crying oo!

*ɔsu oo!* It's crying oo!

*M'awie no no!* I'm finished!

*Mesɔre ee! Manhunu kwan.* When I stood up I couldn't find the way.

*Makɔɔ amena mu afidie ayi me ntentenoa.* 40 I have falling into a pit and I'm trapped in the extremely ends.

*Ehe na merefa bio ee?* Where I'm I passing again ee?

*Maka adwaamu oo!* Am left in a trapped oo!

*Hwan na ɔbeyi me oo!* Who will rescue me oo?

*Mekɔ m'anim a, predawn, mekɔ m'akyire a predawn hee!* 44 When go forward am stucked, when I go backwards too I'm stucked! Hee!

### **Dirge 9**

#### ***A dirge to a late warrior***

*Wɔfa ee!* Uncle ee!

*Wɔfa ee! Hee!* Uncle ee! Hee!

<i>Ɔdi sika atomprada ee!</i>		An instant cash blower ee!
<i>Wɔfà bɛhwɛ me o!</i>		Uncle come and see me o!
<i>Wɔfà mennyae wo din bɔ dabiara</i>		Uncle I have never stopped mentioning
<i>da o!</i>	5	your name o!
<i>Ɔkatakylie ee!</i>		The brave one ee!
<i>Ogyambibiri ee!</i>		Ogyambibiri ee!
<i>Yɛnhyia wo he na yɛagoro?</i>		Where should we meet you and play?
<i>Aduana ba ee!</i>		Son of aduana ee!
<i>Madi abene, afidie ayi me</i>		I'm in trouble I have been trapped
<i>ntɛntɛnoa.</i>	10	extremely
<i>Aduana ba e!</i>		Son of Aduana e!
<i>Manyi wo ayɛ a, na mennyi ayɛ.</i>		If don't praise you then I have been
		unfair.
<i>Asuo ayire me o!</i>		I'm drown by a river o!
<i>Me gyefo ne hwan?</i>		Who is my saviour?
<i>Madi amia o!</i>	15	I'm in trouble o!
<i>Madi amia o!</i>		I'm in trouble o!
<i>Wɔfà ee!</i>		Uncle ee!!
<i>Ennɛ efie abɔ ama mmaa na wɔreko</i>		Today the house is empty and women
<i>ako</i>		are now going to war.
<i>Wɔfà ee!</i>		Uncle ee!
<i>Woama fie yi abɔ o!</i>	20	You have made the house empty o!
<i>Woama fie yi atete apamsam.</i>		You have made the house broken into
		apart
<i>Wɔfà ee!</i>		Uncle ee!
<i>Woama fie yi anyinya!</i>		You have made the house spoiled

<i>Aa! Wɔfa!</i>		Aa! Uncle!
<i>Owuo ampini, anka mede me ho me maa no.</i>	25	Death did not agree I would have offered myself
<i>Aa! Wɔfa menyɛ deen nie o?</i>		Aa! Uncle! What should I do o?
<i>Abusuapanin, owuo anpini anka mede me ho memaa no.</i>		Family's head death does not agree I would have offered myself to him.
<i>Owuo woayɛ yɛn bɔne kɛsɛ pa ara.</i>		Death you have wronged us too much.
<i>Owuo kura adeɛ a, nkwa ntumi nye</i>		When death holds something life cannot take it.
<i>Owuo yeyɛ wo deen nie?</i>	30	Death what did we do to you?
<i>Abusua ayɛ wo deen ne o?</i>		What has the family done to you o?
<i>Wode yɛn tɔtɔ na worehye yɛn nyinaa</i>		Gradually, you are burning all of us.
<i>Owuo dɛɛfoɔ ee!</i>		Mighty death ee!
<i>Wode yɛn ani kɔ o!</i>		You have taking our eyes away o!
<i>Wode yɛn yafunu kɔ o!</i>	35	You have taking our stomach away o!
<i>Wode yɛn aso kɔ o!</i>		You have taking our ears away o!
<i>Wɔfà!</i>		Uncle!
<i>Yɛwo ani nso yɛnhunu adeɛ o!</i>		We have eyes but we can't see o!
<i>Owuo woaka yɛn ano atom ama yɛntumi nkasa bio.</i>		Death you have closed our mouth and we can't talk again.
<i>Woama fie ayɛ basaa.</i>	40	You have made the house disarray
<i>Owuo asesa yɛn prae nyinaa kɔ .Yɛbesi deen apra fie?</i>		Death have taking all our brooms away How can we sweep the house?
<i>Owuo afa prae Abena kɔ ama fie adane apotɔbibire.</i>		Death has taking Abenaa, the broom away for the house to grow spirogyra

*Owuo akyekyere yen nsa agu yen*      Death has tied our hands into our back  
*akyi*

*Wɔfà! Wo wuo yi aka yen ano*      Uncle! Your death has closed our  
*atom.*      45      mouth

*Enne wɔmmɔ yen din bio*      Today they don't mention our names  
again

*Wɔfà ee!*      Uncle ee!

*Wɔfà ee!*      Uncle ee!!

*Wode yen din ko o!*      You have taking our names away o!

*Wɔfà! Wɔfà! Wɔfà!*      50      Uncle! Uncle! Uncle!

*Woakyere yen ase, woama atamfo*      You have shown our secrete you have  
*anya yen.*      made enemies to get us

*Wɔfà yedidi wie a, hwan na ɔne yen*      Uncle when we finished eating, who  
*bɛdi nkɔmmɔ?*      will chat with us?

*Hwan na ɔbɛto yen anansesem?*      Who will tell us Ananse stories?

*Wɔfà ee!*      Uncle ee!

*Wɔfà ee!*      55      Uncle ee!

*Hwan ne w'anamsini a ɔbɛboaboa*      Who is your replacement that will  
*yen ano akɔ ako?*      gether us to war?

*Hwan hɔ na yenkɔ?*      Whom shall we go?

*Hwan na yɛbɛbisa ne hɔ biribi?*      Whom are we going to ask for  
something?

*Wɔfà aden na woama yen ani atutu*      Uncle why have you made our eyes  
*aka yen nsam yi*      59      falling into our hands?



*Dirge 10**A dirge ro a late relative*

*Moreto me abasa a, mongu no* If you swing your arms, do it carefully  
*berɛberɛ na mo nsa bebɔ m'ani ee!* so that you will not hurt my eyes ee!

*Mamee ee! Maame ee!* Mother ee! Mother ee!

*M'ani abere oo!* My eyes are red oo!

*M'ani abere pa ara!* My eyes are really red!

*Ee! Asomurofi dwo a, na ɔkraman* Ee! When the hearth cools the dog gets  
*nya dabere* 5 a sleeping places

*Ee! Ee! Ee!* Ee! Ee! Ee!

*Maamenom te aseɛ na ente saa!* When mothers were alive, it wasn't like  
 that!

*Aka me nko oo!* Am left alone oo!

*Aa! Mmarima asa!* Aa! Men have finished!

*Enonom kɔ ama asomurofi adwo* Mothers have gone to make hearth cool  
*ama ɔkraman anya dabere oo!* 10 for the dog to have a sleeping place oo!

*Owuo tɔn adeɛ a firi bi na ɛdane sɛ* When death sells something buy some  
*boɔ a ɔde wo bekɔ* in credit because no matter what it will  
 take you.

*Ɔkrɔbea Asante kɔtɔkɔ ee!* Ɔkrɔbea Asante Kɔtɔkɔ ee!

*Aa! M'ani abere.* Aa! My eyes are red.

*Enonom ee!* Mothers ee!

*Enonom ee! Ee!* 15 Mothers ee! Ee!

*Menyɛ deɛn wɔ wiase na m'ani* What should I do in the world that my  
*atutu aka me nsam yi?* eyes have falling into my hands?

*Akokɔ dwane a ɔdwane kɔ ne dabɛ.* When a hen runs it runs to where it sleeps.

*Hwiremo awɔ me memfa he?* I'm hurt by the thorns where should I pass?

*Hwiremo awie me!* Thorns have finished me!

*Hwiremo adi awu o! 20* Am doomed by the thorns o!

*Hee! Hee! 21* Hee! Hee!

