SIT Graduate Institute/SIT Study Abroad DigitalCollections@SIT

African Diaspora ISPs

African Diaspora Collection

4-1-1999

Product of the Past: An Examination of Ashanti and Dagari Proverbs as a Means of exploring the Cultural and Societal Effects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on the Dagaaba People and the Ashanti People

Melanie Kawano

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/african diaspora isp

Recommended Citation

Kawano, Melanie, "Product of the Past: An Examination of Ashanti and Dagari Proverbs as a Means of exploring the Cultural and Societal Effects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on the Dagaaba People and the Ashanti People" (1999). *African Diaspora ISPs.* Paper 80.

http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/african_diaspora_isp/80

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the African Diaspora Collection at DigitalCollections@SIT. It has been accepted for inclusion in African Diaspora ISPs by an authorized administrator of DigitalCollections@SIT. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Products of the Past: An Examination of Ashanti and Dagari Proverbs as a Means of exploring the Cultural and Societal Effects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on the Dagaaba People and the Ashanti People

Melanie Kawano

School for International Training Ghana: Cross-roads of African and the African Diaspora May 7, 1999

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the following people with all my thanks and appreciation:

- ❖ Dr. R. T. Ackam of University of Science and Technology,
 - Dr. B, G. Der of University of Cape Coast, and
 - Mr. A. Darimani, Regional Director of EPA, Wa

For their help in reaching sources of data, guiding me in my research, and generously Giving me their valuable time, support and energy;

- ❖ The Chiefs and people of Takpo, Sankana, and Kozokala, Nana Obiri Yeboah of the National Centre for Culture, and all the other participants, informants, and translators For their time, patience, and shared wisdom;
- ❖ The Kyei-Mensah family

For welcoming me into their home and family;

Drs. Naana and Kwadwo Opoku-Agyeman

For their love, patience, guidance, and their desire to teach and grow;

❖ Mom and Dad, my family, and all friends back home

For the support and unfailing love you all sent across the oceans and continents in your prayer, letters, and phone calls.

And God, Praise You Lord that you grew me in the face of new and old challenges, for the deeper relationship we have and the greater understanding I have gained of Your character in the past semester, and that I just plain made it.

TABLE OF CENTENT

Abstract
Introduction
Cultural and Ethnographic Information Review
Methodology
Data and Results
Discussion
Conclusion
Bibliography
Appendix A – Ashanti Interview Questions
Appendix B – Dagaaba Interview Questions
Appendix C – Dagaaba Cultural Interview Questions
Appendix D – Proverb Classification
Appendix E – Ashanti Proverbs Collected
Appendix G – Proverbs Analyzed

Abstract

An examination of Asante and Dagari proverbs was conducted to see if the different role of the Dagaaba and Ashanti peoples in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade affected each respective society. Proverbs, culturally embedded statements, are derived from common experiences of the people and drawn from the whole of society. Therefore they capture and reflect each aspect of society as well. Thus proverbs are an ideal means of exploring the complex and sensitive issue of how the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade affected the people and vice versa. It was hypothesized that there would be proverbial differences in several categories: War and courage, forgiveness, power and leadership, and strangers. There were indeed differences found in the proverbs, as well as some similarities, that resulted in both the nature of the people involved and the roles they ended up playing in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Introduction

In a society where traditionally all knowledge of the past and the present socialization of the individual is done orally, there can be no denying the wealth that society's language will need to have. The language will need to communicate what was before, what will be in the future, and how the individual and the collective whole fit into that vast picture. Moreover for a people who have lived, survived, and endured for thousands of years, developing and speaking such a language is practically effortless. This is seen in all the different facets a language can have. There are the derivations and origins of words that have come to mean other things, the wealth or emotion that expressed in one sound, and the oral tradition of the people. For African specifically, this tradition included folktales, song and dance, and proverbs. The focus of this study is proverbs and what they reflect about Dagaaba and Ashanti culture specifically proverbs and its reflection of two societies that played different and significant roles in what happened on this side of the Atlantic Ocean as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

First and foremost though, a definition and explanation of how proverbs truly embody in African culture is important in this academic exercise. In the Education Wisdom of Our Fathers Agyakwa defines proverb as a "peculiar linguistics medium of communication . . . [with a] rigid form which speakers do not try to paraphrase" (p.2). Proverbs are different from a mere wise saying in that they are often derived from some practical truth as a result of some common experience of the people. They are so experiential character that it confers on them the status of legal precedent or philosophical counter. Moreover they are of a moral nature procured from certain facts about nature, human life, or some phenomenon in one's surroundings and environment (Agyakwa, pp. 4 & 5). Moreover, John Mbiti in "Children Confer Glory On A Home: Introduction to the African Proverbs Series" states since they drawn from whole society so that every part of society captured in proverbs (p. x). Proverbs are therefore abundant sources of cultural information, for they draw on the collective experiences of the people. This is the reason that Agyakwa can accurately and confidently state that proverbs are a "means of understanding the African way of thinking" (p. 2).

On a more practical level, proverbs call attention to dangers in human relations, cautions people about behaviour, character, relations with others, and imperfect world in which he/she lives (Mbiti, xi). This is the resultant of the experiential nature and basis in common experiences that proverbs have. They are not only practical, but culturally applicable and relevant truths. Furthermore, proverbs are a direct result of the past and history. The Chiefs of Takpo, Sankana and Nana Obiri Yeboah all agreed that proverbs are shaped by the past. One said that "proverbs come according to events" and another said that "history shapes proverbs"

(Yeboah, interview & Banzara, interview). This is the rationalization behind the statement that proverbs may be used as a mirror of a given society.

Thus, the examination of proverbs is an ideal instrument to look at any aspect of a given culture. Since proverbs are so specific to a given "common experience," it is possible that two different ethnic groups with different histories and experiences, though relatively culturally similar, will have different messages communicated within their respective proverb. That is to say that because the Asante and Dagaaba played different roles in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the proverbs of the two groups will be distinctive certain ways. The Akan Kingdom gained from the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade monetarily by trading slaves and interacting a great deal with the Europeans and played a large role in the execution of raids on other ethnic groups. The Dagaaba, conversely, were the ones raided by other ethnic group and were geographically more isolated from the Europeans.* For if proverbs epitomize one's society and past, as much as proverbial scholars and experts say they do, then a difference should be found between two groups who have distinct histories and collective experiences. Namely the areas in which differences are hypothesized are war and courage, forgiveness, strangers, and concepts of power and leadership.

Regardless of what some may think, whether here or there, they or we, victim or perpetrator, or "white" or "black" and Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade's hands touch every one of us, directly and indirectly. As a member of the human race and as an either direct or indirect benefactor the depth and breadth of the African Diaspora all over the world caused by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade are proof enough that it touched us all. For there is not one continent where dispersed African live, Europeans have not colonized and capitalized, and people do not benefit from the money, ideology, or military power of the United State, in whose very foundation the lives of hundreds of thousands of slaves are deeply embedded.

*For both though, I will narrow the focus of the investigation down to more specific peoples and areas. For the Akan I will focus on the Ashanti because they were the Akan ethnic group with the most power, politically speaking, and they dominated the then Gold Coast in terms of trade in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. For the Dagaaba people, I will focus on areas that alone were raided and did not themselves raid for I wish to focus on how the different roles affected the proverbs and the people. These areas are all Dagao areas outside of Wa in the Upper West Region; specifically, they are the villages of Takpo, Sankana, and Kozokala.

Cultural and Ethnographic Information Review

In order to fully understand and analyze proverbs, one must know at least the basic ethnographic and cultural information of the group being studied. As previously mentioned, proverbs are culturally loaded and reflect a great deal of the individual's surrounding, lived-in environment, and experiences. Thus it was necessary to do some background research, although brief and relatively superficial, on both the Ashanti and the Dagaaba peoples. (For a further explanation for the necessity of this information refer to the 'Methodology' Section.)

About 180 miles north of the coast in an area called the Central Region, and Asante, a group of Akan peoples, live in a densely forested area. For the Akan in this area, the main language is Twi, a dialect different but understood by other Akan. The main occupation of the people is, or at least was at one time, farming. The Asante people are one of the relatively few groups of people that trace lineage through the matrilineal line of the abusua, family in Twi. In Hearing and Keeping: Akan Proverbs, Kofi Asare Opoku says that this matrilineal descent is due to the "shared blood" of the mother and child. On the other hand, in Asante of Ghana: People with a Soul, Fufuo and C.E. Donkor claim that this matrilineal tradition is a result of the "war efforts" of Ashanti men (p.44). Either way, every Asante child belongs to one of these 8 matrilineal clans: Aduana, Agona, Asakyiri, Asenee, Asona, Bretuo, Ekoona, or Oyoko. Each clan has an animal that embodies the trait associated with its clan members. The men in Ashanti tradition also have parallel groups to build a "spiritual bond" between the father and the child (Hearing and Keeping, Opoku). These groups, called ntoro, are divided into 12 clans and are as follow: Bosomafi, Bosomafram, Bosom akom, Bosomayesu, Bosom-Dwerebe, Bosom-Konsi, Bosomkrete, Bosommuru, Bosompo, Bosompra, Bosomika, and Bosomtwe (Hearing and Keeping, Opoku). It is through these matrilineal lines that inheritance, such as land and all other types of property, is traced.

At one time the Asante ruled over a large part of what is now known as Ghana and even had several victories over the British as they tried to maintain the empire they had built. Fufuo and Donkor claim that this military success was largely due to the skilful strategies the Asante used in both times of war and peace. One of these strategies was a very detailed and involved method of espionage. Reconnoiterers were dispatched into neighbouring areas in times of peace and pretended to be enemies of their own state. These spies would denounce their people and even go as far as marrying into the other people group and setting up a farm to prove their loyalty and intention of staying. Yet once enough information was gathered on the enemy, the Ashanti would return home with a wealth of information used against the enemy in the nearing times of war (Fufuo & Donkor, p. 93). These tactics were only a small part of war in the Ashanti nation.

Bravery and courage were also important to the rise of the Ashanti Kingdom. The indications of what a nation's goals are apparent in the characteristics its society values. Even today this phenomenon of emphasizing certain characteristics or traits that will lead one, and its nation, to success is evident. The United States, for example, is a highly capitalistic society; and capitalism calls the individual to have an individualistic, out-for-my-self attitude. Consequently American society persuasively and powerfully socializes the people to be more individualistic as a means of becoming a successfully contributing member of a capitalism nation. Similarly, the Asante views on bravery and cowardice manifests themselves in the socialization and views of the people. There were no standing armies in the social structure of the Asante, and thus every man was a trained warrior perpetually prepared for battle. Thus every man was at the same time conditioned to be not only a warrior, but a useful warrior, a brave warrior; According to Fufuo and Donkor, death at the battle front was a noble one and preferable to life as a coward. Deserters were not tolerated and punished by being starved to death by the people and marriages were even broken because the deserter was no longer worthy enough to be married (p.101). Cowardice left room for failure and defeat in a time when victory was the goal of the society and its leaders. Thus it is not surprising that bravery was greatly emphasized in Ashanti culture considering that, as any nation trying to keep its political power, the Asante were often either at war or preparing for war.

Concerning the general characteristics of an Ashanti, the range is of course wide. Fufuo and Donkor describe the average Ashanti as "extremely ambitious [and] determined to succeed in every venture undertaken, "and that "he will do everything to struggle for position, to sustain, maintain or retain it" (11 & 24). This is a reflection of the goals the Ashanti had of building a strong and mighty empire, the visages of which one can still visibly see today. Moreover Fufuo and Donkor assert that the highest ambition of the Ashanti is the attainment of power. In fact there is even a proverb that addresses this very issue, "If power is for sale, sell your mother to obtain it. Once you have the power there are several ways of getting her back"(Fufuo & Donkor, p. 26). This proverb says much about the desire for power. In a society that places such high value on family and respect for one's elders, it is no light thing to recommend trading one's mother for the acquisition of power.

As a whole, many claim that Asante are a proud and principled people, as embodied in this proverb, "It does not befit an Akan to lose face" (Owusu-Sarpong, interview). Not only is the Ashanti concerned with not losing his own face, but he/she is also continuously seeking to save the face of others as well. This is seen in the wide use of proverbs. Instead of telling one outright the foolishness or dangers of his/her behaviour, one uses a diplomatic proverb. One

interviewee said that proverbs reflect the Asante value and respect for other human beings by speaking in an indirect and courteous manner (Owusu-Sarpong). Another interviewee, Nana Obiri Yeboah of the National Centre for Culture, said that Asante "love people, are gregarious, and social mixers" (15 April 1999, interview). Mr. Yeboah claimed that these traits were necessary because people must be able to move together within the family and community so that in times of need help will be there for you.

Research was also done on what the places of slaves were in Ashanti society. Unfortunately all I could find on slavery pertained to inheritance laws. For a slave of an Ashanti, inheritance of property is possible if there are no other living relatives to claim the assets. However a slave cannot sit on a woman's stool or inherit a stool that is inherit a chieftaincy rank. Slaves were also used to help save a dwindling family line. It was not unusual for male members of the clan to purchase female slaves to have children with. Of course since the woman was an outsider of no real rank, the child did not have an *abusua*, but did belong to the father's *ntoro* as a legitimate son/daughter and treated as a family member (Asante, Rattray). Although these slaves were absorbed into the family, some claim that there were still "whisperings of origins" (Searching for Security: An Ethno psychiatric Study for Rural Ghana, Field). There is even a proverb addressing the stigma of slave origins saying "When someone hates you, he scratches you." This refers to the disgrace a facial or body mark brings one as it is an identification mark of a slave.

Research on the history of the Asante' role in that Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is as follows. As early as 1732 the Ashanti Kingdom was demanding annual slave tributes from the peoples that they conquered. One such instance was that of the Gonja people. The Asante defeated the Gonja in a retaliation attack and in return demanded an annual tribute that thus initiated the Gonja people in conducting raiding of their own. The Dagomba people, armed with only spear, lances, bows and arrows, and swards, were also defeated by the Dane gun armed Asante in 1745. This defeat though was actually a military stalemate that ended in a technical defeat because the Asante captured the Ya Na, Gariba, and ransomed him an agreed upon debt of two thousand slaves. Between 1800 and 1864 the Asante were able to capitalize off the Dagbon and Gonja civil wars caused by chieftaincy disputes, and thus acquire more slaves to trade to the Europeans. In one case during this time period, the Asante still demanded the payments of slaves even after a debt had been paid. The Dagbon had fully paid their debt to the Asante, but were demanded to pay more. The two groups went to war and the Asante triumphed, thus were able to collect more tribute in the form of captured peoples. With the Ashanti defeat by the British of 1874, the Dagomba and Gonja were able to free themselves of

the mandatory tributes to the Asante. Unfortunately other groups, including the Dagbon, the Gonja, the Mamprusi, and the Zabarima, had also begun to participate in slave raiding. (<u>The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana</u>, Der, pp. 8-19). This was the role of the Asante in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade based on the research found.

Lastly, research was done, by means of interviews, on the meaning and significance of proverbs in Ashanti culture and society, and therefore socialization. Nana Obiri Yeboah said that the Asante were the "citadel" of culture because they speak one language, have almost of the same practices, and the intermarriages among the 8 matrilineal clans have welded them together. Nan Yeboah went on stating that this language is very rich, and sometimes one does not "speak straight," but in proverbs that lead one in life (15 April 1999, interview). Dr. Owusu-Sarpong remarked that Ashanti proverbs reflect the "profound" moral and human values, social attitudes, and respect Asante have for others. Samuel Gyasi Obeng stated that "Akan interactants employ various forms of verbal indirection to embellish their utterances, to draw other interactants' attention to relevant issues, to persuade them to minimize social and/or communication tension, and to settle personal scores" (Verbal Indirection in Akan Informal Discourse"). All three sources report that Akan, or more specifically Asante use their words indirectly to communicate any number of things in a diplomatic and socially acceptable way.

In the Upper West Region of Ghana, northeast of the regional capital Wa, and people called the Dagaaba live in the Dagao area. The language of the people in this rather hot and dry area is Dagari. The land's vegetation consists of bush, baa, and silk cotton trees. The local people are mostly traders and migrant labourers. According to Jack Goody in the mis-titled Social Organization of the Lowiili, in pre-European times local people used the river system to trade in fish with the Asante, travelling by dugout canoes. Unlike the Asante, the Dagaaba are a patrilineal group that passes farmland rights from father to son. Families live in scattered compounds and jointly prepare meat together. Daughters of the Dagaaba men are dispersed by marriage, but the men in the family are bound by the interest of patrimony and land inherited by the founding ancestors. According to Monsignor Francis Baghr, in a Dagaaba household the father is the head of everything. The order of hierarchy is the father, then his brothers and then his sons and their children. The men decide everything that goes on in the household, from marriages to funerals. Although they recognize the matrilineal line as well, like the Ashanti, on can inherit only from one side; in this case it is from the patrilineal line. According to Monsignor Baghr, who admitted his information was from a rather old source. Rattray account in 1932, there are 32 patrilineal clans (interview, 24 April 1999). So Monsignor Lawrence Kyemaloo's claim there were as many as 50 clans that came together from the Banri and Frafra peoples is probably a more accurate count. There are also matrilineal clans have no inheritance rights or associations.

Based on the data from cultural interviews conducted, the Dagaaba people were described as peaceful, peasant farmers. It is very important to the Dagaaba to know his/her language, family, and Dagaaba way of life. This life includes knowing the totem, or *dome*, of his/her people, *singra*, or protecting/guardian spirit, and the clan that he/she belongs to. A Dagaaba child must also learn what to do to reach the ancestors, the different herbs used when ill, how to offer sympathy to those bereaved, about marriages and funerals, and about the social organization of the village. Monsignor Baghr also added that, "more or loess in line with tradition, a Dagao would never sell someone or fight to catch him/her to sell (into slavery)" (interview, 24 April 1999). The only exceptions to this one would find would be in times of famine when one would give his/her child away in return for food to feed the others.

There were instances thought of domestic slaves, like the Asante. These domestic slaves, called *gbangbaa* in Dagari, were not acquired through purchases but by losing a game called *gbang* in which a man could bet away his children or wife. Slavery could also result from inheritance. If a man inherited property from a distant relative that included the deceased wife and children, they would become the inheritor's *gbangi bome*, or slaves (cited in The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana, Der). Slaves were integrated into the family by adopting the matrilineal and patrilineal clan affiliations of his /her purchaser. Yet these integrated slaves were stigmatized by being labelled as "red" as an indication of his/her origin. (Social Organisation of the Lowiili, Goody).

As far as the history of the Dagaaba in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade goes, there are two facets to this story. The first is the migration and different settlements that inter and intratribal wars caused. Both the villages of Sankana and Takpo originated from peoples migrating away from wars and the dangers that they brought, namely being kidnapped and sold into slavery (Boya Banzara, interview & Naa of Takpo, interview). Some of these dispersed peoples were easy prey for the slave raiders due to the lack a cohesive political organization that could protect its people. Thus in places like Sankana, the people were compelled to seek advice from the chiefs of Takpo on how to develop some sort of chieftaincy (Naa of Takpo, interview). Moreover both of the totems of Sankana and Takpo were adopted because of the aid that the frog and royal python, respectively, gave to the people of the villages as they escaped raiders and inter-tribal wars. There is the aspect of this history of how these people came to be in the place they now call home.

Interestingly enough one source, a lecture given by Dr. B. G. Der at the University of Cape Coast entitled. "The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana," said that there was still a stigma with being from the North because it implied slave origins. Though I could find no

confirmation for this, the Ashanti proverb that states if you hate someone, scratch his/her face to give them the stigma of slave origins and the fact that one who has slave ancestry can never inherit chieftaincy confirm that there is indeed a stigma to being either from the North or of slave descent.

The other part of this history is the kind found in history books. This is the part that explains the role the Dagaaba had in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Mainly, the role was one of resistance, fighting back and insubordination. In the midst of the raids by Babatu and the Mamprusi, Samori from the south, and even the neighbouring people Wala, the Dagaaba people all over northern Ghana resisted. It has been recorded by European travellers in the northern territories that towns like Ulu had defensive walls, and the people of the Lawra district, the capital of the Dagao region, would rush across the river at the rumour of raiders or at the sight of headless bodies floating down the Volta (Social Organisation of the Lowiili, Goody). The people of Sankana would run into three large caves to fight off the raiders and seek an impenetrable shelter. According to the Chief of Takpo, their resistance was getting the elderly and children to run to the hills while the young, strong men delayed the attackers. Their method was to fight and draw back. During one raid in particular, by a raider named Gojari (who is mis-named Kajari in some books), the people of Takpo joined the people of Sankana in the caves. The people of Takpo knew that if Sankana faced this raider alone they would be defeated and Gojari with then have no difficulties in taking Takpo; so they joined forces to defeat Gojari (interview, 22 April 1999). This is the role of the Dagaaba people in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade as based on the research found.

Finally, a brief look at what proverbs mean to the Dagaaba people, based in research interviews. One of the elders of Sankana Boya Banzara, said that proverbs help shape one's life because if someone does something wrong, for example, you don't tell him/her outright they are wrong,, but in a proverb to warm that person (interview, 18 April 1999.) The chief of Takpo stated that proverbs tell of "what we hold dear," good conduct, bad conduct, things that we value, and things that we do not like. In a similar vein, Monsignors Baghr and Kyemaloo remarked that proverbs reflect a certain lesson, teaching, or moral value used for teaching children and adults alike (both interviews, 24 April 1999). Interestingly both the chief of Takpo and the elder of Sankana articulated very similar things in reference to the history proverbs impart. Banzaras said proverbs tell of things practiced by the ancestors that are still done today, and the chief of Takpo said that proverbs themselves can dies when no longer used, so if they do survive, they tell of the past, of history.

Methodology

Study Design

Since the nature of this study, which seeks to explore the societal, cultural, and therefore psychological effects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on certain people groups in Ghana, is not one that can be answered with textbook knowledge, and alternative method of research needed to be developed. The specific purpose of this study was to see how the contrasting roles of the Dagaaba people and the Ashanti people affected the individual in each societal environment. Already it was said that proverbs

Offer the individual guidance and practical advice from a cultural perspective and that these proverbs are also based on common, sometimes historical, experiences of the people. Thus, proverbs were chosen as the medium to explore the individual's experience and the legacy of said experience. The study therefore had to be designed to obtain proverbs of the Dagaaba and the Asante, understand, analyze, and two groups.

First and foremost though, sine my own understanding, socialization, and cultural nuances are quite different from that of Ghanaians and because, as mentioned, proverbial knowledge is culturally embedded, ethnographic information had to be obtained. Consequently, this process offered two benefits. The first was a better understanding and deeper insight into the proverbs that a relatively culturally ignorant person, such as my-self, would never have perceived. The information gathered specifically addressed the areas of proverbs analyzed. This was a means of getting a more earnest comprehension of meanings and implications of the proverbs given. The second, and perhaps more important, benefit was an increased sensitivity and awareness of cultural dos, don'ts, and practices that communicated to the interviewee a sincere desire to learn, listen, and respect the participant and the knowledge shared. This is not to say though that I did not offend, inconvenience, or miscommunicate, anything to any participant, nor that there were not instances in which the proverbs themselves did not make confuse and baffle me. Nonetheless, the ethnographic information that was found helped with the data collection, the interviewing process itself, and the data analysis. As a result of the lack of ethnographic written literature, especially on the Dagaaba peoples, most of this information was obtained through field research. For the information gathered on the Dagaaba and Ashanti peoples, refer to the 'Cultural and Ethnographic Information Review.'

Interviews were chosen as the main means of data collection due to the face that the purpose of the study was to examine and contrast the daily lives and intentional worlds of the Dagaaba and the Asante. According to Steinar Kvale in <u>Interviews</u>: An <u>Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing</u>, the aim of the research interview is to understand the

themes of the "lived daily world" from the perspective of the participant (p. 29). As proverbs have numerous interpretations and since it is not possible to examine every interpretation of each proverb collected, the participants' view an interview offers is ideal within the time frame and resources given.

Moreover the nature of qualitative interviews was also advantageous on two more levels, the data collection and analysis processes. Proverbs often present a literal and figurative meaning, and can also be general or particular to a certain event in history, or apodictic or hypothetical, terms that will be explained in greater detail at a later time. Qualitative research interviews seek to uncover both the factual level and the meaning level of the phenomenon in question (Kvale, p.28). Thus the option of further exploration and explanation of the meanings behind the proverbs during the data collection process that qualitative research interviews offer is not only beneficial, but methodologically essential as well. The analyses of the proverbs were also made easier by the interviewing process because of what Kvale calls the "theme oriented" quality of qualitative research interviews (p.29). That is the researcher and the interviewee come together in a cognisant understanding to discuss a theme or subject that is of interest to both parties. This results in an interview that can be analyzed primarily with respect to the life world described by the interviewee based on the discussion directed by the interviewer. More specifically, interviewing and interacting one-onone made was conducive to focusing and specifying the information to proverbs in the person's society and life as a reflection of his/her.

Finally, research interviews were chosen over observational research or laboratory-like manipulation of one variant to see the effected outcome for two reasons. The first is the near impossibility of this researcher "blending" into the environment in which the phenomenon is occurring so as not to affect the said phenomenon in any way. Being an Asian-American woman in a practically homogeneous environment of non-Asian peoples makes me so obviously different that any thoughts of blending or fading into the general environment are instantly and effectively discarded. The second reason for choosing interviewing over other research methods refers to the experimental manipulation study design. When one wishes to explore an event or the effect of a given past event at a later point in time, as this study endeavours to do, experimental methods are infeasible. For one it is impossible to go back in time and observe to the previous and later environments. It is also equally undoable to hold all things constant and manipulate one factor in such a dynamic and complex structure as a whole society and culture. Both society and people are living and ever-changing being that cannot be controlled by one person, or many persons for that matter, in such a manner that a valid and reliable experimental design dictates as necessary. Neither observational nor experimental

methods provide the information required nor can the nature of the subject meet the requirements of such research designs as research interviews can.

On a more personal note, mid-way into the semester I realized that I just wanted to sit with people, hear their stories of their lives, struggles, how the past has shaped their society, culture, and therefore lives. I wanted to learn from their experiences, try to absorb their wisdom, and attempt to acquire, thought pitifully insignificant, insufficient and lacking thought it may be, a grasp on the, to me, pain of their lives, now reality and normality, caused by the heinous human err we call the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Three sets of interview questions were utilized for the study; one set for the Asante and 2 for the Dagaaba. Only set was designed and necessary for the Asante because of the relative wealth of already existing published information on the Asante. As fore-mentioned, ethnographic information was needed to conduct the analysis of proverbs, since there was so much information at the start of the research on the Asante, such as exploration was unnecessary. Information on the Dagaaba, on the other hand, was practically non-existent in the library of the University of Cape Coast, where the initial research was conducted. Thus it was necessary to conduct a different set of interviews on the Dagaaba peoples to find the cultural information required. Fortunately these interviews also lead to other sources, which included printed materials and further data was obtained. For the specific questions used in each interview, refer to Appendices A, B, and C.

The reasons for choosing the two different Ghanaian ethnic groups were previously covered, but the specific geographical locations chosen and the allotted amount of time spent in each area were not. In terms of geographic areas of research, the capital of each region was chosen as a base point. For the Asante it was Kumasi, and for the Dagaaba in the Upper West Region it was Wa. This was base on the logical tendency to go to the major place of congregation of peoples, resources, and therefore information when searching for specific data. The fact that both cities had been formerly travelled to were thus relatively familiar, and had pre-established contacts also tipped the scales in favour of Kumasi and Wa as research bases for, respectively, the Asante and the Dagaaba. Interviews for the Asante were all held in Kumasi. Whereas interviews for the Dagaaba were held in Sankana, a small village about 30 minutes drive outside of Wa, Takpo, another village 15 minutes drive from Sankana, and Kozokala, a village about 15 minutes drive from the town of Jirapa. Due to the given time frame of the research project, 7 days were spent in Kumasi, and although only 7 days were scheduled to be spent in Wa, I ended up staying 8 days in Wa due to a day-long bus delay with the State Transportation Corporation. An additional combined 8 days in Cape Coast and Accra were employed collecting ethnographic and cultural information, designing the study, and analyzing the field-researched data.

Data Analysis Procedure:

Considering the qualitative organization of the study, a quantitative statistical analysis of the collected data would have not only been inappropriate, but would not have yielded results that accurately reflected the effects of a contrasting history on the oral tradition of proverbs. Thus other means of analysis were required. Based on an interview with Olayemi Tinuoye, the Ghana: Arts and Culture Academic Director and Research Methods and Design professor, and K. O. Agyakwa's The Educational Wisdom of Our Fathers, a qualitative method of analyzing the data was designed.

The first stem, according to Tinuoye, was to translate the proverbs from either Twi or Dagari to English in a literal, though rough form. Then a polished, grammatically correct English form should be derived from the rough literal translated proverb. Yet as a result of my inability to fluently speak or understand Dagari and Twi, these first two steps already occurred in the field as the research and interviews were being conducted thanks to the translators, and sometimes the interviewees themselves. The interviewee would say the proverb, the translator would then either discuss the interviewee him-/her-self, or a second party present that understood English as well, and finally give me an English translation that best captured the essence and meaning of the original proverb. The interviewee would then give and in-depth explanation of the proverb, often citing cultural or geo-environmental information that aided in the clarification of the proverb's significance.

So the real analysis of the proverbs began at the next point, examining both the literal and implied meanings of the proverbs. This was done through a series of several smaller steps. In The Educational Wisdom of Our Fathers, Agyakwa recommends distinguishing the form or structure of the proverb based on his dwell-researched list of five possible proverb structures (p.1d5). These categories include content classification, negative-positive statements, negative-positive reward, general or particular, and apodictic or hypothetical. (For a more indepth explanation of these categories and examples of each, refer to Appendix D.) At this point, the method used in this study takes a slight deviation from the one that Agyakwa recommends in order to satisfy the objectives of this study. Following this categorization of the proverb, the key terms or images considered to discern whether they were meant to be taken literally or figuratively. The next step was to reduce the proverb into what Agyakwa calls a "clear and unequivocal" statement. Finally, it was determined whether the proverb expressed or illustrated an aspect of indigenous philosophy or a general, universal thought.

Although Agyakwa recommends this last step to be performed before the key terms or illustrations are examined for denoted or connoted meanings and after formal structure analysis, this method was altered to meet the demands of this study. The main objective of this

proverb dissection is to distinguish whether the proverb reflects a thought expressed solely or differently by the Dagaaba proverbs or Ashanti proverb. I wanted to extract as much information as possible from the proverb before the most important aspect of the proverb analysis, for my research purposes, was conducted. Thus this step of asking whether or not the proverb expressed indigenous thought or universal thought was executed last.

Concerning what proverbs actually went through a thorough examination Tinuoye suggested that either a random selection of the proverbs or a consultation with an expert on proverbs transpire, since time would not allow for all proverbs collected to be studied. Considering that culturally the Dagaaba and Asante are somewhat similar in certain aspects, such as belief in a Supreme Being, the importance of community and respect for elders and their experienced wisdom, the first option of random selection as a statistically safe procedure seemed to be both an unnecessary and illogical means to an end. Instead, the proverbs were put into content categories first, then only certain categories of Dagaaba and Ashanti proverbs were analyzed based on the pre-existing hypotheses. The categories chosen were based on their association, in some how, to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the raiding and wars it advocated and propagated. In all there were 4 categories: war and courage, forgiveness, strangers, and concepts of power and leadership. I had hoped to also compare views on slavery, but could not gather any proverbs on slavery in the Dagao region. Every time I asked for a proverb concerning slavery, no one could think of one at the moment.

Finally, this study seeks to perceive the world as the interviewee perceives and interprets the world around him/her. In this case, that specifically means the interviewee's interpretation of the given proverbs. Thus for analysis purposes, it will be held that the explanation given by the interviewee will be the sole interpretation analyzed. Other possible interpretation will not be assessed based on the desire to stay as true as possible to the meaning and import of the proverb in regards expressly to the viewpoint of the interviewee.

Study Flaws:

First and foremost, the flaws of the design of the study will be addressed, then the complications that arose and were not in the control of the researcher will be discussed. I realized the most glaring and possibly damaging flaw when I arrived in Kumasi. I realized that I chose and urban Asante setting, Kumasi, and a rather rural Dagaaba setting, Sankana, Takpo, and Kozokala. This could have made a great difference in that data collected due to the fact that proverbs are spoken more traditional settlings and less in areas where Western culture has a great deal of influence on the people. With the onset of cultural hegemony, this could have been a large problem. Fortunately the people interviewed in both groups were men and one woman of an older generation. Moreover all people interviewed expect for Dr. Owusu-

Sarpong, were raised in villages, where the knowledge and use of proverbs are not only more prevalent, but more valued as well. Thus I do not think that this design flaw ended up affecting the results and data as gravely as it could have.

The second flaw with the methodology of the study has to do with the sources of proverbs. For the Ashanti proverbs most, at least 90-95%, were collected out of published materials, while the Dagari proverbs were collected solely thorough interviews and conversations. This was in part due to the Junior workers strike that began a day or so into my time in Kumasi. Out of the seven planned interviews only two were conducted, either because the participants were too busy with the strike or did not even show up to work on campus that day and therefore missed the planned appointment. Unfortunately some information was lost because participants just plain forgot. Either way, the data being compared between the two groups do not originate from the same methods and therefore must flaw the data in some ways. Thankfully though, due to the geographic location and political successes of the Asante people they have been exposed too much Western contact and scholarship. It was therefore not difficult to find Ashanti proverbs. Had it been the other way around, I do not know how I would have collected the Dagari proverbs, as books on Dagari proverbs are still in the process of being written and published.

Of course time and language barriers also hindered the research greatly. I would have liked to spend time in an Ashanti and Dagao village for and extended period of time. There, if I knew the language, I could have heard and recorded the proverbs when used in context. Proverbs are by their very nature contextual pieces of advice and that by asking someone to just recite a pro9verb that pops into his/her head or give them a category in which to provide a proverb, something is lost. Thus it would have been ideal to know Twi and Dagari fluently before I went in, made myself less conspicuous in the environment, and just listened and observed the people and interactions. Unfortunately I had neither the time nor resources for a study on such a grand and in-depth scale.

Finally, there was my own bias toward both of the groups. I had hoped to find that while there were differences in the proverbs examined, a more levelled and fair view of both sides would have emerged. I had not counted on my enjoying Wa so much with its more relaxed, less crowded, and quiet atmosphere. Just as I had not counted on being so irritated and exasperated by the attention, looks, questions, and random comments I received in Kumasi that lead to some of the worst thoughts, anger, and interactions with people since I have been here. I did hope that these biases would not affect the data collected and this hope was the reason I went to Kumasi before Wa, so as not to let my possible bitterness with what the raids had done to the Dagaaba people affect my interaction with the Asante. It disappointed me greatly to have found the cultural information, in terms of their views on war and pride, on the

Asante to be so damning, and that the people I interviewed about the Dagaaba people were Monsignors who had a great love and connection with the Dagaaba people, who they had been studying and ministering for the decades, and thus biases themselves.

Data and Results

In all 169 proverbs were collected, 36 of which fell into one of the four hypothesized areas. These areas again were war and courage, forgiveness, strangers, and concepts of power and leadership. Five Dagari proverbs were compared to five Ashanti proverbs in the subject of war and courage. Two Dagari proverbs were compared to two Ashanti proverbs in the subject of forgiveness. Three Dagari proverbs were compared to seven Ashanti proverbs in the subject of strangers. In the last category of concepts of power or leadership, four Dagari proverbs were compared to four Ashanti. (For a reference of the exact proverbs compared, see Appendix G.)

In reference to the area of war and courage, though both sets of proverbs communicated to the listener that courage was important in times of was a battle, the messages emphasized different aspects of war and bravery. According to the explanations of the proverbs, all eleven of the proverbs analyzed were meant to taken literally. Of the five Asante proverbs three were classified as general universal essential and two were general universal prohibitive. These proverbs communicated several different things. Proverbs 1, 2, and 5, as listed in Appendix G, tells the listener that bravery is made on the battlefield and not by those staying or hiding at home. Proverb 3 reminds the listener that one needs unity and mutual trust in each other in times of war. Finally, Proverb 4 humanizes the enemy by reminding the people that the one you are fighting against is also another creation of the Supreme Being. For the Dagari proverbs, two were general universal essential, two were negative reward statements, and one was hypothetical. While the Asante proverbs conveyed the importance of bravery, the Dagari proverbs denounced cowards; specifically these were Proverbs 10 and 11. The Dagari proverbs 9 and 8, respectively, also warned the listener to always be prepared and that thoughts or words alone do nothing, it is action that is necessary.

Concerning the importance of forgiveness, though both sets of proverbs communicated the need for one to forgive and identical proverbs for forgiveness were founding each, there was slight difference in the wisdom the two unidentical proverbs impacted. The identical proverbs were classified as negative and positive reward statements and the two dissimilar proverbs were classified as both general universal essential. First, the similar proverbs, proverbs 13 and 15, reminded the listener that whatever one gives, one receives and thus should forgive or face the negative consequences of an unforgiving heart. The other two proverbs though superficially say the same thing, the messages they convey are quite different.

Proverb 14, meant to be taken literally, tells the Dagari listener that he/she should forgive because the listener will probably need forgiveness him/her self in the future. The Asante proverb, number 12, on the other hand is a figurative metaphor on forgiveness. "When there is blood on the tongue, the person may spit some or most of the blood out, but must swallow at least a small amount of the blood for he/she cannot spit it all out". This proverb says that the victim may rebuke the offender, spitting out the blood, but must in the end forgive, swallow the blood. Though both have the same end, the reasoning and way of getting there are different.

When it comes to strangers, Asante have quite a number of proverbs addressing this facet of life. Proverb 16 tells the Asante to be hospitable to strangers, but Proverb 17 reminds the listener not to be so hospitable that he/she forsakes or forgets his/her own family. Proverbs 19 and 21 pardons strangers for his/her misconduct and Proverb 18 gives the reason for the pardon, because they do not know what it right and what is not right in a foreign culture. Moreover Proverb 20 tells the listener that strangers leave soon and do not leave any lasting mark on society and that Proverb 22 cautions the listener against accepting the help and aid of a stranger. The Dagari proverbs expressed both similar and different sentiments on the issue of Dagari proverbs 25 and 26, in concordance with Asante proverbs, pardoned strangers. strangers for inappropriate conduct due to the stranger's lack of culturally polite dos and don'ts. The view on over hospitality as one's possible down fall is also expressed in Dagari oral wisdom, Proverb 24. However differences appeared in two places between Dagari and Asante proverbs. There were a great deal of proverbs on Europeans, their wealth, and greater virtues within the Asante proverbs collected (see proverbs 71-78 in Appendix E), but none within the set of Dagari proverbs. Moreover proverb 27, a Dagari proverb, verbalized an attitude not expressed by the Asante proverb. This proverb, meant to be taken figuratively, says that an old log can never become a crocodile; that is though the log may look like a crocodile, it can never become one, likewise and outsider can never become a true local or insider.

Finally in the domain of power and leadership, the Asante and Dagari proverbs did share some similarities as well as some differences as well. Of the three Ashanti proverbs collected addressing power or leadership, three were general universal essential and one was a negative reward statement. For the Dagari proverbs collected, three were general universal essential and one was a negative reward statement. While both the Asante and Dagaaba peoples possess proverbs that emphasize the importance of good leadership and the need to respect and obey that leadership (Proverbs 29, 33, 31 and 35 respectively) only the Asante proverb (Proverb 30) reminded the listener that a leader also needs to be occasionally and appropriately checked and balanced. In the area of the power, the Asante have a proverb that

calls one to sacrifice everything he/she has to acquire power, Proverb 32. While the Dagaaba have a proverb that expresses that the preferred position for one to have is that of the leader, but also reminds the listener with Proverb 34 that leaders will have to shoulder the responsibility of everything done, good and bad.

Discussion

The data shows that there are both similarities and differences in Dagaaba and Ashanti proverbs. At this point I would like to discuss where or why there are apparent differences. Moreover I will show that these differences are based on the different roles and histories that the Dagaaba and Asante played in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade by their very natures, both characteristically as a people and as result of their geographic location. These thoughts are based on the cultural and ethnographic information collected at an earlier point. The information about the Ashanti and Dagaaba used can be found in 'Cultural and Ethnographic Information Review' Section in the earlier part of this paper.

As stated, the Asante are a people highly skilled at war and how to be victorious in the face of war. This is reflected in Proverbs, 1,2,3, and 5, as listed in Appendix G. Proverb I show the need to unify as a people in order to obtain victory. This is result of the experience anyone would know after being involved in a relatively high amount of battles and conflicts. The Asante have this proverb based on the experiential knowledge that a house divided against it-self cannot stand. This is known by leaders the world over and is the reason why war propaganda, for the war, for the mutual hate of the enemy, and for a collective nationalistic sentiment, is present in times of battle. Moreover bravery and the desire to fight for one's nation are also needed to win a war. This can be seen in Proverbs 2, 3, and 5. The man is told to be a brave soldier and socialized to regard dying on the battlefield for his people as the most honourable death one can have. For dying honourably is better than dying with shame, as stated before by Fufuo and Donkor in their chapter on war in Asante of Ghana.

The Dagaaba people on the other hand, were in a constant state of anticipation and fear as at any given moment a group or raiders could attack. This state of mind can be seen in Proverb 9 that tells the listener to always be prepared in case of an emergency. And yet the Dagaaba also needed to brave men to fight off the raiders and so Proverbs 10 and 11 discourage cowardice. However rather than encourage bravery as the Ashanti proverbs do these discourage cowardice. This could be due to the fact that the ones that hide in the caves of Sankana or took the hills surrounding Takpo were cowards, the ones capable of only menial jobs, or the ones left behind, not worthy of being taken. Finally Proverb 8 collected from an elder of Sankana communicates fearlessness and readiness for the enemy army to attack. This proverb shows the pride the people of Sankana have regarding their victories against greater, larger, and superior armed foes. While speaking of the meaning of the name of Sankana, which basically says that it is a hardened place that cannot be defeated, and of these past triumphs one could not but help to notice the pride Boya Banzare, an elder of the village, had in his voice, visage and eyes. Both cases of Ashanti and Dagari proverbs show that the past produces the lessons and wisdom of the present.

The almost reluctant forgiveness of the Ashanti and acceptability of reprimand conveyed in Proverb 12 shows the just and municipal-minded aspect of the Asante. This ability to justly discern mistakes and grievances is needed to rule any nation. Studies on capital punishment show that action needs to be swift, fair, and consistent in order to be a dependable deterrent for deviant behaviour. Thus this proverb shows the experienced ruler the Ashanti is. The Dagaaba proverb on the other hand, Proverb 14 in Appendix G, has a note of humility. It shows that the person recognizes his/her own imperfections. This could be a reflection of the position of the Dagaaba people today. Due to their lack or natural resources colonial England paid little head to the Northern territories and therefore are not as developed as other areas, the Central Region for example, in the nation that do possess a great deal of valuable resources. Thus recognition of the need to forgive for one never knows what the future may bring. Moreover, this proverb reflects the want Monsignor Baghr called the "peaceful" nature of the people, willing to reconcile for the sake of rest and harmony.

The difference in proverbs on strangers can be attributed to several factors. One is the sheer geographic location of both peoples. The Asante are much closer to the coast than the Dagaaba and therefore had more exposure to foreigners. Furthermore, as already stated, the area in which the Asante live is rich in natural resources, such as gold and fertile farmland, and the Dagaaba are not. This factor alone can account for the degrees of exposure and attention received from both groups, for where there was wealth to be found and exploited, unfortunately that is where colonizers and neo-colonizer, the foreigners, went. Thus it is easy to see why there were 9 Ashanti proverbs collected on Europeans and none collected from the Dagaaba. (This is not to say that Dagari proverbs on Europeans do not exist, only that they are probably less prevalent because none were found.) The fact that the Dagari proverb, number 27 in Appendix G, stated that once one is something log or crocodile, it cannot become something else. This also may be a reflection of the stigma of slave origins. It has been said that Northerners do not, or did not, want to be known as coming from the North because it implied slave origins. The proverb could come from this differentiate of peoples. It could also come from the experience of foreigners, such as missionaries and volunteers, comi8ng into the area and living being, and learning with the people, but never being able to fully and completely fit in. Either way it is clearly based on the experiential past of the people.

Lastly, while both Dagari and Ashanti proverbs emphasize the importance of a good leader and respecting said leader, the two groups definitely have different views on power and leaders. The Ashanti proverb, number 32 in Appendix G, merely echoes the Ashanti's desire for power and his/her ambitious nature. As Fufuo and Donkor stated, the Ashanti "will do everything to struggle for a position, to sustain, maintain or retain it" (p. 24). It is often the case that once someone has tasted power, he/she can never go back to being powerless again.

The Asante even have a proverb that states this, "when a slave has ceased to go for water, and (again) is made to go, he runs away." That is when one has been promoted to not fetching water is demoted again to fetching water, discontent is brought and the slave runs away. The other Ashanti proverbs number 30 in Appendix G, states that one may need to reprimand a leader for he/she cannot and does not know everything. This proverb says that a swimmer cannot see his back, but the one standing on the shore can. The may have been a resultant of poor leadership in the past that lead to the people having to pay the consequences.

The Dagaaba, conversely, see being one's own leader, no matter how insignificant or small, as better than following the will of another, no matter how powerful or large. Proverb 36 conveys the message of the experience of the Dagaaba. The origins of both the villages of the Takpo and Sankana are from peoples that migrated due to wars and conflicts (interview, 18 April 1999). And both resisted the powerful armies the Mamprusi, Wala, and British in the face of domination and subjection. Rather than being ruled by someone else, the former case, or taken as a slave or made to raid others to pay an annual tribute or debt, as in the latter case, both groups resisted. Proverb 36 is a verbal representation of this resistance and desire to be leaders of their own wills. Though this desire to lead one's self may seem similar to the Ashanti desire for power, the two are actually different. One wants to be the head of the elephant, while the other would rather be the head of an ant rather than the tail of the elephant.

Conclusion

It was found that there were indeed differences in the proverb collected from the Dagaaba and the Asante. While there were also similarities, the differences were analyzed to show that what one is now in the present is indeed and product of the past experiences and history. While proverbs do reflect the contrasting cultures and very characteristics nature of the people as well. For while we are all most assuredly product of the past, we are also not product of a sole event. To have thought that, or even implied such thinking was a grave mistake on my part because proverbs are a by-product of the circumstances and incidents-plural-in the past. Moreover as proverbs, a form or African oral wisdom and education, play a role ,in the socialization of the people, the people of the present cannot but help be affected by the past, regardless of how far it may seem from the now.

Whether European or African or Asian, proverbs are a window into the knowledge of thousands of years of civilization. They are the insight and illuminators that our ancestors wished for others to learn from. They are the building blocks on which we stand and the mistakes we do not need to make ourselves. They are still relevant today.

Unfortunately they are also in danger of becoming lost. In an age of growing cultural hegemony proverbs and the traditional sagacity of the past are being lost.

Nowadays, information comes to people in both traditional forms, culture, and new data entering the system, what Trigger in his article "Inequality and Communication in Early Civilization," calls 'news.' Trigger states that as the group increase in size the individual's access to both types of information a matter of specialization that then requires a hierarchical structure to regulate the information. The power in the society becomes directly related to the control of the distribution of information vital to the management of said society. Thus, Trigger concludes, a basis is laid for the breakdown of the acquisition and retention of resources by the politically powerful..

That is, as one controls the information supplied to the public, so does one control the thinking and ultimately management of the people as well. This is clear in the way Western formal education has begun to assimilate people away from more traditional means of work, religion, language, way of life, and even ideological framework. The indigenous traditions, it's culture and past, are all too rapidly being tossed aside and the consequences are tremendous indeed.

Yet it seems that people are entangled between a rock and a hard place. As the Chief of Takpo said, his people are:

Caught in the dilemma of needing to know English to study other things, like Medicine and technology at higher levels of education, but also needing to know Our own language because so much of who one is-the way one thinks, Gestures, everything-effected by language (interviews, 18 April 1999).

The lure of 'development' is a potent one and indeed it does offer society benefit, such as decreased infant death, longer life expectancies, and the like. Exactly what are we willing to sacrifice for these things? Our own mother? Our souls? Our culture and heritage? So where does this leave one? Does one push away what the other has to offer in the face of saving what is his\her own? Indeed James Scott's Domination and the Art of Resistance, suggest something like this. He maintains that linguistic practices are central to the dissemination of foreign ideology and resistance of cultural hegemony (cited in Gal "Language and the 'Art of Resistance' (review article)"). Yet both cultures and societies have much to offer the other. No one is weak the other strong, and where one is blind the other can see. There needs to be a place of mutual meeting. A place where there is mutual cognition of the fact that we all have something to offer, and that though it may seem insignificant is actually of great consequence to all peoples. Sadly though we are a stubborn race, the human race that is. We like to think that we have the answers, need to be strong in those convictions and therefore cannot even listen to what another has to say. If only we were all wise, then a word would be enough, as the Akan and Dagaaba proverbs say "a word to the wise is enough." Instead we seem to be the too cleaver bird who weaves its wings into its nest.

For further work, personally, I would like to actually apply this knowledge and see how proverbs could be implemented into the growing and already existing formal education system. Concerning further research, it would be interesting to take and in-depth look at both the Ashanti and Dagaaba people and their proverbs separately to get a clearer picture of how the past produces proverbs.

Bibliography

Agyakwa, K. O. <u>The Education Wisdom of Our Fathers</u>. Cape Coast, Ghana" Department of Education Foundations, 1979

Baghar, Monsignor Francis. Interview. Saint Francis Xavier Secondary School, Wa, Upper West Region, Ghana, 24 May 1999.

Banzara, Boya. Interview. Sankana Village, Upper West Region, Ghana, 19 April 1999.

Darimani, Abdulai. Conversation. Biyad Enterprises, Wa, Upper West Region, Ghana, 23 April, 1999.

Der, Benedict G. The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana. Accra, Ghana. Woeli, 1998.

Der, Benedict G. "The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana." Lecture. Sasakawa Centre, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana, 25 March 1999.

Der, Benedict G. Interview. Department of History, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana, 7 April 1999.

Field, M. J. <u>Searching for Security: An Ethnographic Study of Rural Ghana</u>. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1960.

Fufuo. J. W. & Donkor, C. E. <u>Asante of Ghana: People With A Soul</u>. Accra, Ghana: Anowuo Educational, 1989.

Gal, Susan. "Language and the 'Arts of Resistance' (review article)." <u>Cultural Anthropology</u>, vol. 10, August 1995, pp. 407-424.

Goody, Jack. Social Organisation of the Lowilli. Glasgow, Ireland: Oxford, 1967.

Kvale, Steinar. <u>Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing</u>. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1996.

Kyemaloo, Monsignor Lawrence. Interview. Bishop's House, Wa, Upper West Region, 24 April 1999.

Mbiti, John. "Children Conger Glory On A Home: Introduction to the African Proverb Series." Accra: Ghana, Asempa, 1997.

Naa of Kozokala. Interview. Kozokala Chief's Palace. Upper West Region, 20 April 1999.

Naa of Takpo. Interview. Takpo Chief's Palace, Upper West Region, 18 April 1999.

Naa of Takpo. Interview. Takpo Chief's Palace, Upper West Region, 22 April 1999

Obeng, Samuel Gyasi. "Verbal Indirection in Akan Formal Discourse." Journal O Pragmatics, vol. 21, Jan 1994, pp. 37-65.

Opoku, Kofi Asare. Hearing and Keeping: Akan Proverbs. (Volume 2 of 5). Accra: Ghana: Asempa, 1997.

Owusu-Sarpong. Interview. Linguistics Department, University of Science and Technology, 13 April 1999.

Rattray, R. S. Ashanti Proverbs: The Primitive Ethics Of A Savage People. London: Oxford University, 1914.

Rattray, R. S. Ashanti. London: Oxford University, 1923.

Tinuoye, Olayeni. Interview. Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 27 April 1999.

Trigger, Bruce. G. "Inequality and communication in early civilizations." Anthropological, volume 18, 1976, pp. 27-52.

Wilks, Ivor. Wa and the Wala. Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1989.

Yeboah, Nana Obiri. Interview. National Centre for Culture, Kumasi, Ghana, 15 April 1999.

Appendix A

The Ashanti Interview Questions.

- 1. How have proverbs shaped your life?
- 2. Can you recall when you first heard a proverb? Who was it from?
- 3. What is the origin of proverbs?
- 4. What do proverbs reflect about Ashanti culture?
- 5. Why do you think that there can be different interpretations of the same proverb?
- 6. How do you think history, the past, shapes proverbs?
- 7. What do you see as the future of Ashanti proverbs in the face of the rapid growth of Western formal educational and loss of value for traditional knowledge and learning?

Appendix B

The Dagaaba Interview Questions

- 1. How have proverbs shaped your life?
- 2. Can you recall when you first heard a proverb? Who was it from?
- 3. What is the origin of proverbs?
- 4. What do proverbs reflect about Dagaaba culture?
- 5. Why do you think that there can be different interpretations of the same proverb?
- 6. How do you think history, the past, shapes proverbs?
- 7. What do you see as the future of Dagaaba proverbs in the face of the rapid growth of Western formal educational and loss of value for traditional knowledge and learning?

Appendix C

The Dagaaba Cultural Interview Questions

- 1. What are the cultural values of the Dagaaba?
- 2. What would be the most important things to teach a Dagaaba child?
- 3. How do proverbs reflect those cultural values?
- 4. Can you explain more about the patrilineal system of the Dagaaba?
- 5. What is the history or origin of the people?
- 6. How were the Dagaaba people involved in the slave raids that were prevalent in the last 19th century? Were they raided? Raiders?
- 7. How do you think that effected to Dagaaba culture and people?
- 8. How do you think history shapes proverbs?

Appendix D

Proverb Classification (According to Agyakwa)

- 1. Content Classification grouped together according to doctrine expressed
- 2. Negative-Positive Statement (negative) = "A dog can catch some animals, but cannot catch a lion"

(positive) = "A kitten catches only a baby mouse"

3. Negative-Positive Reward - classified according to type of reward that result from performance/non-performance of a particular action.

(negative) = "A lazy man's farm is a breeding ground for snakes

(positive) = "The one who goes to fetch water (from the stream) does not drink mud"

4. General or Particular-

- General no reference to a specific person, place, times, or circumstance; wide universal application (two types).
 - (a). Universal prohibitive negative in form, calling attention to certain dangerous or improvident acts that no normal members of society ever perform.
 - (b). Universal essentials recommend certain positive actions or ways of going about certain affairs in daily lives.
- Particular expresses or embodies a specific concrete truth; specific to initial reference, but with wider universal application ("It was because of one piece of roasted yam that the town of Abotachi was ruined." Abotachi was a large town that came to ruin over a trivial domestic matter that was not dealt with).

5. <u>Hypothetical or Apodictic-</u>

- Hypothetical contains conditional statement that expresses a limited degree of certainty based on a particular isolated case. ("If a child commits 9 crimes, he bears the punishment for 5 of them." Person responsible for ½ crimes, family or society responsible for the other half.)
- Apodictic expresses higher degree of certainty or credibility as hypothetical saying becomes more common or generalized, and thus assumes a categorical form.

Appendix E

Ashanti Proverbs Collected

- 1. The testing of the Supreme Being ha assigned to you cannot be avoided.
- 2. If the Supreme Being does not kill you, but a human being kills you, you do not die
- 3. When the Supreme Being fills you gourd cup full of wine and human being pours it away, He will fill it up again for you.
- 4. If the Supreme Being gives you sickness, He (also) gives you medicine.
- 5. It is the Supreme Being who pounds the fufu for the one without arms.
- 6. All men are the children of the Supreme Being, no one is a child of the asaase.
- 7. When death that has killed your mother and your father is there, you do not say to him, "I alone remain."
- 8. Death's sickle does not reap one place alone.
- 9. All the different forms Death takes are just one death.
- 10. If both your father-in-law and Death appoint a day for you to do some work, it is Death's you will do first.
- 11. If Death overtakes you, you do not say "Look there is an old woman (take her)!"
- 12. Death has the key to open the miser's chest.
- 13. Death is not a sleeping-room that can be entered and come out again.
- 14. "I'm going to die tomorrow, I'm going to die today, do they begin the funeral custom?
- 15. When you are (really) dying, you do not say, "Oh, I'm dying! Oh, I'm dying!"
- 16. If one could know where death resides, one would never stop there.
- 17. When a man has met his death through having stumbled, one does not run to attend the funeral of such a man.
- 18. When an army suffers defeat a horn is not blown in its honour
- 19. The slain are not counted before the (hostile) army has been routed.
- 20. An army is driven back by courage, not insults, how ever many.
- 21. The (victorious) army slay him who shouts challenges and insults, but spares the brave man.
- 22. An army does not know what is at the rear of the army
- 23. A man is made at the fore front of the battle and not (by remaining) at home.
- 24. When war comes, it is rumours that cause the fall of the town.
- 25. When you are fighting black ants, and they will not go away, you do not put palm nuts amongst them.
- 26. When one goes to war, it is against one's father's children.

- 27. No one carries a sick man on his back when going to war.
- 28. The hunter's name clings to the elephant's meat.
- 29. The hunter does not spare the sick animal.
- 30. No one went with the hunter to the bush (i.e. there is no one to contradict you, for you were alone when it happened).
- 31. When the gun bursts and wounds the hunter, the man who happens to eat venison is not blamed for the accident.
- 32. It is (only) when a gun has a man cock it, that it performs war-like deeds.
- 33. A gun does not burst in Europe and wounds a man in Africa
- 34. A gun shot does not wound one animal and cause pain to another.
- 35. There is no such thing as "a bad chief", though "a bad vassal chief" may be found.
- 36. When chief is going to compel you to do something, he does so by the authority of the people.
- 37. When a chief is going to kill you, it is useless consulting the lots.
- 38. When you and a chief are on good, intimate terms (some day) he will kill you.
- 39. One does not speak out one's mind in the presences of a chief, but behind his back one does.
- 40. When a chief has good counsellors, then his reign is peaceful.
- 41. When a freeman asks for something, it is something very big he lacks
- 42. A freeman's name is never lost.
- 43. Nobility should be borne as one eats fish (humbly) and not as one partakes of elephant flesh (proudly).
- 44. Fame of being noble born does not spread abroad, it's fame of riches.
- 45. When a freeman does not fight, the slave runs away.
- 46. Among royalty no one is a child.
- 47. An ancient name cannot be worked or eaten; after all money is the thing.
- 48. When the freeman is there, the slave does not take command.
- 49. When a freeman dies, a slave succeeds
- 50. A slave does not choose his master.
- 51. A slave does not make up his own mind about going to war.
- 52. A slave knows his master.
- 53. A slave who is not well behaved, the cause can be traced to his master.
- 54. When a slave eats a sheep, he is in trouble.
- 55. A slave who does not commit murder, his master is not killed.
- 56. A slave who knows how to serve will be permitted to take hi own earning.
- 57. A slave is (as a matter of course) guilty.

- 58. A slave does not point out where good sticks for building are to be found.
- 59. A slave does not eat the second yam crop without good reason.
- 60. A slave's wisdom is in his mater's head.
- 61. When a slave has ceased to go for water, and (again) is made to go, he runs away.
- 62. A slave is like unto corn ground into flour, when a little water is sprinkled on it, it becomes soft.
- 63. A slave like the flint on the striker of gun which, if it were wanting, would make the gun useless.
- 64. When you have no master, someone catches you and sells you for what you are worth
- 65. After a stranger has gone, there is always something to be said about him. (good or bad)
- 66. A stranger may have big eyes, but he does not see unto what is going on among the people, whereas the town's man with small eyes, he knows all the town's affairs.
- 67. A stranger is like a child.
- 68. A stranger is like unto the water running over the ground after a rain storm (which soon dries up and leaves little trace behind).
- 69. A stranger does not break laws.
- 70. When you accept the hospitality of a stranger, your dignity is small.
- 71. All men would like to go to Europe, it is the opportunity they lack.
- 72. It would not be difficult to go to Europe, if it were not for the sea
- 73. It is not Europe that distresses me, it's the beach that's the difficulty.
- 74. It is thanks to the white man that we all wear clothes
- 75. By virtue of wisdom, the white men mount the sea.
- 76. If anyone had knowledge previous to his birth that he was going to have to suffer from poverty, then he would have gone to the white men that he would have been born of them.
- 77. When you eat the white man's pay, you fight at the cannon's mouth.
- 78. When your mother lives in Africa and your father in Europe, and when there is something you want, you do not have to wait for it.
- 79. Fear him who is near you.
- 80. Fear him who says he will take from you, but do not fear him who says "I am going to give you."
- 81. Because I fear to be killed I have made my neck short
- 82. I do not fear the front of battle, much les the front where words are weapons.
- 83. If you are afraid to incur popularity, you have your knife take to flay a python.

- 84. When you fear to marry a chief, you will give birth to a nameless child.
- 85. When you fear (to remove) a slave's excrement, you look on it too many times.
- 86. When you hate your friend's child, your own child dies a sudden death.
- 87. When a man is disliked, he is blamed for all kinds of things
- 88. When someone hates you, he makes malignant remarks about you.
- 89. When someone hates you, he scratches you. (It is a disgrace to have marks on one's body because it is considered to be a mark of slave origin).
- 90. When someone hates you, he reminds you of the promise you made (and have not fulfilled).
- 91. There is no medicine to cure hatred.
- 92. (Even) if you hate your mother, you do not hand her over to the enemy.
- 93. Among friends, there are some who are greater.
- 94. When you covet something to your friend, you work for it, but do not steal (it).
- 95. Some of the blood on the tongue is spewed out and the rest is swallowed.
- 96. It is "We are eating and we shall eat again" which made the stranger happy.
- 97. "Let the stranger eat, and go back to his/her place of origin" makes the relative grow lean.²
- 98. A word to the wise is enough.
- 99. Though your legs stomp on him, it does not kill him.
- 100. If you remove little pieces of meat stuck in your teeth, you will have no meat to eat.
- 101. Trouble never seeks man, man seeks trouble.
- 102. If something has not struck the palm tree, the palm tree would not have made a noise.
- 103. If someone has made a mistake to kill an animal, don't take a knife and go and slaughter a cow.³
- 104. It does not befit an Akan to lose face.⁴

_

¹ Proverbs 1-94 collected from Rattray's Ashanti Proverbs: The Primitive Ethics of a Savage People. (Refer to Bibliography).

² Proverbs 95-97 collected from Asare Opoku's Hearing and Keeping: Akan Proverbs. (Refer to Bibliography)

³ Proverbs 98-103 collected from interview with Nana Obiri Yeboah (Refer to Bibliography).

⁴ Proverb 104 collected from Dr. Owusu-Sarpong. (Refer to Bibliography).

Appendix F

Dagaaba Proverbs Collected

- 1. Today does not allow yesterday to speak.
- 2. When hunting rabbits, rouse them from their hiding places and another rouses another.
- 3. The meat that you eat on the firewood of your father is what you eat.
- 4. The way a bat rest makes it shit on itself.
- 5. Not one person gets into trouble.
- 6. If you open a man's bottom, and he resists, and you insist, you will get shit.
- 7. If you follow the fisherman, you will get mud.
- 8. Show me your friend and I'll show you your character.
- 9. The one who speaks well cannot inherit the dumb.
- 10. The lead cow shows the way.
- 11. When you seek yesterday, you are likely to divulge something.
- 12. Two wise men don't share the cat head.
- 13. Don't defend a child who can speak for himself.
- 14. If you are a young woman, your mother cannot bear your first child for you.
- 15. The clever bird who can weave it's next, can weave it's wings in too.
- 16. The cow is strong compared to the bird, the cow can break the eggs and the bird can retaliate with spreading the cow's shit around.
- 17. If the fowl can't get the water to drink, it can sprinkle to water.
- 18. Donkey doesn't know that salt is tasty.
- 19. The birime says that "the malt that is on the roof top is sour"
- 20. The head says it has no hand in wrestling, but when the body is thrown, you land on your head.
- 21. You use the chief monkey's head to break the baba fruit.
- 22. The hen doesn't thank the refuse dump everyday.
- 23. If you don't put water into the medicine pot and it rains, don't need to empty the pot.
- 24. In one town the one who is the hunter may be the roaster in another town.
- 25. A kind of any who says all hands must go on deck that does it.
- 26. Tug of war can break the calabash.
- 27. He, who does good, does good for himself, he who does bad, does bad for himself.

- 28. Some one you life is life can open a cripple.
- 29. The stranger young lady doesn't know there are more handsome people
- 30. You cannot use both eyes to look into the bottle.
- 31. Every good will rebound on you, every bad will rebound on you.
- 32. Not one woman born a warrior.
- 33. In a village they may kill lizards, but in another village you may be a roaster.
- 34. People say they are coming, they should come.
- 35. If it should spoil, it should spoil good news in nothing to us.
- 36. We forgive because of tomorrow.
- 37. Because of relations, thorough humility you can forgive.
- 38. The day the leg of the billy-goat is broken, that day they know the path home.
- 39. The urine of a circumcised penis goes a long distance, but in the end it comes back to where it started.
- 40. A person once bitten by a snake is always afraid of a worm.
- 41. An old log in the water can never become a crocodile.
- 42. If you are holding the bow and arrow of a chief, you must keep your own (in case of an emergency).
- 43. The blood from your forehead won't escape your nose.²
- 44. Whilst carrying the chief's quiver, make sure you carry your own.
- 45. It is those who survive after the war who live to enjoy the glory of the war-they are the cowards.
- 46. Cowards, or ones handling menial jobs, are the ones who live to build the family line, tell the story, or have the glory (all the courageous ones die).
- 47. Prevention is better than cure.
- 48. Visitor, stranger dances, but does not sing.
- 49. If you are a visitor, and you want to eat all the good things, you will be caught in the rain.
- 50. That man knows the difference between a goat's and a dog's roof.
- 51. We forgive because of tomorrow.
- 52. Do good, do good for yourself, do bad, it will bounce back on you.
- 53. Even rich people who think they have everything, what they need may be in the house of the poor man.
- 54. A chief who breeds guinea fowl does not let them come into the house.

¹ Proverbs 1-31 collected from chief of Taco. Interview (Refer to Bibliography).

² Proverbs 32-42 collected from Banana. Interview. (Refer to Bibliography).

- 55. When the chief cases the wild guinea fowl for soup, that day you will not eat the soup.
- 56. Dare not refuse a chief's assignment.³
- 57. A child who obeys always has lots of gifts, a lazy child always has nothing.
- 58. Eat alone, die alone.⁴
- 59. The eye has no room for strangers
- 60. When the eye is weeping, the nose must also weep.
- 61. Don't reach me, it's better that I leave my hand.
- 62. One finger does not eat the okro soup.
- 63. If something is flying, the offspring will also fly.
- 64. To be the head of an ant is better than being the tail of an elephant.
- 65. Sometimes when you wish to destroy the toad by throwing it on the ground, you may accidentally throw it into the water.⁵

³ Proverbs 43-56 collected from Chief of Taco Interview. (Refer to Bibliography).

⁴ Proverbs 57-58 collected from Monsignor Lawrence Kyemaloo. Interview (Refer to Bibliography).

⁵ Proverbs 59-65 collected from Abdulai Darimani. Conversation (Refer to Bibliography).

Appendix G

Proverbs Analyzed

War and Courage:

- Ashanti
 - 1. An army is driven back by courage, not insults, how ever many.
 - 2. A man is made at the forefront of the battle and not (by remaining) at home.
 - 3. When war comes, it is rumours that cause the fall of the town.
 - 4. When one goes to war, it is against one's father's children.
 - 5. It is on the battlefield that the brave person displays his courage, not in the house.
- Dagari
 - 8. People say they are coming, they should come, not just say
 - 9. If you are keeping the chief's bow and arrow, you must keep your own (in case of an emergency).
 - 10. It is those who survive during the war that live to enjoy the glory of the war, they are the cowards.
 - 11. It is the cowards (one handling the menial jobs) who live to built the family line, tell the story, or have the glory (all the courageous one die).

Forgiveness:-

- Ashanti
 - 12. Some of the blood on the tongue is spewed out and the rest is swallowed.
 - 13. Do good, do good for yourself, do bad, do bad for yourself.
- Dagari
 - 14. We forgive because of tomorrow
 - 15. Do good, do good for yourself, do bad, do bad for yourself.

Strangers:-

- Ashanti
 - 16. It was "We are eating and shall eat again" which made the stranger happy.

- 17. "Let the stranger eat, and go back to his/her place of origin" makes the relative grow lean.
- 18. A stranger may have big eyes, but he does not see unto what is going on among the people, whereas the town's man with small eyes, he knows all the town's affairs.
- 19. A stranger is like a child.
- 20. A stranger is like unto the water running over the ground after a rain storm, (which soon dries up and leaves little trace behind).
- 21. A stranger does not break laws.
- 22. When you accept the hospitality of a stranger, your dignity is small.

Dagari –

- 24. The eyes have no room for a stranger.
- 25. The visitor/stranger dances, but does not sing.
- 26. That man knows the difference between a goat's roof and a dog's roof.
- 27. An old log inside the water can never become a crocodile.

■ Ashanti –

- 29. When a chief's town is left-handed, all his subjects are lame.
- 30. The swimmer does not see his/her own back.
- 31. When a chief is going to kill you, it is useless consulting the lots.
- 32. If power is for sale, sell you mother to obtain it.

Dagari –

- 33. A lead cow shows the way.
- 34. You use the chief monkey's head to break open the baba fruit.
- 35. Dare not refuse a chief's assignment.
- 36. To be the head of an ant is better than being the tail of an elephant.