



Research article

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR¹ / WILLIAM DAUTEY²

¹ Presbyterian Women's College of Education, Aburi
gberki26@gmail.com

² University of Education, Winneba
wdautey@st.ug.edu.gh

ABSTRACT

Folk songs have been a major part of ceremonies in most African societies of which the Krobo in Ghana are no exception. One striking type of folk music of the Krobo is *Klama*. *Klama* songs serve as a platform to instruct, entertain, educate as well as chastise wrong doers. In the belly of these songs are buried aesthetic devices which need to be unearthed. This study, therefore, sets out to investigate the use of allusion as an aesthetic device in *Klama* songs. It also aims at establishing and identifying the types of allusion in the songs. The study seeks to examine the effective use of *Klama* lyrics in communicating the history and beliefs of the Krobo. The study is anchored on the Infracultural framework of folklore analysis as the conceptual framework. The framework acknowledges that oral texts are deeply rooted in the culture and tradition of the performer and that the interpretation of an oral text must be situated within the cultural context. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation and information gathered from ethnographic records. The study reveals that biblical and historical allusions are important literary devices in *Klama* songs. It argues that allusion is heavily dwelt upon by *Klama* cantors to communicate the history and the beliefs of the Krobo ethnolinguistic group. This study documents *Klama* songs and contributes to the teaching of poetry and oral literature. It also brings *Klama* songs to the lime light for scholarly attention.

KEY WORDS: allusion, folk song, ethnolinguistic, *Klama*, Krobo



REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

1. Introduction

Song is one of the powerful genres of oral literature. CHILUWU (2009) avers that song is regarded as a poetic literary form. According to CHENENJE (2017: 1) folk songs “are composed and sung within a particular community which has a common belief or culture”. Folk songs address societal issues and concerns. The fundamental characteristic of song as a poetic form is its richness in profuse emotive linguistic expressions, rhythm, special diction for the achievement of intended effect and style. Significantly, the performer as well as the occasion has always been the focus during the performance of songs. It is in the light of this assertion that BUTAKE (1978:140) cited in NDIMOFOR (2011:3) documents that “the African manifests his feelings through an outburst of songs when he loves, hates, works or plays, when he is at peace or war, when a child is born or death takes its toll.” Song serves as the life line of the Krobo who recognize that the art of poetry is indispensable to the members of the society for expressing emotive human predicaments. NNAMANI (2014: 1) opines that traditional “song plays an important part in the lives of the people and one of the major characteristics of folk song is that it has function. The various stages of the life-cycle of an individual and the life-cycles of the society are all marked with the performance of songs.”

OKAFOR (2005) postulates that among the Igbo of Nigeria, every person is expected to make music or perform at a dance at certain points in life. All life rites or rituals have musical implication and involvement so that at any point in time, somewhere, somebody is making music or dancing in Igbo land. Initiation rites are occasions to display the rich culture of a people of which the Krobo are no exception. Adolescent rites of passage exist in and are valued by cultures and countries around the world, including most ethnic groups in Africa (KANGWA 2011, PEMBA 2012, ADINKU 2016). Adolescent rites are designed to mark transition to adulthood through a ceremony, ritual or other experiences (MALULEKE 2001, VAN ROOYEN and HARTELL 2010, EKINE et al. 2013). According to SALM and FALOLA (2002), adolescent rites are necessary for ensuring the propagation of a lineage and providing status. Initiation rites to usher young girls into adulthood are occasions for singing among the Krobo ethnic groups in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Whenever a group of Krobo people gather to celebrate any cultural event which matters a lot to them, such as marriage, coronation of a chief, the birth and naming of a child, or some religious festival, they sing and dance to *Klama*.

Klama remains the most active and exciting means of transmitting the cultural heritage of the Dangme, particularly the Krobo ethnolinguistic group in Ghana. *Klama* performances showcase the interplay between language, culture and

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

thought of the Krobo. The traditions, values and norms of the Krobo society are preserved through *Klama* songs and performances. The artistic use of language as well as the aesthetics of cultural practices are revealed through *Klama* performances. This is in tandem with OKPEWHO'S (1992) assertion of oral genres. Among the Krobo, *Klama* serves as the reservoir of the history of the people, the lubricant that propels the engine of the Krobo society and the vibrant binding force that brings various segments of the society together. The oral performances of the Krobo society are manifested in several genres such as libation texts, chants, proverbs, riddles, puzzles, myths, legends, folktales and folk songs. HARGOE (2017: 61) posits that *Klama* songs involve, "expressions of social and religious values, jokes, institutionalized abuse, biographical sketches, instruction for proper performance of customary rites, aesthetic theory and values, proverbial wisdom, herbal medicine, Dangme cosmology and commentary on social behaviour". *Klama* songs consist of the worldview of the Krobo. One major occasion on which *Klama* is performed is the *Dipo* puberty rites of the Krobo observed annually between March and May. *Dipo* is an indigenous cultural practice laden with moral values, business orientation and many other lessons that impact positively on the Krobo girl.

Apart from the fact that *Klama* songs are sung to accompany the various rituals the girls are taken through they are also intended to teach or admonish not only the initiates but society in general. The songs address major themes like good motherhood, obedience, fidelity in marriage and cleanliness directed to the initiates whereas vices such as irresponsible parenting, indolence, extravagance and hypocrisy are communicated to the larger society. Thus, to FINNEGAN (2012: 40) initiation songs serve the purpose of "integration and maintenance of society". Though the composers of *Klama* are mostly unschooled, it is amazing to find out that these songs are loaded with aesthetic devices which allusions are no exception. FORCHU (2012: 214) opines that since the psychology, concept, values and attitude of a culture are reflected in song texts, the fabric of the society is, therefore, upheld in music, through which behavioural patterns come to life. Routine traditional and cultural activities of the Krobo are greeted with categories of folk music. Each category of Krobo folk music has a unique characteristic, structure and performance style. However, *Klama* song lyrics has been chosen for this study as a result of its literary richness.

In spite of the several sterling artistic elements embedded in *Klama* lyrics and the accompanying aesthetic cultural performance, *Klama* songs have not received the needed scholarly attention to unearth the literary devices engrained in them. This article, therefore, seeks to examine the use and types of allusion in *Klama* songs as well as its effects as a means of educating and entertaining

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

specifically the Krobo and the Dangme society in general. The present study would augment the existing body of literature on African traditional songs and document selected *Klama* songs. The teaching of poetry would be enhanced with the help of this study. The section below discusses the background of the Krobo ethnolinguistic group.

1.2 Ethnographic background of the Krobo

The Krobo or *Klo li* (as the natives call themselves) are the largest ethnic group of the Dangme ethnolinguistic group of Ghana who live along the Western side of the Volta River. The Krobo consists of Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo respectively. The two Krobo groups are a major part of the sub-ethnic groups among the eight mutually intelligible dialects of the Dangme ethnolinguistic group comprising Ada, Gbugbla, Kpone, Ningbo, Shai and Osudoku (WILSON 1992, HUBER 1993). According to OMENYO (2001), the Krobo migrated from North Eastern Nigeria, a place called Sameh. Due to continuous hostilities suffered from the neighbouring ethnic groups, they travelled and settled for a time at the hills or the Tagologo plains within the Accra plains later referred to as Lorlorvor, *Lɔlɔvɔ* in Ewe, meaning 'love has ended'. The name *Lɔlɔvɔ* came as a result of the squabbles that ensued between the Krobo and their neighbours. The Krobo then moved onto a mountain called the 'Krobo Mountain', *Klo yo mi* where they stayed until their ejection in 1892 by the British colonial government. HUBER (1993) opines that the Krobo were under the leadership of Aklo-Muase or Akro-Natebi to *Kloyom* (Krobo mountain). It is believed that Aklo-Muase was a great hunter who discovered the mountain and saw it to be a suitable settlement and, therefore, led his people onto it to take refuge from the attacks of their enemies.

The major occupations of the Krobo are farming and bead-making. In view of the interest of the Krobo in agrarian activities, they are found in the forest zones of Ghana. The Krobo are endowed with communal activities such as farming, hunting, funerals, marriage and puberty rites celebrations which are accompanied and embellished with folk songs to coordinate group communal activities, inspire, motivate, educate as well as mark the various stages of life. Songs are an aspect of oral poetry and a major component of oral literature performed by African societies on innumerable occasions and activities. Melody and rhythm are the basic features of folk songs (see FINNEGAN 1977, ONU and UGWUOKE 2019).

Initiation ceremonies are occasions for singing. Among the Krobo, *Klama* is the music performed during the *Dipo* ceremony to usher young girls into womanhood. It is the song that brings out the performance and tells the audience about the occasion. There are four types of *Klama* that are performed by the

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

Krobo. These include *ha*, *hangme*, *vlo* and *tegbɛ*. *Ha* and *hangme* are the *Klama* songs used for most joyous ceremonies of the Krobo namely marriage ceremonies, puberty rites and naming ceremonies. HUBER (1993) documents that *vlo* song is a warlike cry. *Vlo* songs are sung when the *Dipo* girls are successfully returning from *tegbɛ*, the sacred stone amidst gun firing. *Tegbɛ* is the type of *Klama* that is performed during royal funeral celebrations and the celebration of state deities. BOTCHWAY (2006) describes *Klama* as the *tsui kɛ kla*, meaning 'the heart and soul' of the Dangme. From a morphological point of view, *Klama* consists of two morphemes, *kla*, which means 'soul' and *ma*, meaning 'corn dough' (see HARGOE 2017). *Ma*, 'corn dough' constitutes one of the major staple foods of the Krobo people. This, therefore, suggests that *Klama* is the food of the soul of the Krobo. The joy of parents is mostly expressed in the *Klama* lyrics. Its origin appears to have been a religious play of the Dangme of Ghana with various subcategories. *Klama* is performed at the funerals of chiefs, *matsemɛ*, priests, *wɔnɔhi* and priestesses, *wɔyi* to bid them a befitting farewell since they are the custodians of the culture and tradition of the people. Some *Klama* songs are inspired by deities especially during the celebration of *Nadu* and *Kotoklo*, the state deities of the Manya Krobo and Yilo Krobo people respectively. *Klama* addresses different socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic issues in the society. *Klama* songs provide solutions to challenges that confront the Krobo society. Therefore, *Klama* songs per their structure and content regulate every facet of the life of the Krobo. Dance forms an integral part of *Klama* performances. The dance overtly showcases the rich culture of the Krobo to the outside world. Apart from the cultural significance of *Klama*, it also constitutes a source of wellness and entertainment for the people.

Klama has no specific author. *Klama* is composed mainly on the spur of the moment. However, after its composition, it becomes part of the society's oral repertoire which can be used at subsequent performances by others. The skill of composing *Klama* is acquired through observation and imitation but it must, however, conform to the form and rhythm of the already existing lyrics. The composer must be informed about the history and events in the community as and when they happen. Thus, the singers have the license to manipulate the lyrics of the song to suit the prevailing circumstances. This explains why the language of *Klama* is highly proverbial, allusive and poetic. Since a good singer wins an emotional appeal and should be able to move the audience, these features put in by the singers help them to achieve that purpose.

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

2. Literature Review

KUMETAY (2009) explored the perception of the Krobo on *Dipo* in contemporary Ghana with focus on the underage *Dipo* girl to find out if the practice still promotes its aims of preparing Krobo girls and ushering them into womanhood. The study notes that *Dipo* trains Krobo girls to become good housekeepers, good housewives, mothers and to make them real Krobo women who are chaste and competent for marriage. However, the study found that *Dipo* no longer achieves its objectives of preserving the virginity of the Krobo girl before marriage in contemporary Ghana. The author further observes that the *Dipo* puberty rite does not facilitate the chances of the Krobo girl into marriage in contemporary times and that non-*Dipo* initiates equally enter into marriage with Krobo men unlike the olden days.

Adopting a combined framework of aesthetic, performance and semiotics, HARGOE (2017) investigated the performance aesthetic of *Klama* dance of the Gbugbla people of Ghana. The study proved that *Klama* performance is an integral part of the social process of the Gbugbla people especially the celebration of their *Kple* festival. The performance reveals the aesthetic and semiotic sensibilities of the people and serves the utilitarian needs of aiding worship, entertainment and preserving their culture. The study indicates that *Klama* performance is symbolic of the unity and social cohesion of the people as it brings together key functionaries of traditional music making, community members, priests, priestesses to affirm the collaboration of stakeholders in community development. It concludes that *Klama* dancers make artistic statements with their gestures, facial expression, body movement and costume that calls for appreciation and value for symbolism.

NDIMOFOR (2011) carries out a study on the folksongs of the Akum people of the North-West region of Cameroon with the focus on promoting cultural heritage and ignite the society's interest in folk music. The study argues that folk songs constitute a vital genre of the oral literature of the Akum society. The critical analysis of the study reveals that the knowledge of the composition, characteristics and performance help the audience to interpret the meaning of the songs and understand the culture of the people. According to NDIMOFOR (2011), historical facts of a people can be accredited to oral literature particularly folk songs. The study observes that folk songs are platforms for educating and amusing people as well as expressing a society's diverse knowledge and experiences. It adds that folk songs boost communal solidarity. NDIMOFOR (2011) suggests that the life experiences of a society that constitute their history, wisdom, norms and values are communicated through folk songs. Songs are interactions between the composer and the audience.

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

TETTEH (2016) conducts a study on the style and literary devices in *Klama* songs focusing on the origin, style, devices, meaning and moral lessons. He notes that *Klama* is performed with a lead cantor. It is observed that *Klama* like any other oral genre provides escape for daily routine and tedious work as well as providing release from emotional stress. The study suggests that *Klama* cantors employ a wide range of literary resources available to them for the purposes of defining, identifying the people and affirming the communal membership among community members. The study notes that the meaning of *Klama* songs is brought to light through the knowledge of historical antecedents, context and other paralinguistic features added to the performance. It reveals that repetition is predominantly identifiable in the songs.

In a related study, SANORTEY (2012) analyzes the aesthetics of the festival songs of the Birifor, a dialect of Dagaare in the Upper West region of Ghana within the framework of the utilitarian theory. It emerges from the study that the Birifor festival, *Kɔntɔmbɔɔr*, folk songs are rich in poetic features. These songs are useful socialization and reminiscence tools. The cantors of the *Kɔntɔmbɔɔr*, festival songs combine both verbal and non-verbal components of communication such as dancing and jumping in addition to traditional musical instruments like bells, gourds drums in a harmonic rhythm. These demonstrate the beauty and usefulness of the songs for teaching cultural values and encouragement for the celebrants. The study also admits that repetition is a prevalent device in Birifor folk songs. The study concludes that the performance of Birifor festival, *Kɔntɔmbɔɔr*, folk songs show the rich culture of the people, promote we-feeling and belongingness among members of the society and bring to life through the evocation of the cantors the emotions and sentiments expressed several years ago. The reviewed studies above have intriguingly engaged the cultural dynamics of songs concentrating on traditional song performance. However, as we have pointed out earlier, there is no known study that examines allusion in *Klama* lyrics of the Krobo. Importantly, the previous studies provide immense assistance to our work on allusions in *Klama*.

2.1 Theoretical framework

A literary theory aims at unearthing the meaning, function, and significance of literary art. A literary analysis involves examining the historical and cultural contexts in which a text was produced. It explores the formal elements and structures of a genre, studying the relationships between the author, the text, and the reader, and analyzing the social, political, and ideological implications of a text. In view of this, this study adopts the Infracultural framework propounded by ALEMBA (2002). The Infracultural framework is an offshoot of HYMES (1994)

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

ethnopoetics theory. The ethnopoetics borders on the composition of verbal text in the course of performance. It also emphasizes the interaction between the culture of the people performing a particular oral genre and the performance. The infracultural framework argues that interpretation of words and actions should be positioned within the perceptions of a particular community of practice. This framework aims at fostering collaboration between the researcher and the speech community in a reflective process to gather information on an oral genre and interpret it together in accordance with the worldview of the people. Similar to HYMES (1994) ethnopoetics that focuses on oral literature, the infracultural framework takes into recognition performance, the oral text, and the written text. ALEMBI (2002) outlines some significant elements of the Infracultural framework including the need for cultural insider perspective analysis and interpretation of an oral genre within the cultural context of the community of practice. The framework also extends its scope beyond the examination of the stylistics features of oral texts to explicating the theme of the study. The infracultural framework equally underscores the need for a profound engagement of the researcher in a dialogue and interaction with respondents for better appreciation of the structure and the meaning of a phenomenon and the cultural practices of the community. The meaning of a particular oral genre is based on the cultural background of the performer, audience and participants observing the performances of a given oral genre. The study opted for the infracultural framework of folklore analysis as fit for purpose analytical framework for unravelling the meaning of *Klama* songs. The framework suggests that the interpretation of an oral genre is dependent on the culture and traditions of the performer and audience who are stakeholders of the speech community.

3. Methodology

The research was carried out specifically in the Manya and Yilo Krobo traditional areas located in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The inhabitants are scattered in both *yona*, 'village' and *Dɔm*; 'Somanya and Odumase' settlements found in the villages and those in the towns. *Dipo* is only performed at *Dɔm* and for that reason, during the *Dipo* season, the Krobo have to travel to *Dɔm* to perform the rites. It is worth mentioning, that the ceremony is not performed in every home but at designated shrines located in the towns. The reason is that these shrines must be devotees of *Kloweki*, 'the goddess'. Twenty participants were involved in the study. The participants were purposively sampled. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where selection is based on characteristics of a population and objectives of the study (PALYS 2008). The reason for opting

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

for the purposive sampling technique was that those who needed to be interviewed ought to be Krobo natives and *Klama* singers. These participants willingly assisted in giving out the required information because the researchers showed interest in the performance and also joined in some of the performances. Some face-to-face interviews were conducted in the *Kono*'s, 'chief's' palace, the traditional council and among two song leaders of two *Klama* groups. Since *Klama* is based on oral performances, data was collected through interviews, observation and audio recordings of performances. It was followed by transcribing and interpretation of the songs collected.

4. Allusion

Allusion is one of the literary devices that has an aesthetic impression on texts. ABRAMS (2009: 11) defines allusion as "a passing reference, without explicit identification, to a literary or historical person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage." He adds: "to make allusions very effective, there must be a common body of knowledge between the writer and reader or the performer and the audience". BALDICK (2001: 7) also describes allusion as "an indirect or passing reference to some event, person, place, or artistic work, the nature and relevance of which is not explained by the writer but relies on the reader's familiarity with what is thus mentioned". From the definitions above, one thing is clear: allusion is a technique of calling to mind what already exists without mentioning it explicitly. When using allusions, a writer tends to assume an established literary tradition, a body of common knowledge with an audience. This shared knowledge makes the audience part of the performance (CUDDON 1991).

4.1 Classification of allusion

There are different approaches to the classification of allusions. DUPRIEZ (1991) identifies the following types of allusion: historical allusion, where a reference is made to a historical figure or happening; biblical allusion is where the Bible serves as the point of reference, literary allusion where reference is made to any literary figure or idea and personal allusion where one refers to other content in which one appears to explain a current situation.

The Krobo perform several types of folk songs which include *Klama*, *Oglojo*, *Kpatsa* and *Gbeko* among others. In all these songs, specific allusions are made to the Bible, heroes and heroines and historical events. Reference is made to the bible in Krobo folk songs to express the belief of the people in God. Reference is also made to historical events and figures to remind the people of the heroes and

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

heroines and to teach the history of the Krobo people. The Krobo refer to allusion as *adetohe*. They also refer to the bible as *ngmami klouklou* and historical events as *blema munyuh*. Therefore, biblical allusion in Dangme is referred to as *ngmami klouklou adetohe* and historical allusion as *blema munyu adetohe*. Historical allusion could make reference to a historical event or a historical figure as illustrated in the data. Based on the data, allusion in *Klama* can be classified into biblical and historical. This article discusses the two main types of allusion found in *Klama* songs.

4.2 Importance of allusion in texts

Allusion plays significant roles in texts and there are several reasons why writers may choose to allude rather than make a direct reference. Allusions can actually communicate things that straightforward statements cannot. Alluding, therefore, saves space. BALDICK (2001) holds the view that the technique of allusion is an economical means of calling upon the history or the literary tradition that authors and readers are assumed to share. VAN ALSTYNE (1993: 14) suggests that allusion adds a dimension of familiarity and intimacy to a text or, in contrast, serve to encode meanings to be deciphered only by those who are aware of its particular system of communication. This is why IRWIN (2002: 530) postulates that allusions in a text need not be explained because the “audience should be allowed to feel the pleasure and power of discovery and creativity in order to produce an optimal feeling of intimacy and community”. CHANG (2004) avers that when allusions are used in a text, one of their functions is to indicate that text producers and receivers belong to a community with shared linguistic and cultural values as well as providing interest and novelty to the text, which further increases solidarity. When audiences or readers are able to decipher the meaning of an allusion in a text, it brings them to the level of the writer or performer. Sometimes, writers willfully condense a text using several allusions. This is done mostly to avoid verbosity and to add some level of terseness to the text. Thus, in the words of (VAN ALSTYNE 1993: 16), “the medium of expression such as song, the narrative quality of the text is necessarily condensed in favour of direct allusion to extratextual phenomena that are collectively known in greater or lesser degrees by those present and taking part in its performance”. Allusion could also be a means of expanding a text.

5. Allusion as an aesthetic device in *Klama* songs

Song like poetry reflects the composer’s skillful use of language to evoke some emotional feeling among the audience. In the process of performing *Klama*, the

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

wonderful deeds, his amazing grace, his immortality”. AGYEKUM (2010: 371) argues that speakers who have “large repertoires of the lexical register” use honorifics. Honorifics are conversational and communicative strategies purported to persuade, show deference and politeness. The use of honorifics is employed as a demonstration of the *Klama* cantor’s communicative competence. The cantor through the medium of *Klama* performance deploys the communicative strategies of formality, persuasiveness and politeness for request as she submits the entire Krobo speech community in general, her audience and the occasion in particular to the Supreme Being for blessing. In the song, we found out that the *Klama* cantor deploys the illocutionary act of inviting. The illocutionary act of inviting is a form of the directive speech act that the speaker impresses upon the hearer to act in a way to satisfy the content of the utterance (UBONG 2012). The cantor modestly invites *Ajɔ*, ‘God’, to fulfill a request made to him to bless the Krobo society.

The song below alludes to Psalm 121: 4 (NIV) which says “indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep”.

- (2) *Nyɔŋmɔ wɔko lee* God does not sleep
Mawu hwɔ we nɛ wa he. God does not sleep because of us.

The expression *Nyɔŋmɔ wɔko*, meaning ‘God does not slumber’ is loaned from Ga, a Kwa language spoken by the Ga ethnolinguistic group in Ghana. The *Klama* cantor used the communicative style of code-switching between Ga and the Krobo dialect for the purposes of drawing the attention of the audience to God’s unfading vigilant role over his people. The cantor uses the Ga expression, *Nyɔŋmɔ wɔko* meaning ‘God does not slumber’ and the Dangme equivalent *Mawu hwɔ we* in the song. The cantor uses the code-switching style for emphasis and to create excitement among the audience. The code-switching communicative style also exhibits the *Klama* cantor’s proficiency and competence in the two languages. The repetitive style of the singer is employed for emphasis and a memory device for the audience as noted by (SANORTEY 2012). The effect of the literary style of allusion echoes the name of the Supreme Being and the trust the Krobo has in his watchful powers. Respondents indicated that this song is performed at marriage ceremonies, naming, festival celebrations and during the *Dipo* puberty rite performance to acknowledge God. The major themes in the song are protection and vigilance. The song is communicating and inculcating into the present generation the value of vigilance in protecting the vulnerable in the society.

Another instance of the use of biblical allusion is seen in the song number 3.

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

The enjoyment of this song is dependent on the performer's use of voice, tone, gestures and other non-verbal features. The vibrato effect of the voice of the singer, the graceful swaying of the hands, moving forward and backwards, facial expressions and the ecstatic playing of the rattle help to manipulate the audience. In some cases, the audiences have influence over the performance and always join in the song during the chorus. This makes direct references to the behaviour of the audience where possible. The audience on hearing this may break into the performance with additions and criticisms. In this way, the audience participation in the presentation of the song improves the performance as it adds to the mockery which is what the singer sets out to do. This song is not only performed during the *Dipo* puberty rite performance but is also performed during marriage and naming ceremonies among the Krobo. The song serves as advice to community members who engage in corrupt activities to amass wealth.

Christians believe that heaven is the reward of the righteous. The Bible teaches that unless a man is considered righteous, he cannot spend eternity with the Almighty God. The word 'pastor' in the song does not really refer to any particular person, but rather to Krobo Christians who either refuse to perform *Dipo*, or those who speak ill of the custom on the grounds of it being heathen. The songsters see them as self-acclaimed righteous people. The singers believe that the only person who can judge between the sinner and the righteous is God, hence the allusion to Matthew 25: 31-46 ("When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"). This is what is alluded to in the song (5).

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| (5) <i>Osɔfo</i> | Pastor |
| <i>kɛ o ke o da a</i> | if you claim to be righteous |
| <i>poo mi nɛ hiɔwe</i> | let us meet in heaven |

This *Klama* song mocks the hypocrisy of Christians represented by *Osɔfo*, 'Pastor/Reverend' who preach against *Dipo*, but who secretly perform it for their daughters. These Christians also refuse to marry those who have not undergone the *Dipo* rite. *Dipo* is the puberty rite performed by the Krobo for their adolescent girls to usher them into womanhood. KUMETAY (2009: 20) argues that "the main aim of *Dipo* is to preserve the virginity of Krobo girls until they are married and also prepare them adequately for marriage". According to the Krobo culture, young girls who are not initiated into adulthood are regarded unclean

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

and unworthy to be married. Respondents disclosed that this song is performed at a durbar of the *Dipo* girl where a lot of folks come to appreciate the elegance, the glamour and the beauty of the *Dipo* girls. The cantor uses the opportunity to ridicule hypocrites in the Krobo society. The effect of this cannot, however, be felt in this write-up, but in the performance. The gestures, body language, tone, facial expression, the wit and humour accompanying these songs are designed to be observed. The lead singer adopts a high trembling voice, the effect of which is to provide the right pace and level of excitement for the words which are sung. The use of the high pitch and the tonal variations, sometimes, are to create humour. This is meant to soothe the effects of a direct attack on the satirized. Both the verbal and non-verbal communication features aid the interpretation and understanding of the songs. The cantor through the song is communicating to the society to avoid stereotyping people and being pre-judgmental. NWANKPA (2013: 43) affirms that 'music is used for social reconstruction and character formation.' The cantor employed the medium of the song to perform the commissive illocutionary act of daring the pastor to meet him in heaven. This is seen in the use of the imperative statement, *poo mi* 'meet me'. This indicates that the *Klama* cantor is confident, bold and fearless.

The allusion that God lives in heaven but watches and controls activities on earth is illustrated in the *Klama* song in 6 below.

- (6) *Kɛ pi bɔku he ɔ* Had it not been the sky,
I ko na Mawu nge hiɔwe. I would have seen God in the heavens.

This song buttresses the point that the Krobo believe that God resides in the heavens. It explains that God is invisible but omnipresent. The song expresses the feeling and the religiosity of the Krobo. It is sung for the spiritual upliftment of the people. Aside from the allusive form of the song, it is also proverbial. It is used as an indirection to blame others for being the reason for one's unfulfilled plans in life. *Boku*, 'sky' as used in the song symbolizes impediments. The *Klama* singer, as a social commentator, uses this song to explain to people her inability to achieve an objective in life. The singer also uses this song as a medium to tell the gathering that impediments are bound to happen as one strives to achieve success. From a culture-insider perspective, the song is performed at a durbar organized in honour of the *Dipo* girls after their confinement as well as during marriage ceremonies.

The Krobo believe that God does not only bless but can sometimes punish wrong doers. This is seen in the case of Job in the Bible. This belief is alluded to in song (7).

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

- (7) *Mawu lɛɛ w ko ko pia lɛ oo* Nobody should blame God
Mawu lɛɛ w ko ko pia lɛ oo Nobody should blame God
lɛ kɛ e pɛɔ w w He punishes
nɛ lɛ kɛ e wɔ w bua And he comforts
Mawu lɛ w ko ko pia lɛ oo Nobody should blame God
Bua wo b. Comforter.

The just nature of God is highlighted in the song. The cantor enjoins the society to eschew the habit of dabbling in a blame game when situations are bad. She affirms the belief that God is the giver and taker of life. It suggests that God comforts and soothes people on the one hand and punishes where necessary on the other hand. This song demonstrates the unbiased but fair nature of God to all manner of persons. The attitude of God portrayed in the song is an indirect communication directed to people in authority within the Krobo society. Indirection is one of the major functions of folk songs in the Dangme society. Some respondents revealed that this song is performed at the naming ceremony of a child who has survived several infant mortalities to console the parents. Parents of reincarnated children are advised with this song that God blesses couple with a child and takes it back to eternity at his own time. So, parents in particular and the Krobo society in general must learn to accept both birth and death since the two rites of passage are orchestrated by God. This song could also be performed during the *Dipo* ceremony to advise parents not to blame God and others for their misfortune. In summary, biblical allusions have been shown to be a major part of *Klama* folk songs. Biblical allusion is employed not only for demonstrating the Krobo's knowledge of God and the belief in Him but also used as a means to teach some important moral lessons to members of the society. The other type of allusion which forms part of the focus of this study is discussed in the ensuing section.

5.2 Historical allusion

The function of *Klama* is to maintain the stability of the Krobo culture and ensure its continuity. *Klama* encapsulates the philosophy, the language and the culture of the Krobo. It is performed in most gatherings to ensure the stability and the continuity of the Krobo culture. *Klama* is orally handed on from one generation to another. The Krobo as a people have had a significant history which they cannot forget easily. These experiences are passed on to the initiates and the listening public through the medium of *Klama*. They are to tell it to their generations. This is not only for the ears of the initiates, but for the audience as well, both participants and non-participants alike. Allusion is one medium through which this is done. Let us consider the following songs.

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (8) | <i>Muase su la ha Maja</i> | Muase lit the torch for Maja |
| | <i>ne e ke hye yo ɔ</i> | Maja discovered the mountain |
| | <i>ne Maja ke e yo</i> | Maja claims that the mountain is his |
| | <i>se Muase ji yotse.</i> | but Muase is the owner. |

Muase and Maja were two leading hunters sent by the priests to ascertain the suitability of the mountain, referred to as *Klo yo*, 'Krobo mountain' for human habitation as they migrated from Sameh in Western Nigeria. The mountain became their ancestral home until one fateful Saturday in 1892 when they were compelled to descend the mountain to their present residence. The day remains taboo and a day of bad omen in the annals of Krobo history. The memory of these hunters continues to live in this *Klama* song. Respondents indicated that Muase first discovered the Krobo mountain through his hunting expedition and later led Maja to the site. Maja having been the first to have reported back to his people said that he was the one who discovered the Mountain. The Krobo mountain to date remains an important site to the people. The Krobo people pay homage to the mountain annually during their annual *Ngmayemi* and *Kloyosikplemi* festivals celebrated every October and November by the Many Krobo and Yilo Krobo respectively. *Klama* cantors use this song to teach the history of the people and other relevant lessons. The song is communicating the notion of traditional government as a continuum and the need for unity and continuity. The cantor inculcates in the people, particularly, the audience the spirit of acknowledging and recognizing the contribution of others in one's life. During the interviews, respondents disclosed that this song is performed at the commencement of the *Dipo* puberty rite performance and during festivals to teach the Krobo society their history.

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (9) | <i>Nako nge we mi</i> | Nako is at home |
| | <i>ne Kloweki ye nye.</i> | And Kloweki became victorious. |

Kloweki was the priestess who originated the *Dipo* puberty rite. According to respondents, the *Dipo* girls were sent to *Kloweki's* grove for training in personal hygiene, environmental cleanliness, childcare, housekeeping, cookery, spinning of cotton, herbal medicine and pottery (see KUMETAY 2009). She also offered training in domestic management and courtesy and etiquette for the girls. *Kloweki* also served as the counsellor to the womenfolk and the priests. Song (9) above alludes to the important achievement of the ancestor. Respondents disclosed that *Kloweki* did not die. However, she metamorphosed into a reptile known as *Nako*, 'the royal python'. *Nako* has since become a totem of some Krobo clans. This python is neither killed nor eaten by the Krobo society

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

particularly those clans that has it as their clan deity and totem. This song is sung at the end of the *Dipo* puberty rite performance to communicate the success of the girls for undergoing the *Dipo* puberty rites.

The stay of the Krobo on the mountain was characterised by frequent wars until their forceful ejection by the British governor in 1892. Memories of this warring period are recalled through this song:

- (10) *He ne Siako da a* Where Siako stands
Dome ta. Dome people fight.

Siako is the name of an ancient warrior who led his people to fight their enemies. Thus, memories of old battles are recalled through this song text. The names *Siako* and *Dome* are names bestowed by the *Suisi* clan. Siako and Dome are bestowed on first male children in remembrance of their progenitors as well as to continue the family lineage. These names symbolise bravery. According to respondents, this song is performed during festivals to preserve these iconic names and encourage the present generation to be brave and courageous as their ancestors did to protect their heritage.

Before the inception of the formal court, the people had good leaders who arbitrated in cases and petty squabbles among members. This is illustrated in song (11).

- (11) *Anikika, wa ka ne waa hye* Anikika let's try and see
ne suw nya ma. that the elephant may shut up.

Anikika is a court where the priests and elders meet to settle disputes, deliberate on the case of any eminent calamity, and how to face the daily dangers and challenges that confront the people. *Anikika* served as an important space in ancient Krobo. It is a converging point of the people to deliberate on developmental issues and settle disputes. *Suw*, 'elephant' in the song symbolises an accuser. In the song above, the cantor is urging her colleague to pursue a case at the *Anikika* court in order to silence the accuser. The song in the view of respondents is performed at the climax of the *Dipo* puberty rite to ridicule those who think that the girl child will not be able to undergo the *Dipo* rite due to teenage pregnancy.

The Krobo are a hardworking and industrious people. Their occupations include farming, hunting, palmwine tapping and pottery. They however, learnt the act of fishing from the neighbouring Ewe, Ga and Ada ethnic groups. These neighbouring ethnic groups are noted for fishing. The name of the first man to

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

introduce fish from the sea was *Tete Okum*. He is alluded to in the following *Klama* song:

- (12) *Tete Okum ya Ayigbe* Tete Okum travelled to Ewe land
ne wo lo ba. And brought sea fish home.

Respondents revealed that this hero, *Tete Okum*, travelled to neighbouring Ewe, referred to by the Krobo as *Ayigbe* to purposely learn the fishing occupation in addition to his farming. This ambitious adventure made him a hero in the society hence his recognition in *Klama*, the reservoir of historic events. This song according to respondents is sung at either the commencement or the climax of the *Dipo* puberty rite performance to teach the initiates the history of the people.

Klama tells the origin and the essence of *Dipo*. As already mentioned in this work, *Dipo* was started by *Kloweki* as a means to appease jealousy expressed by the womenfolk. *Dipo*, according to OMENYO (2001) originated out of jealousy and bitterness. This was recorded from a Krobo historical account which alleged that once, a nobleman lived and married two women. While the elder wife gave birth to male children, the younger wife had female children. Due to the practice of a patrilineal system, an elaborate ceremony was organized for the male child on the 8th day after birth as part of the naming ceremony. Gifts of valuable items were presented to the child to welcome him into the family and the community as a whole. This ceremony honoured the elder wife who enjoyed it with pride to the annoyance and bitterness of the younger wife. Out of the bitterness and jealousy, the second wife reported to the Priestess, *Kloweki* to have same ceremony for her girls to honour them. The Priestess, *Kloweki* then established the *Dipo* rite where Krobo girls between the ages of 12 and 15 were sent to her grove for training as mentioned in song number 9 (KUMETAY 2009: 21). This is confirmed by this song:

- (13) *Kloweki je Ohue* Kloweki came from Ewe land
ke ba Dipo he. because of dipo.

Apart from the Krobo, *Dipo* is also performed annually by the *Se* and *Osudoku* ethnic groups to usher teenage girls into womanhood. The girls are equipped with both domestic and vocational skills desirable for wifehood among the Krobo. It is important to note that *Klama* and *Dipo* are intrinsically interrelated, although, *Klama* is used for other traditional celebrations. This song is performed as a means of passing on the history, tradition and culture of the Krobo to the younger generation. It is mostly performed at the commencement of the *Dipo* puberty rite performance to inform the initiates of the originator of

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

Dipo. *Ohue* as used in the song above symbolise a faraway land. During the period of performing *Dipo*, Krobo parents living abroad travel with their daughters to Kroboland to have their girls undergo the puberty rites.

Oral tradition has it that during the periods of war with their enemies in the olden days on the *Klo yo*, 'Krobo Mountain' the enemies hid in the bush and kidnapped the *Dipo* girls on their way to and from the *Okwe* river where the *Dipo* girls had their ritual bath and the sacred stone referred to as *totloku* on which they sit for three times to prove their virginity. Djangma is said to have been a hunter and hero of old who hid in the bush and killed the enemies who tried to kidnap the *Dipo* girls. The song below alludes to his great show of bravery, patriotism and commitment to protect the womenfolk and the adolescent girls.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (14) <i>Djangma ke wa ya</i> | Djangma called on us to go |
| <i>Wa ya wa ba</i> | we have gone and come |
| <i>nɔ̄ ko be blɔ̄ ɔ̄ nɔ̄.</i> | there was no impediment. |

The women sing this song after successfully returning from the *Okwe* river and *totloku*, the sacred stone to register their joy and excitement. It is also sung in remembrance of the hero and to tell the story of old. In addition, the youth are, by this song, told to be brave, protect and defend their women and children who are considered weak and vulnerable in the society. In effect, through reporting this significant historic event, the Krobo are advised to be brave and patriotic.

6. Conclusion

Klama songs are not sung just to entertain, but are used as a platform to pass on the rich history and belief of the people from generation to generation. The culture, history and the language of the people will face a possible demise if these songs are allowed to become extinct. This is not to say that the study of the culture of a people is solely dependent on songs. However, *Klama* song is regarded as a treasure capable of providing insight into the language, history and culture of the Krobo. *Klama* embodies the social environment, the belief, tradition, values, norms, religion, language, culture and the world view of the Krobo. *Klama* remains the means of preserving the history of the Krobo speech community from pre-literate times. *Klama* constitutes the major folk song that serves as a lubricant that smoothly propels the wheel of every facet of the Krobo life. The knowledge of the Almighty God before the coming of the missionaries is communicated through *Klama* lyrics. The joy, sadness, entertainment, education, transition from one stage of life to another is mainly occasioned by *Klama* performances. *Klama* cantors employ diverse poetic and musical styles such as

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

repetition, gestures, facial expressions, and tone to make the songs appealing to audience. The *Klama* cantor provides sufficient and suitable foundation and material for both traditional and Christian song artists to dwell on. This is the main reason why there is the need to make an in-depth study of *Klama* songs. *Klama* is simple, it is congregational, communicative and performed in a call and response style. The use of both biblical and historical allusions in the songs proves the cantors' intellectual prowess of the Krobo culture, religion and history.

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

References

- ABRAMS, Meyer Howard, and Stephen Greenblatt (2000). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- ADINKU, Grace Uchechukwu (2016). "Dipo: The Krobo Ghanaian Puberty Rite and Art", *Matatu* 48 (2), 450-474.
- ALEMBI, Ezekiel (2002). *The Construction of Abanyole perceptions of death through oral funeral Poetry*. Ph.D. Thesis, Department of folklore, University of Helsinki, Finland.
- ASIGBO, A. (2012). "Re-Inventing the Wisdom of the Ancients: Moral Signposts in Mike Ejiagh's Akuko N'Egwu", in Anthony Basil CHIEGBOKA, Ikechukwu OKODO, and Ikenna Livinus UMEANOLUUE (eds.), *A bountiful Harvest. Festschrift in Honour of Very Rev. Msgr. Prof. J. P. C. Nzomiwu*, Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick, 681-690.
- BALDICK, Chirs (2001). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- CHANG, Chenguang G. (2004). *English Idioms and Interpersonal Meaning*, Guangzhou: Sun Yak-Sen University Press.
- CHENENJE, Solomon (2017). *Stylistic analysis of Kabras folk songs*. M.A. thesis, University of Nairobi.
- CHUWA, Leonard Tumaini (2014). *African indigenous ethics in global bioethics interpreting Ubuntu*, New York: Springer
- CUDDON, John A. (1991). *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. (3rd edition). London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- DUPRIEZ, Bernard Marie (1991). *A dictionary of literary devices : Gradus A – Z*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- EKINE, Adefunke, Madalo SAMATI, and Judith-Ann WALKER (2013). *Improving learning opportunities and outcomes for girls in Africa*, Brookings Institution, Center for Universal Education.
- FINNEGAN, Ruth (1977). *Oral Poetry. Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*, London: Cambridge University Press.
- FINNEGAN, Ruth (2012). *Oral literature in Africa*, Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.
- FORCHU, Ijeoma Iruka (2013). "African music performance practice propagating social harmony and Development", *Journal of the Association of Nigerian Musicologists* 7: 320-331.
- HARGOE, Aristedes Narh (2017). *Performance aesthetics of the klama dance of Gbugbla (Prampram)*, Ghana. PhD thesis, University of Cape Coast.
- HUBER, Hugo (1993). *The Krobo: traditional social and religious life of a West African people*, Fribourg: University Press Switzerland.
- HYMES, Dell (1994). "Ethnopoetics, Oral-Formulaic Theory, and Editing Texts", *Oral tradition* 9 (2): 330-370.
- IRWIN, William T. (2002). "The Aesthetics of Allusion", *Journal of Value Inquiry* 36: 521-532.

REBECCA GBERKI ANGMOR / WILLIAM DAUTEY

Literary aesthetics of *Klama* lyrics: An exploration of allusion

- KANGWA, Jonathan (2011). *Reclaiming the values of indigenous female initiation rites as a strategy for HIV prevention: A gendered analysis of Chisungu initiation rites among the Bemba people of Zambia*. Masters' Thesis. University of Kwa Zulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
- KUMETAY John Jackson (2009). *Krobos' perception of dipo in contemporary Ghana: a case study of Somanya, Yilo Krobo district*. M.A dissertation, University of Cape Coast.
- NNAMANI, Nnamani Sunday (2014). "The role of folk music in traditional African society: The Igbo experience", *Journal of Modern Education Review* 4 (4): 304-310.
- OKPEWHO, Isidore (1992). *African oral literature: background, character and continuity*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- OMENYO, Cephass Narh (2001). *The ongoing encounter between Christians and African culture*, Accra: Adwinsa Publishing (Gh) Ltd.
- ONU, John Onu, and Priscilla Ebere UGWUOKE (2019). "A study on the Form, Structure and Functions of Igbo Work Songs", *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria* 22 (1): 212-233.
- PALYS, Ted (2008). "Purposive sampling", in Lisa M. GIVEN (ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, Los Angeles: The Sage Publication, 697-698.
- PEMBA, Earnest A. Tendemele (2012). *The changes in the conduct of Yao boys' initiation ceremonies: An empirical study of the impact of HIV and AIDS NGOs/projects' interventions: Nothing for us without us*, University of Nordland, Norway.
- SALM, Steven J., and Toyin FALOLA (2002). *Culture and customs of Ghana*, Westport: Greenwood Press.
- SANORTEY, Thomas Dikpetey (2012). *The aesthetics of Birifor festival songs*. M. Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba.
- TETTEH, Elias Nomo (2016). *Style and literary devices in Dangme Klama songs*. M. Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba.
- VAN ALSTYNE, Gregory (1993). "The unvoiced text: allusion in Malawian sung poetry", *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 24 (1): 13-32.
- WILSON, Louis Edward (1992). *The Krobo people of Ghana to 1892: a political and social history*, Ohio University Centre for International Studies.