OUR PAST, OUR GUIDE: A STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF APOƆ FESTIVAL SONGS OF THE PEOPLE OF TECHIMAN IN THE BONO EAST REGION OF GHANA

BY

GERTRUDE NYARKO-TAKYI

(B.A. ENGLISH)

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. I further declare that to the best of my knowledge, this thesis does not contain any material previously published by any person or any material which has been accepted for the award of any degree of a university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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Gertrude Nyarko-Takyi (PG 9747017)	……	…….
Student (PG 9747017)	Signature	Date

Certified by:

Dr. Peter Authur	……	…….
Supervisor	Signature	Date

Certified by:

Dr. Philomina Yeboah	……	…….
Head of Department	Signature	Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Ella, Benjamin, Daniel, and Allan.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I dedicate this work, first of all, to God almighty for giving me the strength, wisdom and knowledge I needed throughout the journey.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Peter Authur for his guidance and for the opportunity he has granted me to have published works with him. I am most grateful.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the content of songs performed at traditional festivals in Ghana. The song texts are information source mostly forsaken in the study of traditions and cultures, yet, they hold a significant part of oral history. This paper specifically analyses the song texts of *Apoɔ* festival songs which is performed by the people of Techiman. *Apoɔ* song texts are enriched with ethical and moral values. This study examines how these positive values are used to control the behaviour of the indigenes of Techiman. The paper relies on primary data gathered through personal interviews conducted with citizens of Techiman, songs recorded through participant observation and their transcription. The study also examines *Apoɔ* songs from the perspective of performance drawing on the major theories of Richard Bauman. Some of the findings are that despite the incursion of foreign culture and modern methods of controlling the society, *Apoɔ* festival songs are still used as a medium for social control in the Techiman Municipality. It is concluded that the society has got its own in-built mechanism for morality. Chiefs and policy makers must therefore work assiduously to help sustain our rich heritage which seems to be diminishing in recent times. *Apoɔ* festival songs reveal the virtues and vices, as well as project the culture, customs and traditions of the people of Techiman.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.0 Background to Research

In many parts of Africa, particularly Ghana, acts of indiscipline, immorality, delinquency and crime "have become the main incitements to the destabilization of the development of the continent" (Selby 2008). The problem of indiscipline and delinquency has "persisted over years and it's becoming a boil in the marrow" (Moye 2015:81). These acts have even "militated against effective teaching and learning hence, it has significantly affected the production of useful, acceptable and responsible members of the society" (Moye 2015:81). The spate of indiscipline, immorality and crime on this continent has certainly become a source of worry for all in contemporary African society. We are "living in challenging times where many parents have lost grip on their children due to poverty and lack of parental guidance and neglect" (Duodo, 2009). Therefore, "The rate at which we are witnessing indiscipline amongst the youth is frightening" (Duodo, 2009).

Unfortunately, "moral and spiritual values have been shunned by society all in the name of modernity and technology. Society seems to have lost track of the essence of a disciplined life" (Selby 2008). With the "advent of foreign religions and modernity" (Akintan 2013), most people regard our culture and traditions as ungodly, devilish, and outmoded, and therefore look at our cultural practices with disdain. Therefore, few people give the necessary respect to our culture and partake in their observance and celebration (Akintan 2013). Most partakers also do so for entertainment since in recent times, the entertainment aspect overshadows the ethical and moral values in our cultural practices (Akintan, 2013). However, our customs and culture

are embedded in or imbedded with positive ethical and moral values which aid in checking as well as controlling the behaviour of people in the society.

The Deputy Minister for Chieftaincy and Traditional Affairs, Mr. Yaw Effah-Baafi, during 2009 *Apoɔ* celebration asked *Nananom* (traditional rulers) to "reflect on what went wrong and what has happened to our positive moral values which our forefathers and mothers applied in nurturing the youth into responsible adults" (Duodo, 2009). The point being made here is that, good societal values are engrained in our culture, although Christian and Islamic religion has had great influence on the observance of these traditional ceremonies. Yet, their significance in the lives of individuals and the society is greatly felt. *Nananom* (Traditional leaders) are thereby called upon to help in sustaining valuable ancient traditions which taught our people, especially, the youth good moral values.

Evidently, these 'positive ethical and moral values' are what our contemporary society needs in order to control the behaviour of people. One of such cultural events which has positive impact on the society is the traditional Festival. Festivals "give deeper meaning to the social, political" (Akintan 2013), and religious life of the people who celebrate them. Festivals enable society to inculcate ethical and moral values in its people which guide them to live morally upright lives. The *Apoɔ* Festival celebrated by the people of Techiman of Bono East region of Ghana is one of the festivals which helps in putting people's behaviour in the society in check. *Apoɔ* festival songs specifically convey significant messages which are culminated in series of performances and entertainment. These messages are meant to sensitize the society by bringing to the fore the virtues and vices in the society. This forms the basis of this study. This paper focuses on how *Apoɔ* festival songs are used as a tool to control social vices such as indiscipline, immorality, crime and other deviant behaviours in the society. It also looks at the importance of *Apoɔ* festival songs and its impact on the people of Techiman municipality.

1.1 Statement of Problem

The rate of indiscipline and crime among the youth is frightening in recent times. There are several reports on indiscipline and crime in our various schools and communities (Moye,2015). This situation has reached a point that people defy the laws of the society with impunity. An attempt to curb or eradicate these ills in the society has become problematic for the government, policy makers and scholars of this continent since there seems to be no definite solution to this problem. And so, I sort for a way to contributing to a custom that could help curtail this canker since a viable solution can be found in our customs and traditions. Our customs and traditions are embedded with positive moral, ethical and cultural values which help to keep people's behaviour and conduct in check. The Bonos have a special way of inculcating positive moral and ethical values in their youngers through the *Apoɔ* festival. Many people have written on the *Apoɔ* Festival of Techiman. Rattray (1923) and Asihene (1980) gives sociological account on *Apoɔ* Festival and its songs. Duodo (2009) dwells on the purpose and significance of *Apoɔ* Festival while Adom (2016 & 2017), Powell (2017) and others also have a general overview by highlighting mainly on the religious, ethical and cultural aspects of *Apoɔ* Festival as a form of social control in the Techiman traditional area. They suggested further studies be conducted in this area. Although there is available literature on *Apoɔ* Festival and its songs, very little shows how *Apoɔ* songs could be studied literary hence, this thesis attempts to fill that gap. This paper therefore takes a look at how *Apoɔ* song texts are used to check the behaviour of people in society. It also seeks to find out how the literary aspects in *Apoɔ* songs help to correct deviance in the people of Techiman.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of this study is to:

i. examine the literary structures of *Apoɔ* song texts that warn the society against social deviance.
ii. analyze how the literary structures of *Apoɔ* insult songs help to correct deviance among the Bono East people.
iii. look at the poetics of *Apoɔ* songs as performance being used as a medium of social control in Techiman.

1.3 Research Questions

i. How do the literary structures of *Apoɔ* song texts warn the society against social deviance?
ii. In which ways do the literary structures of Apoɔ insult songs help correct deviance among the Bono East people?
iii. In which ways are the poetics of *Apoɔ* songs as performance being used as a medium for social control in Techiman?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Policy makers and all stakeholders will find the result of this study helpful in many ways:

i. This thesis will serve as a source of further knowledge in solving problems that might be affecting the effective measures being taken to curb the acts of indiscipline and immorality in the country.
ii. The findings of this study will add up to the body of knowledge already existing and add a fresh angle of the way these cultural practices are seen.

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iii. It also hoped to aid stakeholders, policy makers and educators in developing policies that will help preserve, promote and uphold our tradition and culture.

iv. The results of the study will provide important information about the culture and customs of the Bono East people to researchers, educators, policy makers, stakeholders and many more.

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1.5 Research Methods

This study was conducted at Techiman, the capital of Bono East Region of Ghana. Data was collected in the natural setting; the researcher tends to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue under study (Creswell, 2008). How the research was carried out, and the various techniques employed to accumulate the required data for the study thereby contributing to the ethical and moral values of the *Apoɔ* songs of the Bono East people are discussed and presented in detail. It encompasses the research design; the researcher chooses qualitative approach, research instrument for data collection, observation, participant observation, interviews conducted, sample design, population, types of data, transcription of video and audio files, research approach, ethical consideration, biases, data analysis plan, as well as the theory used for the analysis.

1.5.1 Research Design

Research designs are plans and routine for research that span the choices from wide assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2008). He adds that the research design allows the researcher acquire answers to the questions posed.

This study is purely historical such that it digs into socio-cultural benefits derived from *Apoɔ* Festival and *Apoɔ* songs. The researcher chose qualitative research method thus, ethnography because this is an historical event and the best way to know what is exactly happening, is to go

to the people being studied. These three stances were taken into consideration: to hear what they say about what they do, get to know what they do and allow them to comment on what they do in order to get answers to the research questions.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define ethnography as a qualitative methodology that lends itself to the study of the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviours of small societies, involving participation and observation over a period, and the interpretation of data collected. Geertz remarks that ethnographer's task is that of explaining culture through thick description, which offers a detailed knowledge of how people feel, think, imagine and perceive their world (Greetz, 1973:312; Naidoo, 2012; Kharel, 2015:148).

1.5.2 Data Collection Instrument

This occurred in a natural setting and so the best I could do to elicit for information was through observation, interviews, being with them, taking pictures, recording videos, taking notes in my diary, and transcribing audio and video files into textual facts. These instruments were necessary due to the study which involved series of performances.

1.5.3 Observation

Robson (2002:310) says, what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation provides a reality check. It enables a researcher to look afresh at everyday behaviour that otherwise might be taken for granted, expected or go unnoticed. It also offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:415). The researcher was first a participant observer but when performers asked her to join them in the various performances, she became an observant participant. Observing the performance of *Apoɔ* songs during the period of *Apoɔ* celebration forms fundamental part of this thesis. Observation took place mainly at the forecourt of the

Omanhene's palace; Nana Taa Mensah's palace, *Amanfum* (a sacred place), and the principal streets of Techiman.

1.5.4 Participant Observation

Dewalt & Dewalt (2002) defines Participant observation as the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. In order for the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study, participant observations were keen in gathering data for the study. During the period of the celebration, the researcher took part in the various *Apoɔ* performances which made her a complete participant in most of the activities. This provided the opportunity for the researcher to interact with participants, and made it easier for the researcher to collect relevant information for the study from participants and audience as the activities occur. In this way, the researcher got first-hand information and experience with participants. She was able to record information and activities as they occur. Sample of the observation guide can be found in appendix I.

1.5.5 Interviews Conducted

Interview as defined by Kvale (1996:14) is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, and she sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasizes the social situatedness of research data. It is an intercommunication in which oral questions are posed by the interviewer to bring out oral feedback from the interviewee. There was the need for the researcher to meet face-to-face with respondents and participants since not all of them could be observed directly, and to elicit views or opinions in relation to *Apoɔ* festival and *Apoɔ* songs. She sought permission from the interviewees before commencing and recording their responses. She conducted a dyadic

interview with the chief priest, chiefs, queen mothers and linguists. The researcher chose this form of interview with these individuals due to their experience and knowledge on the phenomenon under study. This is to get in-depth information from them since they are the custodians of the *Apoɔ* ceremony.

The researcher also conducted triadic interview with the senior citizens, elite Christians and illiterate Christians and indigenes in order to interact and generate specialised ideas from both the customary and contemporary perspective. The researcher again conducted multiple group interviews with the singers, the youth and audience in order to solicit their general views on *Apoɔ* festival and *Apoɔ* songs. This made it possible for the researcher to take control over the line of questioning.

The researcher also made use of semi structured interview to collect data from participants and respondents. The choice of interview was because the correspondents were both literates and illiterates. The illiterates and the youth were more comfortable with giving oral answers to few questions than writing or answering many questions. The researcher wanted to get the views on specific issues such as the origin of *Apoɔ* festival and its songs from the custodians and overseers of the *Apoɔ* festival, so she designed an interview guide which was used in conducting interviews with such individuals to ascertain the truth. She made use of controlled interview to cross-check and verify such information to gather accurate data for this thesis. The researcher also used generally open-ended questions to interact and generate ideas from the people. In this way, most participants freely expressed their views thereby giving out even some hidden secrets on the issue being discussed. A telephone interview was conducted with some participants as a follow up. The channel of communication was in Bono, Asante Twi and English. Responses were written in a dairy or recorded in a form of audio/visual files where

necessary. Sample of the interview guide can be found in appendix II. The names of the respondents were mentioned in Chapter Two, Three, Four and Five of this study.

1.5.6 Population of the Study

The chiefs, sub-chiefs, queen mothers, traditional priests, linguists (spokespersons), senior citizens, the youth, singers, elite and illiterate Christians, elite and illiterate indigenes and people with knowledge in *Apoɔ* festival constitute the target population for the study.

1.5.7 Sampling

A sample is "a smaller (but hopefully representative) collection of units from a population used to determine truths about that population" (Field, 2005). To get all the various and specific correspondents for the study, the researcher chose purposive and random sampling technique.

1.5.8 Purposive Sampling

The researcher purposefully selected people who are well informed on the phenomenon under study. They are the custodians of the culture of Techiman. These people are the *Okomfoɔ* (chief priest), chiefs, sub-chiefs, queen mothers and the linguist.

1.5.9 Random Sampling

A random sampling "is a probability sample where every individual has an equal and independent probability of being selected in the sample" (Singh, 2016). This is from the street communication, people were handpicked by the researcher to be included in the study based on their experiences, judgement and knowledge on the topic under study. This sampling technique was necessary because it was to validate, confirm and reinforce the information already collected.

- **Participants**

These are the people with in-depth knowledge on the issue being studied, these people are the custodians of the culture of Techiman

- **Informants**

They are the knowledge carriers, they can be observers or participants and they are for validity and reliability. These people are the youth and the audience.

- **Respondents**

They are the people the researcher asks questions from because of their age or knowledge. They may be knowledge carriers or non-knowledge carriers. They are for validity and reliability.

1.5.10 Data

Primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary source of data was the song texts and the secondary source of data was collected form the library, and literature from experts in the form of journals, publications, books, articles, bibliographies, reports, e-books, conference reports, encyclopaedias and theses.

1.5.11 Transcribing of Audio and Video Files

The verbal intercommunication recorded from the interviews with respondents during the *Apoɔ* celebration were transcribed into text facts as accurately as possible. The researcher also watched the videos recorded repeatedly to get clearer sound and words of the contents of the songs used during the *Apoɔ* celebration. These videos were transcribed into texts to describe *Apoɔ* festival and the songs performed during the celebration of the festival.

1.5.12 Research Approach

After seeking permission from the paramount chief of Techiman traditional area, the researcher conducted personal interviews with some indigenes of the area. The researcher was able to arrange and hold meetings with the chiefs, queen mothers and the traditional priests at their residences or palace with the assistance of Nana Ama Anima (the linguist). The researcher presented a bottle of schnapps before interviewing some of the chiefs. Since the researcher is a native of the town, she did not have difficulty in interviewing other respondents. However, a few youths demanded drinks before allowing an interview with the researcher. Some of the informants and respondents did not want to be recorded on phone or captured on camera so the researcher wrote down their answers in the form of notes. The interview sessions were either recorded with a smart phone, captured on a digital camera or a video recorder. Performances were observed mainly on the principal streets and the forecourt of the chief's palace. Live performances were recorded with a mobile phone and a video recorder at close range. At a point some videos were taken from afar to capture the whole performance when the performers were in groups. Pictures were also taken with a digital camera. Due to the nature of the activities involved in the celebrations, the researcher employed the help of an assistant who is a professional to take pictures and record videos of the needed performances for documentation especially, whenever the researcher was partaking in the performance. Due to the loud sounds from the singing and drumming which accompanied the performances, the words of most songs could not be heard clearly so the researcher paid two different singing groups to sing for her to record at close range. The researcher through series of observations witnessed all the performances that took place during the festivities. These materials were very useful in chapter two, chapter three, chapter four and chapter five of the study.

1.5.13. Site

The places where the performances took place thus, the forecourt of the *Omanhene's* palace (the Paramount chief's place), the principal streets of Techiman, the shrine, various communities within Techiman and *Amanfomu* (a sacred place).

1.5.14. Ethical Consideration

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With assistance of Nana Ama Anima, the *okyeame* (linguist) of the Queen mother of Techiman traditional area, the researcher was able to arrange a meeting with the *Omanhene* (Paraamount chief) at his palace. The researcher then sought permission from the *Omanhene*, *Oseadeeyo* Akumfi Ameyaw IV, with two bottles of schnapps as customs demands before conducting the research in Techiman. At the chief's palace, the linguist welcomed the researcher to their land, and the chief gave her permission to record and video events but cautioned her to adhere to the norms and customs pertaining to the celebration of the *Apoɔ* ceremony.

1.5.15 Biases

The researcher being a native of Techiman sometimes had problems set back from the performance. And that was a problem for interpretation and therefore expect opinion and information were relied upon to validate the data collected.

1.5.16 Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis plan offers a diverse variety of perspective on the subject at hand. The story transcription was utilized to transcribe the speech texts from the audio recordings, and a literary translation was employed to improve them with an interpretive phonological and hermeneutical analysis. Literary works, popular terminology, and phrases were used to guide the translation. The study's conclusion is derived, and recommendations are presented.

1.5.14 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework was established using poetics approach to analysing poetry or poems. Poetics is the poetic approach to analysing poetry of poems. Here, I am analysing the language, the sound, the rhythm, the structure, the content and all that produce the theme.

- Language; the lexico-syntactic structures
- Sound: repetition that aid memory
- Rhythm: repetition that produce rhythm
- Structure: parts that come together to form the poem
- Theme; lessons drawn from analyzing the poem.
- These lead to the investigation of the tropes that provide meaning in the text.

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1.6 Delimitation

This study was limited to the Techiman Municipality in the Bono East Region of Ghana and only the performance of *Apoɔ* songs was highlighted upon, thus the *Apoɔ* Festival songs.

1.7 Limitation

This study was to cover the three communities, Techiman, Nkoranza and Wenchi, which celebrate the *Apoɔ* Festival in the Bono East and Bono Regions of Ghana but due to limited time and financial constraints, the researcher limited the study to cover only Techiman Municipality. Also, there were over 70 *Apoɔ* songs sung during the celebration but due to time and space, only 17 songs were used for this study.

1.8 Theoretical Considerations

There is mixture of theories from different disciplines. Due to the objectives of this study, a theoretical framework was established using the theories of Bauman's performance theory and Hirschi's social control theory.

1.8.1 Bauman's Performance Theory

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The performer displays a level of communicative competence in his/her performance. The audience evaluates each performance within a cultural context to check the skill, effectiveness and competence of the performer, - the role of the audience in interpreting, understanding the text based on patterns (cultural practices) available. All these bores down to shareability thus, the way we share culture which produces identity (Bauman, 1981). With the text, there is keying, the kind of framing and patterning, when we put all these together, it gives you the genre (Bauman, 1984; 1975; Lin, 2004:3).

Considering the nature of performance of *Apoɔ* songs, which is a folklore, Bauman's verbal art of performance is the most appropriate theory to adapt for this thesis. This is so because with Apoɔ performance, the performer displays a level of communicative competence in his/her performance by using appropriate language, gestures, and dance steps in his/her performance. The audience evaluates each performance whiles it is being performed to check the skill, effectiveness and competence of the performer. *Apoɔ* performance conveys messages which are to be understood and interpreted in a special sense, based on a certain pattern that is, *Apoɔ* songs, *Apoɔ* dance, *Apoɔ* speech and *Apoɔ* dressing, *Apoɔ* rhythm etc. All these show who they are, their identity as the Bonos of Techiman.

1.8.2 Hirschi's Social Control Theory

Another theory that serves as a theoretical thrust to this study is that of Hirschi's social control theory. Hirschi proposes that strong bonds to family and society prevent people from committing crime but weak bonds between individuals and society allow people to commit crime, hence, establishing strong social bonds, such as family ties or close community groups will prevent crime (Hirschi, 1969; Curran & Renzetti, 2001). People will conform to a group when they believe they have more to gain from conformity than deviance (Hirschi, 1969). Therefore, indigenes of Techiman build strong bonds between the people and society through performance of *Apoɔ* songs.

1.9 Organization of Chapters

The entire research is made up of six chapters. The chapters include introduction and methodology, review of related literature, discussion, finding, conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter One provides the introduction of the study. It comprises the Background to the Study, Statement of the problem, Objectives of the Study, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Research Methods, which highlights on Research Design, Population for the Study, Data Collection Instrument, Data Analysis Plan, Analytical Framework, Delimitation, Limitation, and Theoretical Considerations.

Chapter Two deals with the review of Related Literature which is made up of a brief introduction of the Chapter, with supporting facts from experts in the field of festivals, festival songs and *Apoɔ* festival and its songs.

Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five talks about a brief introduction of the Chapters, with the Analysis and Discussion of Data collected, and the presentation of the findings.

Chapter Six comprises the Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, References and Appendix.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Social Control

Social control is defined in diverse ways by many scholars as there are noteworthy incongruities in its conceptualization in scholarly writings. For instance, social control has been defined by Owojuyigbe and Busari (2014:24) as "that part of society that establishes order and prevents disorder. It involves an attempt to ensure someone does what is expected of him or refrains from doing something with a view to maintaining order, regulating behaviour and checking social maladjustment." Social control serves as a means of enforcing conformity to social norms, thus, regulating the behaviour of people in order to inculcate in them desirable human conduct.

Accordingly, Social control refers to the numerous strategies a society employs to bring its straying members back into line (Berger, 1963; Atere & Ajayi, 2014). Atere and Ajayi assert that no matter how diminutive a society is; it could never exist without some form of social control. From an institutional perspective, Lianos (2003:415) opines social control is the "instrument for the conscious and planned management of socialized human activities." In terms of socialization, the formation of social control reflects resilient relationships with parents, friends, teachers and other sources of conventional socialization who affects lives positively (Hirschi, 1969; Jensen, 2003). In this sense, when social bonds are non-existence or weakened, society becomes ridden with deviants and delinquents who are possible sources of social vices. Hence, social control is developed to check deviance and crime through sanctions.

Undoubtedly, check on nonconformity has been the rudiments of social control mechanisms in traditional and modern societies. The fact remains that youthful delinquency and deviance

weakens the bonds, integrity and trustworthiness of socialization which binds people and communities together in harmony. This is the reason societies establish a system to maintain order and ensure peaceful co-existence among its members. Thus, social control is instituted for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, deviance, and adult crime. However, these mechanism work in different forms to attain conformity to communal values and norms. Nnonyelu (2009) declares that societies are not only held together by consensus of values but also by force, restrictions or the existence of common roles and norms. Social control has been paramount in simple and complex societies such as clans, kinsfolk, kingdoms and industrialized communities and nations. It is used to normalize and maintain stability in societies by regularizing human behaviour.

In an attempt to determine why people obey rules and regulations of the society, and what causes people to commit crime or participate in deviant behavior (Wiatrowshi, 1978), Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory in *Causes of Delinquency* (1969), even though we have more recent theorists of social control, is found to be the most widely accepted theory that best explains why some individuals engage or involve themselves in crime. The theory contends that in early childhood, many youths form a bond with society and these bonds prevent some of them from involving themselves in delinquency while those who fail to form this bond become delinquents (Hirschi, 1969; Wiatrowshi, 1978:2; Wiatrowshi, Griswold & Roberts, 1981:525; Bartol & Bartol 2011:5). He therefore argues that delinquent behaviors emerge when an individual's bond or ties to conventional social institutions are severed, weakened or broken altogether; thereby making the individual more vulnerable to the temptations of delinquency (Hirschi, 1969; Pittaro, 2007:5; Curran & Renzetti, 2001; Bartol & Bartol 2011:5). In other words, Hirschi's theory suggests that children are simply less likely to engage in acts of delinquency if there is a strong attachment to family, school and community (Curran & Renzetti, 2001).

Contrary to some earlier theories such as the Strain Theory or Differential Association Theory, which claims that felonious behavior was either learned or caused by happenings or conditions in one's environs (Pratt, Gau & Franklin, 2011), Hirschi's is of the belief that "human beings, from birth, possess the 'hedonistic drive' to act in the kinds of egotistic and antagonistic ways that lead to deviant behaviour (Hirschi, 1969:57). This shows that all of us, beginning at birth, are fundamentally "bad apples that must be controlled by laws, rules and regulations in order to keep society in check" (Crawford, 2014). In analysing Hirschi's social control theory, Wiatrowshi, Griswold and Roberts (1981:525) assert that criminal behaviour is a characteristic of human nature, so it is conformity that must be looked at. Here, conformity can be achieved *through* socialization thus, formation of a strong bond between a person and the society. These basic bonds comprise attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. When individuals fail to form or maintain any of these bonds to society, they may be involved in criminal activity (Hirschi, 1969; Wiatrowshi, Griswold and Roberts 1981:525; Pratt, Gau & Franklin, 2011; Crawford, 2014)

Despite the importance of Hirschi's theory which is still relevant in contemporary society, it has come under a lot of criticism. Welch (1998) argues that the four basic elements of conformity and deviation have attracted a lot of criticism mostly because they do not seem to explain all types of crime. He adds that Hirschi blamed the family breakdown, rather than social inefficiency for the increasing ills in the society (Welch, 1998). Empey (1978) suggests that Hirschi's theory's empirical support does not completely explain why individuals become deviant. This is due to the fact that he "does not consider how his four elements might act simultaneously to affect the likelihood of delinquent behaviour" (Wiatrowshi, Griswold and Roberts 1981:526). This suggests there are numerous "institutional experiences" or "significant other's stimulus" (Wiatrowshi, 1978:2) which operate as contingencies experienced by

adolescents which in turn affect their desire to pursue their future careers, and even force some youths into patterns of deviance or delinquency.

Similarly, Wiatrowski (1978:2) argues that the socialization levels reached by youngsters in primary group socialization are sometimes altered by subsequent experiences, such as school grading and experiences and social class backgrounds of youths. And those vicissitudes increase or decrease the likelihood that adolescents will become involved in socially unacceptable behavior (Wiatrowski 1978:3). On this point, Michael writes in *Violence and Social Control* (2007) in reference to school violence that although Hirschi depended on the four social bonds to explain why some youths resort to delinquency, there are mounting evidence which suggest that social class and other factors also contribute to adolescent delinquency (Pittarro 2007:6). His argument, using Harris and Klebold as examples centered on the fact that even though these two adolescent shooters, he cites (Bachman & Alvarez 2003) were supposedly raised in loving, supportive families, both stated in a videotaped confession, that each family would be devastated by what was about to occur (Pittarro 2007:6). Undoubtedly the two teenage shooters were concern about how their parents will feel for disappointing them**.** Considering their confessions, social bonds seem quite strong, but these bonds were eventually weakened with the urge for revenge on those students who bullied the offenders for weeks or months (Pittarro 2007:6).

On the other hand, the confessions of the two shooters reveal that although the social bond or attachment to parents and family did not stop them from killing other human beings, it really points to the extent to which these social bonds can control people's behaviour. They did not want to disappoint their family whom they love and care about dearly. It is worth mentioning that Hirschi himself even furnished some of these critiques**.** Development of the control theory presented in *A General Theory of Crimes* (Gottfredson & Hirschi 1990) shows that Hirschi

himself accepted his social control theory in reality does not provide all the answers to why people obey laws or participate in deviant behavior. There are other social elements that also influence a person's likelihood to involve themselves in crime of delinquency (Pittaro 2007:7). Despite the lapses in Hirschi's social control theory, it makes it easy to understand how the informal/traditional social control methods aids in regulating people's behaviour although Hirschi's theory is applicable in both formal and informal social control field. Analysing the theory critically, it could be deduced that bonds that control people's behaviours are characteristically the bonds that have been attained through the traditional or informal process instead of that of formally accepted laws.

As introduced earlier, the concept of social control has referred to how a person's conduct is regulated in primary group relations and how the micro-social establishments such as religion, education, law and political organization maintain order in the society (Wiatrowshi, 1978:2). Michael contends that in recent times, social control arguments have centered upon the primary group aspects of socialization and the relation of that socialization to delinquency and have been inattentive to larger social institutions and secondary group factors that also influence behavior (1978:2). By definition, social control theories are primarily concerned with understanding and determining why people obey the law and adhere to society's rules as opposed to the more widely accepted criminological theories concerned with why people break the law (Pittaro, 2007; Curran & Renzetti, 2001).

2.2 Traditional Norms: Cultural Values and Moral Construction

Before the colonial era and the introduction of punitive measures/system to Africa, Africans had viable methods of social control, reformation and moral cleanser which served as instruments to correct and serve justice (Ayuk, Owan & Uyang, 2013:61). These non-custodian or traditional means of social control are the medium the people used to enforce conformity to

social norms. Igbo (1992) defines non-custodian methods of social control as "the traditional means by which the society regulates the behaviours of its members. Every community has a way to put into effect this conformity in the interest of all members of the society. One of the channels through which society control the behaviour of its members include the traditional rulers' council; chiefs, village heads, elders, family heads and traditional priests, who are seen as the custodians of customs, beliefs and traditions, and whose duty is the "interpretation of the code of conduct and behaviour of the subsisting community as passed down from generation to generation (Ayuk, Owan & Uyang, 2013:61). It is a fact that these group of people are not the ultimate power, but they discharge their duties without fear or favour. This is due to the fact that they are guided by norms, values and principles during trails, dispute resolutions and other related issues concerning their members. These principles include fairness, honesty, impartiality, truthfulness and just to mention a few.

Undoubtedly, African societies have well established institutions for controlling the society and maintaining social order, although they did not have well written laws to guide conduct as observed in and by the western societies (Ayuk, Owan & Uyang, 2013:61). Ottenberg (1971) argues that the peace and order that was in existence in Africa at the time was one that cost them nothing and was transmitted to the next generation through folktales, fables, myths, and other cultural activities. Surely, these folktales and cultural events are "embedded in strong moral consideration" (Idang, 2015:103). Ottenberg (1971) further states that the people in the society are not forced to conform to the traditional social mechanisms, but they conform to the ideal of these social mechanisms because it is a part of their day-to-day lives which they are willing to live by. Here, members of every community know that defilement of social norms and values is detrimental to the survival of the whole community. Each member therefore tries to conform to societal norms to avoid any form of retributive action from the traditional

authorities, and not shame his/her relations. Societal norms, values and belief system correct people's attitude and make them change from socially unacceptable behaviours.

Basically, the mode of constructing the behaviour of people in indigenous African societies is in line with Hirsch's views of social control. The procedure encompasses "attachment to norms and values, commitment to social environment, involvement in the social activities and belief in the values system" (Onyima, 2015). These bonds to a great extent are rooted in the "pattern of organization and belief system of the people" (Box, 1987). Invariably, crime or delinquency can be reduced to a barest minimum when the people are bound together by strong cohesive limits of community consciousness, well tribal and transaction (Box, 1987; Dambazau, 1994). Through these social bonds, societies are able to regulate the behaviour of its members. Those with weak ties to these social bonds mostly participate in crime or deviant behaviour (Hirschi, 1969). It cannot be denied that socialization was the most effective means of controlling the society in most traditional African societies. Socialization aided members of the society internalize their societal norms and values. It was when socialization was unsuccessful that society needed to resort to other alternative measures of social control which was most often severe sanctions, to serve as deterrents to wrongdoers and potential criminals.

It is worthy to note that violation of any societal norm and social values comes with serious repercussion since there is a robust judicial system which gives severe punishment to evildoers. Putting into effect these corrective measures does not only humiliate the individual but also brings shame on the culprit's entire family. Society used these traditional disciplinary measures in 'enforcing desirable human behaviour' (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010:122) in its members.

Ideally, within the context of traditional African customs, norms, and values, one of the effective instruments most societies use in constructing the behaviour of its members is 'taboo,' a social or religious restriction which owes its origin to methodology. Despite the influx of

foreign culture, religion and modernity, various groups in most communities in many African countries such as Cameroon, Ghana, Nigerian, Zimbabwe, and others still remain attached to some of their fundamental values, such as taboos. They are still highly practiced and used as a way of shaping human behaviour as well as protecting the environment, especially, the water sources, forest and wildlife for sustainable use of nature's resources (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010; Boamah, 2015; Dosu, 2017; Abugiche, Egute & Atud, 2017). According to Osei (2006:44) taboos "represent the main source of guiding principles regulating and directing the behaviour of the individuals and the community towards the Supreme Being and especially the gods and the ancestors in African traditional societies." The word taboo is also applicable to "any sort of social prohibition imposed by the leadership of a community regarding certain times, places, actions, events and people" (Boamah, 2015:28). In this vein, taboos are the 'dos' and 'don'ts' instituted for the general well-being of people, and for the preservation of the environment for future generations. This makes the observance of taboos and conformity to societal norms an obligation and not a choice.

It is worthy to note that taboos are not simply seen as "avoidance of rules that are merely observed by people," but also as "pedagogical tools aimed at inculcating desirable behaviour" in young ones (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010). In investigating the role of *zviera* (taboos) in socialization, Tatira (2000) observes that the Shona of Zimbabwe often use *zviera* as a means of teaching young members of the society. She further notes that "The Shona had, and still have, unique ways of transmitting social values which are crucial to the development of their society." Similarly, among the Akans of Ghana, taboos are known to be very effective instrument used in constructing the behaviour of the youth. The Akans has a lot of stories which are full of Akan taboos. The children are told a lot of these folktales which are intended to inculcate good moral values in them. For instance, the Akan youth are usually told to sit straight and not bend his body, lie down, or talk while eating. And they are not to sing while taking

their bath and their disobedience would cause the death of their mother. Of course, as young ones, so strapped to the love of their mother, they will not do anything that would take away the life of their mother. Again, they are told not to whistle in the night for fear of inviting dwarfs. Through such mythical prohibitions and instructions inherited from the ancestors, they teach their children positive moral behaviour.

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Moreover, the Akans, like most African tribes believe that violation of these moral codes invokes the wrath of the gods on them and therefore behave appropriately. Tatira (2000) attest to this by stating that violation of Shona taboos is said to invite an angry reaction from the spiritual world. This indicates that "fear of the unknown discourages the would-be offender of the moral code to act in such a way that negates the moral code" (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010:122). An aspect of the African culture that has not succumbed to the pressures of modernization and cultural globalization is the pre-eminence of the supernatural world. The African, particularly, the Akan society's belief in the Supernatural Being, gods and ancestral spirits is still prevalent; this strong belief in the supernatural has greater influence on the actions, utterances and behaviour of the people. The fact remains that the indigenes Akan of Ghana believe that these traditional norms and values are bequeathed to them by the gods and ancestors and violation of any of these moral code results in serious consequences. Thus, since "violation of taboos is thought to invoke the anger of the spiritual world, no one is prepared to act in ways that anger the spirits even though one had no sufficient knowledge to validate such claims" (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010:122).

Although indigenous social values and norms are perceived as primitive and have little to contribute to this modern society, Boamah argues that traditional values such as taboo "is rather a worldview that coexists in complex ways with modern Ghanaian" (2015:30) and African societies in general. It is still seen as a sacred rule by the Supreme Being and therefore highly

functioning and effective in fostering desirable human behaviour in people in most communities. Taboo is not peculiar to only indigenous African communities, but it is a worldview phenomenon which cuts across various disciplines and has been researched on for a long time by many scholars and also used by religious scholars, sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists alike. From the on-going discussions, it could be deduced that traditional norms and values are not 'primitive' but they are effective ways to foster desirable conduct in human beings. A morally upright person is someone who shows desirable conduct to both humans and nature. Therefore, combining both the traditional methods of constructing human behaviour and the modern methods of social control can reduce the rate of indiscipline, delinquency, and crime in the contemporary society.

2.3 Significance of Lyrics in African Traditional Songs

In many Ghanaian communities, music is not just for entertainment, but it is used to convey various messages to the public. These messages being communicated across in the lyrics have "meanings that are transparent within the native community but opaque to others" (Trehub, Becker & Morley, 2015). This suggests that music is a form of communication among people of various ethnic groups. A means by which communities preserve or project their history and customs, or hide their secrets, strengths, and weaknesses from other communities, especially, their enemies. Although lyrics in music are used to communicate with others, Trehub, Becker & Morley, (2015) admit that lyrics in music lack communicative specificity in comparison with language. But they add that the power of music (lyrics) sometimes exceeds that of language in social, emotional and spiritual domains. An indication that music can communicate to greater numbers of individuals and over greater distances than language can. In consonance to what have been stated, Nettl (2000) propels that one does not just sing but one sings 'something' and that 'something' can be identified in one way or another (cited in Trehub, Becker & Morley,

2015). An indication that what is being sung has an element, identity or mark that differentiates it from any other form of musical act or utterance.

On this note, it is evident that the essence of song lyrics is indispensable; it is an essential part of music. In Asare's thesis on *Evolution of Funeral Songs* in Asante Mampong in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, he reveals that "The role and significance of the various types of indigenous songs were derived from the song text," which comes with its "own purpose and has the reason which backs the composition" (Asare, 2015 [iii]). Song text/lyrics performs significant role in human life; in reference to how humans behave in their surroundings. Merriam (1964:187) observes that song text provides a philosophical understanding of human behaviour in association with music. He further states that lyrics of course, is idiom behaviour rather than musical sound but they are vital parts of music and there are clear signs that the language used in connection with music differs from that of normal discourse. In support of what Merriam has stated, Nketia propounds that:

> The treatment of songs as a form of speech utterances arises not only from stylistic considerate or from consciousness of the analogues features of speech and music: it is also inspired by the importance of the song of verbal communication, a medium for creative verbal expression which can reflect both personal and social experiences (Nketia, 1974).

In consonance to what Nketia has stated, Agordoh states that:

> Song texts in Africa are sometimes a reflection of the concerns of the culture which they are a part. They contribute to the correction of those aspects of behaviour to which they call for attention. They serve as a direct social control, ridicule, and in some cases

even more direct action, to effect actual changes in the behaviour of erring members of the society (Agordoh, 1994)

Similarly, Christensen (1998:1) states that when speaking to each other fails to get the point across while attempting to communicate, individuals may, or indeed tend to resort to music as a means of interaction. To buttress this point, Tracy Hugh (1948) points out, "You can say publicly in songs what you cannot say privately to a man's face (Cited in Boateng, 2016:29). Rattray and others also confirm this point by stating that lyrics of *Apoɔ* Festival songs of the people of Techiman are used to tell or repudiate the wrong doings of their neighbours, especially, the chief publicly (Rattray, 1922: Asihene, 1980; Powell, 2017)**.** This explains what Anderson means when he says, "Where words fail, music speaks" (Anderson, poet 1805-1875). Reflecting on the above quotes, it could be deduced that music is affected by language. They are interrelated, in that, speech melody sets up certain models of sound which must be followed to some extent in music, if the song text is to be understood by the listener (Merriam, 1964:188). An important aspect of song texts in African is that, in song, the individual or the group could express deep-seated feelings not permissibly verbalized in other contexts (Merriam, 1964:190; Asare, 2015:15). In a similar way, "music influences language in that musical requirements demand alterations of normal speech. Thus, language behaviour in song is a special kind of verbalization which sometimes requires special knowledge of the language in which it is couched." Here, the common component of song texts is the use of special language (Merriam, 1964: 188,189).

Moreover, song lyrics projects the cultural identity of people within specific locality. Christensen affirms that songs that the Mosomagor of Ghana recognised as their indigenous or original songs are based on the lyrics, since the tune can be heard in other communities within the country to go with other lyrics which may have no relevance to their culture (Christensen,

1998:1). Some scholars concur with Christensen on this point, for instance, Adowa, a traditional music and dance of the Akan of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire which is performed at traditional ceremonies does not only entertain the people but also serves as a means of communication (Nketia, 1973). In this sense, lyrics used in traditional songs come along with essential information which has great significance to the culture of the people within that community. Similarly, Boateng (2016) demonstrates how some Ghanaian female musicians who challenge those culturally accepted roles of women and present a new perspective of womanhood achieve their aim through their song lyrics. He then advises, "one pays close attention to the lyrics of songs" (Boateng, 2016:27). It is important to note that lyrics of African indigenous songs cannot be ignored or left untreated when dealing with African songs which purposely portrays the African identity, culture, and heritage.

Music performs a vitally important role in maintaining the unity of a social group. Singing the same songs in the same way at the same time binds individuals together, and a strong group feeling is established (Boulton, 1957:4**).** According to Adom (2017:79) song texts of *Apoɔ* festival songs help promote and ensure peace and unity among the people. Thus, the song texts ensure "social cohesion within families, between families and the entire society as a whole" (Adom, 2016:13). The point being made here is people and communities are connected by the 'words' produced in songs, which in a way portray their joy, grievances, and history. It cannot be denied that song 'lyrics' have great influence on the people in a community and bring about a feeling of oneness. Seeger (1996) states that specific sounds or words used in music convey specific importance for their performers and audiences. In every society, the composition of music comes along with language. But most often, music does not necessarily need to be understood before relating to it like language. In Anthony's view, musical performance may have robust effect on individuals' who do not understand the language used, this same music may mean different things to different people due to the lyrics of the song. Music is rarely

"just" entertainment (Seeger, 1996). The fact is "lyrics takes special forms and implies special significance (Boateng, 2016:28), therefore song lyrics convey essential messages which bind people together in every society.

Undoubtedly, African's culture, as well as struggles that were overcome are deeply rooted in its music. Music is an integral part of the African culture (Hassan, 2012). It is an indication that, music has been part of the African culture for ages, and people express their past and present experiences through the lyrics. Saboro agrees, noting that although the "exact period these songs found their way into song repertoire of African communities remain uncertain, what remains certain is the fact that these songs have been imaginatively composed to reflect a real cultural and historic experience" (Saboro, 2017:35) of the people. The lyrics in these songs tell the history or reveal past joyous or traumatic experiences of the forefathers. He demonstrates how the lyrics in a Bulsa traditional song which says, "Let someone be deceived to follow, and he will surely remain and die in the bush," (Saboro, 2016:120) tells how a victim being chased by a slave raider pretends to be running away in fear into the bush, but lures the slave raider into a terrain which is unfamiliar to him. By so doing, the victim escapes while the slave raider gets lost and eventually end up dying in the bush. The lyrics of such songs more importantly serve as 'community memories' of how people transcended the tragedy of enslavement and survived, by employing running and retreating strategy (Saboro, 2016:120, 126).

On this point, Marley (2019:25) in this dissertation affirms that *Amlaku or Kpa songs* performed during *Homowo* by the people of *La* and *Teshi* usually "accompany some performances of religious rituals in the community and their lyrics recount historical events in praise of the La principal deity – *Lakpa.*" He adds "The songs are mainly performed in an ancient version of the Ga language and the lyrics of the songs are often characterized by

allegory," (Marley, 2019:25). Likewise, Adom (2016:79) suggests that performance of *Apoɔ* songs recount the history of a deadly plague that befell the people of Techiman as a form of punishment from a great deity called *Sipe,* who hated animosities harboured in one's heart against his/her neighbour. The song texts reveal how the observance of the festival "effectively arrested the deadly plague on the people since they maintained their peace with the *Sipe* deity and their fellow" (Adom 2016:79).

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Generally speaking, song lyrics convey messages to people, and also gives people the freedom to express their views in diverse ways. It seems song texts, "because of the special kind of license that singing apparently gives, afford an extremely useful means for obtaining kinds of information which are not otherwise easily accessible (Merriam, 1964:194). Eva then concludes that messages conveyed by 'song lyrics' in the performance of songs during social events portray the artistic values giving people the privilege to voice their opinions, feelings and express how their challenges are dealt with (Ebeli, 2015:1). Song text is therefore one of the topmost elements in music composition. It is an integral or vital part of music. Lyrics are put together using proverbs, allegories, old sayings, allusions, figurative expression, metaphors, old myths which makes it rich in language which in turn helps in transforming societies. This is an indication that song lyrics 'cannot be avoided' since the lyrics play an essential role in impacting the society, as well as maintaining the cultural identity of each community (Asare, 2015:14; Boateng 2016:28).

2.4 Role of Traditional Songs in African Culture

Traditionally, lyrics in music has played an important role in African culture. It is important in portraying the strong African heritage, and its relevance is evident in many aspects of the culture. The ancient African cultures integrate music into their everyday lives. Children's games, storytelling, dance and cultural practices are all grounded on the music of the culture

(Hassan, 2012). In support of this fact, Mbaegbu (2015:176) opines that the role of music is indispensable in the life of Africans; it is incorporated in their work, socio-economic engagements, integral development, politics, religious worship, and moral life. Lyrics in music, so far are the vital and the most demonstrative expression in the life of Africans. From morning till night, from the cradle to the grave, everything is done to the rhythm of its music. It is a living art form handed down by word of mouth from one generation to the other. It is a means of preserving for posterity the traditions, ambitions, and lore of the tribe (Boulton, 1957:4). In this view, Hassan (2012) emphasises that music in Africa is a way of life and not just a form of entertainment. It is used in all aspects of life; music is used to communicate, pass literature, work and welcoming heroes among other ritual functions in the African society. In this sense, Seeger is right in saying "there is something human about music, but deeply cultural" about it as well (Seeger, 1996).

Evidently, music in an indigenous African society is used as a means of communication just as dance and drums. Many scholars support the opinion that music communicates (Nketia 1964; 1974; Agordoh, 1994). Music conveys vital information across to the masses in every community. Its language as well as meanings may be opaque to an outsider, but it is clearly understood by the people of the community of which the language is couched. Whatever is sung communicates something to specific members of the society. Although Merriam says, "the major problem is that while we know music communicates something, we are not clear as to what, how, or to whom," and "of all the functions of music, the communication function is perhaps least known and understood," (Merriam, 1964:223) he however states:

> Music is not a universal language, but rather is shaped in terms of the culture of which it is a part. In the song texts it employs, it communicates direct information to those who understand the language in which it is couched. It conveys emotion, or something

> similar to emotion, to those who understand its idiom. The fact that music is shared as a human activity by all peoples may mean that it communicates a certain limited understanding simply by its existence (Merriam, 1964:223)

Music in traditional African society is for the whole community and everyone from the youngest to the oldest participants. It is so interwoven with work, social, and religious activities of the natives that it is difficult to isolate it and study it apart from its role in the life of the people (Boulton, 1957:5). In affirmation, Teffera (2006:37) propounds that music making is closely related with and recognized as a social activity that fosters and reinforces communal unity among traditional East African communities. Music therefore offers a uniting theme/idea around which people in a society meet and participate in activities which call for the coordination of the group. Every society has activities signalled by music which brings its members together and reminds them of their unity (Merriam, 1964:228). On Nketia's observation of the Yoruba musician in Accra, he remarks "For the Yoruba in Accra, music thus brings both the satisfaction of participating in something familiar and the assurance of belonging to a group sharing in similar values, similar ways of life, a group maintaining similar art forms. Music thus brings a renewal of tribal solidarity" (Nketia, 1958:48). Evidently, music contributes to the integration of African society.

More specifically, "enforcement of conformity to social norms" (Merriam, 1964:224) as well as "moral sanction against social and traditional authority" (Akintan, 2013:270) is one of the major functions of music. Alan argues that "songs of social control play an important part in a substantial number of cultures, both through direct warning to erring members of the society and through indirect establishment of what is considered to be proper behaviour" (Merriam, 1964:224). Likewise, Rattray writes that *Apoɔ* Festival songs are used to criticize societal ills to cause a change in the behaviour of the people in the Bono society of Ghana (Rattray, 1922:

Powell, 2017). Good moral behaviour is therefore inculcated in young boys and girls during initiation rites to adulthood; they are thought what is right and what is wrong. On this point, Nketia (1974) and Agordoh (1994) assert that African musical practices have always served as vehicles of expression, and they also serve as a means of checking periodically those in authority thereby helping to enforce sanctions of social behaviour. In his article, *Protest in West African Urban Popular Music*, Saighoe (1997) demonstrates how musicians through their music seek redress for societal ills.

On a similar note, most African communities protest against abuse, corruption, social injustice and bad governance through songs. People express their sentiments and anger through the songs they compose themselves or through familiar songs (Hassan, 2012: Merriam, 1964:224). The messages conveyed in such cases are coiled in simple language which everybody in the community can easily perform. For instance, the Zanla Forces War Songs by the ZANLA, the militant wing of ZANU, ZAPU and ZIPRA in Zimbabwe in the 1970s, are used to stir up the masses. These are songs of the struggle. The words of popular songs such as folk songs, church songs and European choral music were changed to easily spread the revolutionary message (Hassan, 2012). Here, "Songs of protest call attention as well to propriety and impropriety" (Merriam, 1964:224). The idea is to call on the people to be involved in the revolution which is a 'communal issue' by using songs familiar to them, allowing for easy teaching and participating. Freeman's remarks (1957) regarding Hawaiian folksong suggest that songs of social protest may allow the individual to let of steam and thus to 'adjust to social conditions as they are,' or they 'may accomplish social change through mobilizing group sentiment. An indication that in the African society, songs are sung for a common purpose.

Similarly, African traditional songs serve as community memories of traumatic past events which most often seems to be distorted by European narratives and literature available. Saboro

states that “European narratives about the slave trade in Africa has often attempted to underestimate, overlook or sometimes forget completely the role of African indigenous resistance to human kidnapping for enslavement” (Saboro, 2016:111). Although he admits “literature on memories of slavery within African collective imagination is rich and varied,” he believes “studies have often been silent” on how those who were victims have often “tried to cope, represent and reconstruct the memories of their traumatic past” (Saboro, 2017:34). He therefore portrays how songs among the people of Bulsa and Kasena of Northern Ghana who were constantly threatened by slave raiders can “enhance our collective understanding of the slave experience.” (Saboro, 2017:34). The songs reveal a “compelling story about a people who do not always want to be perceived as victims, but as agents in reconstructing a narrative of endurance, skill, ingenuity and toughness” (Saboro, 2016:111). These songs retell how the ancestors intelligently adapted various strategies to be safe and ensure not only their survival but also the survival of their culture.

Elsewhere, Maybury-Lewis (1996) posits that, “To be human is to make music, and the music we make says a great deal about who we are or, at least, who we think we are.” In this vein, traditional songs disclose one’s or a community’s identity. That is why David says, music is the way in which each piece of humanity lays claim to its own character. He however warns that music is overwhelmingly ambiguous. Thus, it bonds all of humanity, for all humankinds make music, yet it also separates people, for it so often becomes an important way of defining the identity of groups and distinguishing them from others (Maybury-Lewis, 1996). On this point, Seeger (1996) demonstrates how the Suyά Indians of Brazil use music and ceremony to re-create and celebrate who they have been and establish what they wish to be. He however points out that people all over the world use music to create cultural identity, yet music is used to erase the identity of others. Therefore, music is used to create and dissolve cultural identity. Undoubtedly, traditional music is a vital trait which distinguishes one group of people from the

other. Many African communities are therefore emphatic about the significance of music in their culture because it is their music that "makes them who they are and that establishes for them their place in the scheme of things" (Maybury-Lewis, 1996).

Most Ghanaian festival songs offer a special kind of license and freedom of speech that permits musicians to boldly express their thoughts, ideas and feelings on sensitive social issues (Boateng 2016:29). It allows the use of offensive remarks to be openly expressed in a controlled environment through songs (Campbell, 2002). These songs are termed as "insult songs because they are harsh, abusive, offensive and vulgar and full of ridicule" (Asihene, 1980:15; Campbell, 2002). With such privilege, indigenes of Techiman in the Bono East region use *Apoɔ* festival songs to 'reject evil' and cleanse the society. One can freely 'insult' his neighbours, even address the king to the face as a way of reforming them from their evil ways. (Asihene, 1980:15; Rattray,1922: Powell, 2017). *Apoɔ* festival allows 'insult songs' to be used as a sort of purging of resentment and ill will and cleansing the soul (Asihene, 1980:15; Campbell, 2002). Likewise, through "*Kpa-son-kpa* music and other variants of the music, the La public is able to freely talk about issues which are usually considered sensitive because of their political attachments (Marley, 2019:25).

Similarly, Ghanaian festival songs serve as a tool for social control. Songs of the *Kpa loloi* variation are used to "expose and shame culprits of social vices and power abuse in the La community" (Marley, 2019:25). Such songs are "satirical and often include comedy and exaggeration that narrate and comment on vices by community members and leaders (Marley, 2019:25). Through *Apoɔ* festival songs, the people of Techiman "repudiate publicly the wrong things in the society without any fights or whatsoever, the mistakes and bad actions of everyone, including those occupying key positions in the society" (Adom, 2017:79). Therefore, *Apoɔ* songs are therapeutic and evaluative; it enables people to change from their erroneous

ways and tend to change their attitudes for a better life (Duodo, 2009). Through performance of *Avudwene* songs by the Nzemas, "values and ideas are distorted and reconstituted as a form of renewal of human experience, and as a critical means of underling meaning and relevance" (Agovi, 1990). This indicates that Ghanaian festival songs are embedded with positive societal values which evoke a change in people's attitude.

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In the nutshell, African traditional music offers appropriate music and dance for all religious ceremonies such as birth, naming, initiation, marriage, death, funeral and rites of passage, as well as working (hunting, farming, fishing,) and doing communal labour (Asare, 2015:18). The importance of music in human culture is obviously indispensable to the appropriate promulgation of the events that constitute a society; without it, it is questionable for a man to be truly called a man, with all that implies, because music is a universal human behaviour (Merriam, 1964:227). Music thus educates, advises, entertains, controls society, unifies societies, heals the soul, provides comfort and security, and graces occasions.

2.5 Origin of Bono People of Techiman Traditional Area

According to Asihene (1980:3-8), legend has it that the descendants of Techiman came from a hole called Amoawi Bonmu. But according to the traditions of Techiman, the Bono kingdom was founded in 1295 and the founders of Bono Manso, its capital originally came from the Sahara Desert. After passing through Diula, they moved southwards and settled among the Mo (Mossi) (Asihene, 1980:3). But after a fierce and lost war, the defeated army and refuges of Bono retreated southwards, crossed the Black Volta to hide in the woods and caves to the east of present day Techiman under the leadership of Nana Asaman. They moved and built their first town known as Yefri, which literally means 'we are coming out' when the caves collapsed after a terrible storm. Later, the Bono State was founded with Bono Manso as its capital. Gold was mined by the Bono people in the fourteenth century during the reign of Nana Akumfi

Ameyaw the first. Bono Manso became a great commercial centre attracting traders from Egypt, Sudan, North Africa and Arabia. But at the height of its power and prosperity, a treachery by Baafo Pim led to its destruction.

Nkansa-Kyeremateng (2004:33) asserts that, the Akan's premier kingdoms were those established by the Bono; the first and second Bono kingdoms. The founders, who were of the Anona clan were known to be refugees from Dyala (Diula). The first Bono kingdom occupied the triangular of the Red and Black Volta in modern Mossi country. However, the Mossi had moved by the end of the 13th century and the survivors moved further south into Gonja territory and founded the second Bono kingdom. The new Bono kingdom which had Bono Manso as its capital was founded in about 1295 by Nana Asaman (Nkansa-Kyeremateng, 2004:33). The kingdom was rich in gold. Akan kingdoms which got established to the south such as the Fante, Eguafo, Esti and Afutu claimed association with the second Bono Kingdom. The kingdom enjoyed absolute peace on her southern borders after the departure of these groups until it finally crumbled to Asante because of a treachery of Nkoranza. After the Asante war, the kingdom was formed again with Techiman as its capital.

2.6 Origin of *Apoɔ* Festival and *Apoɔ* Songs of Techiman

Apoɔ festival which is originally known as *Apoɔ Afahyɛ* is quite peculiar to the people of the Bono East community. It is celebrated by the indigenes of Techiman, Nkoranza and Wenchi in the Bono East and Bono regions of Ghana. Both written and oral accounts give various versions of the origin of *Apoɔ* festival of Techiman. In a brief oral narration, Nana Opoku Fosu Gyeabour[1] the Manwerehene/Koasehene (a divisional chief) of Techiman says, *Apoɔ* is a festival instituted by the ancestors around the fourteenth century to give people the liberty to

[1] Nana Opoku Fosu Gyeabour was interviewed at his palace at Koase on 15 March 2019.

criticise people in authority in particular. He affirms that, chieftaincy in the Akan society in ancient times was, and even now, is power. Therefore, speaking to or against that power was not easy. It was very difficult to go before the chief and talk to him. In this sense, people felt reluctant to express their views on issues concerning their communities. The authorities became aware of the situation and realised the silence of the people could lead their societies into ruins since none of their subjects criticised their administration, particularly the authoritarians.

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He further adds that based on these facts, *Nananom* (chiefs) constituted a festival to enable people speak out on happenings in their communities, particularly, on the conduct of their chiefs and sub-chiefs. The people were then given the liberty to publicly criticise the villainies of rulers, and faults of other people every year. Songs became the medium of such communication. The accuser reveals all resentments through songs, likewise, the accused also have the right to defend him/herself of allegations levelled against him/her through songs. This action in turn frees both parties' 'souls' from all grudges. Many disputes are settled through this 'mode of communication'. The celebration is marked by singing, drumming, and dancing, as well as beautiful display of Techiman culture and customs.

In other oral account on the history of *Apoɔ* Festival, during *Apoɔ* celebration in 2009, Nana Twi Brempong[2] the Adontehene of Techiman narrates, *Apoɔ* festival began during the reign of Nana Kwakye Ameyaw. He was an authoritarian so the people could not express their views freely on happenings at that time. He notes that the people were peeved but feared to express their views. The people could not ask the rulers to account for their stewardship. They then consulted the gods of the land who asked them to set aside some days for them to come out and say what was on their 'chest' more especially about people in authority. It was then agreed at the *Apoɔ* celebration that no one could be held responsible for whatever he/she says (Duodu,

[2] NanaTwi Brempong was interview at the durbar grounds during Apoo celebration in March 2009.

2009). During that period, the people would say, *Mereko po me haw*, 'I am going to say what is on my chest' and this is how *Apoɔ* festival came into existence. Nana Twi Brempong added that, the purpose of the festival was not only to criticize the traditional authorities but also all who were in leadership positions in the traditional area. However, *Apoɔ* was also used to recognize those who had distinguished themselves or done something good for the society (Duodu, 2009).

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On the other hand, Rattray (1923) gives a detailed written account on *Apoɔ* festival after witnessing the ceremony in 1922. But his account on the origin of the festival is what was narrated to him by the god of *Ta Kese* or *Taa Mensa* (chief priest) at Techiman at that time. By quoting the words of *Ta Kese,* Rattray writes that everyone has a *sunsum* (soul) that may get hurt or knocked about or get sick, thereby making the body ill. Although there may be other external causes such as witchcraft being the cause of many sicknesses, ill health may be caused by evil and the hatred that another has in his head against you. Likewise, you too may harbor hatred inside you against another person because that person has wronged you in a way (Rattray, 1923:153). He adds, this also causes one's *sunsum* (soul) to fret and become sick. The forefathers at the time knew this to be the case, so they ordained a time, once every year, when every man and woman, freed man and slave, should have the liberty to voice whatever he/she has hidden deep within them to their neighbours, tell them their thoughts about them, and their actions, and they should do same with the king or chief (Rattray, 1922:153). *Ta Kese* explains to Rattray that, "when a man has spoken freely thus, he will feel his *sunsum* cool and quieted, and the *sunsum* of the other person against whom he has now openly spoken will be quieted also" (Rattray, 1922:153). And this is the reason why the ancestors instituted *Apoɔ* ceremony.

However, Rattray's intention for enquiring about the history of *Apoɔ* ceremony is to clear some misconceptions on the festival already given by Bosman, a Dutch historian of the Coast of

Guinea who has witnessed *Apoɔ* celebrations two centuries before Rattray's encounter, and a semi-educated African who gave a brief history on *Apoɔ* festival before Rattray witnessed the events himself later. From both men's point of view, particularly the African, *"Apoɔ* ceremony is a fetish custom where everyone curses everyone else, where morals were relaxed and promiscuity sanctioned, where all fetishes were brought out to walk about, and where the witch doctors indulged in diabolical rites" (Rattray, 1923:153; Powell, 2017). Rattray then concludes that the *Apoɔ* ceremony serves as a means to control delinquency in the Techiman community since he "never once saw a drunken man or woman" (Rattray, 1922:153) during the celebrations in which 'morals is perceived to be relaxed'. This indicates that *Apoɔ* festival, which is ordained by the ancestors is a means to put the behaviour of people in the community in check. Undoubtedly, *Apoɔ* ceremony is not a period for promiscuity either as perceived by some historians. Rattray vouch for this by stating that,

> I did not hear later of one case of adultery arising out of a celebration in which, theoretically, it seems to have had the sanction of custom. The rules with regard to this point are very strict and well defined…. Theoretically there appears to be a license in regard to sexual intercourse, but in reality, this is not so, and in any case in practice (Rattray, 1923:153)

According to Asihene (1980), *Apoɔ* Festival originated at Bono Manso, the capital of the then Bono Kingdom long before 1740 after a war. The gods then advised the chiefs and the people to address their grievances in public as a way of settling disputes. This action of dispute resolution went a long way in bringing unity and peace among the people, hence the ancestors set a day aside yearly for individuals and heads of villages to meet to settle their differences (Asihene, 1980:15). Asihene further states that:

> The first celebration of the *Apoɔ* served as a great unifying force under their chief. Because it was the time, they needed the protection and help of the Supreme Being, their ancestors and gods in order that they might be victorious in their incessant inter-tribal wars. To foster confidence in themselves, their chief and their state, they came together at every *Apoɔ* ceremony. This strengthened their brotherhood through which they worshipped their ancestors with loyalty (Asihene, 1980:15).

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Although various versions of stories have been given on the origin of *Apoɔ* Festival, both written and oral narrations provided so far affirm *Apoɔ* was instituted by the ancestors of Techiman to control the behaviour of traditional rulers in particular. Citizens of Techiman traditional area get an opportunity to hold their chiefs, wing-chiefs, and other leaders accountable thereby making them responsible for the welfare of their people. Also, aggrieved people get the opportunity to speak to those who have done things that offended them in one way or another to their face. It can be said that this is the best way to settle disputes and promote peace and stability in the society.

2.7 Important Facts about *Apoɔ* Festival and *Apoɔ* Songs

Basically, Apoɔ Festival is an annual festival which is celebrated between March and April. The festival is a 13-day observance which is devoted to the ritual purging of self and society. "The ceremony starts twelve days before the vernal equinox which is also the *Adaduanan* 'fourth forty-day, counting from the *Adaduanan* New Year" (Asihene, 1980:15). Nana Gyeabour[3] in an interview says, *Apoɔ* ceremony does not fall on just any day or month per its calculation. Its calculation is based on the ancient method used by their forefathers, and they must fall on specific auspicious days. Since there was no calendar like today, *Nananom* used

[3] Nana Gyeabour was interviewed at this palace at Koase on 15 March 2019.

certain prefixes to count the days. Those calculations are based on the *Adaduanan* Calendar. Asihene (1980:63) explains, the *Adaduanan* Calendar consists of nine forty-day period plus the additional five days at the end of the year. This is coupled with the week of seven days of which each day is sacred to a deity. Each day of the week is given a prefix. "There are only six prefixes for seven days, the last day of the week is given the prefix of the first, and thus the prefix falls back a day with each succeeding week. (Asihene, 1980:64).

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Generally, *Apoɔ* is derived from the Akan word *"po"* which means "to reject" evil. One is supposed to reject all resentments, anger, nuisance, grudges or bitterness harboured in the soul all year long. *Apoɔ* is sometimes known as "*atemdie"* and also "*horo*" which translate to "to insult, to abuse' and "to wash, to cleanse" due to its harsh manner of execution (Asihene, 1980:15; Rattray, 1923). *Apoɔ* festival, as ordained by the gods and the ancestors give a privilege to all indigenes every year to criticise other people irrespective of their social status, race, position or power. During *Apoɔ* ceremony, every individual has a lampooning liberty to publicly criticize the frauds, faults, villainies (Asihene, 1980:15 Rattray, 1923:153) or reveal the secrets of others, especially, people in authority with the "view to making them repent or reform" (Asihene, 1980:16). This action puts the offender's conduct in check and make him/her repent from evil ways. It's a way of reforming people to make them live morally upright life. "The motive behind the 'insults' is to drive evil far away from the vicinity; and avoid such evil from returning to the vicinity. Cleansing of all evil within the communities is symbolised by the washing and scouring of all household utensils by the women before the celebrations begins" (Asihene, 1980:15, Rattray, 1923:152). Asihene points out that,

> The high priest of *Tano* at *Takyiman* describes this liberty as the chance to speak out all personal grudges, which have caused the person's soul or *sunsum* to fret and become

sick. After the confession, he believes, the souls or *sunsum* of both parties become cool, quiet and happy again (Asihene, 1980:16).

In affirmation, the current chief priest of *Tano,* Nana Taa Mensah *Bosomfoɔ*[4] says that "The act of publicly speaking out all resentments and grudges does not only put the soul of the accuser and the accused at peace but also brings unity and harmony between them, and their families." This practice in turn promotes peace, love and harmony among the people in all communities. The most interesting aspect of *Apoɔ* is being able to freely speak out without facing any sanctions or retributions from the offender, especially, people with power. If the culprit attacks or reproaches the accuser in any way during the festivities, he/she will not only be sanctioned or fined by the rulers of the land but also faces the wrath of the gods and ancestors. In this context, Asihene (1980) points out that "If the complainant assaults the accused during this period, then the former forfeits the right to have his case settled" (1980:16).

However, such liberty requires honesty and truthfulness. There is no room for lying or merely tarnishing other people's image due to personal resentment or hatred. Nana Opoku Gyeabour further explains that "The complainant is expected to tell the truth by reporting what he/she has witnessed. One must not be criticised or be accused based on mere speculations. Whatever pronouncement one makes about others must be the absolute truth." He further states "People who accuse others wrongly without proof during the *Apoɔ* festivity are dealt with severely when the ceremony is over. The accused person can take the accuser on, and he/she will be sanctioned for telling lies about the accused." In this sense, this act indirectly inculcates the habit of truthfulness and honesty in `the people because it deters people from lying, publicly disgracing people or tarnishing others image.

[4] Nana Taa Mensah Bosomfoɔ was interviewed at his palace on 17 March 2019.

Moreover, as the root word *po* 'to reject' of the name *Apoɔ* implies, all forms of personal, cultural, spiritual, and social ills are 'rejected' and cast far away from the community during the celebration. This indicates that the festival is keen to the eradication of delinquency, crime, disorder, and immorality from Techiman and its environs. *Apoɔ* is a period for self-reflection, evaluation, repentance, and forgiveness. This is captured in a speech made by the Okyenhene, Osagyefo Amoatia Ofori Panin II[5] at *Apoɔ* festival in April 2009. He states that "*Apoɔ* celebration is a period of forgiveness, therapeutic and evaluation, for people to change from wrong way of doing things and tend to change their attitudes thereafter for better life" (Duodo, 2009). Undoubtedly, the weak and vulnerable in the traditional area bring traditional rulers and other prominent people in the society to book by pointing out their wrong doings in public during *Apoɔ* ceremony. A process Max Gluckman (1963:126**)** defines as the "purging of emotion through pity and inspiration" in verbal duels. An act which can be seen as "rituals of rebellion, which had the function of venting aggressiveness against power in a way that reinforced the status quo" (Pagliai, 2009:61). Challenging leadership powers as well as criticising others without any sanctions is made possible by the 'lampooning liberty' the celebration has awarded the indigenes of Techiman Municipality.

Customarily, this liberty allows anybody at all, being subordinate or superior to say whatever he has harboured in his chest publicly without fear or favour. Traditional rulers are most often the main targets for such 'insults. Nana Twi Brempong further explains that "the festival was not only about the people getting out what was on their chest about traditional authorities but also all who were in leadership positions in the traditional area" (Duodo, 2009). This means all who hold prestigious positions in public and private institutions are also held responsible on how they discharge their duties. Interestingly, all crimes committed in secret are revealed for

[5]Okyenhene Osagyefo Amoatia Ofori Panin II's speech during the 2009 Apoɔ celebrations

the public to know what has been happening around them, as well as how their neighbours, more especially the prominent ones conduct themselves. People could not be held accountable for what they say. However, there are strict and well-defined rules in regard to all physical and spiritual activities performed during the Apoɔ period. For instance, the accuser must say what he knows to be the truth in order not to accuse his neighbour wrongly. The offender must neither display any form of anger towards the accuser, nor hurt the accuser due to anger. Also, "no redress for seduction or adultery may be claimed" (Asihene, 1980:15: Rattray, 1923:154), or any complaint lodged during the period the ceremony is in progress (Rattray, 1923:154). This rule as Rattray puts it, is not a "licence in regard to sexual intercourse" (Rattray, 1923:154) as it appears theoretically.

Such claims about *Apoɔ* are false. Suspension of complaint on seduction and adultery holds for just the period of *Apoɔ* celebration. Once *Apoɔ* period is over, "all such cases are subject to trail before the customary native courts and are liable to the ordinary sanctions of native customary law" (Rattray 1923:154). In other words, if anyone commits any punishable offence due to the "respite from prosecution which the ceremony gives during the occasion", he will "answer as in ordinary course and pay the usual penalty for his delinquency" (Rattray, 1923:154). This implies that no individual or group of persons can misbehave during the actual *Apoɔ* ceremony due to laxity in ordinary laws at that time. On the other hand, if the aggrieved person lodges any complaint, harm anybody or displays any form of violence during the celebration, "he immediately forfeits all right to have his case investigated later or to receive any satisfaction and is himself fined" (1923:154). These in fact seem "more than a sufficient deterrent to any one inclined to take advantage" (1923:154) of the permissiveness of 'no prosecution' within the *Apoɔ* period. Nana Ama Anima[6] confirms that "surprisingly, no, or

[6] Nana Amma Anima was interviewed at the palace of the queen mother on 20 March 2019.

little incidence of adultery, theft or deviant behaviour is witnessed in the vicinity before and during the occasion. Everybody puts on his/her best behaviour to avoid being disgraced publicly." The implication is that people's behaviours are being controlled by our customary laws.

Also, all "funeral rites are suspended" (Asihene, 1980:16) until the ceremony is over. Nana Gyeabour emphasised, "bereaved families, regardless of the status and prestige, are forbidden to wear mourning clothes and mourn the dead during the celebration of *Apoɔ* festival. A ban is placed on funeral rites within the *Adaduanan* to the festivities." The ban period is known as *Adamu asi*. And as customs demands, if the death occurs within the period of celebration, the same rules are applied. Bereave families dress up and join in the celebration as if nothing has happened in the family. Unfortunately, at the time of this interview, Nana Gyeabour's mother was at the morgue, but he has actively been participating in the festivity as required of a divisional chief of Techiman without any sign of grief. He confirms that, "It's painful to lose a mother, but per my position and, as a citizen of Techiman, I have to forget my grief and joyously participate in the celebration of *Apoɔ*." He adds that, "I cannot use my loss as an excuse to opt out of this ceremony. I would be sanctioned per the laws requires. And this applies to all citizens of Techiman." This means no one is above the laws of the land which has been laid down by the ancestors, and the extent to which people respect the words of ancestors, which are coiled within our customs and traditions. People are thereby moulded to be law abiding citizens.

Undoubtedly, *Apoɔ* Festival like most Ghanaian festivals has travelled through time and space. This pragmatic movement has had great influence on the pomp and pageantry which made the festival what it used to be. One of such activity which has lost its beauty over time is what Rattray describes as "carnival freedom," which "permits of any man to say to any girl (except

the king's or priest's wives), *To me tuo* 'fire a gun at me' and the maiden so addressed is expected to whisk off her clothes." But every girl wears *tam* or *danta*, "a string of beads around her waist and a little red cloth tucked into this girdle at the front and the back," (Rattray, 1923:154) beneath her cloth to avoid exposing her full nakedness in public. The performance of the 'cloth ripping' event may be the reason many scholars perceive *Apoɔ* ceremony as a period for promiscuity. According to a participant, Maame Akosua Darkwa[7], a 67-year-old woman from Fawoman, one of the villages in Techiman Municipality, "This colourful event was most often performed by girls from rich families. Young ladies display their *tam* to show off their parents' wealth, and also their beautiful youthful bodies." She however adds that, "A girl shows off her beauty with no intention of enticing men. It's a way of telling the public she is beautiful because she is chaste." Participating in this event makes a girl feel proud and beautiful, so girls take good care of themselves and do not involve themselves in immoral acts such as early sex, to be able to partake in this event.

In this context, this 'carnival freedom' give girls opportunity to portray their purity and wealth of their parents to the general public. Maame Akosua Darkwa believes this event encouraged many girls to keep their chastity till their puberty rites are performed. She adds, "It will surprise you to know that men at that time had no interest in the girls' nudity. Their focus was on the beautiful display put up by the girls." All these imply that everything about *Apoɔ* festival is educative. Good moral values are imparted in people, particularly, the youth. Even rules governing the entire ceremony in a way inculcates positive ethical values in people. Citizens of Techiman obey, respect, and honour the rules and customs laid down by their ancestors. And this goes a long way in moulding and controlling the conduct of the people of Techiman.

[7] Maame Akosua Darkwa was interviewed at the forecourt of the King's palace on 19 March 2019.

CHAPTER THREE

WARNING SONGS

3.0 Overview

The culture, customs and identity of the indigenes of Techiman are expressed through their festivals. The people of Techiman in the Bono East region of Ghana, have various festivals they celebrate annually. Some of these festivals are the *Apoɔ* festival, the Yam festival, the *Adae* festivals. *Apoɔ* festival, like most festivals celebrated in the country is rich in performances. It involves varieties of performances which project the culture of the people. This study seeks to examine *Apoɔ* festival song texts and how they are used as a tool to control the behaviour of the people of Techiman. It looks at the literary tropes used in the songs to bring out the meaning of the song lyrics. The data gathered through the instruments employed are analyzed and presented in this and the two next chapters. A critical analysis and interpretation of information gathered on *Apoɔ* songs using the instruments of research has been presented in this chapter.

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3.1 Songs intended to warn wrongdoers.

Wickedness

(1)

Amuokuaa ee yie aborɔ firi fie
Aborɔ firi fie menua
aborɔ yi firi fie
Amuokuaa ee, yie aborɔ firi fie
Aborɔ yi firi m'abusua mu
ɛmfiri baabi ara,
Amuokuaa ee yie aborɔ firi fie
Aborɔ yi firi me nuanom
ɛmfiri obiara ara
Amuokuaa ee yie aborɔ firi fie.

Squirrel, wickedness abounds in my family
Wickedness abounds in the family my brother, wickedness abounds in the family
Squirrel, wickedness abounds in the family
This wickedness abounds in my own family,
not from anywhere
Squirrel, wickedness abounds in the family
Wickedness abounds within my own siblings,
not from anybody
Squirrel, wickedness abounds in the family.

The word *amuokuaa* 'squirrel' is used as a symbol of wickedness. That is where they say one thing to represent another thing. On this point, Mr. Samuel Kofi Munufie[8] a respondent, narrates two scenarios which seemingly are the origin of this song. On one hand, he says "squirrel feeds on groundnut but ends up destroying the farms, an act which makes farmers toil in vain." Its act of wickedness lies in the manner in which it feeds on the nuts in the mound without destroying the groundnut plant. That is, the plants look healthy throughout its growing process until harvesting when farmers realize there is nothing to be harvested. Most farmers incur debt as a result. The squirrel is seen as 'evil or wicked' so it is used to represent people who exhibit such behavioural traits.

Performers used *amuokuaa* 'squirrel' as a metaphor to compare the bad behaviour of humans; likening them to the behaviour of the squirrel. The language is complex which makes the song quite difficult to understand literally. In spite of its complexity, it expresses a deeper meaning which is understood by the audience. This confirms Bauman's idea that performance can be a special code which is to be understood and interpreted in a special sense (Bauman, 1984:9-10).

[8] Mr. Samuel Kofi Munufie was interviewed at his residence on 14 March 2019.

Formally, the song served as a warning specifically, to parsimonious family heads but in recent times, it is used to warn people particularly, traditional rulers and rich people who are identified as been wicked in the society. Aggrieved citizens or family members perform this song early in the morning within the culprit's vicinity or in his house amidst great audience to embarrass the culprit.

On the other hand, *Amuokuaa* 'squirrel' is a cultural allusion. According to the respondent, *Amuokuaa* 'squirrel' was an affluent family head who refused to help his own children and other family members. His miserly knew no bounds; to the extent that even on his dying bed he rejected any form of treatment at any cost. The inevitable happened and he died miserably due to hunger and poor medical attention. When his corpse was lifted from his bed, they realized *Amuokuaa* was all along sleeping on his money. His wickedness even ended his own life. This is in their stock. It is a story known to everybody, so the people easily identify with it. This applies to misers who denial others and themselves the privileges luxury offer but prefer to suffer as a result.

Moreover, call-and-response is employed for unity. Here, it is a call on all and sundry to join the performers condemn the act of wickedness by bringing the activities of wicked people to the fore. One of the family members calls out, *Amuokuaa ee yie* 'squirrel' and the rest of the group respond *aborɔ firi fie* 'wickedness abounds in the family' It is a shared problem and not just one man's business, so community involvement is required to correct this normative deviation. The phonological sound *"ee and yie"* is for emphasis of attraction; to hold the attention of the hearer. Issues pertaining to wickedness is of great interest to Bono East people due to its negative impact on the society, so listeners' attention is paramount; culprits need to pay special attention to what the song says. The ending phrases *abusua mu, me nuanom,* 'my family members and my siblings' are lexical. The words are different but have the same

semantic meaning; both words refer to one's relatives; how one's own kinsmen could be the cause of his/her wretchedness. The singers combine sound and rhyming beautifully in this song which makes it easier to remember and dance to.

Many people, particularly rulers and other prominent people in the community are put to shame with this song during *Apoɔ* festivities, an act which is intended to embarrass the culprit in public. Performer therefore caution culprits to repent from their wicked ways. Most guilty ones change to avoid such embarrassment in the next *Apoɔ* festival. In this way, society corrects such vices by inculcating the sense of responsibility and oneness in people with authority.



Figure 1. Celebrants performing Apoɔ songs and dance within the vicinity of their family heads/leaders. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 24 March 2019.

The Bonos, like all Akans, practice the extended family system but within each clan, many members now practice the nuclear family system. Mr. Kwabena Yeboah[9], an elderly man from Dwomoo, a community in Techiman township, in an interview says, "Though wicked people abound in all the Akan families, the Bonos are perceived to be more wicked than all other Akan groups by their own people." This is because, "while some members languish in poverty others

[9] Mr. Kwabena Yeboah was interviewed at the chief priest's palace on 19 March 2019.

enjoy wealth, yet the wealthy will never give assistance to the underprivileged in the family." He adds that "That is why our people jokingly say, the name *Bonofoɔ* 'Bono people' means *aborɔfoɔ,* wicked people."

Betrayal and Envy

In the same way, certain bad behavioural traits such as jealousy, envy, backbiting are condemned during *Apoɔ* ceremony. An example of the songs used in warning people who exhibit such bad behavioural traits is presented below:

(2)

Aborɔ Gyan ee, Gyan ee, Aborɔ Gyan ee.	Wicked Gyan, Gyan, wicked Gyan,
Aborɔ Gyan ee, Gyan ee, Aborɔ Gyan	Should I buy for you to eat
Mentɔ mma wo nni na wɔde merekɔ a	That when they are leading me away
W'asere me? Aborɔ Gyan ee.	You laugh at me? Wicked Gyan.
Mentɔ mma wo nni, na menya ka a	Should I buy for you to eat
W'asere me?	That when I run into debt you laugh at me?

This song can be performed by any member of the community, at the wrongdoer's compound or places where the wrongdoer can witness the performance. Succinct and direct diction is articulated here, which makes the song easy for even children to understand. Despite its simplicity, it expresses a deeper meaning than ordinary language communicates. The song is an historical allusion; it makes reference to a poor man, Gyan, who betrayed his rich and generous friend out of envy. Although Gyan's friend catered for him and his family, when the inevitable happened and his friend lost all his affluence, Gyan did not only neglect his friend but ridiculed him publicly. He rejoiced at his friend's predicament because of envy. The townsfolk were bewildered by his behaviour, so they called him *Aborɔ* Gyan, 'wicked Gyan'. When fortune smiled at his friend and he recovered his prosperity, scheming Gyan pretended to be a friend, but his friend ignored him.

The song begins by calling out the name *Gyan* using the epithet "Aborɔ" (wicked), 'Wicked Gyan' repeatedly. Performers employ the use of epithet as a perfect way to describe the character of offenders to listeners by making reference to Gyan. The repetition here puts a stress on the calling to attract and sustain the attention of the wrongdoer. In the Bono society, issues pertaining to envy, wickedness, betrayal, and others are taken seriously hence, the need to catch the attention of the culprit in order for him to listen to the message being communicated to him. Line 2-5 carries the main massage in the song, that is the question, *Mentɔ mma wo nni na wɔde merekɔ a w'asere me? "*Should I buy for you to eat that when they are leading me away you laugh at me?" And *Mentɔ mma wo nni, na menya ka a w'asere me?* "Should I buy for you to eat that when I run into debt you laugh at me?" Here, although the offender is an astute person, little did he anticipate that his blunder has been discovered by his victims hence they (victims) cannot be fooled again. Akan captures this in the proverb, *Yɛntia kwasea dua so mmprɛnu',* 'We don't step on a fool's testicles twice' he will wise up after the first experience. The wrongdoer is then told directly he is rather a chump; believing he can deceive people all the time. The text is therefore a traditional approach to how life teaches the individual and the text also expresses this experience of betrayal in a way the Akan understands best. Again, Bauman's theory of Performance comes in here; the people perform this song against the background of a cultural understanding that communicates to a group of people in a manner that cannot be experienced in other cultures (Bauman, 1984:11).

Moreover, the parallelism *na wɔde merekɔ a,* "when they are leading me away" and *na menya ka a, "*when I run into debt" is to emphasize betrayal from loved ones. They are lexical parallelism because the words are different, but it has similar semantic meaning. It is copious: *wɔde merekɔ*, "when they are leading me away," *menya ka,* "when I run into debt" which aids in easy memorization of the song. Both lines end with the phrase *w'asere me,* 'so you laugh at me?' It is interesting to note that when an Akan asks this rhetorical question, he does not

necessarily demand an answer from the culprit, but to get the listener thinking or to emphasize a point being made.

Corruption and Greed

Aside cautioning rulers/leaders to change from their depraved ways, traditional rulers are held accountable by the people they rule by bringing the rulers to book. Mr. Emmanuel Kwasi Ayimadu[10], a former clerk of Ghana's 4th Republic parliament, a native of Techiman in an interview says, "Transparency is vital in every good governance, and this is centred on accountability. But, under the traditional customs and norms, it is an insult for the ruled to demand an account from a ruler with regards to how their funds are spent." Lack of accountability causes mistrust among kings and their subjects. *Apoɔ* period gives liberty to people to demand an account from leaders through songs. All heinous activities of traditional leaders are brought to the fore to either caution them or revolt against them. This rebellion is a peaceful one; it's purposely to put leaders on their toes. It also urges leaders with deviant behaviour to change. Most often, many traditional rulers seem to have forgotten who they are, and what their duties are. So, there's the need to hold them accountable for their decisions and actions as a way of reminding them of their duties. Kings are special people assigned with special roles in the Akan society. Busia (1951) states that "The chief had been a priest revered as the lineal successor of the founder of the state (Cited in Brempong, 2007:2)

Although, chieftaincy has changed a bit due to social, political and religious influence in recent times, traditional rulers in the country still exercise same power over their political communities. Their position grants them access to power, wealth, prestige and sway in society. In spite of these, it is a known fact that some traditional rulers abuse this power and its privileges. Traditional rulers as custodians of ancestral and public lands rather sell off lands

[10] Mr. Emmanuel Kwasi Ayimadu was interviewed at his residence at V.R.A. community on 23 March 2019.

impeding the development of the community. Within the period of the ceremony, a day is allocated to each sub-chief and his people to display their uniqueness and ability through performance of *Apoɔ* songs and dance through the principal streets of Techiman. Performers therefore attack their corrupt leader through songs when it's that leader's turn to parade through the town. The motive is to both warn and dishonour the king amid great audience. One of the songs is presented below.

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(3)

Nana ee, yɛn ara yɛn hene Nana ee,	Nana, our own king Nana,
Nana ee, deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ oo.	What you are doing is wrong.
Wotɔn nsaase a,	When you sell all the land,
kae nkyirimma,	think of the future generation,
Nana ee deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ oo.	Nana, what you are doing is wrong.
Wodi sika a,	When you spend the money,
kae nkyirimma,	think of the future generation,
Nana ee deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ oo.	Nana, what you are doing is wrong.
Nana ee, yɛn ara yɛn hene Nana ee,	Nana, our own king Nana,
Deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ oo!	What you are doing is wrong!

Singers employ call-and-response for unity, thus when society bonds together for a common purpose. The people bond together to demand accountability from their leaders. The lead singer, usually the oldest woman in the group calls out, *Nana ee, yɛn ara yɛn hene Nana ee,* 'Nana, our own king Nana', and the rest respond, Nana ee, *deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ oo,* 'Nana, what you are doing is wrong'. Here, the call is to shower praises on the king to assure him of their allegiance to him. Performers adulate the king to attract his attention before pointing out directly to him in the response that, *Nana ee, deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ oo,* "Nana, what you are doing is wrong" Since the matter at hand is of great importance to the townsfolk, sweet diction is used to extol the king in order for him to easily grant them audience. Performers make use of call-and-response to attract the attention of the public as well. There is a call for the society's involvement in order to confront any corrupt ruler. Although this is a protest song, the

performance on this occasion is to warn leaders to evoke a change in their altitudes. So, *Nana ee, yɛn ara yɛn hene Nana ee* 'Nana, our own king Nana' reassures the king of the the people's loyalty to him however he is being warned to change from his evil deeds. The phonological sound "ee" and "oo" is for emphasis of attraction; to catch the attention of the hearer.



Figure 2. Sub-Chiefs performing Apoɔ songs and dance with their subjects through the principal streets of Techiman. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date: 25 March 2019.



Figure 3. One of the principal streets of Techiman. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date: 14 March 2019.



Figure 4. Chiefs parading through the principal streets of Techiman with their subjects on the durbar day. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date: 25 March 2019.

In this song, the parallelism *Wo tɔn nsaase a, kae nkyirimma* and *Wo di sika a, kae nkyirimma*, in line three and line five is for emphasis on corrupt leaders and corruption which has proliferated the society. These sentences have the same syntactic meaning. That is, the corresponding words and phrases are in the same grammatical order. The repetition here involves the type of action verbs that are used as well as the tense as in "sell" and "spend"

which are all in the present. They indicate the crime committed by many leaders in the society which is corruption. The statements begin with the pronoun "you" to indicate the perpetrators of this crime. Likewise, the phrase *wotɔn nsaase*, 'when you sell the lands' lay emphasis on, as well as to reproach leaders on extensive selling of community lands. And the phrase *wodi sika*, 'when you spend the money' in line five stresses on misappropriation of public funds by leaders without any proper accountability. Keulder (2008) opines that, "no king was queried or called to account for the kingdoms' resources or taxes because he was simply above the law" (Cited in Igbion, 2016:149). In this sense, many leaders do not account for monies on lands sold or taxes collected. And no one could question their decision, they then grab the chance to amass wealth for themselves. Hence, the subjects' confrontation during *Apoɔ* period.

This song ends with an excruciating statement to the king. Thus, the refrain *Deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ!* 'What you are doing is wrong!' to embarrass the king. Although this is a song, performers employ anaphora in this instance as they "reiterate the same though as well as the same sound repeatedly" (Agyekum, 2013). Repetition here prints pictures and thoughts of corruption and bad leadership into the listeners' mind. This expression makes the lines valuable and easy to remember. Also, the statement *Deɛ woreyɛ yi nnyɛ!* is clear and direct, and this is to invoke direct action because the words appeal directly to the senses of the traditional ruler. The directness of this line makes their words powerful and enables listeners to easily understand what is being communicated to them. Performers use this line to demonstrate their competence to the king. They freely criticise the king directly to the face by pointing to him 'you are corrupt and avaricious. Through Ayabomo, married women in Nzema feel free to tell their husbands their piece of mind face to face (Agovi, 1994:206). This constitutes a form of public justice; the people assess you, judge you, and give their verdict. Performers demean corrupt rulers/leaders with this satirical song to evoke a change in his attitude.

As if the above is not enough, the people choose to put a lot of emphasis on chiefs' misdeeds by singing another song:

(4)

Motɔn asaase a, monhwɛ nipa,	When you sell off lands, cater for the people,
Motɔn asaase a, monhwɛ nipa,	When you sell off lands, cater for the people,
Na yabrɛ mo ho.	For we have toiled for you.
Techiman mpanimfoɔ mo tɔn asase a, monhwɛ nipa,	Leaders of Techiman when you sell off lands, cater for the people,
Na yabrɛ mo ho!	For we have toiled for you!

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This song also makes reference to 'land' which is a symbol of the creator and ancestors. Land represents sacredness and prosperity. 'Land' has been repeated in the third and fifth lines of the song for community memory. Repetition is used because we are oral people and we remember more through hearing something severally. Hence, repetition here aids in easy memorization of the sacredness and importance of land to the existence of the people of Techiman. According to Danquah (2014), in the Ghanaian culture, land (earth) is regarded as a divine gift from Onyankopon (God) to their ancestors and passed on from one generation to the next. Ostensibly, land is considered as a celestial gift from the Supreme Being and must be used in a way that will benefit present and future generations (Cited in Boamah, 2015:42). This points out that Akans regard land as a sacred gift bequeathed to them by their ancestors which must be of benefit to all members of the community. Therefore, chiefs must cater for the people *'monhyɛ nipa'* and also the lands must be preserved and handed down to the next generation as the ending phrase *kae nkyirimma* in lines three and five of the first song indicate. A warning message is therefore sent across to the chiefs to consider the people especially, the future generation in their decision making.

The song explicitly touches on extensive selling of public lands by rulers/leaders of the community. Eshun (2011:17) states that "The chief has been mandated by the ancestors to take

proper care of natural resources particularly lands, rivers," but most often, chiefs sell these natural resources to enrich themselves. The point being made here is that Akans consider "land (earth) as a mother and a deity" and it "bears the remains of their ancestors in the form of graves" (Danquah, 2014) so indigenes are instructed to preserve it, use it in a way that will benefit all members in the community and not just a few. In this sense, land must not be destroyed or sold out to foreigners for personal gains. The singers capture this clearly in the statement, *Mo tɔn asaase monhwɛ nipa,* 'when you sell out lands, cater for the people' in line one, line two and line four. Repetition of these lines reminds offenders of the effects of indiscriminate selling of community lands and also stresses on the responsibilities of leaders towards their subordinates. The aggressive manner in which performers sing this part of the song gives more significance to their words; it makes their words stronger, more efficient, and memorable.



Figure 5. Celebrants performing Apoɔ songs. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 24 March 2019.

It is important to note that natural resources have been gifted to humans by the Supreme Being to assist us live comfortably. Due to the significance of these natural resources to the existence of humankind, the ancestors gave out certain instruction in the form of taboos in order to protect the environment for sustainable use (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010; Boamah, 2015; Dosu, 2017). This simply implies that human beings are supposed to take proper care of nature's resources. Yet, they are not forbidden from profiting from it by selling portions of lands to cater for the

people. Performers are not ignorant of this fact so they inform their leaders they can sell lands when the need arises, but the proceeds must be of benefit to all members of the community. Hence, the ending phrase *monhwɛ nipa,* 'care for the people'. The statement, *Na yabrɛ mo ho* repeated in line three and line four stress on bad attitude of leaders. Singers reproach rulers with this statement to point out directly to them that they are greedy and ungrateful. This is to remind those leaders that they (leaders) live comfortably or luxuriously at the expense of the sweat and toil of the people. Within the *Apoɔ* festivities, if a ruler is confronted with any of these songs, it indicates that ruler is corrupt, greedy, and ungrateful. This song is used as a parody to make mockery of corrupt and greedy chiefs. It serves as a guide for rulers to rule with diligence in order not to be shamed every *Apoɔ* season.

These two songs presented above are composed specifically to warn greedy and corrupt traditional rulers. Corruption by people in authority has become one of the social vices which impedes the development of the society. Igboin (2016) attests that, there were corrupt practices broadly defined in pre-colonial Africa; many traditional rulers were and are still corrupt. Kings and queens squandered vast amounts of natural wealth. They were like gods with absolute power which corrupted absolutely. Aggrieved subjects seize the opportunity *Apoɔ* presents to publicly criticise traditional rulers. In anticipation, they sing to express their disappointment and anxiety over the king's despicable conduct. This is in line with Bauman's assertion that performance gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity ways (Bauman, 1984:11). Performers are usually townsfolk who most often disguise themselves to hide their real identity. This is to avoid being recognized by the ruler or his elders, and also enable performers express themselves with competence. Simple and direct diction is used to convey these messages across to hearers. The simplicity of the diction makes the song easily comprehensible by even children.

Songs Intended to Warn People against dangers that Surrounds them in the Society.

Wickedness abounds in all aspect of human life. Therefore, not only people in power but also ordinary members of the society could show acts of wickedness to others. Such wicked people pose danger to the vulnerable in the society. The most vulnerable people in the society are girls/women and children. This is the reason why during *Apoɔ* celebrations, girls/women are warned of wicked people, and the dangers that surround them. They are cautioned to be extra careful in life particularly, when dealing with men. Vulnerability of women in the society compelled a fetish priest to compose a song to warn women of dangers that lie in wait in the shadows to devour unsuspected ones. "The belief in the supernatural world and supernatural is still prevalent among African communities" (Chemhuru & Masaka, 2010:122). Akans, like most indigenous Africans, believe strongly in ancestral spirits and the gods. In an interview Afia Kyeremaa, a 45-year-old woman and Afia Takyiwaa,[11] a 38-year-old woman, both singers from Nsuta say, "We the indigenes of Techiman give ultimate respect to diviners, priests and priestesses that is why we call them Nana, which is a title given to only kings and queens. Therefore, a song composed by *Botwerewa Bosomfoɔ*[12] (The Priest of *Botwerewa*) is valued by the people. He cautions women to be careful in order not to be subjected to any form of abuse by unscrupulous people. The song is presented below.

[11] Afia Kyeremaa and Afia Takyiwaa were interviewed on the principal street, in front of the Paramount chief's palace on 25 March 2019.

[12] Botwerewa Bosomfoɔ, is the chief priest of Botwerewa (a god), one of the most powerful gods in Techiman.

(5)

Monhwɛ yie maa ee ee, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie mmaawa ee
Monhwɛ yie maa ee ee, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie
Morekɔ asuo a,
morekɔ gya a monhwɛ yie
Nanka bi da hɔ oo,
ayɛ a monhwɛ yie
Monhwɛ yie maa ee, ee aya a monhwɛ yie
Moredi agorɔ aa, moredi atorɔ monhwɛ yie
biribi wɔ hɔ oo,
ayɛ a monhwɛ yie mmaawa
Monhwɛ yie maa ee, ee aya a monhwɛ yie
Morekɔ skuul aa, Morekɔ skuul aa, monhwɛ yie
Morefa namfoɔ aa, namfo dodoɔ,
monhwɛ yie
Moretwe mpena a, AIDS wɔ hɔ oo, monhwɛ yie
Monhwɛ yie maa ee ee, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie.
Moreka kaa a,
gyae mirika dodo yi, momhwɛ yie!
Nanka bi da hɔ oo, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie,
Monhwɛ yie maa ee ee, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie.

Be careful women, always be careful young women!
Be careful women, always be careful.
When fetching water,
when looking for firewood, be careful,
There is a copperhead snake lying there, always be careful,
Be careful women, always be careful.
When playing, when gossiping, be careful,
There are unforeseen things there,
always be careful, women!
Be careful women, always be careful.
When going to school, when going to school, be careful
When making friends, too many friends,
be careful,
When dating, AIDS is real, be careful
Be careful women, always be careful.
When driving, control the speed
be very carefully,
There is a copperhead snake lying there, always be careful,
Be careful women, always be careful.

The content of this song warns women against possible dangers. Normally, the oldest woman in the group begins the performance by calling, *Monhwɛ yie maa ee ee, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie mmaawa ee*, 'Be careful women, always be careful young women!' in line one and the rest of the women respond *Monhwɛ yie maa ee ee, ayɛ a monhwɛ yie,* 'Be careful women, always be careful' in line two. Call and response technique is employed for unity. This is a call for family bonding and a call for society bonding. There is nobody far more vulnerable in the society than girls so, there is a call on them to be very careful in the cruel world subjugated by desirous, merciless, and irresponsible men. A society's involvement is required in achieving this objective; in guiding the youngsters, so the public is called upon to unite in protecting the young

ones. Although this is a song, there are instances of anaphora, *Monhwɛ yie,* 'Be careful' which the composer has employed to generate emotional effect in the targeted audience.

Noticeably, the redundant use of the phrase *monhwɛ yie maa* 'be careful women', evokes a sense of consciousness in listeners. It aids in developing imagery of foreboding danger women could be confronted with in their environment in the listener's mind. Similarly, the sense of fear is expressed with the redundant use of the words *more,* 'when' and *ayɛ a* 'always.' This reinforces the thoughts of fear of unforeseen dangers in the minds of girls/women listening to be mindful of times and places where calamity can befall them, in order to tread cautiously. It also gives a nice melody to those lines which makes it more pleasurable to listen and dance to. The phrases '*monhwɛ yie mmaa'* 'be careful women' and '*monhwɛ yie mmaawa'* 'be careful girls' in line one and line seven have the same semantic meaning. They are lexical and lay emphasis on the vulnerability of women, especially, *mmaawa* (girls). This implies that women are at a higher risk of danger in the rotten society they find themselves. Girls are not safe anywhere in the society hence they must beware of dangerous people, and dangers that abound in their surroundings. The sound /e/ in the phonics *ee, yie* create a rhythm which reinforces the poetry of the line which aids in easy memorization of the song.

This song is rich in imagery and the most glaring among them is *Nanka* 'copperhead snake', which often lays ambush in the dark ready to attack defenceless preys. The image of *nanka* 'copperhead snake' prints unforgettable visual pictures of dangers of the world around women in listeners' mind. '*Nanka*' (copperhead snake) is also used as a symbol for devious people. Here, the deceitful nature of *nanka* 'copperhead snake' represents dangerous people in the society who lurk in the shadows ready to devour unsuspected victims. The Bonos like using symbols; this makes them who they are, it is their identity. Fear of a copperhead snake, a beautiful and dangerous snake explains the composer's fear for women, especially, girls.

Society is crippled with fear of lurking danger around youngsters; fear of men with evil intent to harm vulnerable girls, such as the bully Macho, the heartless street lord Poison, and the wily rapist Onko (Darko, 2014). The most frightening situation arises when these vulnerable girls are left to concoct the means of facing up to wicked men of their world. *Bosomfoɔ* (Fetish Priest) does not only warn women against the terror of delinquent men but also cruel women like Maami Broni (Darko, 2014) who turns out to be *nanka,* who forces poor young girls into numerous kinds of abuse, agony and exploitation. Society therefore teaches young girls to stay clear of dangerous people in order to stay safe.



Figure 6. Groups of women in Apoɔ performance. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 24 March 2019.



Figure 7. The researcher in Apoɔ performance with some queen mothers. Photographed by the photographer: 25 March 2019.



Figure 8. The researcher with Nana Ama Anima, the queen mother's linguist, after the interview. Photographed by the photographer. Date 25 March 2019.

It is not only physical traps that lurks in darkness but spiritual ones too. In view of African Traditional Religion, "The living and the dead, the visible cosmos and the invisible world merely constitute one and the same universe (Douglas, 2005:163). An indication that human beings co-exist with other supernatural beings; humans do not live alone in this world. Visibly, good as well as bad spirits abound in our surroundings. The song texts serve as a warning to women in order not to incur the wrath of these spiritual powers. The phrase *biribi wɔ hɔ*, 'there are unforeseen things around' in line seven which is poetic makes euphemistic reference to "spiritual beings that are more powerful than humankind," (Acquah, 2011:10) since they are conscious of the existence of gods and ancestral spirits. *Maame* Akua Gyabaa[13], a 52-year-old hawker, explains that "One may never know what spirit lurks along one's path. One must therefore be cautious of her actions, be mindful of her utterances, and more importantly, when menstruating, to avoid any form of curse as consequences of her actions."

In this context, *asuo*, 'water' has also been used as euphemism to avoid mentioning the word *kyima* 'menstruation' which is considered as *akyiwadeɛ* 'unclean or taboo.' According to *Obaapa* Yaa Fosuaa,[14] a respondent, women are believed to be unclean because they menstruate, hence the call to be extra careful during their menstrual period. For instance, a girl/woman is forbidden to go to any riverside or stream within her menstrual period. She is to set up her fire at *nfikyire* (behind the house) and not within the compound of the house until her period is over. *Obaapa* Fosuaa adds that, at a chief's palace, shrine, or the fetish priest's palace, it's a taboo for women who still menstruate to sit on black stools. If she does so knowingly or unknowingly, she may be barren for life. This projects the fact that supernatural powers exist in the society hence one must be careful in order not to offend them. Here, society teaches young girls to be obedient as well as how to keep themselves and behave during and

[13] Maame Akua Gyabaa was interviewed at her food joint near the market on 21 March 2019.
[14] Obaapa Yaa Fosua was interviewed at her shop near the chief's palace on 19 March 2019.

after menstruation. Likewise, *gya,* 'firewood' represents dangerous places. One of my informants[15] says, "Fetching firewood could lead one into the deep forest where a lot of dangerous animals are found. That is why we tell girls to be careful in order not to end up at a dangerous place."

Again, there is phonological repetition in the phrases *moredi agorɔ aa; moredi atorɔ aa; morefa namfoɔ aa, monhwɛ yie,* 'when playing; when lying, when making friends be careful'. The parallelism is based on the moments *agorɔ; atorɔ; namfo*. This repetition is used to indicate the specific moments, places where troubles lurk like a python ready to attack, and the type of people involved there. These moments involve lots of people and all kinds of conversations and incidents take place among people present. Central among such conversations is 'gossip' which is known to be a societal practice within the Akan society; each person's business becomes the business of all. Performers perform these lines to caution girls to be careful when choosing friends; bad friendship leads people into destruction. It is not surprising that the Akan elders say, *Kyerɛ me w'adamfo na me nkyerɛ wo wo suban,* 'Show me your friend and I will show you your character.' With these few lines, girls to act cautiously with friends, and even when dating to avoid disappointments and unwanted pregnancies.

Also, the words such as *skuul*, AIDS, and *drobafoɔ* 'school, drivers' are found in the concluding part of the song. An indication that this song, like many *Apoɔ* songs, has moved across time and space. The chronotope makes this current song quite different from the original one. The change is due to the introduction of formal education, and the increasing number of road accidents and HIV/AIDS cases in the modern society. AIDS and drivers are symbols which represent death. Death lurks in waiting like *nanka,* 'copperhead snake' to claim innocent lives. Young girls are therefore warned not to engage in promiscuity to prevent contracting infectious

[15] A male participant who offered his views at the interview of Maame Akua Gyabaa on 21 March 2019.

diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other STDs which lurk in the shadows to destroy innocent lives. Here, society teaches girls good moral values. An indication that, women become aware of the consequences of engaging in pre-marital sex or promiscuity and why they should abstain from it. Likewise, drivers who like speeding on the roads are warned to drive with conscientiousness and think about death which also lie in wait like the copperhead snake to claim lives through reckless driving. Similarly, *skuul*, 'school' has been used as metonymy. It represents formal education. Repetition of school in line nine lays emphasis on the importance of formal education to the people of Techiman.

In conclusion, the literary structures in *Apoɔ* festival songs do not only inculcate good moral values in the people but also a sense of cohesion among indigenes and their chiefs; an act which promotes peaceful co-existence among the people of Techiman. Also, citizens of Techiman have the lampooning liberty to demand an account from their leaders through songs. Thus, traditional rulers/leaders are criticised and mocked to remind them of their duties and responsibilities towards their people. *Apoɔ* songs enables indigenes to protect and preserve natural resources such as land.

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CHAPTER FOUR

INSULT SONGS AIMED AT CORRECTING DEVIANCE

4.0 Overview

This study continues to examine the literary structures of *Apoɔ* songs which insults the wrongdoer. Let us note that *Apoɔ* songs are insult poetry and all the targets suffer insults. We have treated the literary aspects of *Apoɔ* songs about wickedness, betrayal, corruption and greed, and dangers that abounds in the society. This chapter is a continuation of the song texts which attacks people with social foibles, and the aim to make them change for the better. This chapter analysis *Apoɔ* insult poetry against abuse of power, sexual immorality, laziness, and theft.

4.1 Songs to Attack Deviants in the Society

Apoɔ songs are seemingly insulting. The mean or harsh manner of performance of the songs renders it as such. Though *Apoɔ* insult songs are generally derisive songs, they are intent to correct certain normative deviations in the society. *Apoɔ* songs like many traditional songs, "function as a release mechanism but, coupled with what is clearly freedom of expression, they are a means of disseminating information which leads to redress of grievances and solutions of problems" (Merriam, 1964). One of the key functions of *Apoɔ* songs is conveying information to the general public through insults. Members of the community are informed about present and past happenings in the society which are of social concern. The whole essence of *Apoɔ* festival is not only to 'reject evil' or repudiate publicly the misdeeds and bad actions of indigenes but also to put the behaviour of indigenes, especially, people occupying key positions in the community in check through songs.

Abuse of Power and Immorality

In early years, many traditional rulers/leaders were known to exercise power in loathsome ways which resulted in the destruction of their towns and villages. According to Nana Bafour Asare,[16] the *Tumtumhene/ Bamirihene* (divisional chief) of Techiman, "Among the Akans, chieftaincy is power. Traditional rulers command the highest authority in their political communities." He admits that "It is an undeniable fact that some rulers abuse this power by maltreating, intimidating and exploiting their subjects. History about specific past kings attest to hegemonic way of ruling people in the past in Techiman." An indication that abuse of power by traditional rulers/leaders is a social concern. To regulate the behaviour of bad leaders, and ease the suffering of subjects, *Apoɔ* period gives license to aggrieved subjects to express their grievance through songs. This means, *Apoɔ* is to make rulers responsible to the people they rule. During *Apoɔ* celebration, specific songs are composed to hold rulers accountable, and in a way counter the hegemonic rule at the time. Popular among such songs is *Berɛ yi adane* 'Times have changed' which is presented below.

[16] Nana Bafour Asare was interviewed during the sacrificial rituals at Amanfomu on 15 March 2019.

(6)

Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee, Kwadwo Fɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane oo
Mo ma yenka na adwamansɛm!
abɔ kuro yi
Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee, Kwadwo Fɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane
Mo ma yenka na awudisɛm
abɔ kuro yi
Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee, Kwadwo Fɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane
Mo ma yenka na akorɔmfoɔ abɔ kuro yi
Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee,
Kwadwo Fɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane
Mo ma yenka na nkɔnkɔnsafoɔ abɔ kuro yi
Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee, Kwadwo Fɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane, wo pɛn so
Yɛntumi yenka, yɛntumi yɛnka,
abɔ kuro yi
Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee, Kwadwo Fɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane, wo pɛn so.

Times have changed Kwadwo, Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed
Let's be honest sexual promiscuity!
has ruined this town
Times have changed Kwadwo, Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed
Let's be honest mysterious killings
have ruined this town
Times have changed Kwadwo, Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed
Let's be honest thievery have ruined this town
Times have changed Kwadwo,
Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed
Let's be honest gossip has ruined this town
Times have changed Kwadwo, Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed, in your reign
Taking away peoples' freedom to free speech has ruined this town
Times have changed Kwadwo, Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed, in your reign.

Performers of the above song are mostly aggrieved townsfolks who walk directly to the chief's palace in the morning to criticise him. Performers sing, dance vigorously, and show gestures which depict their angst to the audience, particularly, the king. Since the performance is aimed at the king, performers disguise themselves to avoid being recognized. The performance begins with a call-and-response. The lead singer calls, *Berɛ yi adane Kwadwo ee, Kwadwo foɔdwoɔ berɛ yi adane:* 'Times have changed Kwadwo, Kwadwo Fordjour times have changed', and the rest of the group repeat same line in response. Call-and-response technique is employed here for unity. Thus, building strong community bonds. Citizens of Techiman who yearn for fairness, justice and accountability are called upon to unite and join in the 'protest' against the unacceptable behaviour of the people in authority. This is in line with Hirschi's (1969) assertion

that strong bonds to family and society prevents people from committing crime. This makes it a communal issue and not just one man's business.



Figure 9. Performers dressed in various forms of disguises to hide their identity from the public. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date 25 March 2019.

The repetition in the sentences *Berɛ yi adane ee* and *berɛ yi adane oo* in line one is word and lexical parallelism but the 'ee' and 'oo' are a phonological difference, indicating the change being recommended by the people. The sound is for emphasis of attraction; it doubles the idea of calling. This is to hold the attention of the offender. The name 'Kwadwo Fordjour' repeated severally in the song is alluded to one of the late chiefs of Techiman who many informants described as authoritarian, whose immoral and corrupt ways and decisions led the town into ruins. This is an historical allusion; it is in their stock so people can identify with it easily. The sentence *berɛ yi adane* 'Times have changed' has also been repeated a lot of times to emphasize more on mismanagement and misrule which is negatively affecting the lives of the people and the society. Again, the repetition in this line conjures a rhythmic effect on the musicality of the song and makes it very danceable and this is just to tease the target of the text who cannot be addressed directly but who can only be addressed using such techniques of indirection.

The song text addresses specific normative deviation such as promiscuity, murder, theft, gossip and tyranny in lines two, four, six and eight. These societal ills perpetrated by leaders are noted

to impede the development of the community as well as distract peaceful co-existence among the people. The song brings to fore unacceptable behaviours which when not properly checked lead even great nations into destruction. This projects the fact that our society is currently in ruins due to our inability to control these ills in the society that have engulfed it. Through the song texts, performers eagerly inform bad leaders that their crimes have been exposed and caution them to repent and mend their bad ways.

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Moreover, repetition of the phrase *yɛntumi yɛnka,* 'not able to speak out' in line ten emphasizes fear put into subjects by rulers. A king exercises "absolute control," he rules over the life and property of every person" (Keulder, 2008) living in his jurisdiction. Therefore, challenging a king's authority comes with serious repercussion. In this sense, people are silenced by the sovereignty of rulers. By speaking out, one "takes a risk" (Faucault, 2001:16) and endangers his/her own life and in some cases put the lives of his/her relations at risk. Ostensibly, the "said truth is capable of hurting or angering" (Faucault, 2001:17) the people with power, no one then dares to incur the wrath of a king. In turn, people become silent and 'not able to speak out.' On the other hand, the singers use this same phrase *yɛntumi yɛnka,* 'taking away people's freedom to speak', to encourage citizens to be bold, honest and speak out against immorality, tyranny and bad leadership. Likewise, "telling the truth is regarded as a duty," (Faucault, 2001:19) being silent and not bringing leaders to order could cause their own and the community's down fall.

The song concludes by embarrassing the chief further with the repetition of the clause, *berɛ yi adane, wo pɛn so*, 'Times have changed, in your reign' in line 9 and line 11. Repetition here is for community memory. This line specifically portrays the chief as a failure and bad ruler. Also, felons are shamed with same song lyrics. Since the meaning of the song (story) is normally obvious to the wrongdoer, performers, and listeners, it is remarkably humorous. The song is therefore used as a parody to mock immoral, ruthless, and unscrupulous people in the

municipality. Being able to easily identify with the story makes audience respond to the song with great enthusiasm just to ridicule bad rulers and perpetrators of the crimes mentioned in the song.

This song is a protest against bad governance, abuse of power and immorality. Formally, this song was directed at depraved rulers but now it is used to attack all manner of people in the community, especially, those in authority who are found to be culprits. The song contains obscure words. This method has been employed purposely to observe the norms of the society. Like the 'Chamula' obscure words, they make "normative statements by suggestion and never by the actual explicit statement, since their social setting demands circumlocution" (Bauman, 1984:101). This shows that although *Apoɔ* gives people liberty to criticize others, it still has some barriers such as rank, age and sex. Therefore, as a king his subjects accord him with the maximum respect. Yet, even the most inferior person can call down that chief through songs composed with obscure words such as *berɛ yi adane, wo pɛn* so 'times have changed, in your reign'. This statement is intended to disparage the ruler/leader. This helps in upholding the moral order without disrespecting that ruler/leader's authority.

Whenever subjects perform this insult song whiles following their king during *Apoɔ*, it is an indication that the people are displeased with that chief. Chiefs who are pig-headed are ridiculed during the next *Apoɔ* season or dethroned. In the same way, thieves, murderers, gossips and promiscuous people are insulted to repent or face the fury of the people.

Sexual Immorality

In other instances, the elderly makes good use of this period by informing the youth of foreboding dangers through songs. However, these same songs inform sexually immoral men that their promiscuous activities have been uncovered by others. Sexual promiscuity is a

behaviour Bono East community seriously frowns upon. Some interviewees from Agosa[17] explain that the Bonos despise promiscuous men because custom permits a man to marry as many wives as he desires so far as he can cater for the women and their children (interview with informants). Given such privilege, if any man still engages in indiscriminate sexual activity with girls, then that man is not a morally upright person. So, during *Apoɔ* festivities women attack perpetrators of this immoral act as in the following song:

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(7)

Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma,	That paedophile who defiles children, council workers who defile children
council foɔ abɛdi mma ee	
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma,	That paedophile who defiles children, leaders of this town who defile children
kuro mpanimfoɔ abɛdi mma ee	
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma,	That paedophile who defiles children, council workers who defile children
council foɔ abɛdi mma ee	
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma,	That paedophile who defiles children, timber merchants who defile children
timberfoɔ abɛdi mma ee	
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma, council foɔ abɛdi mma ee	That paedophile who defiles children, council workers who defile children
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi me ba,	That paedophile may defile my child, Government workers who defile children
aban adwumayɛfoɔ abɛdi mma ee	
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma,	That paedophile who defiles children, council workers who defile children
council foɔ abɛdi mma ee	
Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma,	That paedophile who defiles children,
Adidi nkwadaa abɛdi mma ee.	that paedophile who defiles children.

This song is directed at paedophile and womanizers in the society. Women usually perform this song anywhere in the community so far as the wrongdoer can witness the performance. The song begins with a call from the oldest women in the group. She calls out, *Adidi nkwadaa abɛdi mma, council foɔ abɛdi mma* "That paedophile, who defiles children, council workers

[17] Agosa is one of the villages in Techiman. The participants were interviewed on the durbar grounds on 25 March 2019.

who defile children" and the rest respond *Adidi nkwadaa abɛdi mma*. "That paedophile who defiles children." Call and response technique is used here for unity thus, when society bonds together. The use of polyphony (different voices coming together) serves as another bonding instrument. This is an indication that the problem at hand is not the business of a particular family, but every family's. The victim may be one's own daughter, who can be anybody's daughter as line four indicates, *Adidi nkwadaa abɛdi me ba* 'That pedophile may defile my child.' One's own daughter may be the next poor victim, a devastated situation which needs to be addressed by all and not just one person/family.

The phrases *Adidi nkwadaa* and *abɛdi mma,* 'that paedophile' and 'who defiles children' are used in a redundant manner. Redundancy is employed here to aid in reinforcing the thought of danger of being sexually abused in the minds of women especially, girls. This makes the song lyrics easier and clearer to comprehend. The ending words *nkwadaa* and *mma* are lexical. Though the words are different they have the same meaning since both words refer to 'children'. The parallelism here is to lay emphasis on how dangerous the perpetrators of this act are. That is, they spare no one, not even their own children because "they are animals, they know no mercy" (Darko, 2014:22). No wonder some towns in Anlo in the Volta region of Ghana refer to promiscuous men as 'He-Goats' (Campbell, 2002).

Moreover, the word *nkwadaa* literary refers to little girls. Among the Bonos, it is disgraceful for a man to be sexually linked to little girls. So, *nkwadaa* is employed here as a parody to promiscuous men for their shameful behaviour. Likewise, the word *mma* which refers to one's children, which could also be taken to be the offender's own child. According to an informant, Yaw Opoku Gyan,[18] "the culprits' unhealthy desire renders their own daughters their prey." The implication is these promiscuous men could satisfy their lustful desires with just any girl,

[18] Kwadwo Opoku Gyan was interviewed during a night *Apoɔ* on the streets of Taako on 14 March 2019.

even their own blood relations, being their sisters, nieces, daughters or granddaughters. But it is abominable for a man to have sexual intercourse with his own 'blood', so performers use the word *mma* to further humiliate these evil men. Rapist and paedophiles are not spared in the Bono community. They are embarrassed with this satirical song to evoke a change in their attitude.

Line one mentions the word 'council,[19]' followed by words like *kuro mpanimfoɔ*, *timberfoɔ*, and *aban adwumayɛfoɔ* (elders of the town, timber workers and government workers) from lines two to line four. Council used as metonymy here to represent all government workers. Although specific names of perpetrators are mentioned, listeners easily identify them through the performance. Campbell (2002) posits that "a song could refer to a person without using his/her name, and if the song's target was obvious through the context of the song," indigenes easily identify them. One of my informants says, "This song was composed by women who were worried about the alarming rate at which some men indiscriminately had sex with young girls in their respective communities." As *Maame* Abena Nyarkowaa[20], the oldest woman among the informants from Agosa says, "Most workers at council chase after our young girls, have sex with them and destroy their chastity without marrying them." The old lady's statement implies that society is much concerned about the honour of its young women. She adds that "In times past, girls had to be initiated into womanhood, thus, by passing through puberty rites before marriage. Girls are taught a lot of moral values and personal hygiene during this period which kept them away from pre-marital promiscuity." An indication that society prevents teenage pregnancy in its own way.

[19]'Council' is a term used to refer to workers at the then Town Council, presently known as Municipal Assembly.
[20] Maame Abena Nyarkowaa was interviewed on the street of Dwomoo on 20 March 2019.

The statement *Adidi nkwadaa, abɛdi mma*, "That paedophile, who defiles children," which doubles as the chorus of the song is repeated in each line of the song for community memory lay much emphasis on sexual immorality of men in the community. The phonological sound 'ee' doubles the call on the offender; to attract and hold his attention. Since the song text is clear to all and sundry, it is sung to ridicule or belittle paedophiles. Performance of this song within the culprit's compound, workplace, or vicinity is to demean them. Another informant adds that, "the performance of this song disgraces not only the culprit but also his entire family and colleagues Hence, every male in the community tread with caution in order not to shame himself and his relations." In this way, the society teaches young men especially, boys about pre-marital promiscuity and its side effects. These boys then understand why they should abstain from sexual activity so; they grow up to be morally upright men in the society.

Despite parents' efforts to protect youngsters from promiscuous lifestyle, some youths still engage in pre-marital promiscuity. Taken advantage of the festivities, both men and women with weak morals involve themselves in sexual immorality secretly. But *Apoɔ* festival is not a time for promiscuity as stated earlier in the literature review. Rattray attests that "The rules with regard to this point are very strict and well defined" (Rattray, 1923:153). This implies that *Apoɔ* does not give liberty in regard to promiscuity or sexual intercourse. The season is a double-edged sword; while healing the society, it also hurts it. As an Akan proverb says, *efie biara Mensa wɔ mu*, 'there is a bad nut or a black sheep in every family'. Thus, whatever the restrictions and taboos may be, there will still be defiant people within the society. So, while people busily sing to reveal hidden secrets, advise and praise others, some men jubilate as 'more and more' women arrive from their towns and villages to partake in the celebrations. These men disguise themselves by dressing like women, while others wear masks and sing to express their emotions with courage and vigour. With great enthusiasm they sing:

(8)

Apoɔ yi aba,	It's Apoɔ time,
Yɛbɛdi mmaa	We'll have sex with the women
Nkanka ne nkurasefoɔ	More specifically, the villagers
Apoɔ yi aba,	It's Apoɔ time,
Yɛbɛdi mmaa	We'll have sex with the women
Nkanka ne kuro bi so foɔ	Specifically, those from a certain town
Apoɔ yi aba,	It's Apoɔ time,
Yɛbɛdi mmaa.	We'll have sex with the women.

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This song is a double-edged song; it attacks culprits and warns the venerable. This song is to be understood in two different ways thus, depending on who the performers are. This is a culture peculiar to the Bono people. Concerned parents and young men perform this song on the streets as they see groups of young women arrive from nearby towns and villages to participate in the festivities. Performers (men) usually disguise themselves by dressing like women or warning a mask to hide their identities. The diction of this song is clear and direct; it has been couched with sufficient directness to allow the meaning of the song lyrics to remain clear to listeners particularly, young women. This song starts with call and response like many *Apoɔ* songs. The call *Apoɔ yi aba, "*It's *Apoɔ* time" by one of the men and the response *yɛbɛdi mmaa,* "we will have sexual intercourse with the women" by the rest of the group ironically is a call on indecent men to unite to celebrate as 'more and more' women arrive from their villages. Men are called upon to come and express their emotions which is sexual excitement through their performance. This signifies a prearranged plan of the immoral men, to inform women of their innermost desires and intentions to 'enjoy' them sexually. The clause *yɛbɛdi mmaa,* "we will have sexual intercourse with the women" repeated in the first, third and fifth lines is vulgar, offensive and considered too harsh to utter in public. But due to the license of expression *Apoɔ* offers, evildoers take the opportunity to express their views freely by breaking certain protocols, using uncouth words publicly without being sanctioned. The repetition here

lays emphasis on those indecent men's evil intents, which is to "have sexual intercourse with women." The clause *yɛbɛdi mmaa,* "we will have sexual intercourse with the women" also conveys a clear message to young women of what these immoral men can do, and willing to do to their victims.



Figure 10. Young men performing Apoɔ songs through the principal streets of Techiman. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date: 23 March 2019



Figure 11. Young men in Apoɔ performance at the forecourt of the Paramount Chief's palace. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date:25 March 2019.



Figure 12. Men dressed as women. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 25 March 2019.

Similarly, the statement *Nkanka ne nkurasefoɔ*, 'Specifically, the villagers' in line two paradoxically identifies the targeted group these licentious men sort to hunt; the villagers. The village girls are perceived to be gullible which makes them the possible targeted group. These womanizers do not hide their immodest desires and those they intend to devour; they are like hunters on a hunt. In this sense, no one can accuse them of rape or any form of sexual

harassment when they put their words into action. It is perceived that the ladies who eventually fall victims participate in the sexual act willingly since the evildoers have already declared their intentions publicly. The repetition of the phrase *Nkanka ne,* 'more specifically' places more emphasis on the fact that what they (men) are saying is true and not to be taken flippantly. This makes their words stronger and memorable. Also, it makes the situation an attention-grabbing and funny. It is therefore used to make mockery of inexperienced village women and potential victims.

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On the other hand, concerned individuals, parents as well as *Apoɔ* groups also perform this song, but to inform the vulnerable girls to be careful and stay clear of promiscuous men. One of my respondents, Madam Monica Adwoa Takyiakwaa[21], a 74-year-old retired educationist says, "We the elderly sing this song to inform the unsuspected ladies of impending danger. The villagers are innocent and naïve and are easily caught up in the web of womanizers." In contrast to the views of these flirtatious men, this song serves as foreboding to protect women from imaginable danger which could be defilement, sexual harassment or rape, and in worst cases, unwanted pregnancy. These improper behaviours are scowled upon by the people. They are therefore of great concern to both authorities and common people due to its scandalous nature. It brings disgrace upon people, especially, venerable young girls.

Despite the clarity of the song lyrics and its previse, careless, free and easy ways of some young girls render them preys to this old prank of men. By taking notice of such misconducts being perpetuated by people, especially the youth, at the blind side of the aged during the festivities, the elderly envisage misfortune befalling their communities. Their apprehension relates to the issue of teenage pregnancy. In the past, "though sexual intercourse before marriage and even adultery, are regarded leniently, birth of a child to these unions is definitely a misdemeanour"

[21] Madam Monica Adwoa Takyiakwaa was interviewed at her residence on 23 March 2019.

(Merriam, 1964:197). This indicates that among indigenous Africans, having a child out of wedlock is deemed an offence, against the wrongdoer's clan as well as the gods and ancestral spirits. This shows that, till date, teenage pregnancy or having a child without being properly married brings dishonour to one's self, family and ancestors.

Moreover, the statement, *Nkanka ne kuro bi so foɔ,* in line four is to sneer that town/village for its members' bad conduct. It is worthy to mention that due to strict monitoring of activities, certain occurrences do not go unnoticed. So, women found to engage in this indecent act are confronted with spiteful songs. Singers actually go ahead to mention names of particular towns but due to ethical consideration, names of those towns are left out of this work. Here, the statement makes reference to towns of wrongdoers instead of the names of the wrongdoer, thus, names of particular towns are mentioned. In this way, performers directly disgrace the whole community, the chiefs, queen mothers and common people. With this line, performers tell leaders of the identified towns that they raise women with weak/loose morals which indirectly tells a lot about the conduct of leaders of that community. These lines portray a negative picture about the entire community; so, queen mothers in particular ensure that women in their communities are taught good moral values in the early ages of their lives, so they grow up with it. Performance of this song ensures direct social control in the various communities.

The statement *Apoɔ yi aba, yɛbɛdi mmaa,* which doubles as the chorus is repeated to emphasize the fact that every woman is vulnerable so far as some men intend to have sexual relations with them within the Apoɔ period. The whole song is repeated a lot of times to scorn and deride women. Ideally, performance of this song by the elderly also serves as a means of inducing attitudinal change in wrongdoers and their leaders alike. This song is to be understood in two different ways thus, depending on who the performers are. Whether the performers are the dishonest men or the concerned citizens of the town, the meaning of the performance is

understood by listeners. This confirms Bauman's idea that performance can be a special code which sets up, or represents, an interpretive frame within which the message being communicated are to be understood by the linguistic community (Bauman, 1984:9-10; 1975:168). Chiefs and opinion leaders are therefore kept on their toes in enforcing conformity to societal norms in their towns and villages to avoid being shamed amongst other rulers/leaders.

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Laziness

In the Bono community, laziness is frown upon by many people. Even the Bible says, "the hands that do not work should not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). This quotation says clearly that we shouldn't be lazy; one must work hard to survive. Mr. Samuel Ofori[22], a 58-year-old lecturer at the Telecom University and a native of Techiman states categorically that, "society frowns on laziness because lazy people mostly turn out to be thieves, murderers, drug dealers/users, prostitutes and gossips who disturb the peace and stability of many communities." These group of people are insulted during Apoɔ ceremony. The song is as follows:

(9)

W'adware hyɛnhyɛn,	You've bathed glittery,
Wote bamma so,	You are seated on the veranda,
Nkyɛnkyɛma agye w'afuo.	Weeds have seized your farm

The song text uses figurative language to carry the message of this song across to the audience. The complexity of the diction makes it quite difficult to comprehend literally but it is understood by the people. The word, *hyɛnhyɛn*, 'glittery' is used as an image in the song to create visual image of luxury or extravagant lifestyle in the minds of the audience. In the Akan language (Bono dialect), one can bath 'thoroughly' but not 'glittery'. The statement, *W'adware*

[22] Mr. Samuel Ofori was interviewed at the residence of Mr. Kwasi Ayimadu's residence on 23 March 2019.

hyɛnhyɛn, "You've bathed glittery" does not suggest one bathing him/herself thoroughly and brightening up as a result, but it literary connotes one dressing up nicely all the time with expensive clothes and accessories. According to Mr. Ofori, "Lazy people want to live extravagant lifestyle but refuse to work to earn money. Some are often seen in luxurious cars and outfits borrowed, stolen or bought with stolen money from innocent people." This explains the use of the word *hyɛnhyɛn*, 'glittery' in the song.

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The second line conveys the main message in the song to listeners. *Wote bamma so*, "you are seated on the veranda" literary means 'you are lazy.' Another image which prints mental pictures of effects of laziness in listeners' minds. Thus, this person in question is always found sitting idle, sleeping, or seen roaming aimlessly about. With this statement, performers leave listeners to their own imagination. It is undeniable that "Idle hands are the devil's workshop" as an old adage says. this is why society abhors laziness; it is seemingly the root cause of the rampant crimes in the society.

This song is rich in visual imagery and the eye-catching one is *nkyɛnkyɛma* (weeds and thongs) which creates mental pictures of negative effect of laziness in the minds of listeners. The use of the word *nkyɛnkyɛma* aids our mind's eye to visualize the scene of a bushy farm. The word *'nkyɛnkyɛma'* in the Bono dialect does not refer to any ordinary weed, but a type of creepy weed and thongs. Thongs are piecing, damaging and frustrating; it entangles everything in its path and destroys it eventually. In the statement, *Nkyɛnkyɛma agye w'afuo,* 'Weeds have seized your farm', weeds have been personified to craft the perfect picture performers want to show case in the minds of the audience. Performers mocks lazy people with this song to persuade them to work for a living.

This whole song is sung repeatedly to stress the fact that laziness is a bad trait. And this is to evoke a sense of consciousness in the listener. Mr. Ofori further explains that "We detest

laziness because most known lazy people within Techiman are criminals. They do all sorts of bad things to get money. That is why we come down strongly on them during Apoɔ" Ideally, the song does not make reference to anybody but since the referent is obvious to the offender, the singer and the audience, the message conveyed is easily understood by all. This is a taunting song intended to shame the culprit to enact a change in his behaviour. Whenever a person is insulted with this song, he realizes his heinous activities has been uncovered so he has to change. It's shameful to be marked as a lazy person in the community; the culprit's entire family is affected. Everybody therefore tries to work hard to avoid such big humiliation.

Theft

Similarly, the indigenes of Techiman express their fear, grief, agony and resentments through song lyrics during *Apoɔ* celebration. According to *Aberewa* Akua Badu[23], the oldest woman at the chief priest's palace, "*Apoɔ* songs are used to insult. People say whatever they want to put across to the public through song lyrics." An *Apoɔ* song entitled *Akromfoɔ yaahunu mo,* 'Thieves, we've seen you' is presented below:

(10)

O yoo akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo nnɛ Wukuo	O yoo thieves we've seen you today is Wednesday
Apolisifoɔ akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo nnɛ Wukuo	Corrupt policemen we've seen you
O yoo akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo nnɛ Wukuo	today is Wednesday
Takyiman mpaninfoɔ akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo	O yoo thieves we've seen you today is Wednesday
nnɛ Wukuo	Corrupt leaders of Techiman we've seen you
O yoo akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo	today is Wednesday
nnɛ Wukuo	O yoo thieves we've seen you today is Wednesday
Nzongofoɔ akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo	Thieves in Zongo we've seen you
nnɛ Wukuo	today is Wednesday
O yoo akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo nnɛ Wukuo.	O yoo thieves we've seen you today is Wednesday

[23] Aberewa Akua Badu was interviewed at the palace of the Chief Priest of Taa Mensah on 19 March 2019.

The above song is used to criticize or insult thieves, corrupt officers and leaders, and cheats within Techiman community during *Apoɔ* ceremony. Performers storm the vicinity or workplaces of culprits to expose their evil deeds to their faces publicly. Performers wear tattered clothes or ladies' clothes (where performers are men) to prevent being recognised when the culprit is a high ranked officer or a traditional ruler. According to an informant[24], "people disguise themselves to hide their identity because these modern times, when the festivity is over, some people in authority secretly hire crooks to attack their accusers so one needs to be careful."

The song begins with the statement, *O yoo akorɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo oo nnɛ Wukuo* 'thieves we've seen you today is Wednesday'. This song is a cultural allusion. It narrates how some notorious thieves within Techiman were brutally murdered one Wednesday. Everybody knows this story, so they easily identify with it. The song lyrics simply inform the felon; you are a thief and your cup is full. The identified culprits are exposed to the audience through the song text. Names of perpetrators of this crime are mentioned to shame them publicly. The purpose of the song lyrics is to directly confront perpetrators and condemn the crime as well. The song makes mockery of thieves to ensure a change in their behaviour.

According to Nana Yaa Gyaabea[25] a 75year old Queen mother of Agosa, a village near Techiman, "delinquency or deviant behaviour is perceived as 'evil,' a behaviour the Bono East people dislike. The culprit is seen as someone who has offended the ancestral spirits or gods and must be punished for his/her actions." She emphasizes "The punishment is not just meant to inflict pain on the offender, but it's purposely meant for the person to reflect on his behaviour and repent form it and deter others from committing same crime" Reckless behaviour is

[24] The informant, a young man from Krobo, a village near Techiman was interviewed at the forecourt of the palace of the Paramount Chief on 22 March 2019.
[25] Nana Yaa Gyaabea was interviewed at her residence at Agosa on 18 March 2019.

punishable by the society and the gravity of the punishment is based on the seriousness of the crime.

As a result, a change is manifested in many evildoers. A culprit who was noted for stealing foodstuffs from people's farms demonstrates this change the next *Apoɔ* by singing a song such as:

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(11)

Me yɛ m'afuo,	I have made my own farm,
m'adua m'aduane ee	planted my foodstuffs
Kofi Bodua, me so me a me bɔɔdeɛ	Kofi Bodua, I'm carrying my own plantain
wɔ abɔntinkɛseɛ mu oo	through the principal street
Obiara nhwɛ oo.	Everybody should come and see.

Apoɔ Festival offers offenders the opportunity to defend themselves. An accused person sings to vindicate him/herself from whatever allegations levelled against him publicly. Individuals who defend themselves acts to either demonstrate they have changed for the better or to vindicate themselves from wrongful accusations. In the above song, the performer informs hearers he was a thief, but he has changed. As narrated by Ama Adomaa[26], a singer, the song tells a story of a man, Kofi Bodua, a prominent person who was respected by both the old and young in his village, but he was a thief. He secretly stole his neighbours' foodstuffs; little did he know his evil act had been discovered by his neighbours. He stole plantain from a poor old man's farm and that infuriated his neighbours. So, on *Apoɔ* Fiada (Apoɔ Friday), while Kofi Bodua danced in the midst of a large crowd, he heard a song which says:

[26] Ama Adomaa, a 31-year-old singer was interviewed at the forecourt of the palace of the Paramount Chief on 23 March 2019.

(12)

Kofi Bodua, bɔɔdeɛ krɔmfoɔ	Kofi Bodua the plantain thief
Kofi Bodua, bɔɔdeɛ krɔmfoɔ	Kofi Bodua the plantain thief
Ɔwia wia ne nhini.	He steals and steal its roots.

This statement, *Kofi Badua krɔmfoɔ,* "Kofi Bodua the plaintain thief" has been repeated in line one and line two to stress on the fact that the accused is indeed a thief. This was meant to shame him publicly to evoke a change in his character. Due to the humiliation he suffered that day, he started his own farm, harvested his plantain and asked the whole community to come witness it. He demonstrated this by carrying a stock of plantain on his head through the principal streets for all to see the transformation in his life the next *Apoɔ* festivity. Since the story is in their stock, its meaning is understood by all. The second song is used to gibe thieves, the last line in particular, *Ɔwia wia ne nhini,* 'He steals and steal its root' tells the thief he steals and even steal useless weeds which are not edible; he steals useless items. This is an insult to that individual's integrity. Thieves are mocked with this line. Yet, the first song is sung by wrongdoers who have repented from their bad ways. This attests to the fact that *Apoɔ* songs indeed evoke a change in people's behaviour. Quite frankly, we cannot ignore the healing touch of the *Apoɔ* song texts, judging by the change in character of the personae of the above text.



Figure 13. The researcher with Nana Opoku Fosu Gyeabour after the interview at his palace at Koase. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date: 15 March 2019.



Figure 14. An interview with Mr. Kwasi Ayimadu and Mr. Samuel Ofori at Mr. Ayimadu's residence. Source: Photographed by the photographer. Date: 23 March 2019.

Conspiracy

On the other hand, *Apoɔ* songs informs people particularly, chiefs of conspiracies against them through insults. Sometimes, a chief's own kinsmen, prominent members at his palace or even the townsfolk conspire to overthrow him if the people seem disappointed in him. Despite the king's wrong actions and decisions, any member of the community who thinks the king deserves a second chance to mend his mistakes may reveal the plot against that king to him during *Apoɔ* celebration to prompt him to change from his bad ways. To inform the king of such scheme, the snitch (performer) sings this song at the chief's palace:

(13)

Ohene Ameyaw woti kakraa, bɛɛgye wo nsam hene, wate? Takyimanhene, woti kunoo, bɛɛgye wo nsam hene, wate? Wo nono Manpayin a woti henee, bɛɛgye wo nsam hene, wate?	King Ameyaw, your head is large, they are taking the power out of your hands, do you get it? King of Techiman, your head is very big, they are taking the power out of your hands, do you get it? The great chief with the biggest head, they are taking the power out of your hands, do you get it?

The song above can be performed by any member of the town who knows of the plot against the king during the celebration. Dressed in anonymity fashion, the performer visits the king's palace early in the morning with the intention of disclosing the plot against the king to him. Literally, the diction seems simple and abusive but carries a deeper meaning when taken metaphorically. Insulting a chief publicly is deemed a taboo that merits serious sanctions by traditional norms, but the singer dares to make usage of such pronouncements to easily carry his information across to the chief. This notwithstanding, the *Apoɔ* festival offers immunity for all celebrates from attack by people in authority. By taking advantage of the immunity *Apoɔ*

offers to people to freely express their views and emotions, the singer uses what seems to be insulting words, *woti kakraa*, *woti kunoo* and *woti henee*, 'your head is large, your head is very big and, the biggest head' as epithet to describe the torment and agitation he/she feels deep within him/her. Revealing secrets of treacherous act to the king requires thoughtfulness since the informer knows that he is putting his life at risk; when he/she is discovered he/she could be poisoned to death. Here, the singer employs this technique to give richer meaning to his words in order to make it easier for the king to understand. By describing a physical feature of the king vividly, that is, *woti* 'your head' redundantly in the three lines, the singer diverts other listeners' attention from the main secret being revealed to the king. By so doing, he saves his own life and that of the king.



Figure 15. Performers singing Apoɔ songs directly in front of their chiefs, while the chiefs respond to their performance with a dance. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date 25 March 2019.

In affirmation, one respondent, *Aberewa* Akua Badu[27], an 82-year-old woman at the palace of the chief priest of Taa Mensah says, "The insulting words in this song are to deceive the conspirators but not actually insult the king. Loyal subjects who know of the plot sing this song to inform the king of the conspiracy against him." Here, this secret is revealed through the song lyrics which factually seem offensive but sends strong and clear message to the king that "they

[27] Aberewa Akua Badu was interviewed at the palace of the chief priest of Taa Mensh on 19 March 2019.

are taking the power out of his hands." *Aberewa* Akua Badu notes that, "The king may have no idea of the plot hatched by his own people. The performer through his/her performance informs the king about the scheme to unseat or kill him." The old lady concludes that "If you are a king and your subjects sing this song during *Apoɔ*, then you should know that most of your people are not happy with your reign." Performers therefore sing this song to also advise a ruler to be careful with how he treats the people he rules.

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Figure 16. Individuals in various Apoɔ performances. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 25 March 2019.

Moreover, the parallelism, *Ohene Ameyaw, Takyimanhene and Wonono Manpayin,* 'King Ameyaw, King of Techiman, The Great Chief;' is lexical. It has the same semantic meaning, but the words are different. It refers to the same person, who is King Ameyaw. Performers use this technique to put emphasis on royalty and to show how powerful and fearful King Kwakye Ameyaw was since this song is alluded to him. A 48year old informant Mr. Johnson Kwabena Yeboah[28] from Nkwanta, one of the villages of Techiman explains, "Nana Ameyaw was one king who loved to be extoled by the people. He was an authoritarian; people feared him. They were not happy, but nobody could criticize him in any way. Indeed, he had a very big head." In this sense, the performer uses these words to eulogize the greatness of the king. Sweet words

[28] Mr. Johnson Kwabena Yeboah was interviewed at the forecourt of the Paramount chief's palace on 20 March 2019.

are then employed to catch and sustain the attention of the king. Paradoxically, the performer uses the words 'King Ameyaw, King of Techiman, The Great Chief' to praise and abuse the ruler at the same time in such temperament that makes the song considerably funny. Bearing in mind how great and mighty the ruler seems to be yet could not figure out a conspiracy against him at his own backyard makes him a subject of ridicule. Performers take the opportunity to mock the chief before revealing to him that *bɛɛgye wo nsam hene,* 'they are taking the power out of your hands.'

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Each line ends with the sentence *bɛɛgye wo nsam hene, wate?* "They are taking the power out of your hands, have you heard?" This is a rhetorical question which does not require any reply from the king, yet it is intended to either ask the king whether he has heard of the plot against him or inform him that the kingmakers are planning to oust him from power. The performer makes use of this technique to evoke a sense of alertness in the king. It is a wakeup call for a king, a time to reflect on his conduct to find out why his people detest him, and why they aspire to disgrace him publicly. The question *bɛɛgye wo nsam hene, wate?* "They are taking the power from your hands, have you heard?" is repeated in each line to stress on the fact that there is a conspiracy to dethrone the king.

Considering the tonal pattern in this song, there is phonological parallelism in all sections of this song. This parallelism "reveals the structural principles of the language itself" (Agyekum, 2013:95) and makes the song a recognized element. This makes the song noticeable to the listener since its "poetic function draws attention to the form" (Agyekum, 2013:95). Due to modernization and laws on human rights, many changes are made on most *Apoɔ* songs as time changes. This song has travelled through time and space, the chronotope has rendered the current song quite different from the original one. The original song contained more abusive words, and it is presented below:

Woti tɛtiretɛ,	We're taking the victory out of your hands
Na yɛɛgye wo nsam hene,	O King, your head is big.
O Ohene, woti kakraa.	We're taking the victory out of your hands,
Yɛɛgye wo nsam hene,	O King, you are a fool.
O Ohene, w'agyemi. Yɛɛgye wo nsam hene,	We're taking the victory out of your hands,
O Ohene, woho nniho.	O King, you are impotent.
Yɛɛgye wo nsam hene.	We're taking the victory out of your hands

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Your head is very large.

Considering the important role *Apoɔ* festival and its songs play in the lives of the people and the society as a whole, participating in the festivities is an obligation all. People are insulted for not partaking in the ceremony. As instituted by the ancestors, it is mandatory for every citizen of Techiman to partake in *Apoɔ* celebration. So, if anybody deliberately fails to participate in *Apoɔ,* that person is seen as 'evil' and thereby attacked with a song as follows:

(14)

Wo a w'ankɔ Apoɔ,	Anyone who refuses to partake in *Apoɔ,* your mother
wo nni oo	
Woa w'ankɔ Apoɔ,	Anyone who refuses to partake in *Apoɔ*, your mother's something.
wo nni biibi oo.	

This song can be performed by anybody within the community. Normally, performances occur at places where 'troublemakers' are gathered. *Apoɔ* is a period where indigenes of Techiman are required to expose or repudiate the wrongs in the community. An act which cleanses both the people and the land from misfortune. Rattray (1923:156) quotes "The god, *Ta Kese* says, if we have anything to speak, let us speak it. For by so doing we are removing misfortune from the nation." The people believe that this action cleanses and prevents catastrophe from befalling the land. As told by a participant, "any native of Techiman who intentionally refuses to partake in *Apoɔ* celebration is perceived to be *busuofoɔ* (evil person)." An implication that, those individuals wish for calamity to befall the land hence this derisive song about their mothers.

Performance of this song involves call-and-response in both line one and line two. This technique is employed for unite. The call, *Wo a w'ankɔ Apoɔ,* 'Anyone who refuses to partake in *Apoɔ*' is a call on the audience to unite as they strengthen the bond between the people and the society.

To the townsfolk, offenders spell doom for the chiefs and people so, performers attack them with vulgar language, *wo nni oo,* (your mother) in line one. To command "your mother" is generally considered a terrible insult. Mothers are precious and idolized among the Bonos, hence, no individual would like his/her mother to be insulted. Based on this knowledge, singers make use of this awful insult to deter people from staying at home during *Apoɔ*. To even 'force' people to join in the festivity, singers disgrace them further by once again responding with the statement, *wo nni biibi oo,* 'your mother's something' in line two. In fact, the diction in this song is simple and direct but very vulgar and harsh. It is deemed too unpleasant to use in public, and disrespectful to be used for a woman for that matter. It is indecorous to mention the genitalia of a female in public so, singers make usage of euphemism *biibi*, 'something' instead of vagina. Though performers intent to demean offenders, they still maintain their respect for women.

In an interview with Nana Yaa Nyarko Asare[29] at her residence, she explains that "Many Christians and Muslims are forbidden by their leaders to participate in *Apoɔ*. They say Apoɔ is 'evil', so they stay at home during Apoɔ." She adds that "People are insulted in this manner as a way to ensure that everybody partakes in *Apoɔ*. This is the time our ancestors bless us and our lands. We also learn about our history and why we should live a morally upright life." Nana Nyarko's statement confirms that aside casting away evil and receiving blessings from the

[29] Nana Yaa Nyarko Asare is a queen mother of Nsuta, one of the villagers in Techiman. She was interviewed at her residence on 16 March 2019.

ancestors, people are taught about their culture, moral and social values. These cultural values teach the people, especially, youngsters, about good deeds and bad deeds that are used as a guide in their lives. Knowing about their culture, societal norms and values help promote peaceful co-existence among the people. Repetition of the phonological sound 'oo' at the end of both lines helps sustain and maintain listeners' attention and interest. The whole song is repeated severally to ensure the regularity of the rhythm. This aids in mastering the rhythm and lyrics of the song by listeners.

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Generally, *Apoɔ* festival songs are presented as insulting; it is locally known as *atemdie* (to insult) due to the harsh manner indigenes use the songs. Ashihene (1980:40) notes that *Apoɔ* songs are "abusive and derisive even of the *Omanhene* (paramount chief) and his elders." Here, people may speak 'harshly or roughly' to others when publicly pointing out their wrongs to them, no matter who the accused is or his status in the society, he/she is not spared from insults. "Nobody is exempted from ridicule" (Campbell, 2002). During *Apoɔ* celebration, the song lyrics are used to directly attack offenders and condemn the ills in the society. Many evildoers turn to behave well or change from their evil ways after being criticized by others. The society is able to control the behaviour of its members in this way. So, the performance of *Apoɔ* songs help to shape people's behaviour within Techiman Municipality. Through this performance, good moral values and societal values are inculcated in the people therefore indigenes are insulted for not partaking in the ceremony. As instituted by the ancestors, it is mandatory for every citizen of Techiman to partake in *Apoɔ* celebration.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Overview

This study continues to examine the literary tropes of *Apoɔ* songs which aids in putting people's behaviour in check in the society. We have treated the literary aspects of *Apoɔ* songs about wickedness, betrayal, corruption and greed, dangers that surround women, abuse of power, sexual immorality, and theft. We looked at the poetics of *Apoɔ* songs in the previous chapters, but we will treat performance of *Apoɔ* songs as well in this chapter. This chapter is a continuation of the song texts which criticise people with unacceptable behaviour, and the aim to evoke a change in their behaviour. This chapter analysis performance of *Apoɔ* songs against arrogance and pride, gossip and inquisitiveness.

5.1 Songs aimed at shaping people's behaviour.

Arrogance and Pride

(15)

Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi, Takyimanman ahenfo	Truly such arrogance, chiefs of Techiman
ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi	truly such arrogance
Na mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ,	Your supremacy has gotten into you,
apaa ne dwɛɛ yi	truly such arrogance
Ee Oseadeeyɔ Ameyaw ee	Oseadeeyo Ameyaw
Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi,	Truly such arrogance,
mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ,	your supremacy has gotten into you,
ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi	truly such arrogance
Ee Nana Abrafi ee	Nana Abrafi
Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi,	Truly such arrogance,
mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ,	your supremacy has gotten into you,
apaa ne dwɛɛ yi	truly such arrogance
Ee Nana Ama Anima ee	Nana Ama Anima
Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi,	Truly such arrogance,
mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ,	your supremacy has gotten into you,
apaa ne dwɛɛ yi.	truly such arrogance

Words in the above song are simple and direct. It is crafted with much directness for easy comprehension. This makes the message being conveyed to the rulers clearer and memorable. This song begins with a call-and-response. The call comprises line one to line five, *Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi, Takyimanman ahenfo ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi. Na mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ, apaa ne dwɛɛ yi.* 'Truly such arrogance, chiefs of Techiman truly such arrogance, your supremacy has gotten into you, truly such arrogance', and the response is, *Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi, mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ, apaa ne dwɛɛ yi,* 'Truly such arrogance, your supremacy has gotten into you, truly such arrogance' in line three. Performers employ this technique for unity. Here, society bonds together with a common goal thus, condemning foibles of the traditional rulers with the aim of reforming them. The cry of the masses thus, the use of polyphony (different voices coming together) serves as another bonding instrument. The phrase, *Ampaa ne dwɛɛ yi,* has been repeated a lot of times in the song for community memory.

In this particular song, reference is made to names such as *Oseadeeyo* Ameyaw[30] and Nana Abrafi[31], Nana Anima, and Techiman *mpaninfoɔ*. These royal Akan names reinforce the Akan identity; showing who they are, the Bono people. Such names are mentioned to make reference to the wrongdoer. Just like the '*halo'* songs of abuse by the Anlos of Ghana, "The attacked person has to be directly named" (Campbell, 2002). An act which speaks directly to the senses of the ruler without fear or favour.

[30] Oseadeeyo Ameyaw is the name of the paramount chief of Techiman municipality.
[31] Nana Abrafi is the queen mother of Techiman municipality.



Figure 17. The Paramount Chief, Nana Akumfi Ameyaw IV, and Nana Baffour Asare in Apoɔ performance as their subjects' praise and criticise them through songs. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 25 March 2019.



Figure 18. Performers dressed in various masks to hide their real identity from the public. Source: Photographed by the researcher. Date: 25 March 2014

As established earlier, traditional rulers are considered as the representatives of the gods and the ancestral spirits. Based on this fact, rulers are expected to rule with decency and uprightness. When a chief demonstrates any of these bad behavioural traits, a performer can call him to order by telling him to the face that, *mo ama ahenie yi ayɛ mo dɛ,* your supremacy has gotten into you. Repetition of this line severally is for community memory. Also, it lays emphasis on the idea of power and supremacy exercise by rulers over the ruled. In Kwaku Takyi, a 31year old drummer's view, "Arrogant chiefs conduct themselves in a manner that makes the people unhappy. They step on just anybody to demonstrate their authority." An indication that rude behaviour of leaders tends to disrupt the peace in their various communities.

As indicated earlier, no matter your status in the society, you would be criticized for your mistakes. Hence, chiefs and other people in authority identified to be arrogant, proud, rude, or disrespectful are derided publicly through such songs. Formally, performance of this song was directed at kings and queens. But presently, it is used to attack any rude, arrogant or disrespectful person within the community. Any indigene of the town can perform this song; even a child can call a ruler to order with this song. The performer(s) disguise themselves in tattered clothes, ladies' dresses in the case of men, paint their faces or wear a mask to avoid being identified. Being in disguise allows the performer to freely let out whatever is "harboured in his chest" (Rattray, 1923).

Performance occurs mainly at the forecourt of the paramount chief's palace, the accused person's residence or through the principal streets of Techiman. Performers directly attack the wrongdoer who is a high ranked member in the community. Attacking the traditional ruler directly to the face amid a large audience does not only disgrace him but also undermines his/her authority. A participant[32] tells me that "By singing this song, you tell the king face to face that Nana, you are rude, arrogant and disrespectful, so change." Performers storm the accused chief's compound with their musical instruments and criticise him publicly through their performance which involves singing, drumming and dancing. Performers tease leaders with curious lolloping steps as they dance. The offender is expected to maintain restraint and tolerance and join in the performance. He blesses his accusers with various gifts to thank them for pin-pointing his mistakes to him. Singers make ridicule arrogant chiefs/queens with this performance.

[32] A participant, a sub-chief who shared this view at the durbar grounds on 24 March 2019.

Songs against Gossip

On criticizing bad behavioural traits, one major trait that has gained root in the society but frowned upon by many is gossip. Gossip is a societal practice; what concerns an individual concerns all. Grace opines that "Comments about this behaviour are based upon certain codes of values, ethics and conduct" (Morth, 1973:73). This is an indication that gossip is still practiced in many indigenous African communities. Little can be said about the incursion of fake news (gossip) on the various social media platforms causing more harm than good to innocent people across the globe. Although gossip is seemingly accepted in the society, many people do not consider it as such. Within *Apoɔ* season, singers sing to make mockery of gossips in the community. Perpetrators of this act are confronted with a song such as;

(16)

Bɛdɛ bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ	They say they say, they say, they say
Manhene dɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ	The chief says, they say, they say
Hemaa dɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ	The queen mother says, they say, they say
Komfoɔ dɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ	The fetish priest says, they say, they say
Osofoɔ dɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ	The pastor says, they say, they say
Abane dɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ	The government says, they say, they say
Amanyɛfoɔ dɛ, bɛdɛ	The politicians say, they say, they say
Yaaberɛ bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ, bɛdɛ.	We are tired of they say, they say, they say.

The above song begins with the repetition of the phrase, *bɛdɛ bɛdɛ,* 'they say, they say', for community memory. It also emphasizes the fact that he/she (the gossip) is not the originator of the information being circulated. In this sense, that person cannot be held accountable should things get scandalous in future. The diction is simple and direct, which makes the song clearer and easier for listeners to understand. In line 2-6, singers openly make reference to specific people of high social status and reputation. More significant among these people are the *ohene* 'king', *hemaa* 'queen mother', *okomfoɔ* 'fetish priest', who are regarded as the highest authority in any traditional setting. These names reinforce the Akan identity and the hierarchy

within the Akan society. The point being emphasized is that these high-ranking people possess power over the people so whatever decision, information or orders presume to have come from them, is believed to be the truth. People therefore take advantage of this fact and link all rumours to people in authority.

Due to lack of authenticity of gossips and its scandalous nature, people become weary of it. The concluding statement of the song makes reference to this fact that, *Yaberɛ bɛdɛ,* 'we are tired of they say.' This line is repeated to stress the fact that gossip is an unacceptable behaviour in the society. Performers sing and dance with satirical gestures as they gallop to the left and right in front of the perpetrator. Performers demonstrate curious facial and hand movements while facing the wrongdoer. All musical instruments available are played with high tempo to be in tune with the stomping of feet of performers, rendering the whole performance hilarious. In spite of gossip being a good way of disseminating information, most of these rumours are scandalous, fraudulent and misleading. Nobody is held responsible for any damage caused with what might be seen as 'normal harmless' talk. Partakers of gossip are thereby insulted with this mocking song for a change in their behaviour.

Conversations are part of our everyday activities. Central among such conversations is 'gossip' which is known to be a societal practice within the Akan society; each person's business becomes the business of all. Gossip per say is quite essential in human existence since it carries information regarding the happenings and conduct of other people. Even though partakers of gossip may not recognize the issue as such, dissemination of information is an essential part of all gossip be it malicious gossip or normal gossip (Morth, 1973:73). Grace however observes that "Gossip is so often scandalous that one could just as well suggest that normal harmless talk is not gossip" (Morth, 1973:73). She adds that "comments about this behaviour are based upon certain codes of values, ethics, and conduct. Gossip serves as a form of social control if

the system of values also recognizes the impropriety of being gossiped about" (Morth, 1973:73). This implies that society uses gossip to shape the behaviour of people. Another song of insult which intends to expose gossips in the society is as follows:

(17)

Mamene m'asɛm, tamfo afɛre	I've swallowed my words, the enemy is ashamed
Mese a, na worekɔ ka	If I say anyething, you'll get something to tell
Mamene m'asɛm, tamfo afɛre	I've swallowed my words the enemy is ashamed
Wote a, na worekɔse	If you hear anything, you'll get something to say
Mamene m'asɛm, tamfo afɛre	I've swallowed my words the enemy is ashamed
Meka a, na wobɛhwɛ	If I say anything, you'll come and see what it is
Mamene m'asɛm, tamfo afɛre	I've swallowed my words the enemy is ashamed
Wote a,	If you hear anything,
Na woretwerɛ	You'll get something to write about
Mamene m'sɛm, tamfo afɛri.	I've swallowed my words the enemy is ashamed.

Conveyance of this message comes with simple and precise diction. The simplicity of the song text is to make it easy for even children to comprehend. Though the diction is simple, it carries deeper meaning than what ordinary language communicates. Performance of this song is by individuals or *Apoɔ* groups. Since it is intended to cause a change in the guilty party's behaviour, it is performed at places the culprit can witness the performance. Repetition of the statement, *Mamene m'asɛm, tamfo afɛre,* "I've swallowed my words, the enemy is ashamed" which doubles as the chorus is for community memory. Singing this part of the song severally, helps hearers to recollect these lines easily. This statement articulates the actual message the performer intends to communicate. Performers condemn the act of gossip and inquisitiveness in the community by dancing joyously to the tune of this song with the usual clapping of hands and *Apoɔ* dance pattern; three steps to the left and three steps to the right. According to one informant, Adwoa Faustina Badu[33], "performers are happy because we can finally tease gossips

[33] Adwoa Faustina Badu was interviewed at a drinking spot at Taako community on 16 March 2019.

by telling these gossips that, we have kept our secrets, so they (gossips) have nothing to tell others about us." *Mamene m'asɛm, tamfo afɛre,*

Among the Akans, there is a saying that, *Obi bɛnya wo a, na ɛfiri w'ano,* 'People would know you by your words'. An indication that one's own words can subject him/her to public ridicule. By keeping one's secrets, help prevent him/her from public gossip/ridicule. Performers therefore demonstrate this by telling gossips that, *Mese a, anaa meka a,* 'If I say anything', I'll be compromising, so I won't even utter a word. The repetition of these phrases in line two and line six is for community memory. By keeping quiet, the enemy, who are the *konkonsafoɔ* (gossips) and *nsɛkufoɔ* (inquisitors) would have nothing to gossip about. Hence the phrases in line four and six, *Wote a na worekɔse, anaa woretwerɛ,* 'If you hear anything, you get something to write about'. Singers express this by pointing one finger in the air while stamping their feet on the ground with mockery gestures with their bodies.

Tamfo (the enemy) has been used as a symbol to represent gossips in the community. Singers refer to chatters and inquisitors as *tamfo,* (enemy) because they snoop frivolously just to fish out information about others to spread about. Their chinwag most often tarnishes innocent persons' reputation, or cause enmity among friends, families or neighbours. Our elders caution that, *te kakyerɛ bɔ kuro,* 'telling others about what you hear ruins a society' (An Akan adage). This adage suggests that if these bad behaviours are not put in check, partakers can even destroy nations with what they say or write about. The ending phrase of the refrain, *tamfo afɛre,* 'the enemy is ashamed' embarrasses the perpetrator. The whole song is repeated a lot of times, this aids in easy memorization of the song.

In the nutshell, *Apoɔ* performance is aimed at teaching people especially, the youth good societal values. A person must exhibit desirable behaviour to others for him to be called morally upright. Society instils positive moral, ethical and cultural values in its people through *Apoɔ*

performances. Most of the songs make mockery of wrongdoers by criticising them publicly to prevent them from involving themselves in acts of delinquency or crime. citizens of Techiman therefore obey, respect and honour the rules and customs laid down by their ancestors and this goes a long way in moulding and controlling the conduct of the people of Techiman.

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CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Findings

This paper has established that bad behaviours such as wickedness, sexual immorality, corruption and greed among others are criticised through *Apoɔ* warning song texts. The song texts shown certain royal Akan names which reinforces their Akan identity. It was revealed that the literary structures in *Apoɔ* songs serve as a medium to insult offenders of crimes such as abuse of power, sexual immorality, theft pride and arrogance to evoke a change in their attitude. It was evident that, the Bonos made use of literary tropes such as repetitions, call-and-response, symbols, metaphor, images, allusion, parallelism among others to expose, condemn and correct certain societal ills. Also, the diction used in *Apoɔ* songs, in spite of its simplicity or complexity expresses a deeper meaning than ordinary language communicates. These song texts are interpreted in a special sense which is understood by the indigenes of Techiman. Furthermore, performance of *Apoɔ* songs is a means through which acceptable behaviour is inculcated in the people of Techiman. *Apoɔ* song performances empowered citizens of Techiman to foster and maintain certain societal norms that ensure peace, unity and order in the society. Despite the incursion of foreign culture and modern methods of controlling the society, *Apoɔ* Festival songs are still used as a medium for social control within Techiman.

6.2 Conclusion

The focus of this paper has been to examine how poetics of *Apoɔ* songs as performance are being used as a medium for social control. Based on the forgoing discussion, the literary structures of *Apoɔ* song texts are aimed at criticizing and disparaging traditional rulers as well as citizens of Techiman through warning songs to prevent them from committing crime and

deter others from committing same crime. Also, *Apoɔ* insult songs aid in pointing out one another's wrongdoing or judging one another in a satirical manner to evoke a change in their bahaviour. It is a democratic way of settling disputes and resentments among indigenes through derisive songs. Evidently, performance of *Apoɔ* songs help to control or sensitize the society.

We could thus say that the poetics of *Apoɔ* festival songs reveal the virtues and vices in the society as well as project the culture and traditions of the people of Techiman. Performance of *Apoɔ* songs involves singing, drumming, and specific dance movements, facial expressions, wearing of musk or tattered outfits and gestures which are aimed at making mockery of wrongdoers to help correct their errors. Nonconformity to societal norms and youthful misbehaviour demoralize relations among people, hence, the need to crucially condemn these undesirable behaviours among people to socially accepted behaviours. No one is spared within the festivities, no matter who the culprit is or his status in the society, he/she is not spared from the insults; society adapts this method to put its members' behaviour in check. This implies that society has got its own in-built mechanism for morality. Therefore, the combination of both the traditional and modern methods of social control could help solve the problem of indiscipline, immorality and crime in the country.

6.3 Recommendations

I recommend that, *Apoɔ* Festival and its songs being key instrument in molding the character of people within Techiman, people in authority and the entire members of the community are cautious and desist from committing crime due to been criticized through performance of *Apoɔ* songs. Therefore, it is crucial for all Ghanaians to embrace the *Apoɔ* activities in order to shaping the behaviour of the people and control the level of indecency or indiscipline in the country. As a country, there is the need to revisit the past and learn from their good methods of social control to help raise morally upright citizens.

Also, a new research can focus on the comparative study on the literary considerations of the *Apoɔ* festival songs under the lens of the theory of Parrhesias by drawing on Michel Foucault's major theories.

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APPENDIX ONE

Observation check List

Observation check list used by the researcher for data collection.

1. Observe the procession of the traditional priests and priestesses to the sacred place to usher in the *Apoɔ* festivities.
2. Observe the *Hansua* division's procession to town from the sacred place through the principal streets of Techiman after the rituals, singing *Apoɔ* songs to mark the beginning of *Apoɔ* festival (singing of *Apoɔ* festival songs)
3. Observe the young and old singing and dancing to *Apoɔ* songs as they join the *Hansuahene* (Sub-chief) and his people through the streets.
4. Observe the youth as they perform *Apoɔ* festival songs during the evening sessions of *Apoɔ* celebration known as *Anadwo poɔ* (evening *Apoɔ*) in some communities within Techiman on Monday and Tuesday.
5. Observe the introduction of the afternoon session of *Apoɔ* celebrations known as *Awia Poɔ* (afternoon *Apoɔ*) by the *Omanhene* (paramount chief) and his people.
6. Observe the procession and performance of *Apoɔ* songs by the chiefs of the various divisions of Techiman state, their sub-chiefs, queen mothers and their kinsmen through the principal streets of Techiman on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.
7. Observe the carrying of *Taa Mensah Bosom* (god of Taa Mensah) through the principal streets of Techiman before the beginning of the grand durbar on Friday (*Apoɔ Fiada*).
8. Observe the procession of the *Omanhene* and his elders to the durbar grounds.
9. Observe the procession and performance of the other chiefs and their kinsmen to the durbar grounds on *Apoɔ Fiada* (*Apoɔ* Friday) through the streets of Techiman.

10. Observe the various groups from the towns and villages within and around Techiman Traditional area perform *Apoɔ* songs through the principal streets of Techiman to the durbar grounds.
11. Observe how people point out the wrongs and mistakes to the people with power and other indigenes of Techiman through *Apoɔ* songs.
12. Observe how the people, particularly, the chiefs and people in authority react to the songs, and the performers (accusers) when they are confronted with the hidden truths.
13. Observe the instruments and costumes used in the performance of the songs.
14. Observe the general participation of the youth and the elderly in the celebrations, as well as the reaction of observers who are indigenes of Techiman but do not partake in the celebration of the *Apoɔ* festivities on *Apoɔ Fiada*

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APPENDIX TWO

Interview Guide

Interview guide used by the researcher during the *Apoɔ* festival.

1. What is the origin of *Apoɔ* Festival?
2. What is the main objection or aim of the festival?
3. What is the origin of *Apoɔ* songs?
4. What informs the choice of songs for the celebration?
5. Can the festival be celebrated without the songs?
6. What is the role of Apoɔ songs in the celebration of the *Apoɔ* festival?
7. What is the significance of *Apoɔ* songs in relation to the culture of the people of Techiman?
8. How are the *Apoɔ* songs composed?
9. Who is allowed to compose *Apoɔ* Songs?
10. Are the citizens of Techiman the only ones permitted to compose and sing *Apoɔ* songs?
11. Are there any rules or taboos regulating the performance of *Apoɔ* songs?
12. What are the sanctions for violating these rules or taboos?
13. Do the lyrics of *Apoɔ* songs have any influence on the lifestyle of the people?
14. What is your view on the celebration of *Apoɔ* Festival as a senior citizen of Techiman?
15. What is the relevance or importance of the *Apoɔ* Festival to the people of Techiman?
16. Do people really change from their bad ways after being 'insulted' or ridiculed in public?
17. Why do some people wear tatted clothes during the performance of the *Apoɔ* songs?
18. Why do people smile and even give rewards to their 'accusers' instead of being angry with their actions?

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LIST OF SONGS

1. Amuokuaa, aborɔ firi fie
2. Aborɔ Gyan
3. Nana ee
4. Motɔn asaase a
5. Monhwɛ yie
6. Bere yi adane
7. Adidi nkwaadaa
8. Apoɔ yi aba
9. W'adware hyɛnhyɛn
10. Akrɔmfoɔ yaahunu mo
11. Ma yɛm'afuo
12. Kofi Bodua
13. Ohene woti kakraa
14. Wo a w'ankɔ Apoɔ
15. Ampa ne dwɛɛ yi
16. Bɛdɛ bɛdɛ
17. Tamfo afɛre

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