Slavery, Memory and Orality: Analysis of Song Texts from Northern Ghana

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores memories of slavery and the slave trade among the Bulsa and Kasena of northern Ghana and focuses on late nineteenth century internal slave trafficking. Previous studies on memories of the slave trade in Ghana have focused on the transatlantic slave trade and the trauma of the Middle Passage and have relied on the use of conventional historical methodology such as shipping records, missionary and traveller accounts and the perspectives of colonial officials leaving out the experiences of the descendants of those who were mostly considered as victims. This thesis, by contrasts adopts an interdisciplinary approach and engages with new material from the interior of Africa where most slaves were captured and aims at shifting the focus from the use of conventional historical methodology by seeking to establish the voices of descendants of enslaved communities in northern Ghana through a critical study of their songs.

Drawing largely from extensive field work through recording of traditional performances and interviews within these cultures and from a corpus of about 140 with a representative sample of 100 songs, this distinctive body of oral sources aims to contribute to the general body of literature relative to the historiography of slavery and the slave trade in Africa in two significant ways: (1) by the use of the oral tradition and (2) by emphasizing the impact of the emotional and psychological dimension of the slave experience which has often been ignored by historians. A close study of the songs does emphasise the nature of violence that accompanied the enslavement process thereby defeating the prevailing argument that African slavery was benign and less oppressive. The songs also suggest an attempt by these communities who were mostly perceived as victims to rewrite their collective history through songs that celebrate communal valour and triumph over tragedy. The songs also reveal that communities were not just passive victims who acquiesced in the plight of their enslavement, but reflect ways in which communities have also translated what was otherwise a tragic epoch of their history into communal triumph.

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Introduction

An overview of development in historical scholarship over the years reveals a wealth of documentation by scholars on slavery and the slave trade especially the transatlantic slave trade and its importance to Africa and the Gold Coast. The demographic patterns of the trade, methods of capture, legal frameworks governing the trade, the economic systems and religious institutions that facilitated slavery, both as an indigenous system and as an institution, have all received a great deal of scholarly attention.[1]

Although the exact numbers of people carried across the Atlantic into slavery have been subject to a great deal of debate and speculation, conservative estimates by scholars have suggested that a little more that 12.5 million African people were displaced through the transatlantic slave

[1]There are a number of significant general studies on slavery and the slave trade in Africa, especially the transatlantic slave trade while a great deal also focus on the memories of slavery and how these memories are captured within specific cultural domains. For detailed studies on slavery and the slave trade in Africa, see for example, Philip Curtin, *TheTransatlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Wis.:University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), Suzanne Miers, and Igor Kopytoff, (ed) *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison: The University of Madison Press, 1977), Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations In Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), John Grace, *Domestic Slavery in West Africa: With Particular Reference to the Sierra Leone Protectorate* 1896-1927 (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1975), Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to America Diaspora* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2011), Akosua A. Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15th to the 19th Century* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004) and David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London: Yale University Press, 2010). For studies related to memories of the slave trade within Africa, see Rosalind Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2005),Sandra E. Greene, *West African Narratives of Slavery: Texts from Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Ghana* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011), Bayo Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) and Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Transatlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

trade to the Americas. These estimates, however, represent only those who made it to the coast and embarked on ships for the Americas and the New World. These attempts to quantity the slave experience have often failed to account for those who died in slave raiding and battles or wars during capture and sometimes do not also include those who died being marched through dense forests to the castles and trading forts. More importantly, these historical sources have also failed to capture how many people were brought into African internal slavery that became a very active force after legal abolition of the slave trade. The overall effect of the slave experience on Africa cannot, therefore, be quantified in terms of those who transited on ships and experienced the Middle Passage and who eventually became enslaved in the Americas alone.[1]

This thesis thus exposes a hidden dynamic missing from the existing historiography of slavery and the slave trade within the Gold Coast, especially the perspectives of descendants of perceived victims from the interior, and intends to fill this lacuna by exploring the collective memories of two communities in Ghana, the Bulsa and Kasena, relative to their experiences of slavery and the slave trade during the latter part of the nineteenth century through a close study of their songs by focusing on how these communities were threatened by slave raiding but yet survived. It engages with the violence and terror the slave trade imposed through raiding in these communities in Northern Ghana where the bulk of slaves used in the internal systems were captured through raids.

The terrors of the slave raiding experience though "unspeakable" were not "inexpressible". There are still "residual traces" of the painful and tragic effects of enslavement within the cultural productions of African

[1] Laura T. Murphy has recently examined how the slave trade has been metaphorized in West African Literature and provides very interesting perspectives especially on how literary texts by some West African creative writers have engaged with the slave experience in their works using metaphor which I draw from. For a detailed study, see Laura T. Murphy, *Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), see especially pp.1-7.

communities. This work is an attempt to explore the unique cultural and literary forms of representation and remembrance of the slave trade within Ghana, especially through the oral tradition and specifically the song.

While previous studies have significantly enriched and enhanced our understanding of the historical and cultural dynamics of the slave experience within Africa, previous scholars, particularly historians, have tended to rely on conventional historical methodology mostly through the use of written sources drawn mainly from missionary and travellers accounts, shipping records, perspectives from colonial officials and archival material which has largely been European and western in orientation.

This thesis, by contrast, adopts an interdisciplinary approach and engages with original material from the interior where most slaves were captured. It emphasizes the significance of understanding the historical, cultural and literary contexts that have influenced the production and performances of these songs in helping to reconstruct memories of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana, with a focus on the internal slave trade that still continued after the abolition of the slave trade in the Gold Coast.

Using primary oral sources such as songs, the overriding aim is to shift emphasis from conventional historical methodology in order to explore how the collective experiences of enslavement have been metaphorized in the oral literary productions within these cultures. In reconstructing memories of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana, the central focus of the thesis is not to offer another interpretation of the history of the slave trade in Ghana but rather to use these oral sources as a prism through which to refract and help to reflect upon a range of other thematic issues within the broader historiography. The songs are, therefore, a kind of mirror in which we can see reflected aspects of the human and emotional and psychological experience of captivity and forceful displacement which historical sources have not been able to adequately convey.

One key significant theme that emerges from this study is the attempt to challenge the overriding perception within some historical sources that African slavery was benign and less oppressive than its New World counterpart. The study also attempts to counter the often pervasive images of northern Ghana mainly as a victim society which was constantly being pursued and raided.

Using this distinctive body of oral sources as a basis, this work contributes to the general body of literature relative to the historiography of slavery and the slave trade in Africa and Ghana in two significant ways: (1) By the use of the oral tradition in helping to reconstruct memories of the slave experience in marginalized communities and (2) by helping to throw light on the emotional and psychological responses of descendants of the enslaved which written historical sources alone have not been able to capture. The latter concern is particularly significant because as the anthropologist Allan P. Merriam rightly points out, "... Song texts provide psychological release for the participants". Moreover, "the freedom of expression allowed in song, texts seem clearly to provide an excellent means for the investigation of the psychological processes of the people who constitute a culture". Through the study of song texts, Allan argues, "it may well be possible to strike quickly through protective mechanisms to arrive at an understanding of the - "ethos"- of the culture and to gain some perspective of psychological problems and processes peculiar to it".[1]

This study also challenges the idea of "collective amnesia" and collective complicity or passivity to the slave enterprise in Africa. Indeed, the songs do suggest various degrees of indigenous African complicity but that is not all there is; the songs are also compelling evidence that communities challenged slave raiding and their enslavement by adopting various strategies and by manipulating the environment to their advantage in order to elude predation and capture. That a few were complicit does not suggest

[1]See Allan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Illinois: North western University Press, 1964), p. 201.

collective complicity or passivity. Some did refuse to remain passive to their plight of enslavement. They also fought. These variants are given expression in the songs.

The songs, therefore, constitute the verbal articulations of a people who refused to remain silent under the constant yoke of oppression but challenged the violation of their bodies and way of life through violence and other means they found necessary. That some Africans motivated by greed were at the forefront of raiding their fellow Africans and involved in such "collective criminality" does not suggest that indigenous communities chose to remain passive and did not resist the forces of enslavement. The songs indeed suggest that while some actively resisted enslavement, others on the other hand chose to align themselves with slave raiders' inorder to ensure survival. The slave trade was a complex network of forces, sometimes very overt but other times very subtle.

Although these songs are fictional and drawn largely from the imagination, they nonetheless articulate a real cultural and historical experience. While the exact period of the composition of these songs remains uncertain (as most informants conceded "they came to meet their parents singing them"), it is safe to speculate that these songs were composed to give expression to both a cultural and historical experience, either within or after the historical period in which slave raiding became endemic in these areas. The latter part of the nineteenth century to the early part of twentieth century is plausible given that the songs make references to a number of slave raiders such as Babatu, Samori, Gazari and Bagao, all of whom historical sources confirm terrorised these areas within the period under review. Some of my informants, however, suggested that the songs could be between 150 and 300 years old.[1]

The African composes music to give expression to every situation in life and so there exists a wide range of songs predicated on marriage and

[1]Field Notes: February-June 2012.

love, death and loss, poverty, and human suffering, the need for peaceful coexistence, and so on. It is therefore not out of place that there would be songs in these cultures within the general repertoire to express the subjects of slavery and the slave trade,especially given that these events have shaped their collective consciousness in very profound ways. The songs thus provide an opportunity to better understand the processes by which the slave raiding experience and enslavement have been metaphorised within the culture. In recent years, scholars have begun to move away from the very rigid and compartmentalized way of analysing social and cultural phenomena and are employing a rich variety of multi-disciplinary perspectives in helping to shape our understanding of various phenomena and the slave trade is no exception.

Historiographical perspectives

The publication of Philip Curtin's seminal work, *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census,* in 1969 was a major systematic attempt at exploring African slavery and its relationship to the Atlantic world. Since then, scholars have drawn from this study in numerous ways with improvements and modifications in an attempt to shape our historical understanding of the slave experience in Africa and beyond from a number of multi-disciplinary perspectives by examining various forms of servitude in parts of Africa. Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff were later to follow with their significant collection of essays on *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* in 1977 in which they examined various forms of slavery from a wide range of geographical areas within Africa. The problem, however, with these earlier studies on slavery is their reliance on written sources as a basis for understanding the institutional and structural dynamics of slavery and the slave trade within Africa leaving out perspectives of the enslaved. It is significant to note that the subjects under discussion were not the enslaved, but those whose existence were threatened by slave raids. These earlier studies also do not capture the Gold Coast, given that the Gold Coast was an important part of the then Atlantic network and part of the continent that

heavily influenced the growth of transatlantic commerce. Although the Gold Coast has received attention from scholars over the years, the concentration has been on its participation in transatlantic commerce and attempts to quantify the slave experience with few attempt to account for the emotional and psychological dimension of the enslaved, which is why this thesis is significant, especially with the ways it engages with perspectives of enslaved communities and their experience of internal slavery.

Although scholars[1] have given some attention to "domestic" slavery within the Gold Coast, their focus on the voices of the enslaved has been minimal. Historian Akosua Perbi's work, for example, though useful and informative is problematic in its insistence that African slavery especially within the Ghanaian context, was less oppressive because slaves within the Gold Coast were regarded as "human beings" as against chattel as in the case of plantation slavery. Indeed, the distinction between African slavery and its New World counterpart is well documented. The songs I deal with within the context of this study challenge this contention on the relative benign and less oppressive nature of African slavery because whether benign or not, enslavement was an act of violence.

Within the last couple of years, the apparent lack of adequate historical representation of African voices in the story of the slave experience necessitated a shift of focus from some Africanist scholars, especially on the relationship between history and memory and how the voices of those who remained on the continent have shaped the historical narrative. There is now a growing body of scholarship from scholars from a multiplicity of disciplines offering both theoretical and empirical perspectives on memories of the slave trade in Africa and more important within certain

[1]See, for example the studies by Akosua Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana* and Yarak W. Larry, "West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slave Owners of Elmina *Ethno history and Africa,* vol.36. No.1 (1989), pp. 50-51, Raymond E. Dumett, "The Work of Slaves in the Akan and Adangme Regions in Ghana in the Nineteenth Century", in Stephanie Beswick and Jay Spaulding (eds.), *African Systems of Slavery* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2010), pp. 67-98.

Ghanaian communities.[1] Sandra E. Greene, Anne C. Bailey, Bayo Holsey and Saidiya Hartman have, for example, explored the memories of slavery and the slave trade within certain Ghanaian communities. These studies have, however, focused on the coast and its relationship to the wider Atlantic world, with the exception of Saidiya Hartman who traces the experiences of slavery from the coast to Northern Ghana where most slaves were captured.

The central theme that emerges in the literature relative to the experience of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana is that, in spite of its significance as an important intersection of the three slave trading systems, northern Ghana appears in the literature mostly as a "victim society"[2] and its peoples mainly as subjects that were raided and traded with very little attention paid to how their survival and resistance to slavery and the slave trade has shaped the historical narrative. Contrary to perceived images of northern Ghana mainly as a victim society, however, their songs suggest a narrative of communal survival and triumph in the midst of predation.

Northern Ghana, as a geographical space has received little scholarly attention partly because as Rebecca Shumway has argued, the majority of people in West and West Central Africa lived in decentralized or stateless societies in the nineteenth century and, as a result, their collective experiences during the era of the slave trade were less known by Europeans trading on the African coast and also because western scholars were often unable to understand and describe political systems that differed from

[1]Recent scholarship on African Voices of the slave trade and memories of slavery and enslavement with specific focus on Ghana include Sandra E. Greene, *West African Narratives of Slavery: Texts from Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Ghana* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011),Alice Bellamgamba, Sandra E. Greene, Martin A. Klein (eds.), *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), *Bitter Legacy: African Slavery Past and Present* (Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener, 2013), Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Transatlantic Slave Route*(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), Anne C. Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond The Silence And The Shame*(Randle Publishers 2006), and Bayo Holsey *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana*(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[2] I use victim society here to suggest communities who were constantly raided and were under the constant threats of predation by slave raiders in the interior and savannah regions.

centralized states.[1] Shumway has further contended that “the tendency to focus on centralized states to the neglect of other populations has been clearly exhibited in studies related to Ghana, where the Asante have received far more attention than any other group including the northern territories, the Ewe-speaking area, and the coast". Indeed, Northern Ghana's lack of scholarly attention may also be due in part to the images that became pervasive within European narratives about the north and northerners. These images were those of a primitive and backward people "cut off" from the centres of "European civilization".[2]

The cultural anthropologist Bayo Holsey has argued that the slave trade began a process by which many northern Ghanaians, who were already far away from the "centres of the Atlantic order" largely because of geography and therefore vulnerable to slave raiding, sought further distance by retreating into caves and rocky enclaves in order to reduce their vulnerability. While these northern communities retreated into obscure places as a strategy for protection, their geography at the same time distanced them completely from wealth accruing from the slave trading economy within the larger economic framework in the Gold Coast. At the height of the slave trade, Holsey has intimated, European companies stationed at the coast of Ghana came to view the hinterland as a potential pool of slaves.[3]These European companies at the coast had insulated coastal residents from enslavement to secure their cooperation in the slave trade and, as a consequence, Europeans and "southern Ghanaians” came to regard northerners as only fit for enslavement.[4] This image of being "a potential pool of slaves" and nothing more tended to create a situation where scholars

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See Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2011), Also see Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: a Journey along the Transatlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), and Jean Allman and John Parker, *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[2]Holsey*, Routes of Remembrance,* pp. 81-86.

[3]Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance,* pp. 81-86.

[4]Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance*, pp. 44-45.

have given very marginal representation to their experiences especially their efforts in resisting the slave trade.

The emphasis in Ghanaian historiography on the emergence of the Asante kingdom as the most significant event of that era, Shumway argues, has "created a profound lack of historical understanding about how the Atlantic slave trade occurred".[1] Indeed, scholars have suggested that a substantial portion of slaves were brought from the Savannah regions and northern Ghana[2]. Attention to northern Ghana is thus crucial to our understanding of the dynamics of both the internal and external slave trade as northern Ghana was a vital link to the slave trade especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One dominant image that recurs in the literature is the image of northern Ghana mainly as a "slave supply base" for internal and external uses. This "victim image", however, has been contested within the last couple of years. A new surge of scholarly interest has begun to emerge from Ghanaian scholars using a multiplicity of approaches including oral art forms from certain northern communities to shed light on the slave experience within the Ghanaian historiography especially with regards to indigenous resistance. These scholars have each examined perspectives relative to the experiences of the people from specific communities within northern Ghana. [3]

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[1]See Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Slave Trad*e (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2011)

[2]Historians such as Akosua Perbi, Bayo Holsey, Rebecca Shumway, Gareth Austin, Ray A. Kea, and Benedict Der have all discussed northern Ghana as one of the principal sources of slaves during the nineteenth centuries through raids and tributes.

[3] See Naana J.Opoku-Agyemang, "Remembering Slavery Visually and Audibly" Adam Mathew Digital Slavery, Abolition and Social Justice 1490-2007, 2011), pp. 1-23 (Retrieved on 21/11/2011@13:43, Naana J. Opoku-Agyemang, "The Living Experience of the Slave Trade in Sankana and Gwollu And The Implications for Tourism" in Anquandah, N. J. Opoku-Agyemang, M. Doormont, (eds.), *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: Landmarks, Legacies, Expectations* in (eds). (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), p.211. Allison M. Howell, "Showers of Arrows": The Reactions and Resistance of the Kasena to Slave Raids in the 18th and 19th Centuries" in J.K. Anquandah, N. J. Opoku-Agyemang, M. Doormont, (eds.), The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: Landmarks, Legacies and Expectations. (eds) (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007), 189-207; Mawuli Adjei, *The Slave Experience in Ghanaian Literature: A Pan-African Perspective*. A Thesis submitted to the Department of English, University of Ghana, Legon, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English, 2005)**,** Joachim Jack Agamba, "Beyond Elmina: The Slave Trade

Interdisciplinarity

Within the last couple of years, scholars have began to adopt interdisciplinary approaches to help shape our understanding of various social and historical phenomena partly because certain subtle nuances within certain cultures are better understood when there is a close symbiosis between academic disciplines. This thesis thus adopts an inter-disciplinary approach by focusing on the interface between history and oral literature in examining memories of the slavery and the trade within the Ghanaian historiography. The prominent American historian and critic Hayden White is known for advocating a close symbiosis between history and literature. His major works, which include *Metahistory* [1](1975) and *The Content of the Form* [2](1987*),* have largely been concerned with combining literary criticism and historiography in order to develop a deeper understanding of historical discourse and to help understand cultural perspectives. In *Metahistory,* for instance, White sets the framework of interpretation that guides much of his later work. He argues for a more thorough examination of the figurative features of historiographical texts and associates four modes of historical consciousness with four figures of speech: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony, thereby emphasizing the role of figurative language in historical writing.

In analysing and interpreting these songs, I emphasize the significance of understanding the historical, cultural and literary contexts that have influenced the production and performances of these songs.

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in Northern Ghana" *Ufahamu: Journal of the African Activist Association;* Fall 2005/Winter 2006; 32, 1/2.Benjamin, W. Kankpeyeng, "The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana: Landmarks, Legacies and Connections, *Slavery and Abolitions: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, Vol.30, Issue 2, (June 2009), pp. 209-221.Emmanuel Saboro, "Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Triumph: Memories of the Slave Trade among the Bulsa of Ghana" in Alice Bellangamba, Sandra Greene and Martin Klein (eds.), *Bitter Legacy: African Slavery Past and Present* (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener, 2013), 133-147.

[1] For some detailed perspectives, see Hayden V. White, Metahistory*: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe (*Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

[2] See Hayden V. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

Although the patterns of analysis do not fit neatly into Western and Eurocentric forms of literary analysis and interpretation of texts, the constitution of these texts as oral poetry allows for a close study of the songs in ways that one would approach a written text. Although there are limitations inherent in the translations process, the song texts nonetheless present glimpses and insights into these cultures.

I am particularly interested in the ways in which the tools of language, such as metaphors, symbols, allusions, repetitions and other forms of figurative language, are deployed in articulating memories the slave experience within these cultures. But I also focus on what the people themselves think about their own cultural productions and the meanings they ascribe to these experiences through the songs, which is why interviews were particularly useful in throwing light on issues within the songs.

There are, indeed, also a number of African cultural traditions, such as the use of proverbs, naming and naming practices, that appear occasionally in the songs alluding to the experiences of slavery but by and large, the metaphor as a rhetorical trope is dominant. The use of metaphor in communication is particularly common to most cultures and it is thus one of the principal devices through which meaning is achieved especially in poetry. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have pointed out, "... metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action". They further argue that "our ordinary conceptual systems, in terms of which we think and act, are fundamentally metaphorical in nature".[1] The metaphors in the songs are expressed and reflected in the ways in which these cultures have *thought* about their experiences as descendants of victims of slave raids and how they have responded to these experiences.

Metaphors tend to include other poetic devices such as imagery, allegory, personification, similes, and parables. Musicologist Kwabena Nketia has pointed out that African poetry makes reference to a lot of animals and plants because these animistic symbols provide apt metaphors

[1]George Lakoff, and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980),p.3

or similes, or compressed ways of reflecting social experience. [1] The songs under discussion make ample reference to animal imagery, which provides an insight into the social life of the people who express ideas making use of their rich social and cultural environment. As I have argued elsewhere, "The use of verbal salute to particular animals for instance, is one of the dominant subjects of Bulsa and Kasena song poetry."[2]

Some of the animals that recur in both Bulsa and Kasena songs are the lion, elephant, the cat, the mouse and the millipede. These animistic metaphors reflect the social experience of the people as hunters who are familiar with the characteristics of some of these animals. Through the use of these metaphors, the people of these communities seek to associate themselves with the positive features of bravery and heroism epitomised by some animals such as the lion, while they on the other hand they denounce the predatory character of some such as the mouse.

In the analysis of the song texts, I use the metaphor as a social and cultural tool to help reveal and describe how the people of Bulsa and Kasena have made sense of their past. The metaphor thus becomes a significant rhetorical trope through which meaning in the often-subtle hidden traumatic memories is generated. Metaphors in the songs are mostly from their own cultural and environmental symbols and, as such, are both reflective and productive in the meanings they generate.[3] The songs have also come to constitute ways of communal protest. They articulate a collective sense of abhorrence to a system that not only sought to legitimize the enslavement of their persons but also their culture and collective sense of identity.

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[1]See Kwabena Nketia, *Akan Poetry*. In U. Beier (Ed.) *Introduction to African Literature: An Anthology of Critical Writing from Black 'Orpheus'.*(London:Longman, 1967),pp. 23-33.

[2] See Emmanuel Saboro "The *Kanbong* Motif" in Bulsa Folksongs of Resistance to Enslavement". (M.Phil, Dissertation, University of Cape Coast, 2009).

[3] Laura T. Murphy's Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature is particularly informative. She does an extensive study on how metaphor as a literary trope is reflected in written literary texts in West African Literature. For a detailed study, see Laura, T. Murphy, *Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

In registering their displeasure with the system of slavery, the song mode has become an effective tool for launching this protest. And as the literary critic and linguist Kwesi Yankah has reminded us, "the song constitutes a very effective cultural mode of discourse that helps reinforce hatred of the powerful and celebrate the resilience of the underdog".[1]

Conclusion

A synthesis of the literature suggests that slavery and the slave trade was one of the single most important variables that affected the social, economic and political structures of the Gold Coast as most slaves captured were either sold into the trans-Saharan or trans-Atlantic system or retained locally and contributed to the local economies of which they came to be part. A recurrent motif in the literature, apart from European interest in facilitating the trade in the coastal establishments through the supply of firearms that precipitated internal conflicts to benefit the slave enterprise, is the role of Asante in the slave trade and slave dealing in Ghana in relation to the Atlantic and local economy. Historical evidence has revealed that a significant portion of Asante's wealth and labour in the eighteenth century came from the capture and sale of people into the Atlantic economy. The bulk of these people came from the Savanah regions and northern Ghana. Northern Ghana thus becomes an important geographical space worthy of scholarly attention because of the tension and inter-relationships between internal slavery, the trans-Saharan slave trade and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

A review of the various scholarly approaches to the study of slavery and the slave trade in the Gold Coast also present a number of intellectual undercurrents: One is that northern Ghana emerges in the literature purely as a pool of slave supply and as a victim society. Besides the images of being victims there is very little attempt to capture their role as a culture that

[1] See, Kwesi Yankah, "Nana Ampadu and the Sung Tale as Metaphor for Protest Discourse" in Kofi Anyidoho and James Gibbs (eds.),*FonTomFrom:Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*,(Matatu21-22, Amsterdam and Atlanta GA: Editions Rodopi 2000), pp.140-152

survived and resisted predation. There are, however, a few exceptions, seen in the works of Opoku-Agyemang, Agamba and Howell. What also emerges from the various scholarly approaches, especially in relation to methodology, is the reliance on written sources, most of which sometimes emphasize a quantitative narrative with a lot of focus on the transatlantic slave experience.

These historical sources have given very marginal representation to internal slavery, which was equally traumatic and shaped the collective consciousness of most communities in Ghana. These sources are also sometimes silent on the emotional and psychological dimension of the slave experience. It is in light of the apparent deficiencies of the historical approach that the songs under review provide a window through which we can explore these experiences.

The rest of the thesis is structured as follows: Chapter One discusses the slave trade in northern Ghana from a historical perspective. Among other concerns, it looks at Asante and Zabarima slave raiding activities and the rise of Salaga as an important trading outlet for slaves captured during raids. The chapter also looks at the relationship between orality and historical memory and finally examines the theoretical and conceptual framework upon which the analysis of the song texts is grounded.

In Chapter Two, I discuss the song as a valid and alternative source of historical documentation and examine it as a vehicle for individual and communal expression. The chapter also engages in the critical dialectics that exist between space, texts and performance. This is particularly significant because the relationship between these variants within these cultures is often intertwined and understanding these relations within the context of the slave experience is crucial in appreciating the subtle nuances expressed in the songs. The second part of the chapter discusses the methods of data collection and analysis approach.

Historical sources have established the various methods through which people were enslaved in Africa in all the various slave systems. In Chapter Three, I discuss the processes of enslavement within the context of the slave raiding experience peculiar to these cultures. The chapter pays particular attention to the insider and outsider dynamics and how these have influenced the experiences of slavery and enslavement. The chapter also reviews the general consequences of slave raiding within these communities and the broader implications for development in northern Ghana. In Chapter Four, an attempt is made to examine the complex notion of African agency. The subject of African agency is examined within the context of Africans involved in the enslavement of their own as seen in the slave raiding activities of the Zabarima and the Asante. The second notion of Agency is examined within the framework of local communities often collaborating with slave raiders to facilitate the enslavement of others within the same community.

Chapter Five explores how communities often responded to their plight of enslavement by both adapting to survive through songs that often reflect the themes of pain and suffering. In this chapter, I also discuss memories of communities often expressing the real and symbolic quest of getting home; a metaphorical space beyond the physical realm. The final part of the chapter examines songs that challenge oppression through outright and open confrontation with the forces of enslavement. This chapter presents evidence that seek to challenge the predominant images of victimhood to those of communal pride and collective heroism.

Slave raiding more often than not resulted in both individual and communal devastation accompanied by the sense of terror and aggression. The overall effect of slave raiding within these cultures led to loss of lives and property and a loss of a collective sense of identity. Chapter Six examines the impact of these losses. I conclude in Chapter Seven.

Chapter One

Slavery in Northern Ghana: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

Slavery is an age-old institution common to all cultures of the world. It has long been practised in societies ranging from ancient Greece to medieval and early modern kingdoms and quite a large number of people in the world at one time or the other in their history have been part of this experience, either directly or indirectly.[1] As historian Paul Lovejoy has argued, “Africa has been intimately connected with this history, both as a major source of slaves for ancient civilization, the Islamic world, India and the Americas".[2] In whichever society or culture slavery has existed, the institution most invariably has defined the relationship between people. Relations of power over powerlessness and notions of superior over perceived inferior status have ultimately defined societies that practised slavery. These notions have tended to blur the humanity of persons, thereby reducing human beings to commodities to be traded and used by others.

Slavery has often been regarded as a form of human exploitation in whatever form it existed. It is an established historical fact that slavery was already a known and growing institution in Africa and, as Ugo Nwokeji has argued, “Indigenous slavery co-existed with two external slave markets-trans-Saharan and transatlantic" and "the interaction of these overlapping markets had implications for slavery in Atlantic Africa".[3] For instance, in some forest states in West Africa, like Benin and the Congo in central Africa, slavery was already an important institution prior to European incursion.

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[1]For a detailed exposition on slavery as it existed from ancient times to the modern period, see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A comparative Study* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp.vii-xiii

[2]See Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.1.

[3]Ugo G. Nwokeji makes this point in his article “Slavery in Non-Islamic West Africa, 1420-1820” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery Vol. 3 AD 1420-AD 1804* (eds.), David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.1.

The oral traditions of most Ghanaian communities recognise the existence of slavery as a long and complex institution. Linguistic evidence suggests that the word "slave" exists in most languages in Ghana, even though its history and practice differs from one ethnic group to the other.[1] In Buli, the term for slave is "Yoma", while in Kasem it is "Kabah". Allison Howell has suggested that the term Kabah, however, appears to be of Hausa[2] origin, suggesting that the Kasena did not have a term in their language for slave.[3] The Dagomba of the northern region refer to a slave as "Dabli", while the Akan linguistic stock has various linguistic variants for the term “slave” depending on the context of usage.[4] The common terms, however, which recur in the literature, are the terms *Akoa* (sing) or *Nkoa* (pl). The term *ndonkor* was, however, used by the Asante and other coastal tribes and later came to be popular with European sources to designate a slave of foreign origin especially one from northern Ghana.

Despite the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the nineteenth century, slave raiding, slavery and the slave trade, along with the extensive use of slave labour in some African societies continued into the

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[1]See Benjamin W. Kankpeyeng, “The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana”, Landmarks, Legacies and Connections, *Slavery and Abolitions: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, Vol.30, Issue 2, (June 2009), pp. 209-221.

[2]The Hausa are considered one of the largest ethnic groups scattered throughout West Africa mostly found in Northern Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Cote d'voire and Ghana. They are known to have been part of the trans-Saharan trade and traded in goods like Kola nuts and spices and later slaves. The Salaga market was an important converging point for these Hausa traders. Oral narrative accounts of the slave trade in northern Ghana establish their association with the slave trade. Some slaves were believed to have been brought from across the border by some of these Hausa traders. Some of the songs I recorded at the Pikworo slave camp in Nania near the Ghana-Paga Border have some Hausa linguistic variants. One kasem song says “de bam jogɔ magi baya”. “Baya” in Hausa is either backwards or the back. The song literarily means “we drum backwards”.

[3]Allison M. Howell, "Showers of Arrows": The Reactions and Resistance of the Kasena to Slave Raids in the 18th and 19th Centuries”, In J.K. Anquandah, N.J.Opoku-M.Doormont,(eds.), *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: Landmarks, legacies, expectations* (Accra: Sub-Saharan, 2007), pp.189-207.

[4]For the different Akan variants of the term slave, see Edward Reynolds, *Trade and Economic Change on the Gold Coast, 1807-1874*(New York: Longman, 1974), pp. 18-19. Also see John Grace, *Domestic Slavery in West Africa with Particular Reference to The Sierra Leone Protectorate, 1896-1927*(London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1975), p.4.

twentieth century. The legacies of this internal slave holding and slave dealing still linger on in most communities. Historical evidence suggests Ghana's active role in the transatlantic, the trans-Saharan and internal slave trade systems. Most of the slaves trafficked were either retained within the Gold Coast for domestic use or traded within the internal system. Northern Ghana is an important part of the intersection between the three distinct but yet interrelated slave systems: the transatlantic, trans-Saharan and the internal.

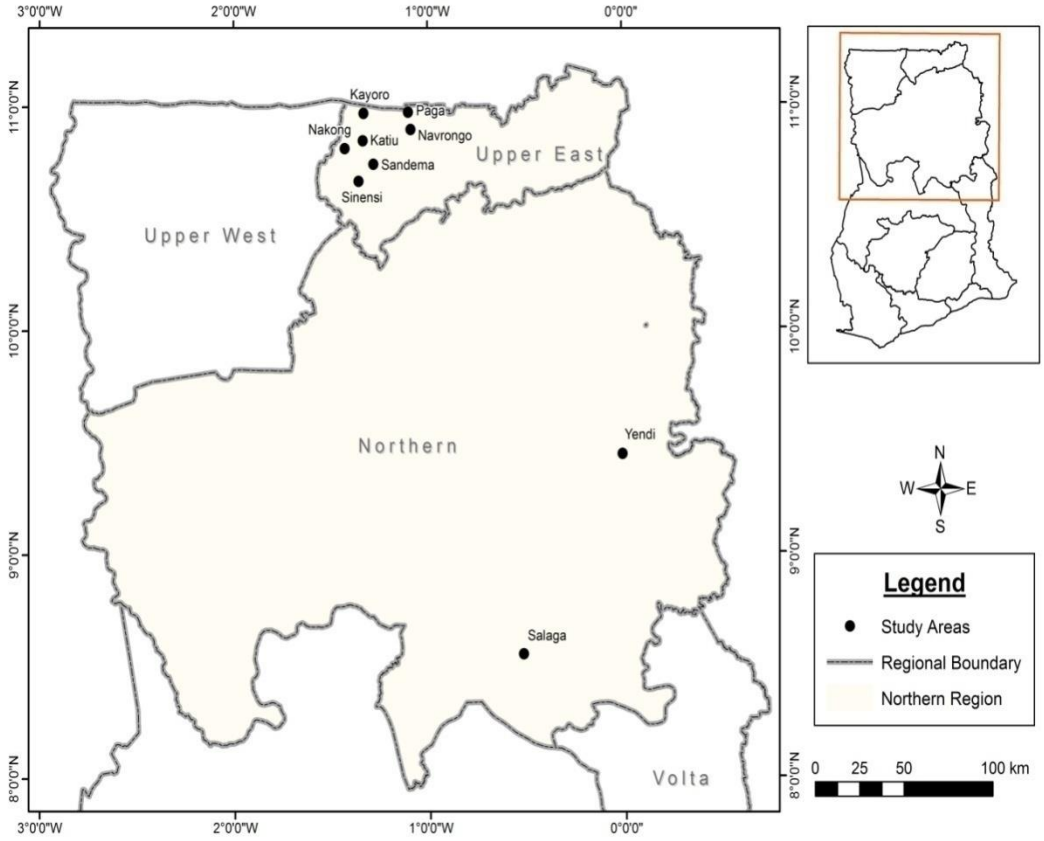

Fig.1:1 A map of Ghana showing Northern Ghana. The study areas are marked in black dots. Source: Geography Information Systems, Cartography and Remote Sensing Section. Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

The origin of slavery in most parts of Northern Ghana is uncertain, even though scholars agree that some forms of slavery, including pawning-, did exist. Yet the buying and selling of human beings was unknown in most northern Ghanaian communities. The historian Benedict B. Der has argued that slave trading was not a feature of northern Ghanaian societies before

the nineteenth century but concedes that a kind of domestic slavery did exist among most ethnic groups. According to Der, northern Ghana became part of the drama of the transatlantic slave trade only during the first half of the eighteenth century. Even then, slaving was restricted to the Gonja and Dagomba when Gonja had to redeem a debt it owned to Asante and the Dagomba had to pay an annual tribute to the Asante. Der has argued that it is historically inaccurate to assume that because of Asante's incursions into northern Ghana and the activities of Babatu, Samori and others, northern Ghana had always been involved in the trans Saharan and transatlantic slave trades. Der disputes the fact that during the period of the Atlantic slave trade a greater part of the slaves exported from the Gold Coast came from the north, an impression he argues has been created by some historians.[1]

Oral accounts by major ethnic groups like the Mamprusi and Dagomba, all in northern Ghana, point to the fact that the slave trade was unknown among them. Even though these groups fought wars of expansion and prisoners were taken during these wars, they were not exported as slaves. Ethnic groups in the Upper East region, such as the Tallensi, Bulsa, and Kasena, do not mention slave trading and slave dealing until the nineteenth century when they became victims of systematic slave raids. Indeed, the songs corroborate these assertions with reference to specific slave raiders such as Babatu, Gazare, Samori and Bagao. However, Bagao is relatively unknown because his activities were confined to the Paga area near the Ghana Burkina Border. Colonial records from European trading companies on the coast reveal that most slaves exported to the New World came from coastal states until much later when slaves from northern Ghana began to appear in the records. Major tribes like the Asante, Ga, Fante, Akyem, Wassa, and Denkyira were principal suppliers of slaves, which they got through wars, kidnapping, raids and payment of tributes.

[1]For a detailed discussion see, Benedict B. Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana* (Accra: Woeli Publishing services, 1998), p. 2.

The Asante Kingdom in the Gold Coast occupies a significant space relative to the history of slavery and the slave trade in Africa and the transatlantic economy. The historian J.K. Fynn has noted, for instance, that "by 1820 Asante had become the dominant power in the Gold Coast" and suggests that "the history of the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century was essentially the history of Asante's relations with the southern peoples and their European allies".[1] The Asante Kingdom controlled a significant portion of all internal slave supply in the nineteenth century[2] , with all internal slave trading routes leading to Kumasi, the centre of Asante trading activities. Asante's trade relationships have thus become the subject of intense scholarly focus and interest especially in relation to African complicity in the slave trade.

Asante's relation with northern Ghana is particularly significant given that Asante's hegemony over Gonja and the Dagomba necessitated raids into the Bulsa and Kasena areas to provide slaves. Asante was thus indirectly involved in slave raiding because it benefited from such raids from the interior. As Der has pointed out, Asante slave raiders often destroyed property, particularly livestock and foodstuff, and also captured people. It was particularly noted among the Gonja that "during the period of Asante domination, 'no man could say he possessed anything of his own. His wives, children, his property, were all at the mercy of passing Ashantis'.[3] Indeed, Der has intimated that after the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade the Asante could no longer export their slaves through European ports at the coast and, as a consequence, had to retain these slaves in Asante society as labourers and domestic servants.[4] The image of the Asante as a predator and oppressor is a recurrent motif in the songs under review. The Asante emerges in the

[1]See J.K. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbours* 1700-1807 (London: North-western University Press, 1971), p. x 1

[2]See for example Edward Reynolds, *Trade and Economic Change on the Gold Coast, 1807-1874*(New York: Longman, 1974), pp. 103-139. Also see Gareth Austin, *Labour, Land and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807-1956*(New York: University of Rochester Press, 2005), pp. 35-71.

[3] Der, p.30.

[4] Der, *The Slave Trade*, p. 19.

songs sometimes as the *kanbong* (slave raider,) even though the *kanbong* often include other parties involved in slave raiding especially the Zabarima.

Slave Raiding and the Zabarima Hegemony

The nineteenth century became an important period in the history of northern Ghana mainly due to the rise of Salaga as an important trading centre and the activities of Zabarima slave raiders and traders, notably Babatu and Samori Toure, Alfa, Hanno, and Gazari. Zabarima is a Hausa word for the Jerma people related to Songhai. There are many variants of the same name but what is common in the literature is *Zabarima.* These people live in a scarcely populated area near Niamey and Dosso in the Republic of Niger and partly in the region of the town of Sokoto in northern Nigeria and speak a Songhai dialect called Jerma.[1] Islam was a major influence over the Zabarima for many centuries, even though not all of them adhered to the faith until the Jihad of Utman Dan Fodio. The few groups of Zabarimas who became literate through Islamic learning and culture began to trade and many of them became devotees of Islamic missionary work, while others followed a military career. With vast experience in warfare and military strategies in the use of horses, they were enlisted by the Dagomba as mercenaries in the Dagomba slave raids in Grushi land. Grushi became a term that earlier anthropologists used in describing decentralised tribes that included the Bulsa, Kasena, and Frafra in the Upper east region. The Zabarima slave raids in northern Ghana are perhaps one significant event that has shaped the cultural and historical consciousness of the people under discussion. Both historical sources and the songs I have collected are replete with images of the collective devastation brought about by these raiders.

Of all the slave raiders, Babatu is the one who is remembered in the oral traditions as the most ruthless. Most of the slaves captured through

[1] See Pilaszewicz Stanislaw, *The Zabarma Conquest of North-West Ghana and Upper Volta: A Hausa Narrative, Histories of Samory and Babatu and Others',* by Mallam Abu (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1992), p. 19.

Babatu's raids were sold in the markets of Sati, Kassana, Yagaba and Salaga. As Der has pointed out, "During these years, the slave market at Salaga shared the prosperity of the slave trade with other markets at Kintampo and Kete-Krachi".[1] The bulk of these slaves, Der has noted "were sold to traders in Asante where slaves were in great demand for agricultural work and domestic services", "while to the north, slaves were exchanged for horses and probably found their way into Arab hands".[2] Most of these Arab traders became important trading agents in the trans-saharan trade network.

The trans-saharan slave trade network is believed to have lasted about two millennia and saw about seven million people dispersed through its trading system.[3] The trans-saharan trade covered the whole of North and West Africa with links with Mediterranean Europe. Although the trans-saharan trade was also outlawed in 1870, Benghazi and Morocco continued to import slaves into the early part of the twentieth century. Movement across the Sahara was especially high during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[4] Northern Ghana became part of the trans-saharan trade through the influence of Salaga. Salaga by virtue of its strategic position was linked to the Western and Central branches of the trans-Saharan trade routes.[5] There was a route from the north-east through Gonja and Dagomba territory, across the river Niger to Hausa land. Merchants from Hausa cities of Kano and Katsina traversed this route to Salaga and exchanged goods such as cloths, leather goods and slaves for gold, and cowrie shells. [6]

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[1] Der, *The Slave Trade*, p.19.
[2] Der*, The Slave Trade*, p. 22.
[3] See Benjamin W. Kankpeyeng, "The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana", pp. 209-221.
[4]See David Richardson, Review: "Across the Desert and the Sea: The Trans-Saharan and Atlantic Slavery, 1500-1900", *The Historical Journal, Vol.38, No.1* (March, 1995), pp.195-204.
[5]See for example Akosua Perbi, "A Double-Edged Sword: Slavery in Ghana. Paper delivered in Leiden, the Netherlands, at the Conference on "African Slave Trade and African Slavery in Global Perspective" 18th May 2006.
[6]See for example J.K. Fynn, *Asante and Its Neighbours 1700-1807* (London: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. X 1.

Plate 1:1 A photo showing Salaga market in modern times: Photo: Author

Salaga recurs in the literature, as well as oral narrative accounts as an important trading axis and a principal locus of the slave trade in the Gold Coast, linking northern Ghana and the rest of the Gold Coast. As slaves from Salaga were believed to constitute a significant proportion of slaves in both pre-colonial and post abolition Gold Coast. Salaga's importance as a major trading centre has thus received a great deal of scholarly focus. Historians Paul Lovejoy, Marion Johnson and Kwabena Akurang-Parry have established the commercial importance of Salaga and its relationship to the rest of the Gold Coast.[1] Indeed, in addition to these sources and the songs recorded, respondents in the field frequently mentioned Salaga as the main market where slaves were sold.[2]Founded in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Salaga was an important cosmopolitan trading centre located in the northern province of Asante active with a large concentration of Muslim

[1] Also see Paul E. Lovejoy, "Polanyi's "Ports of Trade": Salaga and Kano in the Nineteenth Century" in *Canadian Journal of African Studies, 16 (1982*), pp.245-277, Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry, "Rethinking the Slaves of Salaga": Post-Proclamation Slavery in the Gold Coast (Colonial Southern Ghana), 1874-1899, in *Left History*: *An Interdisciplinary Journal of Historical Inquiry and Debate. Vol.8, No. 1 (2002)*, pp. 33-60 and Johnson Marion, "The Slaves of Salaga" *Journal of African History Vol. 27 Issue 02(July, 1986),* pp*. 341-362.*

[2]Interview with Charles Awum Paga II chief of Paga 65 years of age when interviewed at his palace on 11/03/ 2012, and Aaron Chigatra, tour guide at the Pikworo slave camp about 26 years of age at time of interview at Pikworo Slave Camp on 08/03/12

immigrants and Hausa as the main linguistic medium. Kola was the main commodity traded for slaves. In addition, guns, gun powder and a variety of European goods were also traded. Slaves from Hausa land were brought through Borgu or Gurma via Yendi, then from Mossi land through Gambaga from North West Grushi land where the slave raiders Gazari, Babatu and Samori operated.

Plate 2. Photo showing the location of the former Salaga slave market. Photo Author

Marion Johnson's influential study on Salaga, though useful and of prime importance, tends to leave out the significant relationship between Salaga and other trading axes, especially through Salaga-Cape Coast-Accra and the Praso-Manso trading axis, which included the Fanti, Denkyira, Asin, Akyem, Ga, Krobo and Kwahu.[1] It is possible that this axis provided an outlet for slaves to the coast, although there seems to be a degree of controversy and uncertainly over the proportion of slaves who left the coast during this period. What is certain, however, is that a substantial portion of the slaves

[1]The historian Kwabena, O. Akurang-Parry in his article, does point out this significant trading axis. Indeed this axis leads to the coast where some slaves might have still transited. See "Rethinking the Slaves of Salaga": Post-Proclamation Slavery in the Gold Coast (Colonial Southern Ghana), 1874-1899, Left *History*: *An Interdisciplinary Journal of Historical Inquiry and Debate. Vol.8, No. 1 (2002)*, pp. 33-60

traded in Salaga within this period were retained within the Gold Coast for internal use especially in helping to consolidate the Asante empire.[1]

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Scholarship is driven and shaped by theoretical models.This research is informed by two models: These are the theories of cultural trauma, and the dynamics of power in human relationships. Scholars have theorised and conceptualised the notions of cultural trauma and power relative to the experiences of people and cultures that have to deal with oppression and domination in various forms. Although these theories do not conform rigidly to the experiences of the people under discussion, given that circumstances regarding time and space differ, the theories nonetheless provide some useful leads into understanding how marginalised and oppressed groups have understood and responded to their oppression.

Scholars have acknowledged the centrality of power and how it has shaped and influenced human relationships. The philosopher and historian Michel Foucault is one scholar who has articulated the centrality of power in the relations between society, individuals, groups and institutions. What was of particular concern to Foucault was how various institutions exercise power over individuals.[2] The sociologist Orlando Patterson was later to conceptualize power, especially within the context of slavery, as one of the constituent elements of slavery and has shown how the institutional and structural dynamics of power structures within the context of slavery have always influenced human interactions.

Patterson has observed, for example, that " all human relationships are structured and defined by the relative power of the interacting persons", and sees slavery as " one of the most extreme forms of this relations of

[1]See for example, Marion Johnson, "The Slaves of Salaga" and Kwabena, O. Akurang-Parry, "Rethinking the Slaves of Salaga"

[2] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, (ed.) C. Gordon, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 108-270.

domination, approaching the limits of total power from the viewpoint of the master and of total powerlessness from the viewpoint of the slave".[1] The power relation, Patterson has argued, has three facets. The first is the social facet, which involves the use or threat of violence in the control of one person by another. The second is the psychological facet of influence, which is the capacity to persuade another person to change the ways he perceives his interests and his circumstances. The third is the cultural facet of authority, which, according to Patterson, reflects 'the means of transforming a word seems to be missing here into right, and obedience into duty".[2] This theoretical model is particularly useful because it captures essentially some of the variants expressed in the songs especially in relation to the use and threat of violence as a major means of enslavement within the communities under review. Chapter Three discusses these in detail.

The theory of cultural trauma and collective identity is also a useful model because of the way it helps to explain the inherent psychological processes within the collective consciousness of people who have experienced slavery either directly or indirectly within their collective history. As the sociologist Jeffery C. Alexander has pointed out, throughout the twentieth century people have tried to use the language of trauma to explain what happens not only to themselves, but to the collectivity to which they belong.[3] The slave raiding experience within northern Ghana although sometimes an individual experience was also a communal one in its long term consequences. The songs articulate the collective sense of trauma in very emotional terms.

Trauma derives from Greek and carries the meaning of a wound. In medical terms, trauma denotes a physical injury and emotional shock. Alexander has argued that "cultural trauma occurs when members of a

[1]Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.1.
[2] Orlando, *Slavery and Social Death,* p.2.
[3]Alexander, Jeffrey, C., Eyerman, R., Giesen B., Smelser, N., and Sztompka, P., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2004) p. 1

collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways".[1] Slavery and the slave raiding experience in these cultures was a wound in many respects. It was physical, emotional and psychological. This wound has largely affected the collective psyche of the communities under investigation in very profound ways, as the analysis of songs show in subsequent chapters. Within the context of this study, the trauma is slave raiding as collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the collective identity of a people.

Conceptualizing the nature of cultural trauma and collective identity, especially within the specific context of the African American slave experience, Ron Eyerman has pointed out that "there is a difference between trauma as it affects individuals and as a cultural process".[2] He posits that "As a cultural process, trauma is linked to the formation of collective identity and the construction of collective memory".[3] Although the subjects of this study did not experience slave raiding directly, the remembrance of the events in retrospect is what constitutes cultural trauma. Eyerman further reminds us "... cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion".[4] Eyerman goes further to suggest that "the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all".[5] This loss of identity and a tear in the social fabric are given full expression in the songs under review, thus justifying the use of this theory as a guide in the analysis of data. Although scholars have acknowledged that the oral creative expressions of Africaare rich in articulating both the

[1] Alexander et al, *Cultural Trauma*, p. 1.
[2]See Ron Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity" in Alexander, Jeffrey, C., Eyerman, R., Giesen B., Smelser, N., and Sztompka, P., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 60.
[3] Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma", p. 60.
[4] Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma", p.61
[5] Eyerman, "Cultural Trauma", p.61

individual and communal experiences of its people, orality and its relationship to how memories of slavery and the slave trade are transmitted in northern Ghana, is yet to adequate representation. It is in light of this that the section that follows attempts to discuss the relations between oral creative expression and its relationship to historical memory.

Memory and Orality

Much as historians have provided useful and significant insights into slavery and the slave trade through the bulk of historical material over the years, there is still much we do not know. There is still much buried "deep in the minds and hearts of those for whom the experience of slavery must forever remain a living wound".[1] The tragic transcript of slavery and the slave trade is sometimes not overt within communities with histories of captivity and enslavement. And yet underneath certain cultural forms in some communities in northern Ghana, such as the landscape, music and dance, proverbs, songs, and folklore, are hidden metaphors of the tragic story of community memories of the past. These experiences, as represented in the songs, constitute the ways in which these cultures have chosen to remember and reconstruct events of the past and this can be seen as historical memory.

Historical memory and the process of remembering is a central theme in oral history and, as historian, Geoffrey Cubbit has asserted, "In the last quarter century, memory has become... one of the central preoccupations of historical scholarship".[2] Indeed, in historical scholarship, memory is becoming useful as an analytical tool for the understanding of group identity centred on common shared experience of the past especially of a traumatic nature. Since the 1990s, memory has emerged as an important theoretical focus in the literature of most Holocaust studies and a

[1]Anyidoho, "Beyond the Printed Word", p.1
[2]See Geoffrey Cubbit, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 1-22.

strong interest in what became known as “traumatic memory” has come into focus.[1] There is thus a considerable amount of literature on memory relative to the Holocaust, the American Civil War, and the French Revolution and, more importantly, on how survivors and descendants of victims of these traumatic events have made sense of these historical events in their collective consciousness.[2]

The preponderance of evidence, especially within the historical discourse, suggests that the term memory has multiple layers of meaning depending on the specific discipline and context in which it is used. The German Egyptologist Jan Assman, for example, coined the term “cultural memory” to refer to a set of unconscious everyday practices shared by a group and passed on from one generation to the other, while social psychologist Harald Welzer has used the term “social memory” to describe the ways in which social groups remember or commemorate the past through a mediation of various processes and practices.[3] The term collective memory is associated with the French Philosopher and Sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs saw memory as a social phenomenon and this central theme in his work has influenced many scholars who have further developed the concept and applied it in different contextual frameworks. One such influential study is Nora Pierre’s *Les Lieu de Memoire*.

Nora’s work stands out for mention within the context of this discussion because of the relationship he establishes between history and memory and the fact that his study, even though it had a specific focus on France, draws from a multiplicity of academic disciplines-history, literary

[1]See Michael Rossington, and Anne Whitehead, *Theories of Memories: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).
[2]On some general studies relative to memories of the Holocaust see for example, Dominic LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996). Also see James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven, Mass.: Yale University Press, 1993), and Deborah E. Lippstadt, *Denying the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1993). These few studies are also useful sources relative to the memories of the American Civil War. John Keegan, *The American Civil War* (London: Vintage, 2010). Also see Brian R. Holden, The *Origins of the American Civil War* (London: Longman: 1996).
[3]See Indra Sengupta,”Locating *Lieu de Memoire* (Post) Colonial Perspective in Memory, History and Colonialism", 2.

studies, sociology and political science- all in an attempt to locate “sites of memory” within the French national space.[1] Even though scholars have found Nora's distinction between history as a living and an ever present activity and memory as lost or a thing of the past rather problematic, his approach has nonetheless been useful in seeing memory as “an analytical tool for understanding the complexity of social experience and collective remembering”.[2]

The art of collective remembering is facilitated by a number of cultural symbols and other mnemonic devices in most oral cultures, but it is significant to note that memory is not just the recall of past experiences but entails the conscious recall of images, narratives, and emotions of the past and imposing order upon them and situating them within a narrative and recounting them as part of a social or cultural experience. A society’s identity is grounded in its memories of the past. The ability of the society to re - construct their past to serve as a guide to their future is significant for the society’s progress. A community’s memory serves as its road map. It tells where they have been and helps to define where they want to go.[3] As historian Sengupta points out, “collective memory is meant to denote the collectively constructed and shared signification of the past; it includes the collective knowledge circulating in a culture, is represented by shared symbols and is passed on by successive generations”.[4]

Collective memory is not only related to individual or personal experience of recollection about events of the past, but it also refers to ways in which a group lives again in the present and how groups are making sense of the past in directing their future.[5] Memory, as Cubbit reminds us, is “the study of the means by which a conscious sense of the past, as something

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[1]See the foreword to *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French past Vol. 1 Conflicts and Divisions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 2-10.
[2]See Sengupta, "Locating *Lieu de Memoire*, p.1.
[3] See Lynn Adam, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge Press, 2010), pp. 1-20.
[4], Sengupta, "Locating *Lieu de Mémoire*. 2
[5]See Ana L. Araujo, "Introduction" to *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space* (New York: Routledge Press, 2012), p. 1.

meaningfully connected to the present, is sustained and developed within human individuals and human cultures".[1] This connection of the past and present, as Cubbit affirms, is embedded in the cultural practices of a people and encoded through rituals, symbols, cultural artefacts, and mnemonic devices such as songs. The song thus becomes an important repository of group memory as it represents the sentiments of the group in terms of values and communal history and identity.

Songs are a vehicle for individual and communal expression and not only are they a channel through which the direct descendants of victims of slave raids derive emotional comfort and support, but constitute what Shirli Gilbert, writing within the context of the Nazi Holocaust experience, refers to as "a life affirming survival mechanism through which victims assert solidarity in the face of persecution, the will to live, and the power of the human spirit".[2]

The songs from these communities under review are represented in retrospect and are a significant body of texts originating from communities that suffered persistent and systematic slave raids and thus convey to us not only the retrospective understanding of individuals and communities that survived but also the "uncertain" and "constantly shifting perspectives" of the enslaved communities "facing new daily realities".[3] The new realities in these communities include the battle against poverty and underdevelopment brought about in part as a consequence of slave raiding and enslavement.

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[1] Cubbit, *History and Memory*, p. 9.

[2]See the Introduction to Shirli Gilbert's work on "Redeeming Music: Spiritual Resistance and Beyond" *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 2.

[3]Though the context of the slave experience and the Holocaust are different in many respects, the collective sentiments of individual and communal devastation appear similar especially in relation to how music serves as a vehicle for individual and communal expression in the midst of persecution, a subject, which Shirli Gilbert treats quite extensively in her book. *Music in the Holocaust*

These songs are, indeed, a unique social and historical legacy. They constitute a body of shared individual and communal ideas and interpretation, orally conveyed, and preserved, from communities devastated by slave raiding and the constant threats of enslavement. Their music thus provides a unique window onto their internal world by offering insights into how they understood, interpreted, and responded to their experiences at the time of the slave trade.[1] The understanding, interpretation and response to events of the past within Africa are more often than not facilitated through oral means.

African cultures have predominantly been oral cultures and its modes of cultural production and transmission have been essentially oral. Orality within the context of Africa, Liz Gunner has reminded us, "is vector for the production of social life, religious beliefs, and the constant constituting and reconstituting of society, ideology, and aesthetics". [2]The oral medium thus constitutes one of the ways by which African societies have organised and regulated their present and pasts. Orality is manifested "as types of formal speech communication, in some circumstances coexisting with music in the form of song or with instruments, and dance..."[3] The uses of oral mediums, especially praise poetry and music, to encode a state's collective history is widely known and documented. Scholars have often drawn from the rich oral configurations of certain cultures in articulating and informing certain broader historical narratives. The Rwandan dynastic ritual code and the *Oriki (*praise poetry) of the Yoruba are cases in point. Scholars have therefore shown how certain oral forms contain rich and varied forms of creative expressions useful in articulating a people's collective history and identity.

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[1]Shirli Gilbert uses music a framework in helping to explain the Holocaust experience. She looks at how Holocaust victims have used music to respond to their plight of oppression. See, *Music in the Holocaust,* pp. 2-4.

[2] Liz Gunner, "Africa and Orality", *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (eds.), in Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), p.67.

[3] Gunner, "Africa and Orality", p.67.

Although historians have often alluded to the usefulness of oral forms of representation in informing historical debates, the emphasis has often been skewed towards the use of written sources which is why this study is significant. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it promises to add to our store of knowledge the rich body of the song as an oral source and an archive from which we can attempt to reconfigure, the vibrant voices of marginalised communities. Since African culture is predominantly oral, the literary critic and poet Kofi Anyidoho has reminded us that "it seems logical therefore, that documentation and dissemination of knowledge in and about Africa must constantly strive to go beyond the printed word.[1] Indeed, "some of the most compelling records and reminders of the experience of slavery and the slave trade", Anyidoho has asserted, are not to be located in the printed word alone. Although there are no known court historians whose responsibility it is to recount their history, the singers and drummers within these cultures are, in a sense, custodians of this history, as these songs contain in them group history, cultural values and ritual codes. The song is thus a significant source of historical information; a subject the next chapter addresses.

[1]See Kofi Anyidoho, "Beyond the Printed Word" in Alice Bellangamba, Sandra Greene and Martin Klein (eds.), *African Voices on Slavery and the Slave Trade* (Cambridge: University Press, 2013), p.1.

Chapter Two

The Song as a Historical Source

They that walked in darkness sang songs in the olden days-Sorrow Songs-for they were weary at heart (W.E.B. Du Bois).[1]

Introduction

This chapter attempts to theorize and conceptualize the song and examine its centrality as an alternative source of historical documentation with the potential to enrich our understanding of slavery within Africa. The first part of the chapter focuses on the critical relationship between space, texts and performance and looks at the dominant themes that emerge from the songs. The second part of the chapter examines the methods and procedure for data collection taking into consideration the context in which these songs were recorded and performed. It also deals with the analytic framework and issues related to the generality of fieldwork within the context of the oral tradition.

The oral tradition has not only provided many useful approaches for understanding the transmission of music in nonliterate societies all over the world, but its dialectical relation with written sources promises equally valuable insights into the nature of slavery and the slave trade in Africa. The oral tradition, musicologist Philip V. Bohlman has pointed out, "fosters both the creativity and the stability of folk music".[2] The musical and ethnographic concerns of the oral tradition in its relation to how people have articulated their experiences of enslavement are the central foci of this work.

The oral tradition, though a valid source of historical documentation is beset with a number of methodological constraints, often making scholars

[1] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1994), p.155.
[2] Philip, V. Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 14.

doubt its authenticity as a valid source of historical reconstruction. There is no doubt that sometimes a certain degree of bias is inherent in these traditions. To overcome this bias, the oral historian Jan Vansina has suggested that historians can make use of the traditions of other societies, or supplement the historical information made available through the sources they are studying with the findings of auxiliary disciplines such as archaeology, cultural history, linguistics and physical anthropology. Even though these have their own limitations, Vansina has pointed out; putting together all available information can enhance our knowledge of these traditions.[1] Indeed, much of the information in the songs find validation from sources I have made references to in the review of literature.

The nature of memory in oral cultures itself has challenges. The transmission of the song and oral narrative accounts from individual to individual and from generation to generation has limitations. It is most unlikely that oral transmission can occur with absolute reliability and certainty, especially where the oral texts have been preserved in peoples' memories over several generations. Memory failure sometimes may lead to omissions and confusion relating to events of the past. Vansina has suggested that it is imperative, therefore, to determine the degree of distortion any particular tradition has gone through as a result of memory failure. In response to critics who argue that only traditions of the not too-distant past can be relied upon, Vansina argues, it "is a well-established fact that the decisive factor in the tremendous storage capacity of the human memory is the amount of attention given to the data memorised".[2]

According to Vansina, memory failure is directly related to the method of transmission, the degree of control exercised over recital of the testimony, and the frequency with which the testimony is repeated. He goes further to argue that "traditions which have been transmitted with the aid of

[1]See Jan Vansina, *Oral Traditions: A study of Historical Methodology* (London: Routledge, 1965), pp. 141-182.
[2] Vansina, *Oral Traditions*, p.40.

mnemonic devices will be less susceptible of distortion than others".[1] One such mnemonic device Vansina mentions is the song. In oral cultures, the song has been used as a way of preserving history. The songs dealt with here, therefore, promise a new and innovative approach to enhancing our understanding of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana, not least because they are performed annually, thereby ensuring that they do not fizzle out of memory.

Songs are performed within certain defined social and cultural spaces and, as such, "performative acts" in these cultures more often help to present vivid images of the emotional and psychological dimension of an experience that is usually lost and not readily available through texts alone. In order to understand the contexts in which these songs are performed and re-enacted, it is significant to understand who performs these songs and on what occasions they are performed, to whom the performances are directed and whether the songs are shared within the community, and finally the mode of transmission of these songs.

Scholars, particularly historians, have long acknowledged the centrality of music and its role in societies that have experienced pain and trauma. The transatlantic slave experience and the Holocaust[2], for example, have received various degrees of attention on the use of music either as coping mechanisms or as sources of protest in communities where these historical events have occurred. Some slave narratives have often alluded to the role of songs and singing in articulating the slave's discontent with the ills and inhumanity of slavery as an experience and also as an institution. In his narrative, the American ex-slave Frederick Douglass alludes to the role of singing by the slaves on the plantations as a sign of their abhorrence of the inhumanity of slavery.[3] Douglass intimates that slaves selected to go to the

[1] Vansina, *Oral Traditions*, p.41.
[2] Shirli, Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust*, pp. 170-176.
[3] *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, 1844* (Reprinted: General Books, Memphis, Tennessee, 2010), pp. 14-15.

Great House Farm for their monthly provisions "would sometimes sing the most pathetic sentiments in the most rapturous tone and the most rapturous sentiment in the most pathetic tone".[1] These songs, Douglass points out, "told a tale of woe... they were tones loud, and deep: they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish".[2]

Sociologist and pan-Africanist, W.E.B Du Bois also alludes to the critical role of slave songs in his *Sorrow Songs* in which he argues, "the soul of the black slave spoke to men".[3] These songs, Du Bois has asserted, "...are the articulate message of the slave to the world".[4] These songs "tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways".[5]

Historian Lawrence W. Levine was later to conceptualize the nature and dynamics of slave songs within the African American historiography by showing how the slave's worldview was conditioned by the songs and music slaves produced. Levine has for example observed that… "the slaves used the subtleties of their song to comment on the whites around them with a freedom denied them in other forms of expression.[6] He has further suggested that "… Black song ...had many additional functions both in Africa and America". In Africa, Levine has noted, "songs, tales, proverbs, and verbal games served the dual purpose of not only preserving communal values and solidarity but also providing occasions for the individual to transcend, at least symbolically, the inevitable restrictions of his environment and his society by permitting him to express deeply held feelings which ordinarily could not be verbalised".[7]

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[1] *Narrative*, Douglass, p. 14.
[2] *Narrative,* Douglass, p. 15.
[3] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1994), p.155.
[4] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* p. 157.
[5] Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk,* p.157.
[6]For a comprehensive study of "the Contours of Slave Songs" including Slave Spirituals, See, Lawrence, W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom,* 30th Anniversary Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007),pp. 5-35.
[7] Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness,* p. 7-8.

Reflecting on the power and significance of black music within the black Atlantic, the sociologist Paul Gilroy has pointed out how the painful terrors of slavery were kept alive and carefully cultivated into ritualized social forms, especially through music and how these painful expressions have contributed to historical memory. [1] The fundamental axiom governing all of these positions is the connection between the slave's discontent and the verbal articulation of his plight. But while these sources have been useful, they do not reflect the voices of victim communities who suffered the effects of slavery under internal slave systems within Africa. It is in this regard that the sources I engage with in this study become relevant, as they promise new insights into the experiences of slavery from the interior through the medium of the song.

Songs and singing are important features of African life and thought. The African sings on all occasions. There are, therefore songs, predicated on marriage, poverty, peaceful co-existence, and indeed all aspects of human life is governed by music and dance. Songs and music are also an important part of a people's literature. They articulate both individual and collective experiences of people. They also help cultures without writing traditions to continue to preserve and remember their collective history and identity. Songs are thus a valuable source of historical memory, as they contain in them elements of group history, values and corporate identity. Indeed, the oral tradition through music is, as Bohlman has affirmed, "a measure of a community's sense of itself, its boundaries and the shared values drawing it together."[2] Folk music can, therefore, be a repository for these communal values and at the same time a voice for their expression. Reflecting on the centrality of music, especially within the context of the Holocaust, historian Shirli Gilbert has pointed out that "Music is not only itself a subject of historical memory, but also a vehicle for the transmission of memory".[3]

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[1] See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso Press, 1993), pp. 72-110.
[2] Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music,* p.14.
[3]Gilbert, *Music and the Holocaust*, p.176

The transmission of this memory is significant in that one way to gain an insight into a groups' culture and values is sometimes through its music. Music then becomes, in a sense, a narrative through which individual and corporate life can be understood. Gilbert intimates further that music can be used to "construct a narrative of experiences emphasizing meaningful aspects of identity and promoting particular interpretation and responses".[1]

Songs within the African cultural repertoire reflect various themes. These themes tend to be of common interest to members of the community. The musicologist and literary critic, Kwabena Nketia has noted that songs within most African cultures deal with issues ranging from ordinary day-to-day life to the transmission of major historical events. The various kinds of songs that may be found in Africa, according to Nketia, include cradle songs which generally tend to reflect the typical life situations of the rural community. There are also reflective songs, which, according to him, are based on "allusions and poetic images conceived in the style of proverbs".[2] These types tend to be reflective, philosophical, sentimental or satirical in orientation.

There are also historical songs sometimes referred to as "songs of the elders". These songs remind people of the past and one must have knowledge of the oral traditions of the group in order to understand them.[3] The songs of Bulsa and Kasena under review fit into this category since a great many of the themes in these songs are predicated on events of the past, especially the slave trade, even though there are also songs not necessarily about slavery and the slave trade. These songs are transmitted across time and space through a variety of mediums.

The oral transmission of folk music depends to large extent on mnemonic devices for both individual and communal expression.[4] Songs and

[1] Gilbert, *Music and the Holocaust,* p.199.
[2]Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, pp.189-205.
[3]Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, pp.189-205.
[4] Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music*, pp. 14-15.

drum rhythms are used as mnemonic devices in most cultures within Africa not only for entertainment but also for preserving oral history.[1] Music is thus an organised social activity and public performances take place on social occasions. The basis for music making is usually the community who live in a kind of corporate life based on shared traditions, values and belief systems.[2] The degree of social cohesion is usually very strong and the corporate sense brings members of the community together and provides an avenue for consolidating social bonds. The performance of music thus provides an opportunity for sharing creative experiences and for using music as an avenue for expressing the sentiments of the collectivity.[3]

Within the specific contexts of these cultures, songs about slavery and the slave trade are not within the public domain because they are considered sacred and are said to evoke very sad memories about the past. They are usually re-enacted during the funeral of an elderly statesman within the community or during festivals in order to commemorate communal triumph and bravery.[4] These "commemorative acts" are not necessarily directed to any particular audience. For instance, during the funeral of an elderly statesman within the community, the lyrics of the songs remind them of the sense of sacrifice, struggle and the will to survive. It is normally a reminder of the communal ideals of self-sacrifice and the celebration of life in the midst of loss and tragedy.[5]

The songs are the collective repertoire of the communities and it is only during special occasions that they are performed. They are learned rather informally and passed on from generation to generation. Children learn them passively from their parents or during communal performances.

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[1] Jan, Vansina is one of the earliest scholars to have championed the study of the oral tradition as a useful tool in historical enquiry. To date, many scholars have found his seminal work useful and a basis upon which more innovative studies have emerged from scholars across disciplines. See for example Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (New York: James Currey 1985), pp. 46- 47 is particularly useful.

[2]See J.H. Kwabena, Nketia *The Music of Africa* (New York: Norton and Company, 1974), p.21.

[3] Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, p.22.

[4] Interview on the 10th March 2012 with Wemegura Puawuveh a community elder.

[5] Field Notes, 2012

The Bulsa and Kasena do not have court historians whose duty it is to recount the history of the clans. The drummers and singers are regarded as the custodians of history in these ethnic groups. The songs are said to contain significant information about social life including events of the past.[1] The expressions of these collective sentiments are articulated within the context of their collective experiences of slavery under specific thematic variants. These include laments, entertainment songs and war songs.

Dirges/Laments/Sorrow Songs

The first category of songs within the collective experiences of slavery in these cultures can be termed as laments or sorrow songs sung by women and generally fit under the African dirge tradition. These are songs that lament and mourn the tragedy of enslavement. Some of these are dirges that make explicit reference to slavery and slave raiding as "death and killing of another kind". In these songs, names of specific slave raiders are usually mentioned. Themes in these are usually centred on pain, death and loss. There are also dirges that do not explicitly refer to slavery, but when songs of the slave experience are performed, they usually form part of the repertoire. The slave raiding experience was considered "death" of "another kind", especially in the metaphorical sense. This kind of death transcends physical death to include the death of a culture and identity. And so, anytime these dirges are re-enacted, even in contemporary real life situations, sometimes memories of the past come back to haunt them.[2]

Lamenting the tragedy of slavery and enslavement through these dirges has come to constitute ways in which these cultures have given a cultural response to painful memories of remembering. Implicit in the verbal expression of these painful memories is the assumption that pain is

[1] Field Notes, 2005, and Interviews between February and June 2012

[2] In field Interviews, it was common to hear people during focused group discussions refer to the slave experience as death both in the literal and metaphorical sense. Indeed, there are songs in the repertoire I have collected that speak of slavery and slave raiding as "death as killing of a different kind" in the Buli text. (See Appendix A, songs # 11,12,13 and 14)

minimized by verbalizing it. As Elaine Scarry has reminded us, "the act of verbally expressing pain is a necessary prelude to the collective task of diminishing pain".[1]

The study of laments, including ritual wailing and mourning songs, dirge and elegy, are not entirely new within the literature.[2] Ethnomusicologists, literary scholars, folklorists and anthropologists have drawn attention to a variety of lament forms across time and space.[3] A lament, Gail Holst-Warhaft has pointed out, "is an expression of mourning" but he further concedes that "it is not necessarily mourning for the dead". Holst-Warhaft further points out that "laments are common features of cultures where forced emigration has occurred for those who have gone into exile or composed by émigrés for the homeland and family they have left behind".[4]

Laments, for example, were characteristic of the Hebrew Biblical texts, especially those of Psalms and the book of Lamentations and had themes unique to the plight of the children of Israel under bondage in Egypt and their cry out to God for deliverance from their oppressors.[5] Many of these laments have over time come to serve as universal archetypes of suffering, loss and deliverance and have thus come to inspire many cultures under similar circumstances. The Negro spirituals and blues within the context of the African-American experience are predicated on these themes of suffering, anguish and loss.

These laments are more often than not verbal articulations of protest addressed to a higher power as prayer for deliverance from

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[1] See Elaine Scarry, *The Body In Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 9.
[2] See Steven Feld, "Wept Thoughts: The Voicing of Kaluli Memories" in *Oral Tradition*, 5/2-3 (1990), pp.241-266. Also see Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p.2.
[3] Feld, "Wept Thoughts", pp.241.
[4] Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices*, p.2.
[5]For a detailed study of laments especially within the context of the Judaic Christian experience, see Dan Allender, "The Hidden Hope in Lament". *Mars Hills Review* (1994), pp.25-38.

oppression. Because of the different forms in which laments occur throughout the world, the issues of the universality or cultural specificity of their structures and meanings are significant. The analysis of laments must thus be situated in their socio-cultural and historical contexts. Although it cannot be said with absolute certainty that the cultures under review have drawn inspiration from the above examples, certain parallels do indeed exist. These laments within the specific context of this study are predicated on cries of agony, loss and anger. They also sometimes reflect confusion, sorrow and grief brought about as a consequence of slave raiding and enslavement. Whenever these songs are enacted during festivals and funerals, the facial expressions and gestures of the performers often reveal pain, sorrow and anguish.

Apart from laments and sorrow songs, these cultures also have songs about war. Although not all war songs within these cultures are predicated on the slave experience, a number of them convey images of war and violent bloodshed centred on their collective experience of enslavement.

War/Victory Songs

War songs are common features in most African cultures and, as Ruth Finnegan has affirmed, "...war and hunting are topics of particular interest for many African societies..."[1] Within the specific context of this study, there are songs about war and the celebration of victory and these are usually sung and performed by men. These are usually predicated on violent confrontation and bloodshed and are generally centred on bravery, communal strength and resilience in the midst of adversity.[2]Most of these songs make direct and explicit reference to specific slave raiders. Even in cases where these war and victory songs are not direct, the context still suggests they are songs predicated on the slave experience. It is also often the case that most of the songs are sung in indirection. As Allan Merriam has

[1] Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1970), p.206.
[2] Saboro, Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Triumph", pp.133-147.

pointed out, "... the African relishes innuendo and circumlocution too well to be satisfied with bald, direct statement."[1] This singing in indirection may also in part be due to the fact that there are still descendants of perceived collaborators who were considered complicit in the slave experience in the communities who share the same communal spaces with descendants of victims. Within these cultures, it is common to hear of the "Yare" or "Yara"[2] living in close proximity with the Bulsa and Kasena.

The *Pikworo* Slave Camp Category

One other category of songs can be termed entertainment songs and these are performed across communities, some of them mostly performed during funerals, marriages and other social functions. The songs performed at the Pikworo slave camp are of particular significance because of Pikworo's peculiar history. The pikworo slave camp is situated in Nania near the northern border town of Paga in the Upper East region of Ghana. This town connects the major north-south highway of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso to the rest of Ghana through the Upper East regional corridor. The pikworo landscape is variously described as a sacred grove, a tourist site, a historical slave camp or memorial shrine, depending upon the parties involved and the specific meaning they intend to evoke.[3] Today, the slave camp has become popular in both local and continental narratives as the "starting point of the transatlantic slave route"[4] , although no archaeological survey has confirmed the identity of the site. It appears that initially the indigenes tried to conceal or "forget" the history of the camp until the

[1]See Allan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music*(Evanston, Illinois: North western University Press, 1964),p. 203

[2]The "Yare" or "Yaregwale" are considered to have come from either Burkina Faso or beyond and were believed to aid the Zabarima slave raiders in their slave raiding activities. Bagao, one of the slave raiders believed to have set up the Pikworo slave camp in Nania near the Paga and Ghana Burkina Faso border is believed to be a "Yara". It is common knowledge among members of these cultures that the "Yare" are still living in these communtities. (Field Notes, February-June 2012)

[3]See Katharina Schramm, "The Slaves of Pikworo: Local Histories, Transatlantic Perspectives", *History and Memory*. Vol.23 Number 1 Spring/Summer 2011, pp.96-130

[4] Schramm, "The Slaves of Pikworo, p. 105

development of local tourism became a focus within the Ghanaian national discourse.

In 2000, attempts were made by local citizens in collaboration with the Ghanaian Ministry of tourism to represent the slave camp as part of historically reconstructing events of the past, to also attract an African-American audience who hitherto have used only the slave castles at the coast in reconstructing the memory of the slave trade.[1] Interviews I conducted in this area between April and June, 2012 associate activities of this camp to the slave dealer Bagao, although Bagao is relatively unknown in the literature by comparison to Babatu and Samori and Gazari. Oral sources, however, suggest that Bagao is believed to have come from beyond Burkina Faso and established the camp where slaves captured by Babatu , Samori and Gazari during raids were kept for onward transportation to the Salaga market. While in the camp, slaves were often chained to trees awaiting further movement to Salaga and the coast (See plate. 7). Slaves were often made to drum and dance using the rocks to produce music. As the tour guide to the camp explained, singing and dancing were intended by the slave dealers as a form of physical exercise to keep slaves fit in order to increase their market value and to also make captives forget the trauma of capture.[2]

Most of the songs in performed under this category do not make explicit reference to the experience of slavery. They do not also mention names of specific raiders as the ones recorded from the communities around who often mention Babatu, Gazari and Samori as the ones who terrorised these communities. It is significant to note that songs performed by the community folk within Nania where the slave camp is situated make explicit reference to the slave experience. The Kasena term “gwala” recurs in the songs a term that metaphorically has come to mean any slave raider of foreign origin (see plate: 14. women from Nania performing).

[1] Schramm, “The Slaves of Pikworo”, pp.96-130.
[2] Interview with Aaron Chigatara, on 08/03/12 at the Pikworo slave camp at Nania.

The significance of the song as a historical source is revealed by three distinct but interrelated concepts: space, texts and performance. Understanding the relationship between these concepts within the specific contexts of these cultures thus offers a useful means of making sense of the slave experience.

Space, Texts and Performance

Reflecting on the inseparable role between these elements, Bohlman has contended that "the text exists only within the context of performance and tradition, and it is one task of the student of folksong to understand how text, performance, and tradition interrelate".[1] Bohlman goes further to suggest that "the rhythm and syntax of melody can reinforce those of a text" and that "melodic closure may occur simultaneously with textual closure".[2]

Space

Oral historian Jan Vansina has pointed out that all messages are part of a culture and these are expressed in the language of the culture and thus understood in the substantive cognitive terms of that culture. He argues that "every culture has representations concerning a universe and these involve spatial connotations".[3] Space is thus a relative term in most cultures and may refer to a spot in relation to other spots in a given culture. While some spots may be deemed important and have the propensity to elicit an emotional response, others may not. Within the context of this study, certain spots associated with the slave experience have come to be associated with sacredness because of the significance of specific events that are believed to have occurred there. Today, people in these cultures approach these places with reverence and a sense of awe.

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[1] Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, p.17.
[2] Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World,* p. 15.
[3]Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*(New York: James Currey 1985), p.125

Among the Bulsa, for instance, there is a spot under a specific tree where it is believed the slave raider Babatu's wife was killed (as shown in plate 2: 1 below). Today, the tree is no longer visible but stones have been used to mark the spot. Images of this spot elicit different responses from people who pass by and are familiar with the history. Responses could be the sense of trauma that accompanies the remembrance of slave raiding, or the sense of pride that the forces of enslavement were resisted leading to the death of Babatu's wife.

Plate 3.Man showing "Akumcham", a spot in Bulsa where the weeping sheanut tree used to be; believed to be where Babatu's wife was executed, Photo: Author

Oral narrative accounts have also established how settlement patterns and the environment helped people in these communities to escape slave raiding and enslavement. The rocky terrain and caves in the environment provided safe hiding places where people often sought refuge during raiding. In addition, houses were constructed to make access to strangers and people not familiar with the settlement pattern almost impossible. Most rooms had very narrow entrances, while windows were so

small so as to allow only minimal light. (see example displayed in Plate 4 below).

Plate: 4. Photo showing a narrow entrance designed in a way to make entry difficult for people not familiar with the environment as a way of adapting and resisting their enslavement. Photo: Author

These cultural spaces were exploited to facilitate community response to slave raiding. The direct descendants of those who were victims of these slave raids have also constructed the events of this history in their songs and a close study of their songs constituted as texts offers a window into their collective consciousness relative to their past experiences.

Texts

Musicologist Kofi Agawu has suggested that there are varieties of African music and some may be designated as text- as "something woven by performer-composers who conceive and produce the music-dance, by listeners-viewers who consume it and by critics who constitute it for the

purposes of analysis and interpretation".[1] The focus of this work is to look at texts as basic primary data and object of analysis and interpretation. Texts are social facts intended to give us ideas about the society in which they are constructed. These song texts are self-reflective and offer insights into the communities and social relations where they are composed. As cultural anthropologist Karin Barber reminds us, if a particular verbal text is going to be informative about a society and its experience or cultural values, it has to be through its specific textuality. Indeed, oral cultures produce texts using language, rhythm and often music to communicate what could otherwise not be said.[2]A text is thus marked by coherence. This coherence is the result of human effort to encode signs in such a way that they would lend themselves to interpretation. Texts should therefore be seen as the oral configuration of words, visual images and music.[3]

Music represented as texts within the context of this study promises a window into the cultural and historical dynamics of slavery and the slave trade within these cultures who were victims of slavery. Within the context of this study, I analyse these song texts as oral poetry and attempt to tease out various themes relative to the experiences of these cultures and situate them within the broader historical literature. More often than not, the texts alone do not adequately convey the sense of the experience. It is in this regard that performance becomes a significant cultural outlet. As Richard Bauman has acknowledged, "... performance sets up, or represents, an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood, and that this frame contrasts with at least one other frame, the literal".[4]

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[1] Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2003), p.97.
[2] See Karin Barber, *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics: Oral and Written Culture in Africa and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.1-5
[3]Barber, *Anthropology of Texts,* pp.1-4
[4] See, Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Illinois: Waveland Press, 1977). See especially Ch.2 "The nature of Performance", p. 9.

Performance as Memory

The relationship between verbal art and performance, especially within the context of African oral cultures, has been subject to a great deal of scholarly considerations. Folklorists, linguistic anthropologists, and literary scholars have drawn attention to the role of performance in presenting the aesthetic dimensions of human existence and also as significant ways of preserving memory.[1] Harold Scheub, for example, has pointed out how within southern African societies children learn the tools of performance by their membership in audiences and slowly "build a repertoire of plot clichés and a series of structures".[2] Performance is thus a crucial element in most oral genres because it is sometimes only through performance that the emotional dimensions of the experience being enacted can be appreciated. As Paul Connerton has affirmed, "commemorative ceremonies prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative".[3] Ruth Finnegan supports this position by affirming that "a piece of oral literature to reach its full actualization must be performed".[4] And that "the oral piece has no existence or continuity apart from its performance".[5]

The songs predicated on the slave experience, especially those modelled after the dirge tradition, often express anguish and agony for which words alone are inadequate as a vehicle. Various stylistic features such as tone, rhyme, rhythm, and non-verbal modes of delivery like facial expressions and gestures all help to convey messages that written texts do not capture.[6] In every performance situation, the audience forms a significant part. The audience is often directly involved in the "actualization and creation of the

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[1] Richard Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance*, p. 9.
[2] See Harold, Scheub, "Oral Performance and the Use of Models", *New Literary History*. Vol. 6. No. 2. On Narrative and Narratives (winter, 1975), pp. 353-377. For the specific quote, see p.355.
[3]See Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*(Cambridge: University Press, 1989),p. 5
[4] Ruth Finnegan*, Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), p.28.
[5] Finnegan *Oral Poetry*, p. 28.
[6] Finnegan*, Oral Literature in Africa*, pp. 1-25.

piece of oral art".[1] More often than not, Scheub has pointed out, "the performer can have little effect on his audience if its members do not share with him certain experiences of traditional images".[2] The artist and audience, Scheub has noted, are often "involved in a kind of conspiracy to come to terms with reality within a context which does no damage to the society's link with its past".[3] Within the specific context of this study, whenever these songs are performed during festivals and funerals, the audience takes active part through clapping of their hands, dancing, and through gestures.

The Performance Situation

In the performance of the songs, there is usually a kind of a call and response pattern between a cantor and chorus. It is the cantor who most of the times introduces the song and can introduce variations during its performance. The performance of these songs is usually led by a lead cantor who raises the tune while the rests of the group join in the chorus. The chorus is usually repeated several times over the space of about twenty minutes before changing to another song. Some of the songs are either accompanied by the beating of drums or the striking together of two pieces of metal to produce a rhythmic effect. The songs that are performed as dirges are mostly not accompanied by any form of instrumentation. These are usually very solemn. Songs performed by men's warrior groups in their war regalia and other accoutrements amidst war cries, and the dramatization of how some weapons were used during the annual Bulsa fiok and fao[4] festivals attests to the fact that slavery and resistance are still engrained in their collective consciousness and were at the very core of communal survival (see a warrior in his war garb in plate 2:3 and a performance during the funeral of

[1] Scheub, "Oral Performance and the Use of Models", p. 353.
[2] Scheub, "Oral Performance and the Use of Models", p. 353.
[3] Scheub, "Oral Performance and the Use of Models", p. 353.
[4]The *Fiok* and *Foa* are annual thanksgiving festivals celebrated by the people of Bulsa and Kasena. Even though they are not festivals about the slave trade and resistance, the period is often used as an occasion to thank the gods and ancestors for deliverance from slave raiders and as such songs and dances predicated on the slave experience are performed by both men and women.

an elder in a Kasena community (as depicted in plate 2:5 below). Performances through audience participation are enhanced through certain prosodic features.

Plate 5. A warrior in war regalia Photo: Author

Prosodic Features

There is a large body of scholarship relating to stylistic and prosodic features in oral poetry. Although the focus of this work is not on the various theoretical models of these features, it is still useful for the purposes of understanding and appreciating the songs to examine the significant ones that tend to recur in the songs. The songs make use of a number of prosodic features and two prominent ones that recur in the songs are rhythm and repetition. Rhythm is a fundamental feature of music, although what seems rhythmic is culturally determined. Cultural rather than physical factors help determine what is appreciated as rhythmic.[1] The concept of rhythm, Ruth Finnegan has noted, "is not a physical one but a cultural and relative one"[2]

[1] Finnegan, *Oral Poetry,* p.91.
[2] Finnegan, *Oral Poetry,* p.91.

Most of the songs discussed in subsequent chapters have rhythmic patterns provided through the beating of drums, the striking of pieces of metal and drumming on rocks as shown below (plate 2:4).

Plate 6. Men performing at the pikworo slave camp using rocks as drums. Photo: Author

Plate 7. A performance during the funeral of an elder in Navrongo, Photo: George Pwadura

Plate 8. A view of the Pikworo slave camp at Nania at Paga near the Ghana Burkina Faso Border Photo: Author

The songs under review were recorded within a certain defined social and cultural context. The next section discusses the methods and procedure for data collection with specific focus on the context for song recordings and oral interviews. It specifically deals with issues such as the research design, setting, and other relevant conceptual issues related to the use of the oral tradition.

Methodology and Analytical Approach

This research is based on a combination of methods. It adopts the use of both personalised and focused group interviews in eliciting information, in addition to song recordings in different locations within these cultural spaces. Between 2005 and 2006, I started collecting songs[1] of the anti-slavery tradition through which I tried to explore how the Bulsa in northern Ghana have preserved the collective memory of slave raiding and resistance in their songs, which formed a substantial part of my M.Phil thesis submitted to the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Ghana in 2009. After Bulsa, it became evident that the Kasena areas nearer Bulsa shared similar experiences of slave raids. It then became imperative that this area should be investigated to determine if certain commonalities existed and if there were any differences. Since oral genres are not always explicit in themselves, it was necessary to conduct both Individual and focused group interviews across the areas to establish and clarify certain historical detail, and also because the songs often made allusions to specific issues that needed clarification.

[1]Between September of 2005 and December 2006, I conducted fieldwork in the Bulsa area where I recorded songs about slavery and the slave trade. I visited a number of communities in this area and interviewed clan heads, chiefs, community elders and people interested in oral history. I make use of the data to complement the sources from the Kasena area in further exploring the slave experience in northern Ghana.

Plate 9. A view of the landscape in northern Ghana Photo: Author

Research Setting

Northern Ghana is used to designate the three administrative regions of the North hitherto known as the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. The three regions that now constitute Northern Ghana are; the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions. Under British colonial rule, these regions were one administrative unit. The Northern region was the administrative centre of the Northern Territories until the Upper East was carved out after Ghana's independence in 1957. The Upper Region was later divided in 1983. The Upper East has Bolgatanga as the capital, and Wa as the capital of the Upper West.[1] The subjects of this study-the Bulsa and Kasena-are found in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The Upper East region is located in the north-eastern part of Ghana between longitude 00 and 10 West and latitudes 100 30"N and 110 N. It is bordered to the north by Burkina Faso, to the east by the Republic of Togo, to the west by Sissala in the

[1] See Albert K. Awedoba, *An Ethnographic Study of Northern Ghanaian Conflicts: Towards a Sustainable Peace* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers 2010),p. 1

Upper West and to the south by West Mamprusi in Northern Region. The land is relatively flat with a few hills to the East and southeast.

Plate 10. A rocky landscape depicting parts of northern Ghana, Photo: Author

The region's topography is developed primarily from granite rocks. Part of the land area also has rocks and caves. Oral accounts suggest that indigenous people often sought refuge in these caves at the height of slave raiding activities as shown in (plate 10 and plate 11 below).[1] A significant part of the total land mass is shallow and low in soil fertility. This accounts for poor crop yields and famine during most parts of the year, leading to mass exodus by the youth from these areas to the southern areas in search for jobs. The valley areas in the region have soils ranging from sandy to salty clays. Drainage in the area relies on the White and Red Volta and Sissili Rivers. The natural vegetation is that of the savannah woodland characterised by short scattered drought-resistant trees and grass that gets burnt by bushfire during the long dry season. The most common

[1] Field notes and Interviews conducted in both Bulsa and Kasena areas between 2005 and 2012 attest to this fact.

commercially exploitable trees are the sheanut, dawadawa, baobab and acacia.

Plate 11. Part of the rocky landscape that sometimes provided hiding places for people escaping slave raiding, Photo: Author

Ethnography of the Bulsa and Kasena

The Bulsa and Kasena are found in the Upper East Region of Ghana and share a common border with Burkina Faso. They live in close proximity with each other and have very similar cultural and linguistic affinity with other sub-groups of the voltaic peoples like the Mossi, Mamprusi, Dagomba and Sisala.[1]The Bulsa speak a common language called Buli while the Kasena speak Kasem. They both share similar tales of migrations from various locations to their present settlements, even though historical periods and circumstances of migrations have significant variations. For instance, the

[1]See Paul P. Akanko,*Oral traditions of Builsa: Origins and Early History of the Atuga's Clan in the Builsa State 1700-1900*(Denmark: Rosen garden, 1988), p1

Bulsa are believed to have migrated to their present settlements from Mampusi land in the Northern Region.[1]

While there are varied opinions about the exact origins of the Kasena, most of them trace their origin and ancestry from Burkina Faso, *fro* and beyond.[2] Overtly, the tone of everyday Bulsa and Kasena life is egalitarian in social and political spheres. Political authority is vested in their paramount chiefs with their council, of elders although the recognition and exersie of authority by chiefs appears to have been influenced by colonialisation rather than a tradidional and cultural practice. The population is mainly agrarian, with the majority of the population living in dispersed settlements. Subsistence farming is the mainstay of the economy. The main crops cultivated in these areas are millet, groundnuts, beans, maize, and rice. Livestock rearing includes fowls, goats, sheep, and cattle. [3] These cultures also engage in hunting sometimes as a part time activity or as a main occupation by some. This helps to explain why the song texts have a lot of animal imagery.

[1]Field Interviews conducted between 2005 and 2006 confirm this. Also see Akanko, *Oral Traditions of Bulsa,* p. 1

[2] Field notes: February –June 2012

[3]See Henry V. Doctor, Evelyn Sakeah, and James F. Phillips, *Trends in Religious Affiliation Among the Kasena-Nankana of Northern Ghana: Are Switching Patterns Identical by Gender*? Unpublished article

Plate 12. A rocky outgrowth, Photo: Author

Ethical Considerations

The research did not present any physical or psychological risk to the participants. Before embarking on the research trip, a sample interview protocol was submitted to the research and ethics committee of the University of Hull, which was duly approved.[1] In the field, I explained the nature of the study to the participants, which they fully understood and gave their consent for both audio and video recording. Considering the sensitive nature of researching slave communities, because of the possible presence of both descendants of victims and perceived collaborators, I most of the time avoided direct questions on slavery and the slave trade, except when participants mentioned it themselves. Although these were not slave societies, memories of slave raiding within them is till considered an emotive subject. Always the case when I asked about any significant historical event that had occurred in their history, they often mentioned slavery and the slave trade thereby giving me the opportunity to probe further.

[1] A sample of the Research Ethics Form is attached.

Participants

Participants were chosen based on previous knowledge and experience that there are people within the communities who are more versed in local history than others. The chiefs were mostly useful in this regard because they are often regarded as custodians of oral history and traditions within these cultures so most of them were my principal informants. After interviewing the chiefs, they most often directed me to other people within the community who were conversant with local history.

Plate 13. An Interview with an Informant at his house in Navrongo Photo: George Pwadura

Apart from the chiefs, participants were mostly men, community and clan elders with ages ranging from 65 and 90 as (shown in fig: 12 during an interview with a community elder. Women were mostly reluctant to grant individual interviews but felt more comfortable in focused group discussions (plate 2: 12 shows a community gathering and interview session).

Plate 14. A community gathering at Chiana Katiu in front of the chief's palace during a focused group interaction Photo: George Pwadura

Instrumentation

The main instrument used was a non-structured interview protocol**.** The protocol was divided into five parts. The first part sought to establish the demographic profile of the interviewees and their communities. It sought to establish the history of migrations, known historical figures connected to their history, political structure of the communities, their dominant culture and major economic activities. The second part of the questions sought to establish if there had been any significant historical events that have shaped their collective consciousness as a people and a culture, what the specific event was and how the histories of the events are passed on. In almost all these communities I investigated, the issue of slavery and the slave raids always came up, so I always proceeded to ask about the specific story of slavery within these cultures.

The next section of the interview protocol dealt with how events of this history are passed on. I also sought to find out if events about the slavery and the slave trade are found in songs, proverbs, and oral traditions and if there are specific songs, and, if so, who the people who sing these songs are. I also tried to establish the custodians of oral history and whether there were court historians whose duty it was to recount their oral history. The final part dealt specifically with the songs. It was often the case that I asked the singers what they thought the songs meant and to clarify certain allusions and linguistic structures. The art of singing in these communities is not a formal art. Most people learn the art rather passively or informally through their parents or during public occasions like funerals and festivals when some of these songs are performed.

Song Recording Sessions

I was confronted with two equally important options: The first option was to record the songs during festivals and other commemorative events in December in the areas under study, or to isolate the songs for recording. Isolating the songs for recording was deemed ideal because the focus is on how the songs complement the written historical sources and not on the oral performance per se. Even though performance is vital, isolating the songs for recording was deemed ideal because this option affords the researcher the opportunity to make personal contacts with informants and cantors for clarification on certain issues that would otherwise not be clear in the song texts. I conducted and recorded songs at various locations that have specific relevance to the slave raiding experience. These were areas that participants during interviews often mention as places where slave raids were either intense or where raiders were fiercely resisted.

Corpus

A total of one hundred and forty songs were recorded in all. I have, however, focused on a hundred of these songs which constitute a sample that has both direct and indirect references to slavery and the slave trade.

For the purposes of this thesis however, I have chosen to focus on 44 of these songs because of the ways in which these reveal significant insights about the experiences of slavery and enslavement within these cultures. Sometimes I make marginal references to some of the songs as examples to foreground some of the analysis within the chapters. The classification of these songs into groups is by no means absolute as some of the themes overlap. It is often the case that one song may express more than one theme. In such cases, one may find an entire song or significant portions repeated in another chapter. Other songs which were recorded convey themes that are usually centred on marriage, the need for peaceful co-existence, and poverty.[1] All these songs were subsequently transcribed from both Buli and Kasem and translated into English and constituted as texts for close study and analysis. Videos of the songs and performance can be found via research/emmanuel-saboro/slaverymemoryorality.aspx

Plate 15. A group of Women performing at the Pikworo slave camp at Nania,Photo: Author

[1] Only the 100 songs used in the thesis are included in the appendix. The rest are in the author's possession.

Interviews

In addition to song recordings, I also conducted individual interviews and focused group discussions from both Bulsa and Kasena areas. I had to make use of interpreters who are all native speakers of both Buli and Kasem and are also familiar with the culture and context of the study. Even though I am a native speaker of Kasem, and also have a certain level of linguistic competence in Buli, on a 4/10 scale, my language competence is not adequate to dealing with the nuances of oral cultures like these. My language skills were, however, useful because there were times I had to guide my interpreters when I felt a particular issue or word was out of context. The purpose of the interviews was to help throw light on local history and to provide a context for understanding the songs. Two types of interviews were chosen: individual and focused group discussions. The individuals mostly comprised chiefs, community elders and others versed in oral history.

Plate 16. Author with the Chief of Paga at his palace after an Interview Photo: George Pwadura

The focused group interactions afforded the communities involved an opportunity to reconstruct their collective memory as a group. As Connerton rightly affirms, “we situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided by the group” and goes further to argue that “our memories are located within the mental and material spaces of the group”.[1] I always conducted these focused group interviews immediately after each song recording session. The chiefs usually invited some elders and other members of the community who normally gathered in front of the chiefs’ palaces and contributed to the discussions. They usually recounted what they had heard from their forbearers about slave raiding and resistance in their respective communities. During interviews, I asked informants ways by which they remember the events of the past especially the slave experience. They would usually mention the song as one of the ways by which they remember the slave trade. Sometimes, I requested that informants sing some songs they remembered. Other times, I had to arrange with known singers within the community for them to perform these songs.

The Bulsa and Kasena do not have professional cantors in the technical sense even though there are people who are regarded as "gifted" or better endowed than others. There are usually isolated singing groups and drummers within the communities who sing during funerals and festivals. These groups do not have formal structures through which the songs are learnt. Anybody can choose to become part of a particular singing group.

Transcriptions and Translations

Theoretical debates on translation as a process have received a great deal of attention from scholars from a multiplicity of disciplines. These debates on the translation process have often centred on whether one is able to truly and faithfully transfer meaning from one language to another. There have been concerns as to whether one adopts a literal or free approach to

[1] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p.37

the translation process or focuses on particular linguistic variants. It is in respect to the difficulties inherent in the translation process that Hatim and Mason have remarked that, it is the nature of things that the target text displays only the translator's final decisions. Readers perceive an end-product, a result of a decision making process; they do not have access to the pathways leading to decisions, to the dilemmas to be resolved by the translator.[1]

Because readers often perceive an end product, as alluded to by Hatim and Mason, a translated text most of the time only captures in part the whole essence of the original material. Although this work does not intend to engage in the merits and demerits of these scholarly positions, it is significant to acknowledge that there are indeed a number of methodological limitations within the translation process. Translation is both a linguistic and cultural process and, as such, it is often difficult to capture in exact terms certain cultural specifics. Much is therefore lost in the process. It is often difficult, for example, to be able to capture the emotional and performance elements within translations. There are also cases of differences in linguistic variants within the same language, although in most cases mutual intelligibility remains the same.

I had to engage the services of translators partly because translation is a specialized activity. I had to rely on people whose mother tongue is Buli and Kasem and who have had various experiences with the formal study of these languages and who also understand translation both as a linguistic and cultural process and are familiar with the cultural and historical context of the study.

The Buli and Kasem languages are spoken by people mostly found in the Upper East region of Ghana although a significant number of people within Burkina Faso also speak Kasem. These languages also form part of the

[1] See Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (London: Longman, 1990), p.3.

school curricula and are studied in Primary, Junior and Senior High levels and Colleges of Education within the regions where they are spoken. As students progress within the educational ladder, very few often study these languages to a significant higher level. Although the University of Education Winneba has a Gur Faculty that specialises in these languages, very little attention has been given to their formal study and development. Nevertheless, one can still find a few people who have significant levels of formal study of these languages within Ghana. All my translators have had significant levels of formal study of these languages although not all of them have been involved in translation on a professional level.

Some of the Buli texts which were recorded between 2005 and 2006 were transcribed and translated by Mr. Peter Wangara of the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Bible and Literacy Translations, in Tamale who is both a native speaker and who has been involved in translation and literacy of the Buli language for several decades. These were cross-checked by Dr.George Akanlig-Pare a Senior lecturer at the Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, Legon whose area of speciality is in Phonetics and Phonology of the Buli language.

The Kasem texts were recorded between 2012/2013 and were transcribed by Mr. Richard Logogye, a lecturer in Morpho-syntax, Cultural Studies and Morpho-phonemics, of the Department of Gur-Gonja Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. The translations of the Kasem texts were done by Mr. Edward Azambao, a Circuit Supervisor of the Ghana Education Service, who lives and works within the Kasena communities where most of the recordings were done. Mr. Edward Azamboa also has a Degree in Music and familiar with some of the indigenous music patterns of these cultures.

In order to ensure that the translations were a true reflection of the English texts, Mr Azambao sometimes consulted some of the informants in the field for clarifications. The meaning of certain antiquated terms and

phrases were sometimes not familiar to the singers and translators alike. There are occasions where certain “no sense” expressions like, “ei, aba, oo, ba ba” are used. I was very much involved in the editing process.

Fieldwork Challenges

There were a number of challenges in conducting fieldwork. The first challenge was that noise resulting from wind direction on the field sometimes interfered with the recordings and made some of the songs incoherent and in some cases affecting the quality of the transcriptions and translation. The other was that there were times when people were simply not willing to discuss the events relating to the slave raiding experience. Some simply said that because the events occurred long ago, certain details have become blurred or that they did not remember them anymore. They most often softened their stance on realizing that I was part of the culture and so understood their dilemmas and fears or when others in the group were willing to speak. The songs also sometimes referred to certain names of persons and places that informants were completely oblivious of what they stood for. In spite of these difficulties, however, attempts have been made through due diligence to present issues emanating from the data as captured by the informants themselves.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to present an overview of the song as a valid and alternative source of historical documentation. In this chapter, I have examined the centrality of the song in African societies and how the song has come to constitute an important channel for articulating individual and communal sentiments. The various patterns that emerge within the songs can be seen under laments, entertainment songs and war songs. This is intended to set the stage and provide an appropriate context for understanding the songs predicated on the slave experience within these cultures under review. The second part of the chapter attempted a discussion on the methods and procedures for collecting data and the context under

which the songs were recorded. The research setting and the generality of fieldwork and the various issues regarding transcriptions and translation were also discussed.

Although the bulk of historical material over the years has contributed significantly in shaping our collective understanding of the slave experience in Africa, there is still a lot we do not know. These songs therefore promise to add to our store of knowledge on how communities often perceived their enslavement a theme I discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Processes of Enslavement

The slave raider who entered our land
Shot arrows indiscriminately.[1]

Introduction

This chapter engages with new material from the perspective of enslaved communities and promises to enhance our understanding on the cultural and historical dynamics of captivity and enslavement within the specific areas of the Bulsa and Kasena. As the lines in the above song clearly demonstrate, communities often perceived the processes of enslavement mainly through raiding and capture perpetuated through violence and aggression or an act of terror through an outsider who entered into their culture. Out of a corpus of one hundred songs directly related to slavery and the slave trade, I focus on 10 of these because of their strong thematic focus on the subject under discussio These articulate the theme of enslavement with most of them emphasising captivity through violence. In this chapter, I argue that the violence that often accompanied the processes of captivity led to individual and communal alienation.

Violence through raiding and capture had serious developmental implications for individuals, the communities and the larger society. Slave raiding as the songs unequivocally demonstrate, produced a fragmented consciousness within the collectivity and undermined social cohesion. The songs suggests a fundamental tear in the social fabric and the desecration of cultural symbols while the constant threats of enslavement through aggression and terror led to fear and general insecurity within these cultures.

[1] Song # 9 of the Buli text

The chapter also engages with ways in which the captive was perceived as a commodity. Although the subject of the slave as a commodity and stripped of his identity and traded is not entirely new within the literature, the novelty of these oral sources is seen in the ways in which marginalized communities often gave expression to their experiences of enslavement through specific images of commodification and the trauma associated with this remembrance of their ancestors being objectified and commodified. Although there are limitations inherent in the translation process and difficulties in capturing the real experience in print, the texts still reveal hidden strands worth paying attention to. Overall, a close study of the songs that constitutes the chapter challenge the often held romantic view that African slavery was benign and less oppressive than its New World counterpart.

Scholarly literature on the processes of enslavement within the general framework of slavery studies is vast.[1] The multi-disciplinary approaches to these processes of enslavement though often varied over time and space, have provided useful insights into the structural and institutional dynamics of slave supply into both the local and trans-Atlantic slave systems. Scholars, particularly historians, have shown how pawning, "panyarrying", warfare, judicial processes, captivity in warfare and payment of tributes, kidnapping and raids, have constituted major means of enslavement within Africa.[2]

The thesis that slavery was widespread in Africa, and its growth and development were largely independent of the Atlantic trade is not therefore

[1]See for example, Paul E. Lovejoy and David Richardson, "The Business of Slaving: Pawnship in Western Africa, c.1600-1810. *The Journal of African History, Vol. 42, No.1* (2000), pp.67-89, John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (2nd Ed) (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), Patrick, Manning *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), Paul E. Lovejoy. *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, (2nded) (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), Ch. 4, especially, pp. 68-90 and Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).
[2] See for example, Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, pp. 86-90.

entirely new.[1] The issue of Africans enslaving each other, however, remains a highly emotive and controversial subject. Evidence from the oral sources I explore tends to support the contention that some Africans were indeed in the business of enslaving others for both the local slave systems and the export market. Were Africans in the business of enslaving themselves or their enemies? In other words, did they enslave people they perceived to be ethnically and culturally different? What informed the decisions of who were enslavable and who were not? Although these questions are not clear-cut, a close study of a number of songs offer glimpses into how both enslavers and victims of slave raids often perceived each other. The insider/outsider dynamics and notions of the *other* is a recurrent motif which the sections that follow discuss in detail.

The Insider/Outsider Dynamics: The *Other*

The relationship between Europeans and Africans relative to their roles and experiences of slavery and enslavement and the issue as to who was to be considered an outsider and for that matter enslavable and who was an insider and as such unenslavable has received some degree of scholarly attention.[2]The literature and evidence from the songs suggest that enslavers and slave raiders within the context of African slavery often raided and enslaved those they perceived as different or alien. Captive's and slaves were fundamentally perceived as outsiders "who were alien by origin".[3] An alien, historian Claude Meillassoux has pointed out, was anybody "who did not grow up in the interstices of the social, and economic networks of which situate a man with respect to others".[4] Outsiders were thus usually perceived as ethnically different and the absence of kinship was usually the

[1] See John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800 (2nd Edition)* (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), see especially chapter 3, pp.72-97.
[2] See for example David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000). Ch.3, pp. 58-84.
[3] Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 1
[4] Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.23

common factor that determined who could be enslaved.[1] A significant recurrent motif in the songs is the complex dynamics of the notion of the outsider and the other. The songs present insights into how raided and enslaved communities perceived their oppressors through the metaphor of the outsider or the other. The *other* is often used in anthropological terms to refer to the individual or a group of people who are perceived by a group as not belonging or being different in some fundamental way. When a dominant group sees another group as the *other,* they more often than not see them as lacking essential characteristics possessed by the group; the *other* is thus perceived as inferior and treated as such.

Indeed, the subject of the *other* as being different and considered as a socially excluded category from the perspective of the victim in the songs is articulated through the use of specific lexical items such as *I, me*, *we*, *us* and *our* as against *he, they* and *them*. "The slave raider has come to attack *me*", "*He* attacked *me*", "*I* do not have a place to stay" (#1), "*we* are running" (#2), *"He* has killed me" (#5), "*They* came and drove *us* away" (#6), "*He* has really dealt with me" (# 7), "*H*e came to our land"(# 7), "when *he* appeared"(# 7), " we have suffered"(#10), "our fathers have suffered"(# 10), "*they* have killed *me*"(#11) are specific examples of how the notions of the other is perceived within the context of this study. The *other* is also sometimes mentioned in very specific terms such as "Babatu" (#7), "the Whiteman" (#62), "the Asante" (# 62) and "Gazare" (# 63, 73). The *other* and the outsider are not absolute in function. They sometimes overlap but are not identical.

Within the specific context of this study, the songs present the *other* as the slave raider and his cohorts. He is seen as the stranger and is associated with certain metaphors. The *other* is often represented in the songs mainly as *he* and *they.* The other is perceived and described in terms of oppression, tyranny and cruelty. The metaphor of the *kanbong* or *gwala* evolves around the concept of *other,* or, in other words, he is epitomized as

[1] Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery,* p.2-3

the foreign enslaver from far away or distant place. The *other* in the songs metaphorically stands for the Asante, the Zabarima slave raider and sometimes to a lesser degree the Whiteman or European because of the degree of remoteness associated with the Whiteman's activities regarding slave dealing. In fact, the term *gwolo* in Kasem refers to *a far away or a distant place* while the term *gwala* specifically deals with the image of raiding and being displaced through slave raiding and violence.

Although the songs do not present the perspective of the dominant slave raiding group, we are only able to tease out the nature of their relationship with oppressed and marginalized communities through the bulk of historical literature. Indeed, images of northern savagery, primitiveness and barbarity are quite pervasive within a number of scholarly sources. The prevailing images that became dominant within most narratives and tales regarding people of northern descent were that of people who were primitive and backward and outside of the European Christian civilized order and as such only fit for enslavement. Their physical distance from the coast and lack of participation within the Atlantic economy and the nature of their social geography produced images of being cut off from civilized people. They came to be regarded by Akans, the dominant group of the south, and later by Europeans as primitive people who had no social consequence and relevance except to be raided and traded as labour commodities.[1]

Indeed, the very images of the *Ndonkor,* a term used by the Asante to refer to slaves from northern Ghana to connote outsiders, a socially excluded category. This term, Jean Allman and John Parker have suggested, is probably of Mande derivation and suggest "an identity outside of jural corporateness and indeed on a fringe of perceptions of humanity".[2] The

[1]See Jean Allman, and John Parker, *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), p.29-37. Also see Bayo Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana (*Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), Ch.3 pp.81-102.
[2] Jean Allman, and John Parker, *Tongnaab,* p.31

Gurunsi[1] and other *nnonkofo* Allman and Parker have pointed out "stood on the lowest rung of the Akan scale of civilization". [2] Within the collective imagination of enslaved communities, the outsider is often presented as a usurper of communal space who entered a culture through force and aggression to capture and enslave a people and their entire culture. The uprooting of the captive from his land and community to assume a marginal status in a host community was facilitated through the twin evils of organized raiding and capture.

Raiding and Capture as a Violation of Communal Space

Slave raiding and capture was particularly one of the major means of enslavement within Africa. The songs demonstrate this means of enslavement and emphasise the violence of predation in the process of capture. Slavery, Paul Lovejoy has pointed out, "was fundamentally a means of denying outsiders the rights and privileges of a particular society so that they could be exploited for economic, political, and/or social purposes".[3] Indeed, a number of songs articulate how the slave raider as an outsider violated and invaded communal territory through violence and aggression and exploited the captive for social, political or economic benefits. How do victim communities perceive the slave raider relative to their experiences of enslavement? How does the presence of the slave raider constitute a violation of communal space and what does this invasion of communal space reveal about the dynamics of power?

In songs like" the slave raider has come to attack me" (#2) "when the slave raider entered our land",(#3) , when the slave raider entered our land, no one was left"(#5), "the slave raider shot arrows indiscriminately"(#9), "when they pursue you"(81), "the slave raider is in our neighbourhood"(#98), the themes of communal invasion and forceful

[1] A term that became synonymous to less centralized and stateless communities in northern Ghana.
[2] Allman, and Parker, *Tongnaab,* p. 31
[3] Lovejoy, *Transformation in Slavery* p.2

capture are expressed. For example in song # 3, of the Buli text, "when the slave raider entered our land", we are introduced to the notions of an outsider's intrusion and violation of a people's communal space. The song says,

Kanbonka le jam taa yie la,
Kanbonka le jam taa yie la,
Ku ŋman ka nalimoa.
Kanbong le bo ti yie ŋa po a yigi nuraba,
ku ŋman ka nalimoa,
Tama a chali[1] *Kanbonka.*

When the slave raider entered into our land
Things are no longer the same
The raider is going round our community capturing people
Things are no longer the same
We are running away from the raider

This song is sung as a dirge and its tone and mood are solemn. In its performance, the first part is usually repeated twice while the rest of the song runs several times for about twenty minutes. The first two lines of the song are interrelated in the way they express the notion of the slave raider as an outsider and alien whose presence constituted a "rape" of individual and communal space. The sense of invasion is aptly captured in the slave raider's entry into the land and the fact that things are no longer the same. The sense of communal ownership of territory is expressed through the use of the possessive adjective *our to* qualif*y land.* The metaphor of our *land* is

[1] In Buli language, the word *chali* can also be used to express the subject of fear. In other words, the line "Tama a chali Kanbonka" could also mean we are afraid of the slave raider. The choice of the alternative translation "we are running away from the slave raider" was informed by the specific context of the song seen within the framework of raiding and capture.

informative. Within the collective imagination of these cultures, land as expressed in the song does not only suggest the physical geography of a territory but also includes the totality of its people and culture. The slave raider is perceived as an alien oppressor. The slave raider's entry into these "lands" delineates the issues of power and the unlawful access of a "force" into a people's territory.

The song thus suggests that slave raiding denied people the opportunity to enjoy their communal space. The memories expressed in this song suggest that slave raiding and enslavement violated a people's collective identity and damaged irreparably their collective psyche. This is because the "entering of the land" was through force and aggression. The purpose of this invasion is reflected in the idea of the slave raider going round and "capturing people". The sense of a collective identity is expressed in "our community". Our community as used in the song reveals the ways in which people often perceived their space with a sense of entitlement. The use of "our" to express this sense of belonging to a cultural space finds validation in Maurice Halbwach's insistence on the "social contractedness" of memory.[1]

Using the collective as a basis of identity, Liliane Weissberg has reminded us that, "people acquire or construct memory not as isolated individuals but as members of a society, and they recall their memories in society".[2] The recall of these memories through images of invasion of individual and communal space is traumatic. Associated with the sense of invasion of space is the trauma of capture. The song's reference to the fact that "the slave raider is going round the community capturing people" evokes images of forceful abduction against a people's will. The violation of a person's will through capture induce in victims a culture of fear. The fear of

[1] For a more detailed discussion on Collective Memory, see Maurice Halbwach, *Les Cadres sociaux de la Memoire*. Paris: F. Alcan, 1925. Reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975). For the specific quote, see Liliane Weissberg, Introduction in Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg (eds.) *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*(Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1999),p.7-23

[2] Liliane, Weissberg, *Cultural Memory*, p.13

capture thus inhibits movement and stifles creativity on the individual and the collectivity.

How do we read lines that do not render themselves to a clear-cut interpretation? What meaning for example do we impose on the song's reference to "things are no longer the same"? There is silence on the "things" that are "no longer the same". This silence or refusal to mention specifics suggests ways in which oppressive groups sometimes negotiate their oppressive conditions by choosing to be evasive. As the cultural anthropologist Bayo Holsey has pointed out, "silence can ... be a strategy that groups employ in order to negotiate oppressive conditions. In this way, Holsey has argued, "it can be productive of particular kinds of identities and positive possibilities"[1] She goes further to point out that "the slave trade" for example "is evoked in ways other than explicit references to it within public speech".[2]

The silence surrounding "the things that are no longer the same" also defines how certain personal or collective traumatic experiences are inexpressible though words. It thus allows us the opportunity to impose meaning based on the broader historical literature relative to the experiences of these people. The violence that often accompanied slave raiding and capture most of the time led to death and significant casualties. The rape of women and young girls on their way to fetch water or to farm, the acts of brutally slitting the throats of those who openly resisted their enslavement are, without doubt, "things" that cannot be expressed.

The subject of capture as a means of enslavement is further heightened by the shooting of arrows as presented in song # 9 below. The sense of invasion of communal territory is further revealed through specific metaphors. What is particularly significant in this song is the ways in which

[1] Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance,* p. 5.
[2] Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance*, p. 7.

the trauma of capture and enslavement are revealed through violence and aggression.

Kanbong ka jam tong peema yariyari
Kanbong kai le jam tatengla ka tong peema yariyari
yayee yee!!
Kanbong ka le jam tatengla ka tong peema yariyari
ayaa yaa aba ba ba ba
Kanbong kai le jam Doning la ate tong peema yariyari
Yayee yee kanbong kai le jam tatengle ka taka peema

Kanbong kai le jam taateng la nya peema mwan kaa
Aye yeee
Kanbong dek le nyini ta teng la nya peema mwan ka teng po
Ayaa yaa aba ba ba ba

Ka dek jam tetengka la nya peema mwan ka teng po
Aye yee kanbong le jam tateng la nya peema mwan kaa
A yee ka bali ween yee a te ba sebi peema tongka jaa de
Ka ning nyee nya bawai mwan ka tengpo
Kanbong kai ale jam ta teng la tama koma nuer gbelim gbelim
A yee yee

Me yen kanbong le jue ta jig la nya nura mwan ka teng po
wa yaa yaa aba bababa
Kanbong le jue ta jig la nya nura mwan ka tengpo
Aye yee kanbong kai le jam ta tengle nya peema mwan ka
Ayen te koma le ween yee, ate ba sebi peema tongka laa
Dege le ning-nyee ba wai mwan kai teng yoo

The slave raider who entered our land

Shot arrows indiscriminately

Yes, yes, the slave raider who entered our land

Shot arrows indiscriminately

The slave raider who entered *Donning*

Shot arrows indiscriminately

Yes, yes, the slave raider who entered our land

Shot arrows

The slave raider who entered our land,

Look no arrows were left

The fierce raider who appeared in our land,

Look, no arrows were left in the land

He came to our land and no arrows were left in the land

Yes, yes, the slave raider who entered our land,

Look, no arrows were left

And he said they should know how to shoot arrows

When he appeared, look, no one was left in the land

The slave raider who entered our land,

Our fathers are dead and finished

I say the slave raider who came to capture,

Look no one was left in the land

The slave raider who came to capture,

Look no one was left in the land

Yes, yes the slave raider who entered our land

Look, no arrows were left

Our fathers have told us to know how to shoot arrows

Look, nobody was left in the land

This song is normally performed by women. In its performance, the lead cantor sometimes alternates some of the stanzas with other members of the group. Some of the lines are often repeated several times. The song begins with reference to the slave raider's entry into their land. The land as a community expressed in the song, is a zone of spatiality, a place where there are shared values and a common identity. The land is essentially a social space and marked by certain material and symbolic measures of exclusion. The sense of oneness and social cohesion is usually cemented by kinship and familial ties. In this song, however, we see the image of the outsider as a socially excluded category from the perspective of the victim.

The slave raider's presence within the communal space is seen in terms of predation. This song does not only allude to the slave raider "entering the land" but also makes explicit reference to the "shooting of arrows". The entering of the land and the shooting of arrows connote an invasion and the usurpation of communal space. The shooting of arrows indiscriminately evokes images of terror and aggression. It also suggests that no one was immune to captivity and enslavement and thus the indiscriminate process through which arrows were shot.

The image of terror is made the more powerful by the use of the word "fierce raider". Specific emphasis on "no arrows were left in the land", look, nobody was left" suggest the level of communal devastation. Slave raiding did indeed affect the very fabric and core of society. It tampered with communal values and undermined the very foundations of human progress and led to the destruction of family and kinship ties. Societal and family cohesion is impossible when any group of people are always exposed to arrows from slave raiders. References to our fathers are dead reveal the ways in which the family as a social unit was compromised through captivity and enslavement.

The song "the slave raider is in our neighborhood" (# 98) of the Kasem text further expresses the idea of the slave raider as an outsider and

oppressor. The sense of communal territory is again expressed in "our neighborhood". The song says,

Gwala de debam tetare ywoo

Gwala de debam tetare ne ywoo

Ba ná mage neei

A we gwala de debam tetare ne ywoo

Se ba ja ba nwoŋ

Gwala to debam tetare ne ywoo

Dé yi da dé bwoŋi

Se ba ja ba nwoŋi

The slave raider is in our neighbourhood

The slave raider is in our neighbourhood

I say the slave raider is in our neighbourhood

They want to capture someone

The slave raider is in our neighbourhood

Let us rise and call

So that they come out

This song is performed by the women of Nanea where the Pikworo[1] slave camp is situated. The message of the song can be seen in two layers: the first layer announces the slave raider's presence within the community while the second is a call to alertness. In this song, the subject of capture again resurfaces, reinforcing the idea of communal invasion. Capturing evokes images of seizure through force or taking possession through force. The song suggests that, although the slave raider is in the neighbourhood

[1]Nanea is a small community where the Pikworo slave camp is located about 2km from the Paga town centre in Northern Ghana.Paga is situated about 12km of Navrongo in the upper east region of Ghana and it is a crossing point between Ghana and Burkina Faso.Slaving activities reached their peak in this area between 1840 and 1870. The Pikworo slave camp has rocky outgrowths where slaves captured during raids and others brought from other West African countries were confined until they were marched to the Salaga slave market for sale to Asante slave dealers. Although it is possible some were sent to other places.

and capturing people, there is communal action. There is a call to rise so that people would come out. A call to rise is a call to action and resistance. The song thus suggests that people did not remain passive to their plight of enslavent. They often took action- they fought back.

The theme of capture as a method of enslavement is further conveyed in the Kasem song #81 “When they Chase you”.

Ba Na Dege-M Naa
Ba do ba jaana
Gwala kam do ka jaana
Ba ná dege-m jaana
Ba ná dege-m naa
Nmo za-n kwaane n duri se n yi chulu tei
Ba do ba jaana
Gwale sem do se jaana
Ba ná dege naa
Nmo za-n kwaane n duri se n yi chulu tei

When they chase you

They chase to capture

The slave raider chases to capture

When they chase you, fly
When they chase you
Just run till you reach a sacred place
They chase to capture
The slave raiders chase to capture
When they chase you
Just run till you reach a sacred place

The song presents an interesting structure. It introduces what seems the most obvious purpose of the slave raider: to “chase and

“capture”. It then offers an opinion on what to do when a person is pursued. There is an admonition to “fly” and “just run until you reach a sacred place”. Communities under threats of enslavement did not stand aloof. They often chose to elude capture by other adopting counter measures to outwit slave raiders. Two significant lexical items recur in the song. These are “chase” and “capture”. The “chase” metaphor delineates clearly the idea that slave raiding was akin to a hunting expedition undertaken with the sole aim of catching and capturing prey. This is expressed in “when they chase you, they chase to capture”. Capture, as already alluded to, was accompanied by force and violence or the threat of violence. The act of chasing to capture as articulated in the song, puts the captive into the hands of the captor. This process of rendering a captive ultimately into a slave involved the imposition of distance and socialization. The captive almost invariably lost his personhood and cultural identity. The process of uprooting a person or any group of people by force and transmogrifying them into an alien environment through violence is a traumatic experience for both the individual and the collectively.

Raiding and captivity not only sought to circumscribe the movement of people physically but the very process of raiding itself was always intended to imprison one’s spirit and produce a subservient culture within the raided. It induces a kind of “psychological claustrophobia” that makes one yearn not only for freedom of movement but spiritual escape. This desire to escape is expressed in the song through the flying metaphor.

Flying is of symbolic significance. The flying metaphor is used to express both the real and symbolic quest for freedom at all cost. “Running” now appears inadequate and a less than effective means of escape. Flying is also an expression of desperation. Flying also provides victims a means to psychologically escape from the real experience of being raided. Flying is an opportunity to occupy a symbolic space in the realm beyond the physical where no slave raider can possibly reach. It is a realm within the imagination that defies inhibition. Reference to running to a sacred place is also worthy

of note. In African traditional religious thought and philosophy, sacred spaces are regarded as places of refuge. A sacred place in these cultures would normally include a shrine, alter, or a grove. In the event of calamity, a person who runs into such a place is shielded from trouble. Although it is possible that sometimes slave raiders in their desperation to capture might desecrate and not respect sacred spaces.

During interviews, informants often mentioned specific deities within these cultures as having played salvic roles in helping people to escape the slave raiders. The Bulsa for example often mention Azaksuk whose shrine is located in Fiisa, a suburb of Sandema in Bulsa. The Kasena also often mention Zambao and the river deity Kukula.[1] A sacred place could also be a place that transcends the physical. It could possibly be a realm within the imagination, a symbolic and mental space connoting peace and freedom; a mental space that cannot possibly be raided.

The Economics of Trade and the Market as a Metaphor

A recurrent theme in some songs is the economics of trade expressed through the market metaphor. Slave raiding and dealing provided a context where the captive was seen more as a commodity. As Claude Meillassoux had remarked, "It is through the market that the common state of slaves, as a social class is defined..."[2] Specific variants of commodification in the songs are expressed through lexical items such as, selling, being sold, and slaves having value. Indeed, the theme of selling as a means of enslavement is again given prominence in song # 82 of the Kasem text.

The "selling" metaphor the songs allude to is significant because it underscores the very nature of the slave dealing enterprise. Slave dealing was underpinned by the basic principles of objectification and

[1]Interview with Akanse, AKA Assemblyman on 19th July 2006 in his house

[2] Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (London: The Athlon Press, 1986), p. 291.

commodification. The slave raiding and dealing enterprise first of all sought to dehumanize, objectify and commodify the individual. It transformed captives into disposable and exchange commodities. The individual had to be regarded first as an object and a commodity to be raided and traded for profit. The idea of "selling" suggests that the issue of reducing the individual to an object and a commodity who had commercial value was not just a feature of transatlantic slavery but very much also a feature of African slave systems.

This song is part of the general repertoire of songs performed in Nanea near Paga where the Pikworo slave camp is situated (See Chapter 2). Nanea is about 2.5 kilometers from the main Paga Township where the Pikworo slave camp is located. Slaves captured during raids and others brought through Burkina Faso from other West African states were camped in Pikworo and eventually sent to the Salaga market for sale. Women perform song # 82 usually with a lead cantor as in other cases who raise the first part while the others join the chorus. The song runs as follows:

Deem tu ba yeigi daane
Deém tu ba yeigi daane mo na
Ba bwoi kabɛ neei
A we faŋa to ba yeigi daane neei
Ba bwoi kabɛ neei
Leile bia ba jaŋe se ba lɔre neei
Ba na yeigi mɛ
N ná ti n yiga mmo za-n kwaane n ba
Se n lɔre yaga dɛ.

Years Ago They Sold One Another
In the olden days they sold one another
They call them slaves
I say in those days they sold one another

They call them slaves
Today children do not care to know
Where the marketing was done
When you are ready, you try and come
So that you will know market day

The song confronts the subject of the slave trade rather forcefully by stating emphatically that slaves were sold in the olden days. It alludes specifically to the idea of marketing and the market value of slaves. Indeed marketing and market value are business and commercial oriented metaphors. They convey images of commercial transactions and commodity trading. The song presents an image of the captive as an object that can be disposed of as and when the captor wishes. The song also makes an interesting observation to the effect that "today children do not care to know where the marketing was done". It appears that the older generation is probably lamenting the apparent lack of interest of the youth in matters related to the slave trade by not caring to know where "marketing was done".

Closely associated with the lack of desire to know is probably the lack of desire to remember. Slavery and the past are of no historical value to the youth. The complexities of modern life with the problems of unemployment and its attendant consequences of poverty do not serve as a motivation for them to want to know where slaves were sold. After all, remembering these events is itself traumatic. They might have heard that some of their direct ancestors were sold in that market; a family history they obviously do not want to remember. In song # 83 "slaves have market" the theme of the slave's commercial value is again expressed through the market metaphor. The song states*:*

Kabɛ jege yeiga
Kabɛ jege yeiga
Gwala deém maa zege chwoŋa ne

Kabɛ jege yeiga

Kabɛ jege yeiga

Gwala deém maa seigi chwoŋa ne

Kabɛ jege yeiga

Slaves have market

The slave raider is standing on the way

Slaves have market

Slaves have market

The slave raider is standing on the way

Slaves have market

In its performance, the cantor alternates the first two lines by hitting on a calabash to produce a rhythmic pattern. The rest of the chorus in the last two lines is sung by the rest of the group. The rhythm produced by the hitting of the calabash is intended to enhance the musical quality of the song and sometimes makes it easy for audience participation. This market metaphor underscores the commercial value of the captive. The captive is a commodity and has commercial value. The captive was drained of social value, severed from kith and kin and made available in exchange for currency. The symbol of the market made it impossible for captives to return to their previous state of belonging.

The line, "the slave raider is standing on the way" points to a possible enslavement strategy. The slave raider is strategically positioned and ready to capture. Indeed oral narrative accounts in these communities often intimated that slave raiders sometimes would conceal themselves in places where they could easily prey upon people.[1] The song's reference to the slave raider "standing on the way" captures vividly an image of a

[1]Field notes 2005, 2006 and 2012. Interviews and focused groups discussions after song recordings always brought out community memories about ways in which slave raiders often preyed upon people on their way to the farms, or women on their way to the streams to fetch water.

predator waiting to suddenly attack a prey. This attack by the slave raider on his prey is always attended by violence and aggression.

Violence as a Consequence of Slave Raiding

A distinctive feature of the processes of enslavement within these cultures is the nature of violence and aggression in slave capture. Scholars, particularly historians have noted how violence was a major defining feature in slave raiding especially during the nineteenth century when slave raiding became intense. The songs are a new source of information relative to the experiences of marginalized communities hitherto unexplored. The consequences of this violence and its traumatic effect on individuals and the collectivity are given prominence in the songs.

A close study of the songs discussed in this chapter reveals raiding and capture as major means through which people within these communities were enslaved. Raiding and capture thus convey images of predation mostly initiated through violence. The Latin root word *praedationem* from which the word predation is derived, captures ideas of plundering or taking of booty while the noun *predation* is most commonly used to refer to activities of groups like pirates or marauders who prey on innocent people. Indeed, slave raiding and the constant threats of enslavement were akin to preying on defenceless communities. For example, in song # 1, of the Buli text, we see the element of predation as a means of enslavement expressed through the “attack” metaphor. The song says,

Kanbongka le jam nak mu la
Kanbongka le jam nak mu la
M ŋman ka zaana jigi, ka nak
Mu te mae chali ate baa la mu
Mi poom man ka zaana jigiya

The slave raider has come to attack me

The slave raider has come to attack me

And I have no place to stay

He attacked me and I am running

And people are laughing at me

I do not have a place to stay any longer

The women of Bulsa usually sing this song as a dirge. In its performance, one would notice the literary trope adynaton used to evoke an emotional response from the audience which is itself sometimes an active participant in the performance. The tone and mood of the song are solemn and the facial expression of the cantor and performance situation depicts the ambience of a funeral. This solemn ambience underscores the seriousness and gravity of the theme expressed in the song. In the performance of the song, the cantor usually repeats "The slave raider has come to attack me" sometimes twice or more. Repetition in these songs is not only a stylistic and fundamental grammatical feature, but repetitions serve as emphasis. Sometimes the tone and pitch of the repeated line underscores the seriousness of the theme expressed.

Key elements of predation are catching and attacking which are significant variants in the songs, referring to activities of the slave raider. The central theme of the song is predation conveyed through the use of the word "attack". The force of the word connotes violence and aggression. The word "attack" is rendered more powerful here because of its associated images of pillage, pillaging and plundering which were major characteristics of slave raiding. Pillaging and plundering as part of the *modus oprandi* of slave raiders, especially within the collective imagination of these cultures, often resulted in the destruction of property such as livestock and food supplies thereby threatening the very livelihood and survival of these people, leaving them very vulnerable. Predation through violence as

expressed in the song interfered with communal cohesion and collective sense of identity. Group cohesion and collective identity formation are impossible when people are always under attack, as these attacks were often an invasion for gain.

The outsider dynamic in the enslavement process is further revealed in the line, “the slave raider has come to attack me”, over here, we see the slave raider presented as an outsider who “has come” into a culture for the purpose of invasion. The attack of the slave raider is predicated on the principle of total exclusion- a display of the lack of sympathy and concern for the victim. The net effect of these attacks is that people are always on the run, a theme the song clearly articulates. The line, “He attacked me and I am running” is informative. Its tone is that of desperation and anguish. These “attacks” produced cultures that were always “running” away from something rather than towards something. The lack of a sense of direction and destination is a traumatic experience and does not in any way suggest a condition that was benign and less cruel. The violence that often accompanied enslavement as expressed in these songs thus defeats the argument within certain sources that African slavery was benign and less oppressive.

The line “He attacked me and I am running” reinforces this sense of vulnerability and despondency. The threats of these surprise attacks were traumatic as people were always on edge never sure what to expect next. Reference to “I do not have a place to stay any longer”, although connoting displacement as a result of enslavement, also conveys a sense of despondency and despair. The attacks from slave raiding often resulted in the uprooting and displacement of kin. Once a person or group of people are attacked, they cease to belong. They become physically, socially and psychologically alienated. The net effect results in a fragmented society.

Although “individual memory is always conceived in relation to a group and individual identity said to be negotiated within a collectively

shared past"[1], we sometimes see individuals articulating intimate personal experiences in these songs. These individual collective memories thus provide "a cognitive map within which people orient their present behaviour in relation to the larger experiences of the collectivity".[2] Through the recurrence of the lexical items, "He has come to attack *me*", "*I* have no place to stay", *I am* running, and "people are laughing at *me*, we see "a lone voice" articulating the traumatic experience of enslavement through the use of the personal pronouns, "I", "I am" and "Me". This reinforces the individual's sense of alienation and personal disorientation. The individual becomes "depersonalized" and "di-ssocialised" because of the attacks. He ceases to belong and finds no place within the collectivity. This state of psychological disorientation stifles and inhibits creativity and productivity. This is compounded by ridicule from perceived enemies because of the individual's calamity. This desperation is expressed in:

He attacked me and I am running
And people are laughing at me

The subject of ridicule in the song raises a number of questions whose answers are not clear-cut. Who could be laughing at the apparent calamity and tragedy of another? Are there issues of possible complicity and alliances with the slave raider? Were there some people who were more vulnerable than others? Were there people within the communities who wielded power and so could not be enslaved? The subject of ridicule seen in people laughing at others reinforces the notions of the power of the enslaver as against the powerlessness of the captive, such that some people could possibly be laughing at others in the midst of tragedy.

The distinctive feature of the captive's powerlessness is seen in the violence associated with his capture and enslavement. Offering insights into

[1]See Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron, Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser and Piotr Sztompka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2004),p.65.
[2] Alexander, et al, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity,* p.65.

the nature and constituent elements of power and its relationship with slavery, the sociologist Orlando Patterson has identified three facets of power relations which he says include the social, the psychological and the cultural. Of the three, the social facet which Patterson suggests involves the use or threat of violence in the control of one person by another fits within the context of the slave raiding experience within these cultures.[1] Slave raiding as clearly shown in this song was a relationship of extreme domination and the use of coercive force. The subject of ridicule as a result of someone's predicament again surfaces in the song: "He Weeps Helplessly".

O kwi bworo bworo

O kwi bworo bworo

O dona maa maa mɔm se ba yaa lage bɛ

Mo o nɔɔno maama

Kayela mo o nɔɔno maama eei

O nɔɔna maama

Ko mo ne pa o kwia o yera ba zura ywoo

Mo o nɔɔno maama

Ko mo mo pa o kwia o yera ba zura naa

Mo o nɔɔno maama

Kayela mo o nɔɔno maama

He Weeps Helplessly

He is crying uncontrollably

His enemies are happy and making fun

That is the only person he has

Brave man! that is his only person eei

His heart is burning for that is his only person

His only person taken away

That is why he is crying helplessly

[1] Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 1.

That is his only person

Brave man! that is his only person

In the song, we are presented with a person's lamentation over the loss of a loved one through forceful captivity. The song expresses the pain and trauma of captivity inherent in memories of the people within these communities regarding their experience of enslavement. The pain of loss is particularly intense as the victim whose kin is taken away is crying uncontrollably. What is also significant is the fact it is his only person who is taken away. This lone person taken away underscores the oppressive nature of the slave dealing enterprise as seen in the disruption of the family unit through the uprooting of kin. The song emphasises that it is the only one he has and yet his enemies are happy and making fun of him. The sense of pain and anguish is given expression through the tactile image of his heart burning for his only person.

The theme of enslavement initiated through violence is taken further for example in song # 61, of the Buli song text. Relevant portions of the song say:

Ayieta bisa laa nyini la

Ayieta bisa laa nyini la

Ba jinla yig ti baai da yomma

Ba yig ti baai da yomma

Now that Ayieta's[1] children are moving out today,

They will catch some of us

And sell us out as slaves

Now that Ayieta's children are moving out,

They will catch some of us and sell as slaves.

[1]Ayeita is regarded as one of the chiefs believed to have led the people of Bulsa to resist slave raiding. He is highly revered among the Bulsa and regarded as a great ancestor. Anytime the story of Slavery and Resistance within Bulsa is told, Ayieta's name recurs in the narrative.

This song is a two stanza song performed by men. The performance of this song is usually marked by the striking of two pieces of metal together to produce a timeline and regulate the rhythmic pattern of the song. The cantor sings the first part while other members of the group respond to the second part, which serves as the chorus. The chorus is usually repeated several times. The song memorializes the slave experience through the "catching and "selling" of slaves metaphor. The specific reference to Ayieta's children moving out, as alluded to in the song, is informative. The song suggests that Ayeita's children are moving out probably in an attempt to challenge their enslavement but in the process, some would become victims.

The song suggests that the slave raider refused to recognise the humanity of his victim by catching and selling him. The existence of the victim was of no social consequence and relevance. The captive's value was seen in so far as he had economic value. The refusal to acknowledge the victim's social relevance is particularly made forceful through the ways in which people were captured and enslaved; through force or the threat of violence. In this song, the theme of predation is made forceful through the "catching" metaphor. The word "catch" is used to express the idea of capture and enslavement and conveys images of forceful seizure in denying people their freedom and particularly reflects on the issue of fear and insecurity that always accompanied slave raiding. The tone and mood of the song tends to suggest how personal and communal security is endangered. The fear of being captured and enslaved has serious implications for engaging in any form of productive activity and social interaction. The idea of fear and insecurity is expressed in the lines:

Now that Ayeita's children are moving out
They will catch some of us
And sell as slaves.

Fear in the unknown and the the fear of loss all have serious implications for development. Is it fear of unknown or fear of loss?? A culture that lives in perpetual fear of being captured and enslaved remains stagnant and with time may implode and eventually remain unresponsive to change. Song # 73 of the Kasem text again presents a means of captivity through force and violence. The song says,

Kanbɔŋa le natera ywoo
Kanbɔŋa le natera ywoo
Debam bere wa le seo ywoo
Gazare ná le seo o bere wɛ na ba na duri ba seiga

Beyere wa ma dane o vere nabwona wonnu
Gazare ná le seo o bere wɛ na ba na duri ba seiga
Beyere wa ma dane o vere nabwona wonnu
Gɔl-kanbɔŋa le natera naa
Debam beyere wa le seo o bere wɛ-ɛɛ-ɛ

The Slave Raider Has Removed His Sandals
The slave raider has removed his sandals
We shall also remove a cutlass
When Gazare removes a cutlass and shows it up
People run into hiding
Strength is used to rob the poor
When Gazare removes a cutlass and shows it up
People run into hiding
Strength is used to rob the poor
A powerful slave raider has removed his sandals
We shall also remove a cutlass and show it up

Two men perform this song with drum accompaniment. The song opens with a symbolic sign attributed to the slave raider. The symbol of the slave raider removing his sandals presents an image of the slave raider's

possible preparedness to undertake the task of raiding. Although the second line gives a hint to the theme of resistance by the people themselves (which is the subject of another chapter), the issues of force, violence and aggression are brought to the fore in this song. There is the specific mention of one of the slave raiders' name: Gazare. The song thus confirms evidence from historical sources about the Zabarima slave raiders, one of whom was called Gazare. The song suggests that when Gazare removes his cutlass and shows it people run into hiding. Gazare's cutlass is symbol of aggression. It is used as a tool to perpetuate violence in order to facilitate capture. Gazare's symbolic gesture of showing the cutlass up is informative and raises a concern. Does the sign suggest an act of dependence on a supernatural power or a prayer to be able to execute a mission? Since the songs do not often offer the perspectives of the slave raider, one can only infer that these people probably see this symbolic gesture as an act of seeking divine approval and sanction for their enslavement.

The theme of "running" as a direct consequence of predation again resurfaces in this song. Running away from slave raiders produced in these cultures almost invariably "an experience of motion without a discernible direction or destination".[1] Captives were often oblivious of where they were running to. This condition of running and never being sure of direction and destination is both an individual and collective traumatic experience that is inexpressible through words. What makes the memory of the experience within this song traumatic is not only seen in Gazare's use of the cutlass as a tool for captivity and enslavement, but also ways in which the song suggests, "Strength is used to rob the poor". Strength in this context is the outward display of power. The song thus reinforces the dynamics of power over

[1] Although historian Stephanie Smallwood alludes to this metaphor of motion without a discernible direction and destination within the context of the transatlantic slave experience as it applied to captives, it is nonetheless an apt metaphor for the experience of people who experienced enslavement through raiding. See Stephanie E. Smallwood, Saltwater Slavery: *A Middle Passage from Africa to America Diaspora* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), Ch. 5. p.122.

powerlessness.

The Kasem word *vere,* which is translated as “to rob” connotes the use of force and aggression to seize something from someone. Reference to the poor is also instructive in that, the word in this context does not only suggest the poor in economic terms but captures images of the vulnerable, the weak, and the defenseless. These would normally include children, women and old people. Although slave dealers were usually not interested in the old, the images of communal plunder and pillage often affected old people as well, as they often lost property such as foodstuff and livestock including their children who were their economic security, during slave raiding.

The image of the “powerful slave raider” in the song brings to the fore the institutional and structural dynamics of slave raiding and slave dealing. Raided communities often saw the outward display of power exhibited by the slave raiders not only in their ability to “chase and capture” but also in their use of weapons such as guns and ammunition. The introduction of guns and gun powder transformed the nature of warfare and captivity especially during the latter part of the nineteenth century when slave raiding became endemic in these areas. Hitherto, bows and arrows were the common weapons of warfare. Indeed, one of the images of the Asante within northern Ghanaian consciousness is his association with modern weaponry.

In fact, the Buli term for a gun is *Kanbong diok* which literarily means the stick of the Asante or slave raider’s stick. Implicit in this is the fact the Bulsa did not originally have a word for gun in their language. It is also of interest to note that the warrior title kanbonaa (Dagomba), *kanbonnaab* (Bulsa), *kanbonaaba*, (Frafra), became titles for sectional chiefs or leaders who came to assume responsibility for organizing and leading people to war within these groups. The title appears to have been influenced by northern association with the Asante through the slave trade.

"Running" ultimately produced a psychology of defeat and victimhood seen clearly through the lens of always being pursued. This in effect robs individuals and collectivity of the power to have control over their own destinies. The intimidation arising from being pursued produces fear and a general sense of insecurity and instability. These variants ultimately inhibit and stifle individual and collective creative efforts and seriously undermine the progress and development of any society. The songs under review do not only reveal the sense of "running" but also suggest that constant running often resulted in both individual and communal disarticulation.

Individual and Communal Dislocation

The subject of individual and communal dislocation as a consequence of slavery and enslavement is not entirely new within the literature. Indeed, scholars, particularly, historians have long articulated these themes through the bulk of historical writing. What is silent in these sources however, are the ways in which marginalized communities often perceived and responded to their experiences of disarticulation. By addressing this imbalance in the literature the present work is even more, relevant because it promises to add to our knowledge of how these communities often perceived their displacement relative to their experiences of slavery and enslavement.

Specific lines within some songs such as "He attacked me and I have no place to stay",(#2), "we are running way while abandoning our children"(#3), "I am running for my dear life"(#3), "we are running away from the slave raider"(# 3), "we have run, run a lot", (#10), "I am walking and running"(#13), are all examples of both individual and communal laments over displacement as a result of the slave raider's predatory activity. While some lines express individual sentiments, others also articulate the common predicament of the collectivity under slaving conditions. These songs cited above thus brings into sharp focus the issue of an "internal

diaspora"- the dispersal of people within their own country but in this instance, a displacement in a geography that is probably very alien and hostile to what captives were originally familiar with.

The net effect of these forced displacements is the sense of fragmentation of the collective psyche. Individual and collective identity formation is seriously undermined where people are forced into strange lands under strange customs completely alien from their own. The experience of slaves from northern Ghana, who were forcibly transplanted to Asante, became aliens and assumed subordinate status accompanied by various indignities has shaped the collective identities of people from northern Ghana till date.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the various processes of enslavement relative to the experiences of the Bulsa and Kasena in Northern Ghana. Although there is a considerable amount of scholarly literature on the various processes of enslavement within Africa, the songs present predation and capture as major ways through which people were enslaved. The chapter adds to our store of knowledge on existing literature and particularly emphasises the voices of the captive and their experience within Africa. This is in contrast to major slave narratives and other forms of autobiographical writings such as the ones by Equaino and Quobana Otobah Cugoana who related their experiences outside Africa. This work therefore complements and extends their writings in a significant and new way.

The songs discussed have revealed images of capture and enslavement conveyed mainly by violence and aggression. There is also a preponderance of evidence to suggest that slaves were also sold. There was thus a commercial and commodity trading element in slave dealing in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Apart from overt and direct confrontation through war, others also chose other ways to deal with their enslavement. Some of these chose to align themselves with the sources of

power to ensure their survival and sustenance. What prices were people and communities willing to pay to secure freedom apart from open confrontation? The next chapter discusses these issues.

Chapter Four

Slavery, Agency and Survival

Introduction

This chapter provides some new insights into the nature and complexities of African agency and complicity in slavery and the slave trade from the perspective of descendants of victims of enslaved communities within Africa. It specifically discusses how local communities often perceived and understood local agency and complicity within their collective memories. The subject of African agency and complicity in slavery and the slave trade is an emotive subject and its cultural and political underpinnings have engaged the attention of scholars and nations over the years.[1] The debates surrounding African culpability and its attendant "blame game" on nations who were involved in the slave trade have consequently shaped and informed global responses regarding reparations.[2] Indeed, memories of African complicity during the era of the transatlantic slave trade, though sometimes fragmentary, still resonate within certain communities in Africa including Ghana.[3] Reflecting on the dynamics of African slave supply and

[1] African-Americans and Africans in the diaspora have often argued that their continental brothers and sisters especially African chiefs and elites sold them into slavery. At the fore-front of this debate is the African-American scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr., In his TV series *Wonders of the African World,* Gates intimates that he was indeed worried about Africa's complicity in the slave trade after visiting the Cape Coast castle. Later reflecting on the visit, he intimates: "[o]thers have wondered and I am thinking here of Yambo Ouologuem's great novel *Bond to Violence* (1971) if Africa was cursed because of the apparent willingness of so many African societies to participate in the slave trade, bartering what, to us here appear to be their mess of pottage" (quoted in Bayo Holsey, *Routes of Remembrance*: *Refashioning the Slave Trade in Ghana* 2008:p. 122 and Sylviane A. Diouf *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Oxford: James Currey Press, 2003)**,** p. xv.

[2] For some discussion on slave reparations within the context of the transatlantic slave trade, see Rhoda E. Howard-Hassman, "Reparations for the Slave Trade: Rhetoric, Law, History and Political Realities", *Canadian Journal of African Studies* / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines, Vol.41, No. 3, "Rethinking Rights in Africa: The Struggle for Meaning and the Meaning of the Struggle" / Redéfinition des droits en Afrique: Le combat pour leur trouver un sens et le sens du combat (2007), pp. 427-454.

[3] Sandra E. Greene and Anne C. Bailey's researches have alluded to community memories of indigenous complicity in the slave trade by some community leaders and chiefs each citing the Atokor incident of the south-eastern corridor of Ghana as a classic case in point. For a detailed study see Sandra E. Greene, *West African Narratives of Slavery: Texts from Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Ghana* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011),

participation in the slave trade, historian Patrick Manning has pointed out that, "Many Africans saw the consequences of slavery and some fought bravely against its continuation and expansion…"[1] Manning goes on to say that "On the whole, however, "enough Africans participated actively in the capture, commerce and exploitation of slaves to prolong these forms of oppression into the twentieth century."[2] Given the often complex and emotive nature of slave history in most societies that were considered complicit in the slave trade, Manning has argued that "explaining African complicity in slavery is a complex matter…"[3] The complexity surrounding the complicity debate lies in the fact that continental Africans themselves were often not immune from the ills of enslavement as the songs that form the foundation of this thesis unequivocally demonstrate.

Although the nature of African agency in terms of their own enslavement especially within the context of this discussion is not often clear cut, in this chapter, I focus on four songs which suggest indigenous agency with the aim to provide a window into how the communities who were under the constant threats of predation were often aware and conscious of the role and activities of possible collaborators or insiders within their collective history.

My focus in this chapter is to attempt to problematize the agency and collaboration paradigm by shifting emphasis away from conventional historical models of slave agency and attempting to qualify agency as a culturally sanctioned and transmitted set of survival strategies that included but was not limited to collaboration and forming strategic alliances with slave raiders to ensure individual and communal survival. It is therefore important to read the motives of alliances and collaboration enslaved individuals and

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especially pp. 187-212, and Anne C .Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2005), pp.27-56.

[1] See Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.86

[2]Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, p.86

[3]Manning, *Slavery and African Life*, p.86

communities formed with their enslavers as ways in which they attempted to shape their "liveable lives" and negotiated their oppression and survival within the constraints of slavery.

In interpreting these songs, a number of questions emerge. What price were individuals and communities prepared to pay for freedom? What personal and communal choices did people make in order to ensure individual and communal survival? In other words, were people willing to be complicit in order to survive? How are these complicity models then different from conventional models of slave complicity? What do these songs reveal about local agency?

The term agency as used within the historical literature has been subject to varied interpretations, especially when it is used in relation to slave resistance within the context of the African American experience. The term is sometimes used in describing the "humanity and instrumentality" of the slave in asserting and determining his destiny under oppression.[1] Within the context of this study, however, I use the term agency rather loosely to describe ways in which Africans and more specifically communities were involved in facilitating their own enslavement process.

Notions of Betrayal: The *Insider* Motif

The subject of betrayal and collaboration within the collective history of people who have had to negotiate their oppression under very complex circumstances is not entirely new. Within the broader scholarly framework, the notions of betrayal and the *insider* motif is a significant recurrent theme. Some slave narratives, for example, have often articulated this *insider* motif and the sense of betrayal by the slaves themselves. Lamenting on this sense of betrayal by people of his "own complexion", the ex-slave and anti slavery campaigner Quobna Ottobah Cuguano was one of the earliest to have expressed the sentiments that "... I must own, to the

[1] See Walter Johnson, "On Agency", *Journal of Social History 37.1(2003),* pp.113-124.

shame of my own countrymen, that I was first kid-napped and betrayed by some of my own complexion, who were the first cause of my exile and slavery..."[1]

The ex-slave Fredrick Douglass, who later became active in the abolition cause, has also shown from his autobiography how slaves often betrayed one another by reporting to slave masters the intention of others to escape.[2] Similarly, historian Mavis C. Campbell examines the struggles of the Jamaican Maroons against the British colonial authorities, and their subsequent collaboration with and betrayal by them.[3] Within the specific case of Ghana, historians Sandra E. Greene and Anne C. Bailey have uncovered cases of community memories of complicity in the slave trade, especially within the context of the transatlantic slave trade.[4] The betrayal and collaboration themes in most of these cases assume different forms depending on specific settings and circumstances. As we shall see, within the collective history of the Bulsa and Kasena, some of the songs documented suggest various levels of collaboration and betrayal by their own people.

The songs "an insider is digging up my roots", (#59), and **"**my own people have betrayed me", (#60) clearly express the theme of betrayal. These songs articulate concerns regarding the activities of an insider within the collectivity. Some other songs make reference to the motif of "selling one another" (# 82) and this could thus involve people within the community dealing with traders. A careful scrutiny of song # 59 for example is necessary in teasing out the subtle nuances of community dissatisfaction and abhorrence of this insider. The songs says,

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[1] Quobna Ottobah Cuguano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery and Other Writings* (ed) Vincent Carretta (London: Penguin Books, 1999), p.16.
[2] Douglass, *Narrative*, pp.40-49.
[3] For a detailed study on Maroon societies and cultures of resistance, see Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica 1655- 1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal (*Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1988). Also see, Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: 1979).
[4] Greene, *West African Narratives,*pp.187-212; Also see Bailey ,pp. 27-56

Dog po nuru le ta ma wari nyini,

Peelim nyono nya di be?

Ba nya di be?

Ba nya di be?

Ka dog po nuruwa laa tu mi nansa

Peelim nuruwa nya di be?

It is an insider who sends my secrets out

How did the outsider get it?

Where will they get it?

Where will they get it?

It is the insider who is digging up my roots

Otherwise, where else can the outsider get it from?

This song is performed by women and usually led by a lead singer who sings the first part while the rest of the women, numbering about six, respond to the rest of the lines thereby serving as the chorus. Specific lines of the songs are usually repeated several times depending on the personal preference of the lead singer. The song in effect suggests that, within their collective imagination, communities were often aware of possible alliances by local people with slave raiders by revealing secrets. Although the motives for these alliances were often not clear, it may be safe to speculate from the victim's perspective that these alliances were often intended to serve as survival mechanisms. It is plausible to suggest for example that individuals and sometimes communities could betray one another in order to ensure their own survival. In fact, this possibility is hinted through a boastful assertion during the days of slavery among the Kasena to wit:

Asale gwala

I am leaning on the slave raider or

I am allied with the slave raider

Although the limitations of translation sometimes makes it difficult to capture adequately the sense in which some of these statements are

made, this saying nonetheless offers glimpses into how possible association with the slave raider could serve an individual or collective interest. The idea of leaning on the slave raider thus raises issues that are possibly far more complex that mere betrayal. This expression among the Kasena does suggest that, in the attempt to survive, it was sometimes necessary for victims to build strategic alliances with their captors in order to ensure their own survival. The subject of secrets as the Buli song suggests is of great symbolic significance. Although the song is silent on the nature of these secrets, it is safe to speculate that given the fact that communities were often clustered and cemented through a high sense of kinship ties, and a sense of belonging, each community had a certain defined cultural ethos peculiar to its government and function. "Secrets" as used in this song thus suggests that community memories are still centred on how under the threats of enslavement, people had ways of safeguarding their interests even in the midst of captivity and oppression.

The repetition of the rhetorical question "where will they get it" is significant. This repetition is not only intended for the purposes of emphasis, but to stress the difficulty in having access to possible coded information without the activity of an insider. The sense of betrayal is made forceful by the line "it is the insider who is digging up my roots". The "digging out my roots" metaphor conveys images of a person who undermines individual or communal effort in securing freedom; a person who might be responsible in providing useful leads to slave raiders with regards to hiding places of victims. In fact, the activities of the insider characterized by his character of duplicity and betrayal further emerges in the Buli song "my own people have betrayed me" (# 60). This song in terms of its thematic focus is a continuation of the earlier one with specific reference to the insider as "my own people". The song says:

Medek nuruma kan ta me nyini

Medek nuruma kan ta me nyini yee

Yalayala dem nya me ka be?
Yee yee a yee yee yee yee aya wi yaa
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?

Dog po nuruwa kun tami nyini ya?
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?
Yee yee a yee yee yee yee aya wi yaa
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?
Ba ya me ka be ta koa?
Ya yee-yee ayee-yee yaa

Medek nuruma kan ta me nyini yee
Yalayala dem nya me ka bee
Yee yee a yee yee yee yee aya wi yaa
Yalayala dem nya me ka bee

My Own People Have Betrayed Me
If my own people do not betray me,
How would the useless outsider get me?
Where would a useless person get me?

If it is not an insider who has sent me out,
Where would a useless person get me from?
My own people have betrayed me
If my own people do not betray me,
Where would a useless person get me?
How would they get me to kill?

If it is not an insider who has sent me out,
Where would a useless person get me from?

The song expresses an individual's concern over betrayal by his own people. The sense of frustration is captured in reference to the outsider as "a useless person". The song links the act of betrayal to the "useless person's

access" to his victims in order to kill them. Killing, as the song suggests, does not only reveal the physical dimension of losses in the act of capture but also reveals ways in which the whole institution of slavery and enslavement was a killing in a metaphorical sense. It possibly alludes to killing of a communal sense of identity, of cultural values and, of a collective psyche.

In juxtaposing these two songs, what emerges is the image of the insider as one of duplicity. It is that of one who cannot be trusted to work in the interest of the collectivity. This person betrays his own people for his selfish interest and sometimes possibly also for ensuring his own survival. Indeed, the local ecology also sometimes defined how victim communities negotiated their oppression. Communities sometimes made use of the knowledge of their ecology and topography to ensure their survival by running into inaccessible areas. Places of refuge could therefore be "secret" places known to only members of a specific community.

The song also suggests that the processes of captivity and enslavement were often more complex than mere pursuit of capturing victims. It appears that collaborators often provided useful leads to slave raiders in their quest for discovering where people that had fled were possibly hiding. One of the songs of the Kasena does indeed suggest that when Gazare lifted up his cutlass (a kind of farm implement used in weeding) and showed it, people ran into hiding (# 73). Hiding was therefore one way victims sought to elude capture and enslavement. The landscape and topography in these areas sometimes provided an ideal conduit for retreating into rocky outgrowths and caves as ways of eluding capture. The work of insiders, as the song suggests, would then make hiding difficult if not impossible.

The theme of local agency in the enslavement process especially on the role of African nobility and elites in the enslavement of their own people is not entirely new within the literature. The Guyanese historian Walter

Rodney is among one of the earliest scholars to suggest this.[1] Although some lines in the songs are vague, they nonetheless still contain hidden strands in revealing some subtle nuances relative to the people's experiences. Songs such as "years ago they sold one another" (# 82), "A red and white person entered our land but our fathers kept silent" (# 58) allude to the role of people who possibly wielded some amount of power and so could facilitate and mastermind the enslavement of others. The songs do reveal that individuals and the collectivity were often aware of how "they sold one another". Although the selling motif is discussed in detail under the economics of trade motif in chapter 3, it is worth revisiting this particular song because of the contextual issues it raises in light of the prevailing discourse on African agency in the enslavement of their own people. The song says,

Deem to ba yeigi daane

Deém to ba yeigi daane mo na

Ba bwoi kabɛ neei

A we faŋa to ba yeigi daane neei

Ba bwoi kabɛ neei

Leile bia ba jaŋe se ba lɔre neei

Ba na yeigi mɛ

N ná ti n yiga mmo za-n kwaane n ba

Se n lɔre yaga dɛ

Years ago they sold one another

In the olden days they sold one another

They call them slaves

I say in those days they sold one another

[1] See Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and other forms of social oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the context of the Atlantic slave trade", in J.E. Inikori (ed.), *Forced Migration: The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies* (ed (London: Hutchinson Press, 1982), pp.61-73. Also see John Thornton *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (2nd Ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 72-97, pp.98-125.

They call them slaves
Today children do not care to know
Where marketing is done
When you are ready, you try and come
So that you will know market day

This song does not only reveal selling as a method of enslavement but confronts the subject of "selling one another" possibly as a complicity motif rather forcefully. The song's reference to "they" for example is vague and ambiguous. Are there attempts to conceal the real identities of insiders who sold one another? Why are the songs silent on the role of chiefs and nobility? These are questions whose answers are not quite clear. The notion of selling one another thus lends credence to the prevailing discourse of African culpability in the slave trade. Community memories of the selling of one another are a traumatic experience. Indeed, these community memories are captured in Aaron Chigatra's narrative.[1] Aaron does concede that what he heard from his grandfather is what he recounts. In an answer to the issue of local collaborators within their collective history, Aaron had this to say:

Not all the slaves were acquired through raids or through force. Some people were sold by their relatives because of poverty. There were others, whose relatives sold them as a source of power and prestige. Some just wanted to feel powerful and in control over others. Others could even sell their own children. People who had large families and could not take care of them often sold some of them to the slave dealers to help take care of the rest.

[1] Interview with Aaron Chigatra, tour guide at the Pikworo slave camp, Nania on 08/03/12

The narrative also brings to the fore the dynamics of power and how the powerful could mastermind the enslavement of the vulnerable in order to feel powerful. Given the context in which enslavement occurred within these cultures as mainly through raids and forceful capture, the selling motif suggests that individuals or communities were often willing or compelled to sell others for the collective good or in order to survive.

The complexity in understanding the cultural dynamics of slavery within these communities is in how the songs are sometimes silent on the subtle nuances inherent in the slave dealing process. Would the individual or communities attempt to sell a few slaves to dealers in order to ensure the survival of the larger group be deemed complicity or as a strategy to ensure communal survival?

One song however, that provides some glimpses on apparent complicity by community leadership is the Buli song **"**A red and white person entered our land" (# 58). This song alludes to the apparent silence of their fathers when a stranger enters their land. The song runs as follows:

Jamoniŋ japeeli le jam taa yeri
Jamoniŋ japeeli le jam taa yeri
Alege ti koma kala kan biisi
Ba te le nya yie le za lɔ za lɔ
Ba te le nya yie la za lɔ diiya

A red and white person entered our land
A red and white person entered into our houses
But our fathers kept silent
If not, they would have seen how houses
Would be falling and falling
They would have seen
How houses would be falling

This is one song that reveals the tensions and contradictions often inherent in memories of people relative to a remote experience. This song alludes to the presence of "a red and white person" within their land and how their fathers were silent on his presence within the collectivity. Reference to "a red and white" person in the song possibly alludes to skin colour. The colour dynamics in the song are complex, given the context in which captivity and enslavement within the interior was conducted. The role of the Whiteman in the enslavement of Africans has been subject to a great deal of controversy within scholarly discourse. While some Africans have often alluded to the influence of the Whiteman or European in the enslavement process, others have maintained that the Whiteman was a remote figure in the enslavement process, especially in the interior.

The Ghanaian historian Adu Boahen has for example argued that "…the enslavement and sale of the Africans from the seventeenth century onwards were done by Africans themselves especially the coastal kings and their elders". In Adu Boahen's view, "very few Europeans actually ever marched inland and captured slaves themselves".[1] Historian Paul Lovejoy was later to re-echo this position when he clearly articulated that "Europeans were confined to coastal establishments and had little direct involvement in the enslavement of people".[2]

Indeed, these arguments of European non-direct involvement in the enslaving process of Africans in the interior of Africa, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the slave trade was officially abolished, creates some difficulty in clearly defining the role of the Whiteman relative to people's experiences within the interior. This is due largely to the fact that slave raiding, captivity and enslavement in the interior were undertaken primarily by Africans themselves. What appears plausible is that, although memories of the transatlantic slave experience appear remote within their

[1]Albert Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History* ((London: Longman Press, 1964), p.110.
[2] See Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.58.

collective consciousness, fragments of these memories may nonetheless still linger on.

Could references to a "red" person in the song allude to Arabs? It is most unlikely that many Arabs made it to northern Ghana. And those few may have been black. Red may also often refer to Fulbe. Although this song is silent on the racial identity of these persons, historical sources do suggest the influence of Arab traders in the slave trade through trans-Saharan trade and the influence of the Salaga market. What is also probable is the fact that some of the Zabarima who were active in slave raids within these areas had lighter skin complexions and so "red" persons could possibly apply to them although this is also not absolute. References to the Whiteman in the songs also suggest that communities were thus often not totally ignorant of the trading and commercial relationships that existed in the past between Whitemen or Europeans on the coast, Asante middle men and slave dealing in the interior where slaves were captured. Although the songs do not explicitly suggest this, the fact that a number of songs refer to the Whiteman attests to this limited knowledge.

Silence: survival or complicity?

How does silence translate into complicity or passivity? To what extent can we read silence as a resistance or survival strategy? This song exposes some of these complexities. What is particularly insightful in this song is the fact that, when the "red and white" person entered their land, their fathers were silent. The fathers are the collective patriarchal symbols of authority. These include chiefs, community and clan elders whose responsibility it is, to guard and protect their subjects, but these people were "silent". The song thus imposes upon us a burden to question the rationale for this silence. Indeed scholars have suggested that there are times when cultures use silence as a resistance strategy. In this song, the reasons for the silence of the fathers remain unclear. Does it suggest that the "powerful" could in one breath wield power to warrant the selling of others and in

another breadth become powerless? Or that the “fathers” were simply overwhelmed with the forces of enslavement to the extent that they were bereft of speech?

Silence then becomes a metaphor for the ways in which the stakes in slavery could be unpredictable. Did the fathers choose to remain silent in order to survive? Or, that by their silence they gave support and consent to slave raiders to carry on with their enslavement process without opposition? The next line of the song appears to give a clue as to the possible motive of this silence by the fathers. The song goes further to suggest that, if not for the silence of the fathers, they would have seen how houses would be “falling and falling”. *Houses* in the song reflect the collective symbol of the institution of slavery. The song seems to suggest if not for silence of the fathers houses would fall and fall. In other words, the institution of slavery would crumble but for this silence. It does also suggest that communities were often willing to confront their oppression through whatever means they found necessary.

Conclusion

The central premise of this chapter was to examine the complex dynamics of African agency in the slave trade. Although historical sources have often articulated this theme of African agency in their own enslavement process, what is new here is the ways in which African communities themselves have been forthright with the issues dealing with their own conditions of slavery and enslavement. The songs discussed in this chapter, suggest that individuals and communities were often willing to build strategic alliances with slave raiders and willing to betray their own people to ensure individual or communal survival. The issues therefore about indigenous agency are therefore more complex than often assumed.

Although the songs suggest the activities of collaborators within their collective history of enslavement, a significant number of songs also contain evidence of resistance to the processes of enslavement. These songs bear testimony to the fact that communities eventually became tired of

running. Resistance to their captivity and enslavement became an option for those who decided to challenge their oppression. This cultural response to pain is expressed in very strong emotional terms in the forms of laments and dirges performed by women, while war songs which are predicated on violent resistance are performed by men. In the next chapter, these patterns of resistance will be discussed in much greater detail.

Chapter Five

Cultural adaptations and patterns of resistance

Introduction

This chapter attempts to sketch out the general contours of memories of the various patterns of resistance relative to the experiences of the communities under review. It examines particularly ways in which communities often adapted and responded to their plight of enslavement. The notions of cultural adaptations and resistance as revealed through the songs promise to add to our store of knowledge and enhance our understanding on how cultures that became victims of slave raids often negotiated, adapted and survived their enslavement and oppression. One obvious weakness of conventional historical methodology in articulating the experiences of people who have been victims of slavery and the slave trade is the inability of written sources to adequately capture and convey the pain and suffering inherent in these collective memories. In this chapter, I use 18 songs as a basis of the analysis because; these convey a greater emphasis on the issues at stake.

In the first part of the chapter, I discuss ways in which the communities under review sometimes adapted and survived in the midst of predation and enslavement. These are revealed through laments often articulating pain and sorrow. This is then followed by patterns of flight and the desire to get home; a metaphorical space sometimes beyond the physical realm. In the second part of the chapter, I examine war songs. These reveal the refusal to accept the conditions of enslavement while demonstrating valour through resistance and celebrating victory.

Resistance to slavery and the slave trade within the general body of historical literature has received a great deal of attention over the years. Scholars have shown how slaves often negotiated and resisted their oppression through various ways and strategies. Indeed, there is also a

consensus among scholars that resistance to enslavement and the slave trade began at the points of capture through to slave plantations in the Americas. Shipboard revolts and resistance have also been documented. The difficulty, however, in relying solely on these sources is that they tend to leave out the voices of those who were mostly the descendants of victims of slavery within Africa itself. Overall, the new sources discussed here reveal the ways in which communities have sought to overturn the prevailing images of victimhood.

Theorizing Resistance

Resistance as a theoretical concept has been the subject of extensive scholarly focus across a wide range of disciplines such as anthropology, cultural studies, literature, political science, women and gender studies and history. With the proliferation of the term *resistance* within scholarly literature, there appears to be little consensus on its definition. Sociologists Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner, who have tried to synthesize available "cross-disciplinary" literature on the core thematic constructs of the term, have suggested that scholars who have used the language of resistance may not always be referring to the same thing. They have suggested that scholars have invariably used the term to "describe a wide variety of actions and behaviours at all levels of human social life" to include "individual, collective and institutional and in a number of different settings, including political systems, entertainment and literature, and the workplace".[1]

Various crucial elements emerge from the synthesis offered by Hollander and Einwohner. These include: "acting autonomously, in one's interest", "active efforts to oppose, fight, and refuse to cooperate with or submit to… abusive behaviour and ...control", among others. Indeed, what emerges from all of these positions is the recognition by scholars that

[1]See Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel, L. Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance". *Sociological Forum, Vol.19, No.4* (Dec., 2004), pp.533-554.

resistance occurs through a diversity of behaviour and settings, some of which are material or physical, involving the resisters' use of their bodies or other material objects. Resistance may also sometimes refer to social movements or even broader categories of protests. Other acts of physical resistance may also include behaviours of dramatic violence or very mundane and subtle forms such as feigning sickness, working slowly, wearing a particular kind of clothing or even stealing from one's master or employer. [1]

There are other forms of resistance that transcend the physical and material to include speech and other forms of symbolic behaviour. Some cultures for instance are known to have decided to speak their native language as a form of resistance, while in other circumstances silence can be a form of resistance and even the breaking of the silence may constitute resistance.[2] Hollander and Einwohner have further suggested that the scale of resistance may also vary. According to them, acts of resistance may be individual or collective. Moreover, while resistance is most frequently perceived to be aimed at achieving some sort of change, in some cases, the behaviour that is deemed resistance is actually intended to curtail change.[3]

A close study of the songs under discussion reveals some of the variants espoused by Holland and Einwohner in their synthesis of the theoretical literature. Resistance to captivity and enslavement occurs in the songs under a number of variants. Some songs can be seen as coping and survival strategies rather than outright resistance to enslavement. These express ways in which the cultures under review often adapted and survived predation. There are also songs of war and violent confrontation performed

[1] James Scott has examined the issues of hegemony and the subtle forms of power in some peasant societies. He has particularly argued that oppression and resistance are in constant opposition to one another and focuses on peasant and slave societies and their ways of responding to domination through cultural forms of everyday passive forms of resistance. For a detailed study, See, James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp.28-41.
[2] Hollander and Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance", pp.535-537.
[3]Hollander and Einwohner, "Conceptualizing Resistance", p.356.

by men and these are usually robust and convey images of bloodshed and violence.

The songs performed as laments and dirges are a significant cultural response to pain and they reveal how individuals and the collectivity can be overwhelmed to the extent that they are sometimes bereft of the resources of speech to articulate the experience. In the long run, the ability to express this plight in itself reflects ways in which these communities often understood and gave verbal expression to their pain.

Lamenting the pain and plight of enslavement

Scholars have shown how pain is not always necessarily a medical problem. Pain, David B. Morris reminds us, "is never the sole creation of our anatomy and physiology. It emerges only at the intersection of bodies, minds and cultures".[1] Pain and its expression thus have historical, cultural and psychological ramifications.[2] David B. Morris further points out that, "...the culture we live in and our deepest personal beliefs subtly or massively recast our experiences of pain".[3]

Providing further insights into the nature of physical suffering and the act of inflicting pain on others especially within the context of war and torture, Elaine Scarry writes about the difficulty of expressing physical pain, and has pointed out that "the act of verbally expressing pain is a necessary prelude to the collective task of diminishing pain".[4] These acts of verbally expressing pain by these communities can therefore be seen as attempts to lessen its impact. The images of pain expressed in these songs are often physical, psychological and emotional. In their performance and presentation, the bodily movements and meaningful gestures by the

[1] David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (California: University of California Press, 1991),p.3
[2] Morris, *The Culture of Pain*, pp. 1-30. Also see Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), especially Ch. 1. p.9.
[3] Morris, *The Culture of Pain,* p.2
[4] Scarry, *The Body in Pain,* p.9.

performers coupled with facial expressions often reveal the pain and sorrow inherent in them.

The themes of suffering and oppression in relation to a people's collective experience of slavery and enslavement are not entirely new within historical narratives. The bulk of sources especially in relation to people within the collective experiences of the transatlantic slave experience have often shown how slaves have lamented and expressed their sorrow in their songs. Sociologist W.E.B. Dubois and historian Lawrence Levine have provided some insights into slave songs in relation to their suffering.

Using the Negro spirituals as a basis for his argument, Levine has suggested that "… it is the spirituals that historians must look to comprehend the antebellum slaves' world worldview, for it was the spirituals that slaves found a medium which resembled in many crucial ways the cosmology they had brought with them from Africa and afforded them the possibility of both adapting to and transcending their situation.[1] Levine's reference to adaption and survival is crucial within the context of this study as these songs often suggest strategies of adaption and survival rather that overt active resistance although some songs suggest active resistance. Indeed, captives and the slaves' ability to adapt and transcend their oppressive conditions were crucial to their survival in alien environments that threatened to obliterate their entire cultural identities and heritage. Although Levine was certainly writing about survivalwithin the context of slave societies, similar motifs are expressed among the Bulsa and Kasena.

One persistent image the songs contain and convey about how communities often perceived their enslavement is that of a people who "have suffered, really suffered", a people who have "run and run a lot" (# 10). The images of suffering are reflected in other songs such as Babatu has really dealt with me and I know", (# 7), "We have suffered oo (# 62), "Adoa says he needs no food" (# 63) and "The slave raider has shot arrows indiscriminately"

[1]Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness,* p.19

(9). All these songs lament the effects of enslavement. Given the new insight, each song offers in relation to the experiences of enslavement, it is worthwhile to examine each song in detail.

Slave raiding and enslavement is often conceptualised within the collective memories of the communities under review through the images of suffering. For example, song **#** 10 of the Buli text captures memories of suffering and expresses the pain and anguish of the collectivity in relation to their enslavement. The song says,

Te naame ya

Te naame yee naame yee

Te chali yega yega yaa

A yee yee

Me yen kanbong kai te naame yee le naame yee

Te naame yega yega ya

A yaa yaa aba ba ba….

Yee basiik dogdem ma nya ba la nam yega yega yaa

Ayee yee basiik dog dema nya balaa na yaa

Ta yie nya ban moata dela ayi puuri nina basiik dema

Da naam kan nnala alega yen paa yeri yaa

Kanbongkai ale jam tateng la taa nam yega yega la

Wa yee yee

Kanbongka dek ale nyin Dogning la teti daa nam yega yegala

A yaa yaa aba ba ba…

Ka le jam te tengka la ta koma nam yega

Kanbongka dek ale nyin dogning la teti daa nam yega yegala

A yaa yaa aba ba ba…

Ka le jam te tengka la ta koma nam yega yega ya

Nya taa dogdem ala dueni wa paa la yega yega

Ayee yee

Ni nya taa dogdem ale dueni wa vuuta

A yaa yaa aba ba ba ba…

Ni nya taa dodgem ale dueni wa vuuta naa wom

Yee yee ni nya ta dodgem ala dueni wa vuuttee

We have suffered, really suffered

We have run, run a lot

The slave raider has caused us to suffer a lot

We have suffered a lot

Just look at how our people have suffered

We have suffered a lot

We are not nearer home so that we can at least drink some water

We shall suffer like this till we get home

Because the slave raider entered our land,

We have really suffered

The slave raider who entered Basiik has caused us to suffer

Since the slave raider entered our land,

Our fathers have suffered

Our fathers have suffered a lot

We are suffering this way till we get home

Look, our people have done new things

They have done exploits

This song is performed by women. The lead singer starts by singing the first stanza while the rest of the women respond to the subsequent lines

which normally serve as the chorus. Some parts of the song are sometimes repeated several times depending on the personal preference of the lead singer. The subject of suffering recurs in the song with specific reference to how their fathers have suffered. Memories of suffering as expressed in the song reflect both a physical, emotional and a psychological experience. On the physical level, community memories capture how captives were often compelled to walk long distances en route to slave markets and to the coast. The Salaga slave market is often cited in oral narratives within these communities as the place where slaves captured during raids were sold.[1]

Writing within the context of Sahel region of West Africa, historian Claude Meillassoux has pointed out how "capture and the slave trade set in motion a process through which the captive was rendered extraneous and thus prepared for his her state as an absolute alien in the society into which he or she was delivered".[2] According to Meillassoux," the value of the captive increased with distance which became an insurmountable barrier to escape"[3] because, almost invariably, most captives came from far away.

[1] Field work conducted within the Bulsa and Kasena communities often revealed memories about the Salaga slave market. Historian Akosua A. Perbi, confirms this during her field work in Ghana. See Akosua A. Perbi, *A History of Indigenous Slavery in Ghana: From the 15th to the 19th Century* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004), pp. 41-58. They may have known about Salaga, but did they have memories.

[2]Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*: *The Womb of Iron and Gold* (London: The Athlon Press, 1986),p.67

[3] Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, p.67

Plate 17. A foot trail in Salaga believed to have been used by captives from the Bulsa and Kasena areas to the Salaga market. This location is now a tourist site. Photo: Author

The suffering that the song alludes to, would almost invariably include the trauma of capture and the fact that a substantial proportion of captives often subsequently died as a consequence of hunger, thirst, disease and fatigue. Most of the time captives had to contend with the harshness of the weather coupled with the fact they were also exposed to wild animals. The trauma of having to deal with both human and animal predators constitutes suffering and "suffering a lot".

The song does not only lament the suffering brought about by the slave raider, but articulates the intensity of the suffering and people's inability to deal with it. The inexpressibility of this emotional pain is captured in phrases like "we have suffered a lot", "the slave raider has caused us to suffer a lot", "we have really suffered", "and our fathers have suffered". These lines reinforce the fact that most of the time; words are an inadequate medium to convey the emotions of trauma.

The song's incessant reference to the suffering of the collectivity captured in retrospect could also reflect on memories of how their forebears

were often put to exploitative and oppressive labour by slave masters after being sold within the internal slave systems. There is evidence within the scholarly literature to suggest that a kind of plantation slavery did exist within the Gold Coast where northern labour was exploited.[1] Raymond E. Dummett has established that northern slaves constituted a significant part of the work force within the Akan-Adangbe area in which these slaves were used in the oil palm plantations for the local economy. [2] The song again expresses the theme of individual and communal flight because of this suffering. "We have run, run a lot", is indicative of how communities were always in motion. The songs are however, silent on a definite sense of direction or destination. The lack of a discernible direction and destination is a traumatic experience. These cultures were always running away from something, not really sure what was ahead. Their running also reveals ways in which the powerful, represented as the slave raider, was often able to deprive the weak and vulnerable of the power to control their destinies. Running also reveals the lack of choice on the part of the vulnerable to determine the direction of their lives.

This theme of suffering as a communal experience is further expressed in song # 62 of the Kasem texts. The song says,

De yaara ywoo

Dé yaara ywoo

Dé yaara ywoo

[1] Larry W. Yarak for example, has examined slave holding by persons of mixed African and European heritage in the West African coastal town of Elmina. Yarak does confirm that a substantial proportion of these slaves were brought from northern Ghana. Most of these slaves he has argued were mainly used as artisans and laborers in a kind of local plantation system. For a detailed study see Larry W. Yarak, "West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slave Owners of Elmina", *Ethno History,* Vol.36.No.1 (1989), pp.50-51.

[2] See Raymond E. Dumett, "The Work of Slaves in the Akan and Adangme Regions in Ghana in the Nineteenth Century, in Stephanie Beswick and Jay Spaulding(eds) *African Systems of Slavery* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2010), pp.67-98.

Dé yaara naa nabwona bia yaare ywoo

Dé yaare ywoo

Dé yaara ywoo

N yaara naa nabwona bia yaare ywoo

N yaa ze toŋe naa ba ta maga

N bugi naa ba ta maga

Nasara tu ka wa go nɔɔna ywoo

Kanbɔn-zwono ko wa go nɔɔna teo wone

We have suffered oo

We have suffered oo

Offspring of the poor have suffered

We have suffered oo

We have suffered oo, offspring of the poor have suffered

When you work, they beat

When you are tired, they still beat

The Whiteman came and said I should kill people

The Asante came and said I should kill people in the town

This song is a dirge sung by men. Its tone and mood are solemn and it conveys a sense of grief and anguish. The central metaphor in this song is predicated on the collective sentiments on suffering brought about by the slave raider. What is significant in the song is its reference to suffering brought upon “offspring of the poor”. Offspring of the poor in the song reflects the ways in which the defenceless and vulnerable were the most affected by capture and enslavement. This is also one song that appears to project and lament the conditions of oppression under internal slavery. The lines,

When you work, they beat

When you are tired, they still beat

offer an insight into the how the captive eventually settled into the daily routine of slave life and reveals the condition of powerlessness of the victim in relation to his owner. The song's reference to work is significant in that it reveals the condition and plight of the vulnerable in relation to his life of struggle within the context of oppression under slavery. Work within this context is transformed from a useful productive force into an instrument of oppression. Work is used here as an institutionalised arrangement for appropriating and exploiting labour from a vulnerable group. These lines in the song are informative, given that the bulk of slaves within this period were retained internally for use within Ghana. The extensive use of northern labour within the internal slave system, especially during the latter part of the nineteenth century, is well documented.

The image of the captive in the song is that of a commercial tool and an object of exploitation. Images of oppression are reflected in the slave being beaten in the course of work. The song thus offers insights into the nature of oppression seen in the display of power by the slave raider and owner and his ability to control another through the whip. Whipping is thus used as a form of social control and domination. The song thus brings into sharp focus the terror of arbitrary beating and the humiliation associated with oppression within the context of enslavement and reveals the use of naked force as a basis for master servant relationship. Beating, as the song clearly expresses, evokes images of the whip mostly associated with plantation slavery. It thus suggests that the use of the whip and beating to enforce slave compliance were not just a distinctive feature of transatlantic plantation slavery, but was also very much the condition of slavery within Africa. As Orlando Patterson has reminded us, "there is no slave holding society where the whip was not considered an indispensable instrument".[1]Reference to "they" in the song may refer to either slave raider or slave owner or both.

[1] Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p.4.

In articulating the painful memories of enslavement within the collectivity, we are often confronted with songs referring to both individual and collective tragedy. In song # 63 of the Kasem texts for example, we are again presented with a song bemoaning the plight of an individual-Adoa. [1]The song says,

Adoa we o ba meero laga

Adoa we o ba meero laga
Adoa we o ba meero laga
Gaszaare nà tu dɛ ne dé wa ta mo
Dé yage nabwona bia taa duri ba seiga
Adoa we o ba meero laga owoo
Adoa we o ba meero laga
Kanbɔn-zwona ná nwoŋi dé wa ta mo
Fela wa mage teo pa ko yare tɛ

Adoa says he needs no food

Adoa says he needs no food
When Gazaare comes we shall shoot arrows
Children of the poor have to run and hide
Adoa says he needs no food
Adoa says he needs no food
When the Asante comes out we shall shoot arrows
The Whiteman wants me to blast the town

Although the song appears on the surface to bemoan the plight of an individual as seen in the first two lines, the focus is shifted in the subsequent lines to include the voices of the collectivity. The common denominator in both song # 62 and # 63 is the subject of suffering bought upon people as a consequence slave-raiding. Juxtaposing these two songs, three principal characters relative to the experience of slavery and the slave trade within the northern Ghanaian collective imagination emerge. These are

[1] The name Adoa is given to a person born on a raining day among the Kasena

Gazare, the Asante and the Whiteman. These characters occupy a significant space within the collective consciousness of these communities. Gazare is particularly known as one of the Zabarima slave raiders who terrorised these communities and his name has thus come to be associated with oppression within their collective consciousness. In these two songs, the Asante and the Whiteman are also given prominence. Although the Whiteman's role in the enslavement process appears problematic for reasons already mentioned, communities awareness of his influence is nonetheless still significant. Reference to the Whiteman may transcend colour to include the often subtle nuances of power relations that communities knew existed during the course of transatlantic commerce. The lines,

> The Whiteman came and said I should kill people
> The Asante came and said I should kill people in the town

suggest the level of influence communities perceived to have come from these principal parties. Memories of Asante's role in the enslavement process are incontrovertible. Literature on Asante's use of northern labour as slaves and subsequently as migrant workers during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century is extensive. Historians Gareth Austin and Raymond E. Dummet for example have shown how northern labour became crucial within the Gold Coast and Asante areas especially during the nineteenth century.[1]

The songs under discussion make reference to a more generic term - the *Kanbong* or slave raider - and this sometimes includes the Asante. The *Kanbong* was originally used to refer to anybody from any coastal region within Ghana. Within the context of the slave trade however, its meaning has

[1] See Gareth Austin, Labour, *Land and Capital in Ghana: From Slavery to Free Labour in Asante, 1807-1956* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2005), p.2, pp. 46-71. Also see Larry W. Yarak, "West African Coastal Slavery in the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the Afro-European Slave Owners of Elmina", *Ethno History and Africa*, vol.36. No.1. (winter, 1989), pp.50-51. Also see Raymond Dumett "The Work of Slaves in the Akan and Adangme Regions in Ghana in the Nineteenth Century", pp. 67-98.

come to include the Asante slave dealer or slave raider.[1] The term *Kanbong* and "gwala" have come to assume ways in which the Asante and his role in the slave trade have been used as metaphors within these cultures. Although the *Kanbong* may sometimes refer to the Asante, one of my informants during an interview was quick to add that not all Asantes can be classified within the general category of the *Kanbong*, who within their collective imagination was the slave raider. According to him, some Asantes came to northern Ghana to transact legitimate business, so it would therefore be wrong to assume that all Asantes were slave raiders.[2] The Asante is represented in these songs as the new form of "white" domination.

The song "Adoa says he needs no food" does not only lament the sense of tragedy of the slave experience but provides a window into both individual and collective resistance efforts to the plight of enslavement. The song's tone does suggest that people were often prepared to make personal sacrifices in order to secure freedom from predation by denying themselves of their basic needs such as food. The lines,

> When Gazare comes, we shall shoot arrows
> When the Asante comes we shall shoot arrows

attest to the tenacity of resisting oppression through struggle as seen in the shooting of arrows. The will to confront oppression through fighting seen in the "shooting of arrows" does not in any way suggest collective passivity and docility. On the contrary, it suggests courage and fortitude even in the midst of violent predation of the vulnerable and oppressed.

Another dirge that laments the tragedy of enslavement through the image of suffering is the song # 7 of the Bulsa texts. In its performance, the

[1]See Emmanuel Saboro, The *Kanbong* Motif in Bulsa Folksongs of Resistance to Enslavement. (M.Phil. Dissertation, University of Cape Coast, 2009). Also see Emmanuel, Saboro, "Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Triumph: Memories of the Slave Trade among the Bulsa of Ghana in Alice Bellangamba, Sandra Greene and Martin Klein (eds.), *Bitter Legacy: African Slavery Past and Present* (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener, 2013), pp.133-147.

[2] Interview with Weimegura Pwadura in his house on the 10th March 2012 in Navrongo

performers' facial expression evokes an ambience that heightens the theme of suffering and the general sense of destitution. The song says,

Ababatu, Wa Sum Nye Mu

Ababatu, wa sum nye mu

Ate m nya, mi ban weeni

Wariya, allege ababatu ale

Wa tommu ayen ba nye

Mu te ba nya, wa sum

Nye te be nya

Babatu has really dealt with me and I know

But I have not said anything

But Babatu and his troops have decided to deal with me

He has really dealt with me for people to see

In this song, we are presented with a direct lamentation addressing Babatu one of the slave raiders. Of all the slave raiders who terrorised these communities, Babatu's name is always associated with very sad memories because of the level of individual and communal devastation attributed to him. He is regarded as the most ruthless and oppressive slave raider within the historical literature.[1] In this song, we are again reminded of Babatu's predatory behaviour in very strong emotional terms. The song's reference to Babatu's "dealing" is instructive. The metaphor of having been dealt with suggests various levels of individual and communal devastation. What is evident in the song is the inability to adequately express Babatu's "dealing". The line "But Babatu and his troops have decided to deal with me" goes further to reveal that the process of captivity and enslavement was a collective activity; reference to *troops* reveals the ways in which enslavement was much more of a shared and well-coordinated effort. Public humiliation in the last line of the song "for people to see" echoes here of public floggings in

[1] Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana,* pp. 20-24.

American slavery or public executions in some European societies before 1850.[1]

The theme of suffering is carried further in the Kasena song # 78. This song is performed by two men. In its performance, one of them acts as the lead singer while the other responds as a chorus. They each drum on a calabash to produce a time line and a rhythmic pattern. The song says,

Nabiinu wo tane de gwala se n jeini yei !
Nanyɔm wa go debam ye gwala kaana baro
Nabiinu wó tane de gwala se n jeini yei naa
Eei ne kawea baro nanyɔm wa go debam
Woa ywoo
N nam wó tane de gwala se n jeini yeim

Wonnu ná wora ko chula bu nyena wɛ
A we tuu wó yare kwori vale-yeilla wone
Logo maama jei se yeim ywoo
Debam tuu-bala yare kwori vale yeilla wone
Logo maama jei se yeim

Eei zem maŋa ye nanyɔm wa go debam ye
Gwala kaana baro
Nabiinu wó tane de gwala se n jeini yei ywoo
Ei nam yage pa kwei a pa n nwoŋi
Abam yina mo su yia
Bo nwoŋi bo pɛɛle tega
Yina de nam ba jege yere
Ei zem maŋa ye nanyɔm wa go debam ye gwala baro
Nabiinu wó tane de gwala se n jeini yei ywoo

[1] For examples of slave public floggings see Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 1844, (Reprinted: Memphis, Tennessee, 2010), pp.18-20.

Who will challenge the slave raider

And remain the same?

Thirst will kill us, slave raider husband of women

Who will challenge the slave raider and remain the same?

Yes, Kawea's husband, thirst will kill us

But who will challenge the slave raider and remain the same?

A lion will roar from the valleys

I say an elephant will roar from the valleys

The world is in trouble

Our elephant will roar from the valleys

The world is in trouble

Ei today thirst will kill us

Slave raider husband of women

Will a human being challenge the slave raider and remain the same?

Let me give it to your heart

Your eyes are full of tears

Tears that are nameless

Ei today thirst will kill us

Slave raider husband of women

Will a human being challenge the slave raider and remain the same?

The song begins with a rhetorical question that laments the practical difficulty in dealing with the forces of oppression. "Who will challenge the slave raider and remain the same" is a question that is suggestive of the possible consequences and the price for daring to stand up against the forces of enslavement. The song suggests that resistance can thus be a liberating and empowering force and need not necessarily be negative in terms of its costs or effects. The song in effect, demonstrates an awareness of the complex dynamics of power and the consequences of challenging this power. The song seeks to suggest that the task of challenging the forces of

enslavement with the view to overturning the *status quo* is a monumental task. This is evident in the fact that the lines alluding to the possible challenge of the slave raider are repeated four times within the song (line 2, 4, 12 and 18).

The song introduces a thirst motif. This thirst motif is significant and revealing. Indeed, in some of the songs, the thirst motif recurs. In this particular song, the slave raider is addressed directly and confronted with the issue of thirst. Specific lines in the song such as,

Thirst will kill us, slave raider husband of women
Yes, Kawea's husband, thirst will kill us
Ei today thirst will kill us

are illustrative of the anguish and pain inherent in a people's desire for one of the basic yearnings of human life. Life is impossible without water so, enslavement is like depriving people of water. On the physical level, thirst is a natural human instinct that is common to humankind. Given the context in which slave raiding and captivity often occurred, it is plausible that captives were often deprived of the most basic necessities of life including water. On a deeper and symbolic level, the lamentation and thirst for water is symbolic of the yearning for freedom from oppression.

What is also informative in the song is its reference to the slave raider as "husband of women" and more important as Kawea's[1] husband. This is suggestive of the possible access the slave raider had to women within the collectivity. The slave raider's power within the collectivity gave him access and control over anything including women. The access to *women motif* within the context of slavery then goes to suggest that the images often projected within scholarly discourse about the slave master's access to women within plantation slavery are not unique.

[1] A name given to a person born in the afternoon among the Kasena

This song suggests that sex slavery was also very much a feature of African internal slavery. Kawea in the text is the name of a woman and probably suggest that the slave raider had access to this particular woman. The song thus reinforces the power dynamics within which slaving occurred. The use of illegitimate force and coercion of the powerful to deprive people of things that were valuable to them included the disruption of existing family structures. The song also reveals the vulnerability of women and the inability of their husbands to defend and protect them. On the metaphorical level, women are like water- they allow human survival through reproduction across generations. The song also suggests that the slave raider had access to more than one woman thus emphasising the slave raider's wealth and power. In this song, we are again presented with animal symbolic behaviour reflected in the images of the lion and the elephant. Reference to,

A lion will roar from the valleys
I say an elephant will roar from the valleys

reveals the ways in which these animals in the text are defined in ways in which they epitomize fear and insecurity within the collectivity. The images that these animals convey are those of predation and aggression. The roaring of these animals within the communities is enough to suggest that the world was indeed "in trouble". The symbolism and choice of these animals is significant. The lion is a carnivore while the elephant is a grazer. The lion is thus the predator/raider and the elephant the raided but with power to resist given its size. In the section that follows, I discuss how communities often adapted and responded to the violation of their communal space. This was achieved through physical flight as in running away in order to elude capture. The songs in this section also reveal the subject of psychological flight as in the attempt to imagine and occupy a psychological space symbolizing freedom.

Flight as a means of adaptation and survival

Historical literature suggests that in Africa, there is evidence that victims of slave raids often fled from their oppressors, sometimes into caves and rocky outgrowths to escape from their enslavers.[1] Flight or permanent relocation was therefore a common survival pattern among certain communities who had to deal with the threats of enslavement.[2]As Paul Lovejoy has asserted "flight could be –and was in Africa—a major form of resistance, largely unconnected with the violence of armed struggle".[3]

These songs offer some new insights into how cultures often negotiated their oppression by adopting certain survival mechanisms, including running away. Within the collective imagination of these communities, running away in the face of predation and capture was not always an act of cowardice but an attempt to ensure communal survival sometimes in the midst of the display of sophisticated weapons used by slave raiders. Individual and communal flight was thus a survival strategy and this obviously became the only alternative left for those who could not openly confront their captors.

Flight as a possible survival strategy is reflected in songs such as " the slave raider has come to attack me ", he attacked me and I am running" (#1), " we are running away while abandoning our children" "i am running for my life",(#2), "we are running away from the slave raider"(#3), "They came and drove us away"(#6), "we have run, run a lot" (# 10), " I am walking and running"(#13), "when Gazare removes his cutlass and shows it up, people run into hiding"(# 73), and " when they pursue you, fly, Just run till you reach a sacred place"(#81).

[1]Dennis D. Cordell, "The Myth of Inevitability and Invincibility: Resistance to Slavers and the Slave Trade in Central Africa, 1850-1910", in Sylviane A. Diouf (ed) *Fighting the Slave Trade; West African Strategies* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), pp.33-49.
[2]Cordell, "The Myth of Inevitability and Invincibility" pp.33-49.
[3]Paul E. Lovejoy, "Fugitive Slaves: Resistance to Slavery in the Sokoto Caliphate" in *Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean, and Afro-American History* (ed) (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), pp.71-91.

The lines from the songs quoted above suggest that victims were running because of the attack from the slave raider. Song # 1 for example alludes to the fact that as a consequence of this attack, the individual no longer has a place to stay. The song also provides a powerful lens into how the apparent misfortune of an individual could lead to mockery and humiliation, and indeed reveals how a person's marginal status within the community can be ridiculed. The rest of the songs also convey a sense of desperation inherent in the desire to elude capture and to survive predation.

Although the songs clearly articulate the theme of flight with specific variants such as "running" away from slave raiders, the songs are silent on where victims were often running to. What is clear however is the fact that, flight was used as a means of ensuring individual and communal survival in the midst of predation. Rather than willingly surrendering themselves and opting for voluntary enslavement, there were others within these communities who chose to elude capture by running, sometimes into caves and other rocky outgrowths (as shown in the picture below) or even sometimes into the unknown.

Plate 18. A rocky topography within these cultures that sometimes served as hiding places for people running away from slave raiders. Photo: Author

Some of the songs also suggest the real and symbolic quest for rest and freedom often expressed through the home metaphor and this can be seen as a means through which cultures often adapted and survived their predation.

Home as a metaphorical space

The metaphor of "dying and going home" is a recurrent motif in slave songs. Within the African American experience for example, slave songs often articulated the theme of dying and going home as a symbolic quest for freedom from oppression and reflect the notions of death and the afterlife. Some of these slave songs were often coded and it was often difficult for slave masters to understand them. Most of these slave songs later metamorphosed into what became known as "Negro songs" or Spirituals.[1]

The spirituals have thus come to constitute an important part of the African American experience of slavery and resistance. Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Nellie McKay[2] have pointed out, that the spirituals were not just songs that were sung in ritual worship but also offered a kind of psychological escape to the slaves from the cruelty and inhumanity of slavery. They have for example argued that songs like "This World is Not My Home" were songs that "offered its singer-hearer alike visions of a peaceful realm beyond the one in which they labored".[3] Through these songs, slaves also sought to assert their humanity and often drew strength from the lyrics. Within the collective memories of the Kasena and Bulsa for example, the home

[1] The Negro spirituals were religious songs first compiled by Richard Allen, a church leader, in 1801 and have since become an integral part of the African American music repertoire. Frederick Douglass, an ex-slave who later became active in the abolitionist cause after his escape from bondage, has intimated in his narrative how slaves often used songs on the plantation to express their deepest sorrow. *See Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass: 1884, Reprinted: Memphis Tennessee, 2010). Themes* in these songs often centred on survival, escape and hope. The historian Lawrence W. Levine provides very useful insights into slave singing and its relationship to resistance to slavery and oppression. For a detailed study see Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*, *Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom,* 30th Anniversary Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007),pp. 1-55.
[2] See Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Nellie McKay, *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature* (ed), 2n ed (New York: W.W.Norton and Company, 2004), pp. 8-106.
[3] Gates and McKay, pp. 8-106.

metaphor again emerges in a number of songs, suggesting that the quest for freedom through the metaphor of death and going home and the notions of the afterlife is a common trope in oppressed groups. The difference is that for American plantation slaves, home was an area they were torn away from or a spiritual and symbolic place. The Bulsa and Kasena were at home. They feared not a master's whip, but a slaver's rope.

Songs # 8 and # 10 of the Buli texts and # 81 and # 91 of the Kasem texts have hints on the home motif. Specific lines in these songs express suffering and destitution as consequence of enslavement and clearly express the real and symbolic quest for freedom articulated through the home metaphor. These songs not only allude to the desire of getting home as a symbolic quest for freedom but also reveal ways in which oppression is reflected through the predatory activities of the slave raider within the collectivity. Song # 8 is particularly insightful given the details it reveals about how communities often perceived and articulated their plight of enslavement. This song is usually performed by women numbering about six with a lead singer who is usually responsible for providing a lead by singing the first stanza. The rest respond by repeating the subsequent lines several times depending upon the preference of the lead singer. The song says,

Ne nya ka kom ale ta me alege mwoota me adom nying
Ne nya ka kom ale ta me alege mwoota me adom nying
Aye yeee
Akanbonga, nya ka kom ale tame alege mwoota me adom nying nya
Ayaa yaa abababa

Kanbong ka dek ale juele ate koa chuala alege mwoota
Me adom nying
Aye yee kanbong ka dek le jam taa tengle nya mwoota a koaa…..

Ta yienya ba moate dela ayen puuri nina
Basiik bisinya ta a nam ka nnala paari yeri yaaa?

I am feeling cold and hungry

Look! I am feeling cold and hungry

Slave raider! Look! I am feeling cold and hungry

The slave raider who entered our land brought cold

We are not nearer home so that we can at least drink some water

The household of Basiik, look!

Are we going to suffer like this before getting home?

The first stanza of the song presents a lamentation by a lone voice through the cold and hunger metaphor suggesting that slave raiding created conditions under which people became exposed to various forms of human indignity. The cold and hunger metaphor delineates the ways in which people were often exposed to both the harshness of the weather and deprivation of the means of sustenance. The song alludes to the specific household of Basiik. Basiik is an important geographical space within the collective consciousness of both the Bulsa and Kasena in that, it is one of the locations often cited in oral narratives accounts as having "lost its entire people to slave raids". Whether this assertion is often an exaggeration or not, it is difficult to tell. It is in this regard that Basiik tends to recur in most of the songs memorialising the slave experience within these cultures.

Aside the specificity of Basiik, the song goes on to lament the frustration of not being nearer home so that victims can drink some water. Home as expressed in the song may, not refer to any specific geographical location as captives during raids were probably totally oblivious of any sense of destination. It may however suggest somewhere beyond a natural location. It also suggests a sense of belonging: past social relationships, and environment. Home as used in the song is the symbolic quest for freedom, a place of finding rest and peace. What is also of great symbolic value in the song is its reference to drinking water as captured in,

We are not nearer home so that
We can at least drink some water

The desire for water does not only suggest the physical need to quench one's thirst but also alludes to the significance of the ritual of drinking water as a prelude to a safe passage to the world beyond the natural realm. In African traditional religious thought and philosophy, the ritual drink before death is of great symbolic value. In most African societies, the act of giving water to the dying is a sacred duty and a family would normally mourn its omission. In this song, the people are thus lamenting the absence of this significant ritual, thus constituting the denial of a religious and cultural imperative as a consequence of enslavement.

In song # 81 of the Kasem texts, reference is made to running and flying to reach a sacred place. A sacred place in this song is suggestive of the ways in which these communities often adapted to their situation by exploiting cultural and religious spaces to their advantage.

The home motif is carried further in song # 91 of the Kasem texts. In this particular song, an ancestor by name Aveiru is addressed to convey a message home. Whereas in the previous two songs communities were lamenting the distance to getting home, in this song, the notion of home is seen as the hereafter. In the song, Aveiru is killed in battle and being asked to convey message home; to the world of the ancestors. This reveals ways in which cultures often conceptualised death and the hereafter as places of finding rest.

The songs also suggest that some people within the collectivity soon became tired of running and so they also fought. The songs I discuss in the section that follows capture memories of how people also fought to redeem themselves from the yoke of oppression. Collective resistance was predicated on war and violent confrontation. Although these confrontations always

resulted in significant casualties, communities invariably gained in the end. Freedom was achieved.

War and violent confrontation

The songs that deal with resistance to enslavement within these communities present an interesting narrative. There are attempts by these cultures to rewrite their story. A number of questions thus emerge from these attempts. Were they always victims? Do they always want to be perceived as victims? The section that follows attempts to tease out themes that seek to overturn the images of victimhood into those of victory and triumph over tragedy.

The processes of enslavement within these communities, as Chapter Three sought to demonstrate, were always initiated through violence. Violence was thus a necessary and legitimate response from communities under the threats of predation and enslavement. Reflecting on the nature of enslavement within Africa, historian Lovejoy has pointed out that, "the legitimization of enslavement ... reinforced a tendency towards war and other forms of violence".[1] This observation by Lovejoy finds validation within the context of this discussion as a significant number of the songs refer to war and violent confrontation against the forces of enslavement. These songs often evoke images of bloodshed, shooting of arrows, fighting a battle, "eating the medicine for death" and the use of animal imagery epitomizing strength and resilience. War as a response to the threats of freedom is not entirely new. Nations and states have had to use war sometimes as a necessary response to the threat and violation of their collective sovereignty.

Within the specific context of this study, we see the manifestation of war and violent confrontation revealed through songs such as " Our

[1] Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, p. 35.

fathers have driven away the slave raider"(# 22), " The gunpowder is finished"(# 24), "We have eaten the medicine for death"(# 25), "Strength is more than charms"(#26), "Stop and see"(# 27), "If I conquer one"(# 28), "Don't bother them"(# 32), "Let's chop each other into pieces"(# 34), " Let someone be deceived to follow and die in the bush"(#33),"Let someone be deceived to raise an axe"(# 37), " I am fighting the battle alone"(#40), "Our people are fiercer than the slave raider"(#41), "The slave raider has removed his sandals, we shall also remove a cutlass"(# 73), " When they move out and meet the slave raider inside Pasaa"(# 86), "Strong men, strongmen, let us meet each other on the battle field"(# 90), and "They fought till they got to Teyolo"(# 92).

All these songs reveal a certain pattern: these can be seen as those that call to war, those that display bravery and valour and finally those that celebrate victory. I focus on specific songs because of their emphasis on collective action and because during performance, these tend to elicit deeper emotional responses from the audience. Because of the different but often related contextual issues, they each reveal, it is significant to look at each song into much detail. One song that clearly expresses the subject war as a resistance strategy is the song, ''Let someone be deceived to raise an axe". The song says,

Ba paasi waai te wa zak liak
Ba paasi waai te wa zak liak
Liak nya zimm
Ba paasi waai te wa ga yeri
Ga kum baliŋ cheŋ be

Let someone be deceived
To raise an axe
An axe stained with blood
Then he will be deceived, go home,
Cry and get lost

This song is a war song performed by men with drum accompaniment. The drum is usually used to produce a time line (a recurring rhythmic pattern of fixed duration or time span). The significance of this time line is to clarify the regulative beat which is a common feature of rhythmic organization in most African traditions.[1] In the song, the slave raider is challenged to initiate war and he would surely regret the move. The main weapon of warfare here is the axe. The central metaphor of the song is the overriding image of bloodshed and violence. The image of "an axe stained with blood" is of great symbolic significance. Blood within the context of this song connotes violence and aggressive resistance suggesting that resistance was predicated on great individual and collective sacrifice.

In articulating the subject of communal bravery and resilience, we are reminded in song # 86 of the Kasena texts, of the fighting spirit and valour of the people of Achaanea, and Ayaara[2] who did not remain passive but fought to redeem themselves from the yoke of slave raiding and oppression. The song says,

Ba na nɔn nɔn ba baa nuŋi gwala pasaa ne

Ba na nɔn nɔn ba baa nuŋi gwala pasaa ne

Nɔn nɔn yeiri Achanea

Debam mo vere taa de jaa vu kukula

Ba vere paare ba tane de pɛɛro naa

Ayaarania ganɛ wo laŋa ne

Ba tan de fera maa ke mare mare nee

Sam yiga gwala maa ke mare mare nee

Debam mo mage naa de jaa vu kukula

Ayaarania ganɛ wo laŋa ne

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[1] See Ronald M. Rassner, "Narrative Rhythms in AGiryama Ngano: Oral Patterns and Musical Structures", in Isidore Okpewho (ed.), *The Oral Performance in Africa* (ed (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1990), p.228. Also see J.H. Kwabena Nketia, *The Music of Africa* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), pp.131-132.

[2] Achaanea and Ayaara are locations in Kayoro in the Kasena area. Kayoro is up north of the Ghana Burkina Faso border

When they move out and meet the slave raider inside Pasaa

When they move out and meet the slave raider inside Pasaa

No one knows Achaanea

We fought them through to Kukula

We took over titles and confiscated their guns

The people of Ayaara are buffalos on the battlefield

They and the fra are in readiness

The distant slave raider is in readiness

We fought them till Kukula

The people of Ayaara are buffalos on the battlefield

This song is performed by women in Kayoro and expresses a militant tone. The song refers to three significant variables: fighting, taking of titles and confiscating of guns. These variables clearly define the ways and context in which resistance over oppression was undertaken, through aggressive warfare. The emphasis on the collectivity expressed in "we fought", and "we took over titles" reveals ways in which collaborative efforts were necessary in resisting oppression. Taking of titles and confiscating guns is suggestive of valour and bravery even in the midst of predation. The allusion to Kukula is significant. Kukula is a significant sacred space within the Kasena cultural landscape: a river deity located in Kayoro in the Kasena cultural area. This deity is held in great reverence because of the belief in its ability to help anyone who comes to it with a problem ranging from childlessness, the desire for material prosperity and so on. In the days of slavery, oral narrative accounts suggest that natives who were pursued by slave raiders often run to Kukula to seek for protection from enslavement.[1] In the song, the people allude to fighting all the way to Kukula where titles and guns were

[1] E. Saboro, Field Notes, 2012, 2013.

confiscated thus suggesting a kind of redemptive role played by this deity in securing their freedom.

Another song that projects the subject of war is song # 90 of the Kasem text. The song presents a challenge to battle. It is usually performed by men and accompanied by drums producing a rhythmic pattern. The expression of emotion in calling forth "strong men, strong men lets meet each other on the battle field" is an expression and reinforcement of the militant strength and disposition of the group. The song says,

Miatu Miatu

Miatu miatu
Nam yein se de jeiri
Chena bwolo ne

Miatu miatu
Nam yein se de jeiri
Chena bwolo ne
Kanbonga lɔge peo
Debam ba peo kwori cheiga
Nasara lɔge peo
Debam ba peo kwori cheiga

Miatu miatu
Nam yein se de jeiri
Chena bwolo ne

Strong men, strong men
Strong men, strong men
Let us meet on the battlefield

Strong men, strong men
Let us meet on the battlefield

The slave raider has given a gun shot
We do not listen to gun shots
The Whiteman has given a gun shot
We do not listen to gun shots

Strong men, strong men
Let us meet on the battlefield to know who is who

The song invites the strong to the battle field. Invitation to the battle field is indicative of courage and bravery even in the mist of tragedy. The people do not appear deterred by the gun shots of the slave raider but are prepared to confront his oppression head-on. What is also instructive in the song is the association of the slave raider and the Whiteman with guns, thus demonstrating that communities were often aware of the direct or indirect influence of these parties in facilitating their enslavement. What is also important is the people's resolve to challenge this oppression even in the midst of sophisticated weaponry.

War and violence as a resistance strategy is again expressed in the Buli song # 34 of the Bulsa texts. The song is performed by men and during its re-enactment especially during the feok festival, one would notice the men dressed in war regalia, and brandishing of war implements accompanied by war drums. The audience is often drawn to its emotional and warlike feeling through the lead singer's dignified steps and the call and response pattern which some of the stanzas normally assume. The song says,

A Boni Chaaba, Ti Boni Chaab Yoo
A boni chaaba, ti boni chaab yoo
Fidan chiiba zaani ti boni chaab
A boni chaaba, ti boni chaab yoo
Fi dan chiib zaani ti boni chaab
Nankoŋbaliiuk la nak ku a chali
Naara katuak, fi dan togsi

Yegyega, ku gebi keribi, tama
Me siaya, ni dan chiib zaani ti boni chaab

Let's chop each other into pieces
If you are brave and stand
We will chop each other into pieces
If you stand we will chop each other into pieces
We are like the millipede, even if we
Are wounded, we will fight on and not surrender.
We are like vinegar made from the stalks of early millet
If you put so much in your soup, it will be too
Concentrated and you will not be able to eat it

We have agreed that if you are brave
To fight us; we will chop each other into Pieces

The overriding theme in the song is centred on violent confrontation as a means to challenge oppression. The image of "chopping" each other into pieces conveys very strong emotional associations to warfare. The song expresses a simile carved in animal symbolic behaviour expressed in the lines,

We are like the millipede,
Even if we are wounded,
We will fight on and not surrender.

The song's use of the millipede as a metaphor is significant. The significance of the millipede is revealed in its associated images of slow movement, adeptness, and impregnability and hence its reference in the songs suggests a resistance strategy rather than weakness and vulnerability. The millipede is a medium to large sized invertebrate found under rocks and in decaying logs all around the world. When under threat from predators, the millipede would normally recoil and resurface after the perceived threat is

over. The outer skin of the millipede is also covered in a thick layer making it impregnable to external predators. By comparing themselves with the millipede in this song, the people within this culture are in effect alluding to the positive attributes of the millipede to themselves. These are the qualities of impregnability and skill.

Their association with the slow movement of the millipede should not however be misconstrued as a weakness but rather as a strategy over their oppression. The song also expresses an awareness of the possible consequences of violent resistance- awareness that there may be causalities in the cause of fighting for freedom. The line "we will fight and not surrender" is indicative of the collective will and resolve to challenge oppression at all cost. This song thus adds to existing body of knowledge and emphasizes the "legitimization of violence" as Lovejoy has suggested. The song also projects and sheds light on communal values of self sacrifice and resilience even in the midst of tragedy. A people may suffer indignities and oppression but remain resolute and their spirit not broken.

Animistic metaphors epitomizing bravery and resilience

A recurrent motif in some of the songs is the preponderance of animistic metaphors. The literary critic and musicologist Kwabena Nketia has noted that, within the context of Akan poetry, reference is made to a lot of animals and plants, because these animistic symbols "provide apt metaphors or similes, or compressed ways of reflecting upon social experience.[1] The cultures under review are predominantly a pastoral people and hunting is a major activity. As hunters, they are very familiar with the behavioural patterns of the animals they hunt and domesticate. As such, their songs tend to convey a sense of animal symbolic behaviour used in reflecting upon their social experiences as alluded to by Nketia. It is therefore common to see

[1] See Kwabena Nketia, "Akan Poetry", in Ulli. Beier (ed.) *Introduction to African literature: An Anthology of Critical Writing* (London: Longman, 1979), pp.23-33.

them linking the positive attributes of these animals to themselves while associating the negative ones to the slave raider. Themes expressed usually relate to strength, resilience, and bravery in the midst of predation. For example, we tend to find references to predators like the mice, cat, elephant, lion, the millipede and the leopard in these songs.

The Lion

Memories of resistance to enslavement are sometimes expressed in the songs referring to animals that appear indomitable. One such is the lion. The lion is often regarded as "the king of the African savannah" and lions have been celebrated throughout history for their courage and strength. They have an intimidating presence and are territorial in their orientation. In articulating collective memories of resistance, the lion is used as a metaphor. One particular song says,

Ba toŋ gbeŋle le ziim chorototo

Ba toŋ gbeŋle le ziim chorototo

Ayieta dokdem toŋ gbeŋle le ziim

Ba toŋ ka gbeŋ duok/diak

Dela ka dila te baa chaliya

They fought and killed a male lion

They fought and killed a lion and blood is flowing

Ayieta's household have fought and killed a lion with blood

They fought and killed a male lion that is why people are running

Women perform this song among the Bulsa. The song expresses glorification of the men and presents a romantic picture of a battle. The tone and mood is that of aggression. The song is rhythmical and onomatopoeic (chorototo signifying ways in which blood is pouring on the ground). The central metaphor in this song is predicated on battle against predation

through the image of the lion. In this song, the slave raider is represented as a male lion: a symbol of power, of strength and of might. The metaphor of the lion connotes oppression and predation. In spite of its indomitable nature however, the lion was “fought and killed”.

The metaphor of the lion is significant because it underscores the collective sense of courage and bravery with which victims of captivity challenged their oppression. It also adds heroic attributes to victims and puts them on a pedestal for their achievements .The symbol of the lion is also used probably to assert pride and reverse the image of victimhood to that of courage and cultural resilience in the midst of tragedy. Those raided thus take pride in their resistance using it to rewrite their history. A history of a new collective identity of victors who have transcended their tragedy through war.

The cultural response of overturning the image of victimhood into communal victory over predation is further expressed through the relationship between two “domestic enemies” of symbolic significance. In song # 43, for example we see an attempt by Bulsa to make this assertion. The song says,

Ŋooma poom de kook
Ŋooma poom de kook
Poom de kook
Poom de kook
Dogbiak laa pa ŋanta
Ayieta

Even if the mice are a hundred
Even if the mice are a hundred
Even a hundred
Even a hundred
The cat can stretch itself and catch them all

In the song, two significant animistic metaphors are revealed: The *mouse* and the *cat*. Although some people find mice to be less objectionable than rats, they nevertheless, cause significant damage within the household. Their greatest economic loss is not in how much they eat within the household, but how much gets thrown out due to the extensive damage they cause or the contamination that often arises as a result of their presence. The cat on the other hand is a domestic pet and has had a very long relation with humans. Domestic cats remain largely carnivorous, and their skill in killing household rodents including mice is well known. They are natural hunters, able to stalk prey and pounce with sharp claws and teeth. They are particularly effective at night, when their light-reflecting eyes allow them to see better than their prey. The metaphor of the mice and the cat within the context of slavery and resistance to enslavement is thus revealing. The song reflects on the role of the slave raider as mice whose activities within the collectivity are mischievous and destructive. Some of the songs discussed have already alluded to some of the destructive activities of the slave raider expressed in very strong emotional terms. These destructive activities of the slave raider notwithstanding, the song suggests that, victims were often able to counteract this predation. The lines,

> Even if the mice are a hundred
> The cat can stretch itself and catch them all

are informative. The intensification of the number hundred seen in its repeated form is of great symbolic value. Indeed, the symbolism and meaning of numbers have constituted an important part in the collective consciousness of humankind. The number hundred as used in the song though does not suggest a mystical connotation within this culture, does in a sense suggest the degree to which the numbers of slave raiders do not really matter as the ability to confront them. The skill and agility of the cat is seen in its ability to “stretch itself and catch” its prey. Within this context, the role of victim has been interchanged with the role of victor/predator. The

victim/prey versus predator/victor image then suggest that the relationship between these variants are not permanent but are dictated by circumstances and time. The cat as the hunter as the song suggests seems to win over the mice suggesting how timidity (a behavioral trait of mice can result in defeat.

The Elephant

In articulating memories of collective resistance, a recurrent motif that emerges in the songs is the overriding theme of communal synergy in confronting oppression. This is then reflected in the choice of formidable and fierce animals as symbolic representations. One such animal is the elephant. The elephant is of enormous size and great degree of stability. The metaphor of the elephant is thus of immense symbolic value. For example, in song # 44 we are presented with the image of the elephant as a formidable force that needs to be pushed down through collective effort. The song says,

Ba taam yanku ŋaa ŋnyiŋ daasi lonsi
Ba taam yanku ŋaa ŋnyiŋ daasi lonsi
Ba nak yanku, a nak yanku
Ba taam yanku ŋaa ŋnyiŋ
Le kua siŋ kama,
Ba taam yanku ŋaaŋnyiŋ daasi lonsi

They should go behind the elephant and push it down
They should beat the elephant
Beat the elephant
They should go behind it for it will go down
They should go behind the elephant and push it down

"They should go behind the elephant" is performed by men and in its performance, often repeated several times. The song reflects on how communal synergy is necessary in overcoming oppression. Going behind the

elephant to push it down is a call to the harnessing of collective efforts in challenging the institutionalised system of denying people their humanity. The people are confident that, in spite of the elephant's massive stature, communal effort and determination will surely contribute to the collapse of oppression. Overturning the victim/predator image, the symbol of the elephant again emerges. For example, in one instance, these cultures refer to the slave raider as an elephant and in another instance; they refer to themselves as elephants. The novelty in the song as a valid and interesting source of historical documentation is seen in the ways this particular song reveals the complexity of how raiders can become victims and vice versa. These songs also suggest that slavery sometimes creates uncertainty and thus imperil both victors and vanquished in the long term. This change of roles between victim and victor is again illustrated through song # 45. The song says,

Yabta kpaliŋ

Ba deri maa ko yomma
Ba deri maa ko yomma
Asiniensa bisa ka yabta
Yabta kpaliŋ ate kpaliŋ
Ba deri maa ko yomma

The fight is between elephants
They also killed slaves in the process
They also killed slaves in the process
Asiniensa children are elephants
The fight is between elephants
In the process, they also killed slaves

This song alludes to the fight for communal redemption and the consequence of resistance. In the act of securing their freedom, slaves were also killed in the process. In this song, the people of Asiniensa (Siniensa is a

specific location of Bulsa) see themselves as elephants and allude to the fact that the fight against communal oppression is a fight between elephants.

Asiniensa children are elephants
The fight is between elephants

By indicating that the fight is between elephants, communities are in effect suggesting that the role of victim and predator may not always remain the same. By these inferences, they attempt to carve a new image and identity for themselves not as oppressed groups who were always running and at the mercy of slave raiders but also as people who took their destinies into their own hands by challenging their oppression. This new sense of communal identity is reflected in memories of songs that depict victory and triumph.

Celebrating triumph over tragedy

Reflecting within the context of the impact of a slaving history in northern Ghana, Saidiya Hartman has asserted that,

History is a battle royal, a contest between the powerful and the powerless in "what happened" as well as in the stories we tell about what happened-a fight to death over the meaning of the past. [1]

In Hartman's view, "the narrative of the defeated never triumphs".[2] However, She goes further to ask "... must the story of the defeated always be a story of defeat? Is it too late to imagine that their lives (victim communities) might be redeemed or to fashion an antidote to oblivion? Is it too late to believe their struggles cast a shadow into a future in which they might finally win?"[3] The songs indeed suggest that their "struggles (did) (my emphasis) cast a shadow into a future" in which they eventually won. These collective memories of victory and triumph over the forces of enslavement

[1] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007),p.192
[2] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, p.192
[3] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother,* p.192.

are expressed in a number of songs. These convey a sense of pride. In some of these songs, the role of their fathers or forbears is brought to the fore. One of such song is the Buli song **#** 22 which says,

Taa koma yiak kanbong kaa

Taa koma yiak kanbong kaa

Kanbong kai le nyini taa teng ka la

Taa koma yiak Kanbongka te kaa chali

Ya yee aye yee yee aye yawi yaa

Taa koma yiak kanbongka

Ta koma yaik kanbongka te ka chali

Ya yee yee yoooo

Our fathers drove away the slave raider

Our fathers drove away the slave raider and he ran away

The slave raider who entered our land was driven away by our fathers

Our fathers drove away the slave raider and he ran away ran

Can't you see how our fathers could shoot arrows?

Our fathers drove away the slave raider

Can't you see how they are coming out with arrows?

This song articulates communal resistance and celebrates the collective efforts of their fore bears in the resistance struggle. The emphasis on the slave raider being driven away does not in any way suggest acquiesce, docility or victimhood. This collective resolve to fight and win is reinforced in song # 38. This song's primary focus is on the role of their forebears who fought and won. Significant parts of the song say:

Ba Tonŋ Ba De, Pelim Tonŋ Ba De

Ba tonŋ ba de, pelim tonŋ ba de

Ba yaa kala ayen ba tonŋ nab pein

Ba be le de

Ba tonŋ ba de, pelim tonŋ ba de

Ba yaa kala ayen ba tonŋ nab pein

Ba be le de

They fought and won

They fought and won again

They are now going to shoot a cow's arrow

And they will surely win too

This song celebrates collective achievement. In its performance, the lead singer repeats the first two lines several times while the rest of the women respond to succeeding lines which normally serve as the chorus. The song's focus is on fighting and winning. Fighting and winning is certainly not a feature of a passive people, neither does it suggest victimhood. Specific lines of these songs challenge the victim mentality. The emphasis that "They are now going to shoot a cow's arrow and they will surely win too" attests to the confidence of a brave and resilient people.

In "Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?" the sense of communal triumph is projected. This song is performed accompanied by drums, gongs and pieces of metal played by a few members of the adult male group leading the song while the rest act as the chorus. During its performance especially during the feok[1] festival among the Bulsa, one would usually notice the brandishing of bow and arrows and bodily movements signifying courage and defiance which stir up warlike feelings among the audience. The song is sung in a call and response pattern and begins with a rhetorical question .The song says,

Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?

Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?

Kanbonsa nalema baa yiri yaa

Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?

[1] Feok is an annual thanksgiving festival celebrated by the Bulsa especially as the end of each harvest season in December.

Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?

Kanbonsa nalema baa yiri yaa

Where are the houses of the slave raiders?

Where are the houses of the chiefs of the slave raiders?

The chiefs of the slave raiders have fled

Where are the houses of the chiefs of the slave raiders?

Where are the houses of the chiefs of the slave raiders?

The chiefs of the slave raider have fled

The set of rhetorical questions is marked by repetitive structures within the song. Repetition is a basic principle of oral art and can be viewed both as a stylistic and fundamental grammatical form. Repetition in these songs take varied forms such as the repetition of metrical patterns, rhythm, internal echoes, refrains and sometimes syntactic structure. In this particular song, we see a lexical and structural repetition of "Kanbongsa nalema yie za be"*?* This occurs in identical positions in a repeated sentence structure used as a rhetorical device. There is also the lexical recurrence of the lexical items "Kanbongsa nalema yie za be?" The essence of this verbal repetition is intended to mark emphasis. In this context however, the repetition of this lexical item is intended to contribute immensely to the musical quality of the song. During performance, the drum accompaniment together with other para-linguistic modes of communication such as facial expressions and dignified steps by the war dancers enhances the performance and elicits audience response. The second line of the song is more forceful:

Kanbongsa nalema baa yiri yaa

The chiefs of the slave raiders have fled

Resistance led to the fleeing of the *kanbong*. On the metaphoric level and symbolic level, the song challenges the very institution of slavery by the use of the rhetorical question, where are the foundations of the slave

enterprise? This song re-echoes the fact that the very foundations of the institution of slavery have been challenged through open confrontation. [1]

The ultimate reward of a fierce resistance over the forces of enslavement was that victory was won. The excitement and emotion associated with this military confrontation and positive outcome is reflected in some songs which usually reveal a triumphal procession after war. One such is the Buli song # 20. This song is an example of a song celebrating military success.

Tigurika ya nueri ate vuusi
Kanbong ka yaa nueri a te vuusi
Kanbong ka yaa nueri a te vuusi
Yee-yee yee-yee
Kanbong yaa nueri ate vuusi

Tigurika ya nueri ate vuusi
Tigurika ya nueri ate vuusi
Yee-yee yee-yee
Tigurika yaa nueri ate vuusi

We are free at last
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief

The battle is ended and we are free at last
The battle is ended and we are free at last
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief

[1] See Emmanuel Saboro, The *Kanbong* Motif in Bulsa Folksongs of Resistance to Enslavement (M.Phil. Diss., University of Cape Coast, 2009). Also see Emmanuel Saboro, "Songs of Sorrow, Songs of Triumph: Memories of the Slave Trade among the Bulsa of Ghana, in Alice Bellangamba, Sandra Greene and Martin Klein (eds.), *Bitter Legacy: African Slavery Past and Present* (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener, 2013), pp.133-147.

The battle is ended and we are free at last
The battle is ended and we are free at last

One of the positive outcomes of the struggle for communal redemption is reflected in the above song which captures memories of a victorious people. The song is performed by men accompanied by metal gongs and drums in producing a rhythmic pattern. The song in effect links victory to the forces of enslavement with a sigh of relief from constant predation and oppression. Given the context in which slave raiding and captivity often occurred within these communities with its attendant violence and aggression, the defeat of the slave raider produces an exhilarating effect on both individuals and the collective society. The song is also suggestive of the fact that victory over the forces of enslavement was achieved as a consequence of warfare. The end of this warfare brought freedom at last.

Conclusion

What emerges from these sources I have examined here is the attempt by communities hitherto perceived as victim communities to carve out new identities for themselves through their songs, especially those that deal with bravery and resilience. The songs attempt to weave a narrative of communal redemption predicated on pain, struggle and eventual triumph. The songs suggest that while slave raiding and enslavement may have diminished the central communality that had bound communities together, the forces of enslavement were never able to destroy them or to leave the individual atomized and physically defenceless.

The violence and aggression that usually accompanied the processes of resisting enslavement often resulted in significant losses within these cultures. While some were physical, others were emotional and psychological. Although written sources have often been inadequate in capturing the emotional and psychological dimensions, the performance of these songs sometimes offers glimpses into the internal world of these

communities. In the next chapter, I discuss the impact of loss relative to the people's experience of slavery and enslavement.

Chapter Six

The Impact of Loss

Introduction

This chapter promises to enhance our understanding on how communities often perceived and expressed their memories regarding the impact of loss relative to their experiences of slavery and enslavement within the interior. Scholars of the slave trade have over the years speculated on the impact of slavery and the trade on African societies. Debates on the actual numbers of slaves carried across the Atlantic into New World slavery are often inconclusive. There is a great deal of scholarship on slave mortality especially in the last half of the nineteenth century within the context of the transatlantic slave experience.[1] While acknowledging that "Africans entering the slave trade died not only during the middle passage" but "also during the process of enslavement and travel in the interior,"[2] very few attempts have been made to describe what it must have been like to lose kith and kin through raids and warfare. This chapter thus explores the impact of loss relative to the experiences of the people within the communities under review and how these memories are remembered and given expression in the songs.

The central premise of the chapter is that the magnitude of violence, terror and aggression that mostly accompanied captivity and enslavement within the communities under review led to a great deal of individual and communal devastation. In consequence, these overwhelming feelings challenge the theory of African slavery as benign and less oppressive. Some of the songs refer to specific communities that were

[1] See for example, David Eltis, "Fluctuations in Mortality in the Last Half Century of the Transatlantic Slave Trade" *Social Science History* 13: 3 (Fall, 1989), pp.315-340, Also see David, Northrup, "African Mortality in the Suppression of the Slave Trade: The Case of the Bight of Biafra", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9(1), (1978), pp.47-64.
[2] Eltis, "Fluctuations in Mortality", p.315

decimated because of raiding and captivity. These losses, as the songs reveal, were not only in terms of lives and property, but also losses that were unquantifiable such as the loss of cultural values and the desecration and disintegration of kinship and family structures. Social networks were severely disrupted and relationships that bonded people together were severed as a consequence of captivity and enslavement.

The ramifications of these losses, as the songs clearly establish, had serious implications for individuals, the community and the larger society. In the songs that form this sample, what is evident is the power of the slave raider and his ability to deprive another or a group of people of the right to live and be productive through captivity. What is also apparent is the powerlessness of victim communities over their destinies and their inability to help kin in times of trouble. Overall, the songs provide insights into how raiding and captivity interfered with individual and communal identity formation. The songs also reveal the pain and trauma and sense of psychological disorientation of individuals and the collectivity.

In this chapter, I focus the discussion around three significant thematic strands: the impact of slavery and enslavement on kinship and family structures, the physical and demographic impact of slave raiding and finally, I attempt to sketch the level of psychological disorientation these communities experienced as a result of slave raiding,

Indeed, the disruption of family life and its attendant consequences of societal fragmentation is a recurrent motif in the literatures of people who have experienced enslavement in their collective history. This is more evident within the context of the transatlantic experience. The novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe clearly articulates this theme of family disorientation through slavery in her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[1] Scholars have also shown how the experiences of slavery across the Atlantic have often disintegrated

[1] For a detained study, see, Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1995).

family life.[1] The songs however reveal that the transatlantic experience was not the only slave system that had negative consequences on family and kinship structures. African internal slavery, as this chapter attempts to show, not only inhibited family formation, but made stable, secure family life difficult if not impossible.

Scholars have often tried to conceptualise the difficulty in having secure and functional family life under slavery and as a result, our understanding of slave families have been significantly shaped through these historical sources. What is new and what these songs add to our store of knowledge is the ways in which descendants of victim communities often articulated these experiences.

The mode of reproduction, historian Claude Meillassoux has argued, is a major defining feature of slavery as the enslaved woman's womb was constrained by her productive capacity and role. Enslaved women, Meillassoux has pointed out were 'stripped of their sex' and denied motherhood and mothers had their children taken away as captives into slavery.

The sociologist Orlando Patterson was later to conceptualize this role of reproduction within the context of American chattel slavery as 'natal alienation', which he describes as the absolute denial of enslaved person's rights to future and past through ancestors and children. Indeed some of the songs articulate clearly the sense in which the family is seriously fractured because of captivity and enslavement.

Songs such as " the slave raider has come to attack me" (#1), the slave raider is going round the community capturing people(# 3), " we have suffered, really suffered"(# 10), " we have suffered oo"(# 62), "no one runs

[1] See for example Barbara Bush, "African Caribbean Slave Mothers and Children: Traumas of Dislocation and Enslavement across the Atlantic World". *Caribbean Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 1/2*, (2010), pp. 69-94.

away and leaves his/her children"(# 2) and "who will challenge the slave raider and remain the same" (# 78) provide some insights into this theme of family disorientation. I discuss song # 2 into detail because of the ways in which the issues of family disorientation are revealed. The song says,

Fi kan chali laa ge fi biamoa
Fi kan chali laa ge fi biamoa
Kan chali la age fi biamoa

Kanbonka le jam la,
Ti ŋman nya biik be?

Taa chali laa ge ti biamoa
Mi poom ka biik wariya
Mi laa chali ayen m vuuk la

Mi poom ŋman ka biik wariya
Mi poom ŋman ka biik wariya

No one runs and leaves his children
No one runs away and leaves his/her children
You do not run and abandon your own kind

With the presence of the raider
How can we have children again?

We are running away while abandoning our children
I do not have time for children anymore
I am running for my dear life

I do not have time for children anymore
I do not have time for children anymore

This song is a lamentation sung by the women of Bulsa and articulates distinctively the sense in which kinship ties and the family structure are endangered through captivity. Although in the song, a lone voice appears to be lamenting the tragedy of the slaving process, it nonetheless expresses the common predicament of the collectivity. The song begins with the presentation of the ideal captured in the lines:

No one runs away and leaves his/her children
You do not run and abandon your own kind

The lines that follow however suggest that the attainment of the ideal is difficult if not practically impossible under slaving circumstances. This song demonstrates clearly how the family, the basic social unit for reproduction is seriously undermined through violence and predatory behaviour of the forces of enslavement. Kinship relations and the kin group are the dominant elements of the social system in most communities in Africa and as such, any system that disrupts and disintegrates this kinship structure is cruel and oppressive and threatens the very foundation of the society.

The third stanza of the song presents the context in which the family structure is torn and severed by an attack on its matriarchal symbol: the mother. Slave raiding and captivity with its attendant ills of pillage and plunder thus violated and disrupted existing kinship networks by forcing mothers to run and abandon their children. The tearing away and sundering of kin is clearly expressed in the stanza,

We are running away while abandoning our children
I do not have time for children anymore
I am running for my dear life

The song seems to suggest that, with the presence of the slave raider, individual survival becomes the immediate preoccupation. Under slave raiding conditions, people must run in order to survive. The lack of control to

determine one's response to the problem of captivity in relation to kin is indeed traumatic. The effect of a slaving environment and its impact on the immediate family and kinship structure is further highlighted by the rhetorical question expressed in the lines;

With the presence of the raider
How can we have children again?

This rhetorical question is not only intended to achieve a persuasive effect on the audience during performance, but the tone and mood laments the tragedy of captivity. It refers to how the biological and reproductive functions of the collectivity are seriously undermined and disrupted. As Barbara Bush has pointed out within the context of the African-American Caribbean slave experience, "... slavery, in Africa and the Americas, deeply compromised women's reproductive role".[1] The degree to which the reproductive role of women in the song has been compromised as noted by Bush is reflected in the rhetorical question "How can we have children again". This question thus reinforces the fear and the lack of the physical and psychological space needed for procreation.

As a consequence of this invasion by the slave raider, the powerlessness and despair of the victim is revealed. This state of vulnerability and helplessness is seen in the mother's flight from a core parental responsibility: the care and protection of her children. This is reflected in the line "we are running away while abandoning our children". What is particularly traumatic is the individualized nature of captivity and the inability of a mother to save and protect her child in the midst of trouble. This sense of helplessness and despondency is revealed in mothers running and abandoning their children.

[1] Barbara Bush, "African Caribbean Slave Mothers", pp. 69-94.

Echoing the sense of helplessness inherent in the experience of slavery, the sociologist Orlando Patterson has pointed out that "another feature of the coercive aspect of slavery is "its individualized condition" and the fact that the slave was usually powerless in relation to another individual".[1] This "individualized condition" as noted by Patterson fits within this context because, the song not only reveals the powerlessness of mothers in relation to themselves but also the extent to which they have become powerless in their ability to protect and defend their children. The remembrance of this state of absolute powerlessness is a traumatic experience for both individuals and the collectivity that lost kin through raiding and captivity.

The constant reference to children in the song is of great symbolic significance. The subject of "children" recurs in the song six times underscoring the value society places on the continuation of family life. Children constitute the seed of the future. They thus constitute the core foundation of society. They are regarded in most societies as the social and economic security for most elderly people. If mothers would run and abandon their children because of the presence of the slave raider, the children in effect, become vulnerable and easy prey for capture and enslavement, thereby depriving society of a vital human resource. A condition and a system that would necessitate mothers running and abandoning their children and the severing of family ties is cruel and oppressive and does not in any way suggest that slavery within the African context was benign and less oppressive.

The physical and demographic impact of slave raiding

The songs present evidence of individual and collective devastation through physical death. The images that recur in the songs regarding the character of the slave raider are depictions of ruthlessness, oppression often

[1]See Orlando, Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.5.

resulting in death. Slave raiding within these communities led to the destruction of lives and property. As historian Paul Lovejoy has suggested, sometimes even when communities survived raids, they frequently suffered the destruction of their fields and homes and lost livestock and other valuable property.[1] A closer study of the songs reveals that, songs which tend to articulate the sense of enslavement and those predicated on resistance carry strong images of violence and aggression. In these songs, the effects of this violence often lead to significant losses. The songs "when the slave raider entered into our land" (# 3), " when the slave raider entered our land , no one was left"(# 5) and "the slave raider shot arrows"(# 9) all convey vividly the images of loss through death and its effect on both the individual and the collectivity.

The song, "when the slave raider entered our land" is an example of a song that clearly expresses the subject of loss very forcefully. It is usually performed by women as a dirge and has a four stanza structure. In its performance, the lead cantor usually sings the first line of each stanza while the rest of the group respond to the other lines serving as the chorus. This arrangement is sometimes altered where another member of the group takes on the role of the lead cantor. A particular stanza may be repeated several times depending on the preference and skill of the lead cantor. The lead cantor's skill enables her to vary the tone and pitch at regular intervals while modulating her voice and making gestures that convey the message intended in the song.

The song does not only lament the tragedy of captivity and enslavement but also grieves over the decimation brought upon specific locations like Basiik[2] and Donning. Bassiik (Bulsa) or Basiisaem (Kasena) and Donning recur in most of the songs, especially the Bulsa songs. Basiik for

[1]See Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations of Slavery*: *History of Slavery in Africa* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 35. Also see Benedict B. Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana* (Accra: Woeli Press, 1998).

[2]During fieldwork, I often asked informants and singers why Bassiik or Bassiisem recur in the songs. Most of them recount memories handed done to them from their forebears about the communal devastation brought on these communities by slave raiders.

example is further north close to the upper west region boundary that links the Bulsa and Kasena districts. Oral narrative accounts of slavery and the slave trade among the Bulsa and Kasena confirm that Basiik for example has been completely decimated with no visible human presence now. There are only heaps, debris and moulds of old houses suggesting a desolate landscape, rout and pillage because of slave raids. Although this assertion has not been verified and no archaeological survey has confirmed this, Basiik's recurrence in the songs and oral narrative accounts only lends further credence to the devastating consequences of slave raiding within these cultures. The contradictions and tensions that emerge from the attempts to interrogate the slave experience within these communities reveals how cultures would sometimes want to be viewed as "victims" in one breath but in another breath claim to have fought and defeated the forces of enslavement.

Fig. 6:1. A map showing where Dogning is located. Basiik is in between Dogning and Nakong. Source: Google Maps

This song thus confirms existing literature[1], referring to how certain communities that once stood have become desolate and lives have perished through violence. The images of loss and annihilation are made very forceful with the recurrence of certain lexical items in the song. These are, “No one was left”, “He has killed all the people”, “No one was left in the land”, “All the people are finished” and “All the people are dead”. These phrases clearly reinforce images of communal devastation through violence and terror unleashed on captives in these communities during raids and capture. These losses, as the song articulates, have serious demographic implications. Enslavement and captivity more often than not deprived communities of the most productive labour force, thereby depriving them of sustenance and future economic security.

Reference to “No one” and “All” expresses the unquantifiable dimension of the losses. The song also presents the ramifications of captivity on not only the present but also captures ways in which the future is seriously undermined and jeopardized through the destruction of the elderly; patriarchal symbols of power, authority and leadership. The elders in every society are mostly considered as mentors and repositories of communal values and wisdom, whose responsibility it is to guide and disseminate values to succeeding generations. The lines, “all our elders are dead”, “that our fathers are finished” and “no one was left”, thus lament the ways in which the elders have been violently taken away through slavery, thereby leaving behind a society that is deprived of vision, guidance and direction.

[1] The historian Benedict B. Der has alluded to the general effects of the slave trade on northern communities. Some of these often included the looting of livestock and food supplies by the slave raiders. As part of their *modus operandi*, slave raiders according to Der often raided a particular community more than once. For detailed study on the slave trade in northern Ghana from a historical perspective, see Benedict. B. Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana* (Accra: Woeli Press, 1998). Also see Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Transatlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

In the song “the slave raider who entered our land shot arrows indiscriminately” (# 9), we do not only see the shooting of arrows as a method of captivity and enslavement but also the ways in which the shooting of arrows led to both individual and communal losses. The tone of this song is solemn and engages with the terror and aggression associated with captivity through the shooting of arrows. The sense of terror for example is explicit with reference to the ways in which the slave raider shot arrows at random and in all directions. The sense of loss is clearly seen in the reiteration “no arrows were left”, “our fathers are finished” and “nobody was left in the land”. These images reveal the nature of slave dealing as an oppressive and ruthless system that reduces people to objects and prey and indeed also suggests the the desolation left behind by slave-raiders.

The sense in which loss through captivity and enslavement affects an individual or a collective psyche is given expression in the Kasem song **“**he weeps helplessly, he is crying uncontrollably” **(**# 71). This song does not also only reveal the loss of an individual through captivity, but also articulates the sense in which this loss affects a person. During performance, the affective dimension of the song is made more forceful with the cantor repeating the specific lines, “that is his only person” several times. This repetition is not only intended as emphasis, but also to stress the pain and sense of tragedy inherent in the song. The impact of this loss is made the more forceful through the reiteration of the lines:

> That is the only person he has
> Brave man! That is his only person eei
> His only person is taken away

The sense of grief and anguish is heightened by the tactile image “his heart is burning, for that is his only person”. “His heart is burning” also suggest ways in which sometimes words are an inadequate vehicle for conveying the intensity of pain in the person expressing the memory. The song through this strong image reveals the cruel and oppressive nature of

captivity and enslavement where a person can be deprived of his or her only kith and kin. A society that loses the most productive of its people through enslavement remains stagnant and unresponsive to change.

The use of force and aggression as revealed in the songs is not only an effective tool in the hands of the slave raider for captivity and enslavement, but the song also reveals how individuals and the collectivity suffer as a result of the unlawful use of this force. In the Kasem song "the slave raider has removed his sandals" (# 73), we are presented with how the slave raider's use of excessive force is used to undermine group cohesion. The song has two stanzas and is performed by two men with one of them acting as the lead cantor while the other responds to the chorus. The song also involves a timeline supplied by the hitting of two calabashes by the two singers. This timeline is repeated repeatedly until a new song is introduced.

The central metaphor of the song is predicated on Gazare's[1] predatory behavior and the exercise of strength to rob the poor. The song clearly captures images of force over the weak and vulnerable. Reference to "we shall also remove a cutlass" is ample evidence that the communities also resisted their captivity. The cost of this resistance accompanied by violence and aggression by both parties would invariably lead to casualties resulting in losses through death and maiming.

One of the obvious effects of the captivity and the threats of enslavement in this particular song is also seen in people running to hide in order to elude capture. Running away in the face of captivity reinforces images of victimhood. The net effect of this is the tendency for any group of people, always under the threats of captivity, to see themselves as victims and continue to live in fear. Fear, real or imagined stifles creativity and inhibits progress. A culture that lives in fear of itself and the fear of strangers would remain stagnant. Cultures grow as a result of a cross

[1]Gazare is the name of one of the slave raiders known to have terrorised these areas together with Babatu and Samori.

fertilization of ideas and other forms of social interaction. Slavery and the threats of captivity thus deprived these communities of the opportunity to be part of a global network necessary for development. Group cohesion is seriously undermined when people are always running from either a real or perceived enemy.

In the face of challenging and confronting their enslavement, significant losses in terms of human lives were incurred. A lot was lost but also a lot more was gained. Human lives were lost but freedom was ultimately gained. The songs that carry the theme of war and violent confrontation often convey images of violence and bloodshed. In the song, "Lets us chop each other into pieces" (#34) for example, we see the collective resolve of a people to secure freedom from oppression irrespective of the consequences. The images conveyed in "chopping each other into pieces" connote losses of a significant nature. People die as a result of this confrontation.

In songs such as "Stop and see and let's see who will chop who with an axe"(# 27), "Bulsa does not rise to battle unless there is a cause"(35), "Let someone be deceived to raise an axe stained with blood"(#37), "I am fighting the battle alone, let someone dare try"(#40), "The slave raider has removed his sandals, we shall also remove a cutlass"(#73) "When they meet the slave raider at Pasaa"(#86), "Strong men strong men, let's meet on the battlefield(#90) and "we will face each other on the battle field"(#97).

Death as a metaphor

Communities under the constant threats of slavery and enslavement often memorialised their experience as death and "killing of a different kind". The songs do not only present the consequences of captivity and enslavement within the context of physical death alone, but they indirectly allude to ways in which both individuals and the collectivity often *died*. Death then becomes a metaphor for losses which are beyond statistical quantification. The metaphor of death within the context of the raiding

experience is significant because the terror and violence of captivity often damaged irreparably people's collective psyche and group identity. Images of "running" without a sense of destination coupled with being reduced to objects and commodities for sale affects people's sense of worth and undermine a sense of belonging.

The psychological fragmentation people experience when they are *commodifed* and *objectified* inhibits and stifles individual and collective creative efforts necessary for progress and development. There is also the extent to which cultures *died* because of the constant threats of captivity. The death of cultures results from the fact that captives were often torn from their original environments and transported into alien settings where they are forced to assume marginal and subordinate status. As historian Claude Meillassoux has pointed out in his seminal study of the Sahelo-Sudanic Africa, slaves through transfer upon capture acquire two features that are often related. They are first of all economic property and bring a labour power to their host society and secondly they are social property in the sense that they are absolute aliens in the slave owning host society. In their alien state, they are often stripped of their original identity and "de-socialized".[1] In this sense of de-socialization, they have no sense of kin and belonging to their host community. "The kinship code" Meillassoux has observed, "was used as an ideological means of alienation, domination, repression and control".[2] Captives from slave raids because of their marginal and subordinate status within their host communities became alienated and lost both their individual and corporate identity. Orlando Patterson has also conceptualised the nature of the slave in respect to his experience of captivity and enslavement and opined that the slave had no belonging outside of his community and no social existence outside of his master. In this way, Patterson has argued, the slave was "socially dead".[3]

[1] Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery,* p. 100.
[2]Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, p. 108.
[3] See Patterson, Slavery and Social Death, p. 38.

The songs do indeed suggest ways in which communities experienced psychological death and alienation. Specific variants within some of the songs such as the slave raider has come to attack me and i have no place to stay" (# 1), "they came and drove us away" (#6), "they have killed me, a killing of a different kind, and my friends are laughing at me"(# 11), " I am walking and running, I have become a subject of ridicule" (#13), " we have suffered oo" (#61) all bear ample testimony to the sense of individual and corporate disorientation as a result of the experience of the devastation brought about through slave raids.

Slave raiding, captivity and the underdevelopment paradigm

The slave trade and its legacy in contributing to the underdevelopment of Africa have been subject to a great deal of debate within the literature. The Guyanese historian Walter Rodney is one of the earliest scholars to have linked the underdevelopment of African societies to its relationship with capitalist Europe through the slave trade. Although some scholars have found Walter's thesis highly contentious, his views nonetheless provide a framework upon which we can interrogate the effect of slaving on victim communities' especially within the context of northern Ghana. Although northern Ghana's underdevelopment cannot be solely linked to the experience of slavery, evidence from the songs seem to suggest a significant relationship between slave raiding, captivity and underdevelopment of communities that were subject to systematic slave raids.

In Rodney's view, development at the level of the individual "implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and well being".[1] Indeed, these variants as suggested by Rodney were not possible under the experience of slavery. Some of the songs examined in preceding chapters show how communities

[1] See Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C., Howard University Press, 1982), p. 3.

often articulated their plight of being attacked, run and run a lot, suffered and suffered a lot, and so on. Slave raiding, captivity and enslavement had consequences on individual and communal skill acquisition. Indigenous crafts and creativity suffered as people were always running to elude capture. The general state of insecurity as a consequence of the threats of enslavement inhibited freedom and often led to individual and communal dislocation.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how memories of the devastating consequences of captivity and enslavement still resonate within the cultures under review. The songs attest to the fact that the violence and terror that mostly characterized slave raiding and captivity, often resulted in the disintegration and severing of family bonds and threatened the very foundations of the society. The losses as articulated in the songs often took the form of physical deaths of people as a direct consequence of raiding and captivity. The songs present images of deaths arising from the very nature of resistance to captivity and enslavement itself. These are captured in songs that carry the theme of violent confrontation and bloodshed. The overall effect of this open and direct confrontation with the forces of enslavement is the extent to which these deaths have demographic consequences for the communities. Communities often lost their most productive people to slave dealers. The songs analyzed in this chapter also reveal that, overall, these losses were not only physical quantifiable losses but also psychological and often included the fragmentation of group cohesion and identity. Societal values and culture were seriously undermined as a result of the constant threats of captivity and enslavement.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

"We are free at last, the battle is ended and we are free at last."[1]

The fundamental axiom governing this thesis was that, although the use of conventional historical methodology over the years has contributed significantly to our understanding of slavery and the slave trade within Africa, there is still much we do not know. There is still a lot buried deep within the cultural productions of African communities regarding their collective experiences of slavery and enslavement that conventional historical sources have not been able to capture. Although autobiographical writing by enslaved Africans who ended up in the Middle Passage to New World slavery have contributed to shaping our collective understanding of slavery, these do not often reveal the experiences of those who were left behind and, more importantly, those who were victims of internal African slavery after the slave trade was outlawed in 1807. It was therefore because of this imbalance within the broader literature that this thesis set out to explore memories of slavery and the slave trade among two ethnic groups in northern Ghana, the Bulsa and Kasena, through a close study of their songs.

Building on previous studies on memories of slavery and the slave trade in Ghana, this study was therefore intended to fill this lacuna and also serve as a significant interpretation of oral sources, so as to give voice to the otherwise marginalised communities who are mostly presented within the historical narrative "as ciphers in the historical, social and political arithmetic, not as subjects of social history, but as objects and quantities".[2]

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[1] This is the second stanza of the Buli song # 20. See Appendix A.

[2]Stephanie Smallwood uses these terms to refer to captives within the specific context of the transatlantic slave experience within Africa. See Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to America Diaspora* (London: Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 7.

The distinctive contribution this study makes to scholarship is seen in its focus on slavery within Africa, a subject that has often been overlooked by scholars of the slave trade. The study thus adds to our store of knowledge and enhances our understanding of the cultural and historical dynamics of captivity and enslavement from the perspective of the enslaved. It focuses particularly on the emotional and psychological dimensions which conventional historical sources have often not been able to capture. And it does so by using sources of evidence internal to African societies rather than external to them.

Overall, the study also seeks to contribute to specific debates within the historiography. One such debate is the often romanticised view that African slavery was benign and less oppressive than its counterparts elsewhere. Historian Akosua Perbi is one such scholar who has sought to suggest this. Indeed, the structural and institutional difference between African slavery and its New World counterpart is not in doubt and well documented. However, the new material this study engages with, especially from the perspectives of descendants of those who were mostly raided and exploited within internal African slavery, challenges this contention of relative benignty.

Another debate pervasive within the historical discourse and central to this study is the nature of African agency and collective passivity. The fact that some Africans were involved in the business of raiding and slave dealing has led some scholars to assume that Africans were all in the business of enslaving each other. But as the songs have shown, the slave trade was a complex inter-play of forces sometimes very subtle. That a few were in the business of slave dealing does not suggest collective complicity. There is, indeed, evidence to suggest that indigenous communities adapted and devised various strategies to challenge their oppression and enslavement.

For the purposes of reiterating significant landmarks within the thesis, Chapter One sought to examine slavery in northern Ghana from a historical perspective, given that northern Ghana was an important geographical and cultural space because of its relationship with the three distinct but yet inter-related slave systems: the trans-Saharan, trans-Atlantic and the internal. Linguistic evidence tends to suggest that the term slave occurs in most Ghanaian languages, even if the manner and circumstances of the servile status differed from place to place. Although historians have suggested that slavery did exist in certain parts of northern Ghana prior to the transatlantic, if not the trans-Saharan, slave trade, slavery as an institution akin to the American model plantation slavery was very largely alien to the internal Ghanaian context. Some scholars, notably Raymond E. Dummet and Larry W.Yarak do concede that a "plantation like" type of slavery did exist in certain parts of the Gold Coast, but the practice was not pervasive.

The cultural and historical geography of northern Ghana was significantly altered during the latter part of the nineteenth century through the slave raiding activities of the Zabarima and the Asante. The Bulsa and Kasena, who are close neighbours and also share certain cultural similarities, became victims of these systematic raids during this period, with the emergence of Zabarima warlords from Niamey and the rise and influence of the Salaga market where Hausa and Mossi traders often came to trade in slaves with Asante middle men. Notable Zabarima slave raiders and traders included Babatu, Gazare, Alpha Hanno, Samori and Bagao, although Bagao is relatively unknown within the literature. Oral narrative accounts, historical sources and the songs that formed the foundation of this thesis have established how these raiders terrorised these areas, plundered goods, lives and property and sold them in the Salaga market.

Memories of these Zabarima slave raiders and the Asante still resonate within the oral traditions of these communities in northern Ghana, especially within their songs. The songs were therefore isolated for a close

study because of the ways in which songs constitute an important component of African oral traditions and often reveal certain subtle nuances otherwise not readily visible through other genres.

The central premise of Chapter Two was that although scholars have often alluded to the significance of the oral tradition as an important window to the understanding of cultural and historical events in African societies, no systematic effort has been made to interrogate the experience of slavery and the slave trade through the medium of the song. The significance of this study therefore lies in the ways in which a careful study of songs within these two communities in northern Ghana adds to our store of knowledge and enhances our understanding of the cultural and historical dynamics of the slave experience within Africa.

An attempt was therefore made to conceptualize the song as an important component of African oral traditions. The song, it is argued, serves as a repository of communal memory. In fulfilling this function, it serves as a vehicle for the preservation and conveyance of group ideals and identity. Within the specific context of this study, the song has come to represent ways in which marginalised communities have given expression to their past experiences of enslavement. The songs memorialising the slave experience assume various forms. There are those that lament and bemoan sorrow and the sense of tragedy of the experience, those that can be classified as entertainment songs, mostly performed on all occasions, and finally war songs which tend to convey images of violent confrontation. The chapter also gave prominence to the critical dialectical relationship between space, texts and performance as elements crucial to revealing the nuances of the cultural ethos peculiar to the experiences of slavery and enslavement within the specific context of this study.

Chapter Three examined the various processes of enslavement relative to the experiences of the cultures under study. The central premise of the chapter was that although there is a considerable amount of scholarly

literature on the various processes of enslavement within Africa, the songs are particularly important in presenting predation and capture as major ways through which people were enslaved. The songs discussed have revealed images of capture and enslavement conveyed mainly by violence and aggression. There is also a preponderance of evidence to suggest that those enslaved were sold within local markets. The market metaphor therefore revealed the commercialisation of the African slave trade. The study thus supports existing literature that there was a commercial and commodity trading element in slave dealing in Africa in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The debates surrounding the subject of African participation in slavery and perceived agency in their own enslavement process was brought to the fore in Chapter Four. In this chapter, an attempt was made to examine the complex dynamics of African agency in the slave trade. The songs do suggest various levels of community alliances with slave raiders. The songs discussed in this chapter suggested that individuals and communities were often willing to betray their own people in order to ensure survival. Although the songs suggest activities of collaborators in their enslavement, a significant number of songs also contain evidence of resistance to the processes of enslavement. The songs bear testimony to the fact that communities eventually became tired of running and being subservient. Resistance to their captivity and enslavement became an option for those who decided to challenge their oppression.

Chapter Five examined the attempt by communities hitherto perceived as victims to carve out new identities for themselves: identities of survival and triumph over tragedy. Evidence from the analysis in this chapter has shown how these cultures often adapted to and survived the experience of slavery and enslavement. Those who could not confront their oppressors through violence chose other ways such as individual and communal flight in order to escape and elude capture and enslavement. There were those who also actively resisted their oppression and these variants are revealed in

songs that deal with war and violent confrontation and others that tend to convey images of bravery and resilience.

The chapter also focused on certain animistic metaphors pervasive within these cultures, which reveal how the people used these metaphors creatively to give expression to their experiences of pain and trauma and to overturn the perceived images of victimhood. These metaphors, as the songs have shown, were attempts to weave a narrative of communal redemption predicated on pain, struggle and eventual triumph.

Chapter Six examined how memories of the devastating consequences of captivity and enslavement still resonate within the cultures under review. The songs do attest to the fact that the violence and terror that mostly characterised slave raiding and captivity often resulted in the disintegration and severing of family bonds and threatened the very foundations of the society. The losses, as articulated in the songs, often took the form of physical deaths of people as a direct consequence of raiding and captivity. The songs present images of deaths arising from the very nature of resistance to captivity and enslavement itself. These are captured in songs that carry the theme of violent confrontation and bloodshed.

The overall effect of this open and direct confrontation with the forces of enslavement is to expose the extent to which the resulting deaths and other losses had demographic consequences for the communities under attack. Communities often lost their most productive people to slave dealers. The songs analysed in this chapter also reveal that, overall, these losses were not only physical quantifiable losses but also psychological and often included the fragmentation of group cohesion and identity. Societal values and culture were seriously undermined as a result of the constant threats of captivity and enslavement.

In sum, this new material from the interior of northern Ghana has significantly shaped our individual and collective understanding of the historical and cultural dynamics of slavery and captivity within Africa by

highlighting the centrality of the song as a vehicle for the expression of both the emotional and psychological dimensions of slavery and enslavement. This previously unexplored source of evidence suggests that while slave raiding and enslavement may have diminished the central communality that had bound ethnic and kinship groups together, the forces of enslavement were never able to destroy them totally or to leave the individual atomized and physically defenceless. The Bulsa and Kasena in their collective history of slavery, captivity and enslavement may have suffered and suffered a lot, run and run a lot, but in their pain, they also gained. Freedom was the ultimate reward of their opposition and resistance to their plight of enslavement.

Much as some of the songs suggest that communities were often victims running in order to survive, there is also evidence to suggest that these communities eventually transcended their tragedy and pain. Despite the raids, and the exploitation of their labour within the internal slave system, they survived. No humiliation associated with their marginal status, with individual cruelties or with collective oppression has been able to eradicate them completely. Indeed, there was much to weep about and to mourn over, but there was also much to celebrate. The Bulsa and Kasena may have been forced to traverse many forests or may have found themselves in chains for sale at markets. But still, after all their experiences of despair and communal disarticulation, they were eventually able to sing "we are free at last, the battle is ended and we are free at last".

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APPENDIX A

The songs are numbered for easy reference. Songs # 1 through to 61 are Buli Texts with corresponding English Translations while songs # 62 through to 100 are Kasem Texts with corresponding English Translations.[1]

BULI SONG TEXTS

 # 1 Kanbongka le jam nak mu la

Kanbogka le jam nak mu la
M ŋman ka zaana jigi,
Ka nak mu te mae chali ate baa la mu
Mi poom man ka zaana jigiya

 # 2 Fi kan chali laa ge fi biamoa

Fi kan chali laa ge fi biamoa
Kan chali la age fi biamoa
Kanbonka le jam la, ti ŋman nya biik be?
Taa chali laa ge ti biamoa
Mi poom ka biik wariya
Mi laa chali ayen m vuuk la,
Mi poom ŋman ka biik wariya.
Mi poom ŋman ka biik wariya.

 # 3 kanbonka le jam taa yie la,

Kanbonka le jam taa yie la,
Ku ŋman ka nalimoa.
Kanbong le bo ti yie ŋa po a yigi nuraba,
ku ŋman ka nalimoa,
Tama a chali Kanbonka.

[1] The Buli songs have no corresponding video files on the webpage. At the time of fieldwork between 2005/2006 I had no video equipment. The oral tradition as a method of historical enquiry has a number of limitations. One has to do with the issue fof translation from the source languages into English. It is often difficult to capture the very essence of the original text into English. These limitations notwithstanding, the team that were involved in the transcription and translation process tried to stay faithful to the original material as closely as possible. These were people who are themselves native speakers of both languages and who also have knowledge and competence in the translation process. The researcher was also involved in the process of editing and providing leads into the overall context of study.

 # 4 Kanbong moniŋ, felika dan jam

Kanbong moniŋ, felika dan jam
Dela ti maa va wa ŋaaŋ
Ti tin poom bora nye boa
Kan paae chiaŋ, kan paa niabiiga
M ben baya ba bisaŋa nya
M maa va cheŋ yoo

 # 5 Kanbong kai ale jam basiika lee nya nuru ŋman ka aa

Kanbong kai ale jam basiika lee nya nuru ŋman ka aa
Kum, nuru ma nue yee ya nuru ŋman ka yaa boa

Ayen kanbong le jam ta teng la nya nuru ŋman kaa
Ayen taa koma nuer yaaboa
Yayee yee ayeeyee aye yeeyee ooo

Kanbong kaai ale jam Doning la nya nuru ŋman kaa
Naa yem a cheg abe ni meena nya nuru ŋman ka tengpo
A yen taa koma nuer yee nya nuru ŋman ka

Kanbong kai le jam taateng le nya nuru ŋman kaa
Basiibisa taa nuru nuer yoo
Batale badina yee
Batale badina ba ŋman ka

 # 6 Daluŋ ŋman karo

Kanbonka le jam taa teng la
Tama ŋman ka Daluŋ
Ka le jam taa teng la
Tama ŋman ka Daluŋ
Daluŋ ŋman karo
Daluŋ ŋman karo
Ba jam yu yiak
Ba jam yu yiak

Tama ŋman ka Daluŋ
Kanbongka le jam taa yeeŋa la
Fi kali be daliŋ?
Daliŋ ŋman ka taa yeeŋa

Daluŋ ŋman karo
Daluŋ ŋman karo

 # 7 Ababatu, wa sum nye mu

Ababatu, wa sum nye mu
Ate m nya, mi ban weeni
Wariya, allege ababatu ale
Wa tommu ayen ba nye
Mu te ba nya, wa sum
Nye te be nya

 # 8 Ne nya ka kom ale ta me alege mwoota me adom nying

Ne nya ka kom ale ta me alege mwoota me adom nying
Aye yeee
Akanbonga, nya ka kom ale tame alege mwoota me adom nying nya
Ayaa yaa abababa
Kanbong ka dek ale juele ate koa chuala alege mwoota
Me adom nying
Aye yee kanbong ka dek le jam taa tengle nya mwoota a koaa…..
Ta yienya ba moate dela ayen puuri nina
Basiik bisinya ta a nam ka nnala paari yeri yaaa?

 # 9 Kanbong ka jam tong peema yariyari

Kanbong kai le jam tatengla ka tong peema yariyari
Yayee yee!!
Kanbong ka le jam tatengla ka tong peema yariyari
Ayaa yaa aba ba ba ba

Kanbong kai le jam Doning la ate tong peema yariyari
Yayee yee kanbong kai le jam tatengle ka taka peema

Kanbong kai le jam taateng la nya peema mwan kaa
Aye yeee
Kanbong dek le nyini ta teng la nya peema mwan ka teng po
Ayaa yaa aba ba ba ba
Ka dek jam tetengka la nya peema mwan ka teng po
Aye yee kanbong le jam tateng la nya peema mwan kaa
A yee ka bali ween yee a te ba sebi peema tongka jaa de
Ka ning nyee nya bawai mwan ka tengpo
Kanbong kai ale jam ta teng la tama koma nuer gbelim gbelim

A yee yee

Me yen kanbong le jue ta jig la nya nura mwan ka teng po
Wa yaa yaa aba bababa
Kanbong le jue ta jig la nya nura mwan ka tengpo
Aye yee kanbong kai le jam ta tengle nya peema mwan ka
Ayen te koma le ween yee, ate ba sebi peema tongka laa
Dege le ning-nyee ba wai mwan kai teng yoo

 # 10 Te naame ya

Te naame yee naame yee
Te chali yega yega yaa
A yee yee
Me yen kanbong kai te naame yee le naame yee
Te naame yega yega ya
A yaa yaa aba ba ba..

Yee basiik dogdem ma nya ba la nam yega yega yaa
Ayee yee basiik dog dema nya balaa na yaa
Ta yie nya ban moata dela ayi puuri nina basiik dema
Da naam kan nnala alega yen paa yeri yaa

Kanbongkai ale jam tateng la taa nam yega yega la
Wa yee yee
Kanbongka dek ale nyin Dogning la teti daa nam yega yegala
A yaa yaa aba ba ba…

Ka le jam te tengka la ta koma nam yega
Kanbongka dek ale nyin dogning la teti daa nam yega yegala
A yaa yaa aba ba ba…

Ka le jam te tengka la ta koma nam yega yega ya
Nya taa dogdem ala dueni wa paa la yega yega
Ayee yee
Ni nya taa dogdem ale dueni wa vuuta
A yaa yaa aba ba ba ba…
Ni nya taa dodgem ale dueni wa vuuta naa wom
Yee yee ni nya ta dodgem ala dueni wa vuuttee

 # 11 Ba ko mu kokaai ko yoŋ,

Ba ko mu kokaai ko yoŋ,
Ba ko mi kokaai te mi chaab a la,
Ba ko mu kokaai ko yoŋ.
Ba ko mu kokaai, ko mu Nkaari
Ba ko mu kokaai ko yoŋ
Ba ko mu kokaai te mi chaab a la
Ba ben gaam mu,
Ba ko, mu kokaai ko yoŋ.

 # 12 Mi ta ka biyeŋ

Mi ta ka biyeŋ ayen wa
Cheŋ te maa nya ate akum
Jam nye mi chesi-chen.

 # 13 mi laa cheŋ ale chali la

Mi laa cheŋ ale chali la
Te baa la mi kpim-kpim,
Mi kala ayen m bobika miik,
Ba le seba laa nye la, mi kala ayen
M bobi ka miik te baa la.

 # 14 Kum laa nye

Kum laa nye,
Kum laa nye mu dii.
Bu ko m mabisa meena tal mi nyiini,
Ate m vaanchaab
Ta mu nye a la allege m daa
Jalaamon,
Ka kum laa nye.

 # 15 Ba laa kaari la,

Ba laa kaari la, ate m vaa yiti
Ba laa kaari la ate m vaa yiti
Ti yeeŋa biik laa cheŋ kpiluŋ
Alige kan banti.

#16 Teŋ sobri ten pa n jaduom

Teŋ Sobri ten pa n jaduom
Ate mi ninyiam a siŋ buriburi
N kan gu, ate n kaziim a nak wubibibi
Ayen m duak be ya?

 # 17 Ni jam te ti nak tanjagni jiam,

Ni jam te ti nak tanjagni jiam,
Te wa kalik, te wa ga
Ŋmasi kanla, te wa chogsi
Siak a tabi balibali ga paa du.
Ti waai ban pooma wari.

 # 18 Naamu, naamu,

Naamu, naamu,
Naamu, naamu
Naam be daa buye
Naamu, naamu
Naamu, naamu
Naam be daa buye.

 # 19 Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?

Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?
Kanbonsa nalema baa yiri yaa
Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?
Kanbonsa nalema, yie za be?
Kanbonsa nalema baa yiri yaa

 # 20 Tigurika ya nueri ate vuusi

Kanbong ka yaa nueri a te vuusi
Kanbong ka yaa nueri a te vuusi
Yee-yee yee-yee
Kanbong yaa nueri ate vuusi
Tigurika ya nueri ate vuusi
Tigurika ya nueri ate vuusi
Yee-yee yee-yee
Tigurika yaa nueri ate vuusi

 # 21 Ni meena jueli gbong nya

Ni meena jueli gbong nya
Ni jueli gbong nya
Tom buui alaa nak yeeya
Ni jueli gbong nya.
Kanbong ka alaa nak yeeya

 # 22 Taa koma yiak kanbong kaa

Taa koma yiak kanbong kaa
Kanbong kai le nyini taa teng ka la
Taa koma yiak Kanbongka te kaa chali
Ya yee aye yee yee aye yawi yaa
Taa koma yiak kanbongka
Ta koma yaik kanbongka te ka chali
Ya yee yee yoooo

Ba yiak kanbongka, taa koma yiak kanbongka
Nyama jalan di ale jueli ta dek la te koma yiak kanbong
Nyaaa ate ka chali
Ya yee yee yeee yee yeee
Ta koma yiak kanbongkaaaa
Ta koma dek le tong la le kan nyaaa
Ya yee yee aye yee yoo

Ayen ba dek ale poom a tong peema
Ta koma yiak kanbongka
Ya yee yee
Ta koma yiak kanbongkaaa
Bala nyini ale peeminya la ne kan nyaaa
Ya yee yee ayee yeee yooo

 # 23 Nya wa nya wa

Nya wa nya wa, ni kan te
Ŋaboari jam nak jo ti, nya
Wa nya wa, ni kan te ŋanboari
Jam maa jo.

 # 24 Tiim nueriya,

Tiim nueriya,
Tiim nueriya
Ne jam ate wa
Kabi tiim. pa nuru

 # 25 Tama de di kum tiim

Tama de di kum tiim,ya
Tama de di kum tiim,ya
Tama nyiem a nak laa forisi a paari
Le kan chali kum
Tama de di kum tiim ya

 # 26 Pagro gaam tiim,

Pagro gaam tiim,
Pagro gaam tiim
Ku daa choa wogwok-wogwok,
Pagro gaam tiim
Pagro gaam tiim

 # 27 Ni zaani nya, ni zaani

Ni zaani nya, ni zaani
Nya, ate wa che wana
Ale kpaani?
Ba zaani nya
Zaani nya, ba zaani
Nya, te wa che wan le kpaani.

 # 28 Mwalim walim nak nwala

Mwalim walim nak nwala
Ŋman taam,
Walim walim nak
Nwala taam.

 # 29 Wa nak jakpionku yeri

Wa nak jakpionku yeri
Wan nya gambiak
Gambiak maa yaali

 # 30 Ba pom yiagi,

Ba pom yiagi
Ba poom yiagi
Ba poom yiagi naam ga be
Ba poom yiagi te wa
Kolim a kuli ga jo guura po
Ni poom yiak naam ga be.

 # 31 Ba poom tali baye bata

Ba poom tali baye bata
Nuru kan jam de
Ba poom tali baye bata
Nuru kan jam de
Kook tom kan jam de
Ayieta biik ale
Wa yoaba naaniŋ, ba gaam kook
Kook tom kan jam tama yieya

 # 32 Ni kaa choa ba

Ni kaa choa ba, mi yen
Ni kaa choa ba, ni kaa
Choa, ni kaa choa ba,
Ba ninaŋa po, gbaŋ gbaŋ
Ba puusa po gbaŋ gbaŋ
Ni kaa choa nle ba jam ya

Ba pom tali baye bata
Wari kan jam de, tama
Dokdemm, ba gaam kook
Kook tom kan jam de
Ba poom tali baye bata
Wari kan jam de.

 # 33 A wari wuuk a wari wuuk

A wari wuuk a wari wuuk
Ba paasi waai te wa wari
Wuuk, A wari wuuk a
Wari wuuk, ba paasi waai
Te wari wuui, kan daa ba
Laa weeni la, Sandema yaa
Nueya/sianya, ate fi kala fi sum

Siak, ba paasi waai te wa
Wari wuuk.

 # 34 A boni chaaba, ti boni chaab yoo,

A boni chaaba, ti boni chaab yoo,
Fidan chiiba zaani ti boni chaab
A boni chaaba, ti boni chaab yoo,
Fi dan chiib zaani ti boni chaab,
Nankoŋbaliiuk la nak ku a chali,
Naara katuak, fi dan togsi
Yegyega, ku gebi keribi, tama
Me siaya, ni dan chiib zaani ti boni chaab.

 # 35 Buluku kan yiri kinla,ka wariya,

Buluku kan yiri kinla,Ka wariya
Ayieta bisa kan yiri kinla,ka wariya
Yiila naa ko baai, ni meena wom
Fi dan zaab ŋmoruk ku kuri fu
Ayieta bisa kan yiri kinla
ka wari nyinŋ, yiila laa ko baai
Ni meena wom
Fi dan zaab ŋmoruk ku kuri fu

 # 36 Tama le bak ba wuu

Tama le bak ba wuu
Tama le bak ba wuu
Ba dan weenie te ba siak
Ate ba siak
Tama le bak ba wuu

 # 37 Ba paasi waai te wa zak liak

Ba paasi waai te wa zak liak
Liak nya ziim
Ba paasi waai te
Wa ga yeri ga kum baliŋ cheŋ be

 # 38 Ba tonŋ ba de, pelim tonŋ ba de

Ba tonŋ ba de, pelim tonŋ ba de
Ba yaa kala ayen ba tonŋ nab pein
Ba be le de

Ba tonŋ ba de, pelim tonŋ ba de
Ba yaa kala ayen ba tonŋ nab pein
Ba be le de

 # 39 Ba dan ko akanbiisi

Ba dan ko Akanbiisi, ba te
Le nya yie le zaa lo, zaa lo ba te
Le nya yie zaa lo diiya

 # 40 Midek yiem atong tugurika ka mdeg nyini

Midek yiem atong tugurika ka mdeg nyini
Midek yiem atong tugurika ka mdeg nyini
Midek yiem atong tugurika ka mdeg nyini
Waa bi maa magsi aya
Waa bi maa magsi aya
Waa bi maa magsi nya

 # 41 Mabiri weesa gaam kanbong ya

Mabiri weesa gaam kanbong ya
Mabiri weesa gaam kanbong ya
Nyee-yee yee yee
Mabiri weesa gaam kanbong nyaa

 # 42 Ba toŋ gbeŋle le ziim chorototo

Ba toŋ gbeŋle le ziim chorototo
Ayieta dokdem toŋ gbeŋle le ziim
Ba toŋ ka gbeŋ duok/diak dela
Ka dila te baa chaliya

 # 43 Ŋooma poom de kook

Ŋooma poom de kook
Poom de kook
Poom de kook
Dogbiak laa pa ŋanta
Ayieta

 # 44 Ba taam yanku ŋaa ŋnyiŋ daasi lonsi.

Ba taam yanku ŋaa ŋnyiŋ daasi lonsi
Ba nak yanku, a nak yanku
Ba taam yanku ŋaa ŋnyiŋ
Le kua siŋ kama, be taam
Yanku ŋaaŋnyiŋ daasi lonsi

 # 45 Yabta kpaliŋ

Ba deri mae ko yomma,
Da deri maa ko yomma,
Asiniensa bisa ka yabta
Yabta kpaliŋ ate
Ba deri maa ko yoma.

 # 46 Gbeŋle, gbeŋle,

Gbeŋle, gbeŋle, gbeŋle le biak biik
Weerik biik ŋman chim boa?
Weerik biik ŋman chim boa?
Gbeŋle, gbeŋle gbeŋle ne biak biik
Weerik biik ŋman chim boa?

 # 47 Weeri nan biak boa?

Weeri nan biak boa?
Kaa biak ka kadek biik
Weerik nan biak boa?
Kpajri yaa yoŋui?

 # 48 Asuom a cheŋ nanyeŋ,

Akpiaguuk kan jam
Asuom a chali nanyeŋ,
Asuom a cheŋ nanyeŋ,
Akpiagnuk kan jam
Asuom a cheŋ nanyeŋ.

 # 49 Naab le bu leewa, kobsiye

Naab le bu leewa, kobsiye
Kobsita, bu jila nyini ya
Kobsiye, Kobsita, Azagsuk
Le wa bisanya, kobsiye, kobsita
Ba wnak te ba kuli, Kobsiye, Kobsita

 # 50 Nakpak yeri kan jok garumon chiak

Nakpak yeri kan jok
Garumon chiak ya
Garumon chiak ya
Nakpak yeri kan jok garumon chiak ya

 # 51 Ti naawa yiriya, yiriya

Ti naawa yiriya, yiriya
Yiriya, naawa yiriya
Kulululu. Naawa yiriya
Naawa riyiyi kulululu.

 # 52 Kinkansa yoana, ŋa yoani kiri po,

Kinkansa yoana, ŋa yoani kiri po
Akinkansa yoana, ka
Yoani zima
Kinkansa yoana
Ŋyoani kiri po
Akinkansa yoana, ŋa yoani zima

 # 53 M dachiak kpiya, a nyini koku

M dachiak Kpiya, wa sum
Kpi kama, a nyini wa koku
A taam jo pa wa olkku a yaa ta
Yiri goani a jueli
Gaa ko walik a ta walike jam chan ba
Dokdem meena jaa tali bogi
A ŋman ta yiri goani jueli
Ga tu Awalik bisa, ka boan
Iam te fi kan ŋmari a te mi

 # 54 Awaai dan za, awaai dan za

Awaai dan za, awaai dan za,
Awaai dan za ba ŋman
Chime nya wsa, Awaai dan za,
Awaai dan sa taa cheŋ
Kama, awaai dan za ba
Man chime nya wa.

 # 55 Ŋanboari ka waaŋka

Ŋanboari ŋamboari, ŋamboari
Ka waaŋka, ŋanboani tin waaŋ
Da din dai, ba liiri lam ne kan
Iiin wogta, ba liiri wogta le kan
liiri ŋamoa, ŋanboari, ŋanboari
ŋanboari ka waaŋka

 # 56 Wan laa nye mi?

Wan laa nye mi?
Wein laa nye?
Dan ka nuri
laa nye ti le miiti chaat kpiluŋ
Mi pa chem Ke
Wein laa onye
Dan ka nuru
Laa nye ti le miiti
Chaab kpiluŋ

 # 57 Awen nya mi, awen nya mi,

Awen nya mi, Awen nya mi,
Awen nya mi ŋman pilin nya mi
Awen nya mi te m chaab
A la ba ben ŋaam mu,
Awen nya mi ŋman pitim la mu.

 # 58 Jamoniŋ japeeli le jam taa yeri

Jamoniŋ japeeli le jam taa yeri
Alege ti koma kala kan biisi
Ba te le nya yie le za lɔ za lɔ
Ba te le nya yie la za lɔ diiya

 # 59 Dog po nuru le ta ma wari nyini,

Dog po nuru le ta ma wari nyini,
Peelim nyono nya di be?
Ba nya di be?
Ba nya di be?
Ka dog po nuruwa laa tu mi nansa
Peelim nuruwa nya di be?

 # 60 Medek nuruma kan ta me nyini

Medek nuruma kan ta me nyini yee
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?
Yee yee a yee yee yee yee aya wi yaa
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?

Dog po nuruwa kun tami nyini ya?
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?
Yee yee a yee yee yee yee aya wi yaa
Yalayala dem nya me ka be?
Ba ya me ka be ta koa?
Ya yee-yee ayee-yee yaa

Medek nuruma kan ta me nyini yee
Yalayala dem nya me ka bee
Yee yee a yee yee yee yee aya wi yaa
Yalayala dem nya me ka bee

 # 61 Ayieta bisa laa nyini la

Ayieta bisa laa nyini la,
Ba jinla yig ti baai da yomma,
Ba yig ti baai da yomma.

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APPENDIX B

English Translations

#1 The slave raider has come to attack me

The slave raider has come to attack me
And I have no place to stay
He attacked me and I am running
And people are laughing at me
I do not have a place to stay any longer

 # 2 No one runs and leaves his/her children

No one runs away and leaves his/her children
You do not run and abandon your own kind
With the presence of the raider
How can we have children again?
We are running away while abandoning our children
I am running for my dear life
I do not have time for children anymore
I do not have time for children anymore

 # 3 When the slave raider entered our land

When the slave raider came to our community
Things are no longer the same
The raider is going round our community capturing people
Things are no longer the same
We are running away from the raider

 # 4 When the whiteman comes, I will go with him

When the Whiteman comes here
I will go with him
What do we still for?
Our lives no longer make meaning
We have lost weight
We have lost all our relatives
And I cannot cater for other people's children
I will follow him

 # 5 When the slave raider entered *basiik*
Look nobody was left
When the slave raider entered *basiik* look nobody was left
He has killed all the people, no one was left

I say when the slave raider entered our land no one was left
That our fathers are all finished
They say, when the slave raider entered into our land, no one was left
All our people are finished

The slave raider who entered into *Donning*, look, no one was left
All the people are dead
All our elders are dead no one was left

The slave raider who entered our land look, no one was left
All the people of Basiik are dead and gone
How many have survived?
All are gone

 # 6 No more socialisation
When the slave raider entered our land
We could no longer socialize
When he entered into our land
We could no longer socialize
No more socialization
No more socialization
They came and drove us away
They came and drove us away

We could no longer socialize
When the slave raider entered our land
Where can you sit and socialize?
There is no more socialization in our community.
No more socialization
No more socialization

 # 7 Babatu has really dealt with me

Babatu has really dealt with me and I know
But I have not said anything
But the raider and his troops have decided to deal with me
He has really dealt with me for people to see

 # 8 I am feeling cold and hungry

Look! I am feeling cold and hungry
Slave raider! Look! I am feeling cold and hungry

The slave raider who entered our land brought cold
We are not nearer home so that we can at least drink some water
We shall suffer like this till we get home

The household of Basiik, look!
Are we going to suffer like this before getting home?

 # 9 The slave raider who entered our land shot arrows indiscriminately

Yes, yes, the slave raider who entered our land
Shot arrows indiscriminately

The slave raider who entered *Donning*
Shot arrows indiscriminately
Yes, yes, the slave raider who entered our land
Shot arrows

The slave raider who entered our land,
Look no arrows were left
The fierce raider who appeared in our land,
Look, no arrows were left in the land

He came to our land and no arrows were left in the land
Yes, yes, the slave raider who entered our land,
Look, no arrows were left
And he said they should know how to shoot arrows
When he appeared, look, no one was left in the land

The slave raider who entered our land,
Our fathers are dead and finished
I say the slave raider who came to capture,
Look no one was left in the land
The slave raider who came to capture,
Look no one was left in the land
Yes, yes the slave raider who entered our land
Look, no arrows were left
Our fathers have told us to know how to shoot arrows
Look, nobody was left in the land

 # 10 We have really suffered

We have suffered, really suffered
We have run, run a lot
The slave raider has caused us to suffer a lot
We have suffered a lot

Just look at how our people have suffered
We have suffered a lot
We are not nearer home so that
We can at least drink some water
We shall suffer like this till we get home

Because the slave raider entered our land,
We have really suffered
The slave raider who entered Basiik has caused us to suffer

Since the slave raider entered our land,
Our fathers have suffered
Our fathers have suffered a lot
We are suffering this way till we get home

Look, our people have done new things
They have done exploits

 # 11 They have killed me, a killing of a diffferent kind

They have killed me, a killing of a different kind.
They have killed me and my friends are laughing at me.
Meanwhile, they are not better than me.
They have killed me, a killing of a different kind.

 # 12 I have only one child

I have only one child
And just at his prime,
Death came and snatched him away
Leaving me with empty hands.

 # 13 I am walking and running

I am walking and running
I have become a subject of ridicule
I will commit suicide
They are doing it deliberately
I will commit suicide and they will laugh

 # 14 Death has caused it

Death has caused it
Death has caused it
And I am suffering
It has killed all my relatives
Leaving me alone and
My friends are laughing at me
But I am not someone to be laughed at
It is death that has caused it

 # 15 I heared a cry

They are wailing and I arose
They are wailing and I arose
A child from our community is going to the land of the dead
Without saying good bye to us

 # 16 When night falls

When night falls and I take sleeping mat
My tears will be pouring down my cheeks
And my heart will be beating
How and where can I lay down to sleep?

 # 17 Come and let's thank the hero

Come and let us thank the hero
So that he will go and sit down
Go and sit down well
He will take the road and walk majestically
Till he gets there

 # 18 Victory

Victory, Victory
Victory, Victory
Victory is not won twice
Victory, victory
Victory, is not won twice

 # 19 Where are the houses of the slave raiders?

Where are the houses of the chiefs of the slave raiders?
The chiefs of the slave raiders have fled
Where are the houses of the chiefs of the slave raiders?
Where are the houses of the chiefs of the slave raiders?
The chiefs of the slave raider have fled

 # 20 We are free at last

Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief

The battle is ended and we are free at last
The battle is ended and we are free at last
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief
Victory over the slave raider has brought us a sigh of relief

The battle is ended and we are free at last
The battle is ended and we are free at last

 # 21 Climb to your roof tops and see

You should climb your roof-tops and see the slave raider
And his troops who are raiding the houses
You should all climb up to your roof-tops
And see the slave raider who is raiding the houses

 # 22 Our fathers drove away the slave raider

Our fathers drove away the slave raider and he run away
The slave raider who entered our land was driven away by our fathers
Our fathers drove away the slave raider and he run away

Can’t you see how our fathers could shoot arrows?
Our fathers drove away the slave raider
Can’t you see how they are coming out with arrows?

 # 23 Here he is

Here he is, here is he
Don’t allow many people to come
And overpower us
He is here, he is here
Don’t let the crowd come
And be part of us

 # 24 The gun powder is finished

The gunpowder is finished
The gunpowder is finished
Get someone to make some for use

 # 25 We have eaten the medicine for death

We have eaten the medicine for death
We have eaten the medicine for death
We will strike and advance towards the enemy
Without fear of death
We have eaten the medicine for death

 # 26 Strength is more than charms

Strength is worth more than charms
Strength worth more than charms
If you hear the noise of battle,
Strength is worth more than charms

 # 27 Stop and See

Stop and see
Stop and see
And let’s see who will chop who with an axe
Stop and see
And let’s see who will chop who with an axe

 # 28 If i conquer one

If I managed to conquer one
The other should come
If I managed to conquer one
The other should come

 # 29 He invaded the big house

He invaded the big house
But he did not see his enemy
I am looking for my enemy

 # 30 Even if we are driven away

Even if we are driven away,
Our bravery will not be lost.
Even if they drive us away
We will not lose our bravery.

 # 31 Even if we are left with two or three

Even if they were left with only two or three
No one would have dared come here
Even if they were left with two or three
No one would have dared come here
A troop of hundred could not have entered our houses
Ayieta's household maybe only eight but
They are stronger than a troop of hundred
A troop of hundred could not have entered our houses

 # 32 Don't bother them

Don't bother them, don't bother them
Their eyes are red, their stomachs are red, red
Don't bother them, for they have come

Even if they are left with two or three people
No calamity would befall us
Our clan members are more than a hundred people
A battalion of hundred people cannot come here
Even if they are left with two or three people
No problem can come here

 # 33 Let someone be deceived to follow and die in the bush

Let someone be deceived to follow and die in the bush
Let someone be deceived to follow and die in the bush
Remain and die in the bush
They will deceive someone
And he will remain and die in the bush
They say that the people of sandema are finished
If you sit down and believe it

They will deceive someone
And he will die and remain in the bush

 # 34 Let's chop each other into pieces

Let's chop each other into pieces
If you are brave and stand
We will chop each other into pieces
If you stand we will chop each other into pieces
We are like the millipede, even if we
Are wounded, we will fight on and not surrender.
We are like vinegar made from the stalks of early millet
If you put so much in your soup, it will be too
Concentrated and you will not be able to eat it

We have agreed that if you are brave
To fight us; we will chop each other into Pieces

 # 35 Bulsa does not rise to battle unless with a just cause

Bulsaland does not rise up to battle
Unless there is a cause
Ayieta's children do not rise up to battle unless there is a cause
All of you listen
If you underestimate the rain
You will be beaten by it
Bulsaland does not go to battle without
A just cause
All of you listen
If you underestimate the rain, you will be beaten by it

 # 36 We are able to defeat them all

We are able to defeat them all
We are able to defeat them all
If they tell them to fight with us
And they agree, we are able to defeat them all

 # 37 Let someone be deceived to raise an axe

Let someone be deceived
To raise an axe
An axe stained with blood
Then he will be deceived to go home
Cry and get lost

 # 38 They fought and won

They fought and won
They fought and won again
They are now going to shoot a cow's arrow
And they will surely win too

They fought and won
They fought and won again
They are now going to shoot a cow's arrow
And they will surely win too

 # 39 If they dare kill akanbisi

If they dare kill Akanbiisi
They will see houses falling, houses falling
They will see how/what makes houses to fall

 # 40 I am fighting the battle alone

I am fighting the battle alone
I am fighting the battle alone
I am fighting the battle alone
Let someone dare try
Let someone dare try
Let someone dare try

 # 41 Our people are fiercer than the slave raider

Our people are fiercer than the slave raider
Yes, yes our people are fiercer than the slave raider
Our people are fiercer than the slave raider
Yes, yes our people are fiercer than the slave raider

 # 42 They fought and killed a lion

They fought and killed a lion and blood is flowing
Ayieta's household have killed lion
They fought and killed a male lion that is why people are running

 # 43 Even if the mice are a hundred

Even if the mice are a hundred
Even a hundred
Even a hundred
The cat can stretch itself and catch them all

 # 44 They should go behind the elephant and push it down

They should go behind the elephant and push it down
They should beat the elephant
Beat the elephant
They should go behind it for it will go down
They should go behind the elephant and push it down

 # 45 The fight is between elephants

They also killed slaves in the process
They also just killed slaves
Asiniensa children are elephants
The fight is between elephants
In the process they also killed slaves

 # 46 Lion, Lion

Lion, lion, a lion will give birth
What will the kid leopard be?
Lion, lion, a lion will bring forth its kind
What will a leopard baby be?
It will certainly be its kind

 # 47 The lion will give birth after its kind

What will a leopard give birth to?
It gives birth to its own kind
If a leopard gives birth
Will it be a cheater or a leopard?

 # 48 Rabbit is walking with one leg

Akpiaguuk is a dangerous place
Rabbit is running with one leg
Rabbit is walking with one leg
Akpiaguuk is a dangerous place
Rabbit is walking with one leg

 # 49 The cow and its daughter

The cow and its daughter, two hundred three hundred
Today it is going out two hundred three hundred
Azagsuk and his children, two hundred three hundred
They will defeat them and they will run home, two hundred three hundred

 # 50 An oldchief will not lack a piece of an old red cloth

An old chief's house will not lack
A piece of an old red cloth
A piece of an old red cloth
An old chief's house will not lack
A piece of an old red cloth

 # 51 Our chief is risen ready to fight

Our chief has risen in great splendour ready to fight.
The chief has risen with his troops in full swing ready for battle.

 # 52 The fig tree bore fruits

The fig tree bore fruits.
The fig tree bore fruits even to the stem.
The fig tree bore fig fruits too much even at the stem.

 # 53 My enemy died and became a ghost

My enemy has died
He is truly dead
He became a ghost
Went in and took his quiver
And went hunting and killed an antelope
He brought it and shared the meat
Among his family and left with one front leg
He took the leg with him to the bush
For hunting again and went
And met Antelope's children
And they asked him what meat he had
And would not give them some

 # 54 If anyone is standing

If anyone is standing
If anyone is standing
If anyone is standing
They will not turn back and see him
If anyone is standing
They will not turn back and see

 # 55 A crowd is not easily dispersed

A crowd is not easily dispersed?
A crowd is not easily dispersed?
When has it been possible to disperse a crowd?
You scoop vegetables but not scoop meat
A crowd is not easily dispersed?
A crowd is not easily dispersed?

 # 56 Who has put me in this condition?

Who has put me in this condition?
It is the work of God
But if my situation has been caused
By a human being, then we will meet each other
In the land of ancestors
I think it is the work of God
But if it is a human-being
That is responsible for my plight
Then we will meet in the land of the dead

 # 57 God has forsaken me

God has forsaken me
God has punished me over and again
God has forsaken me
And my friends are laughing at me
Even though they are not better than me
God has dealt with me over and again

 # 58 A red and white person entered our land

A red and white person came into our houses
But our fathers kept silent
If not, they would have seen how houses
Would be falling and falling
They would have seen
How houses would be falling

 # 59 An insider is digging my roots

It is an insider who sends my secrets out
How did the outsider get it?
Where will they get it?
Where will they get it?
It is the insider who is digging out my roots

Otherwise where else could the outsider get it from?

 # 60 My own people have betrayed me

If my own people do not betray me,
How will the outsider get me?
Where will they get me to kill
It is my own people who have sent me out
Otherwise how will the outsider get me?

 # 61 Ayieta's children are matching out

Now that Ayieta's children are moving out today,
They will catch some of us
And sell out as slaves
Now that Ayieta's children area moving out,
They will catch some of us and sell as slaves.

APPENDIX C

Kasem Song Texts

 # 62 De yaara ywoo

Dé yaara ywoo
Dé yaara ywoo
Dé yaara naa nabwona bia yaare ywoo
Dé yaare ywoo
Dé yaara ywoo
N yaara naa nabwona bia yaare ywoo
N yaa ze toŋe naa ba ta maga
N bugi naa ba ta maga
Nasara tu ka wa go nɔɔna ywoo
Kanbɔn-zwono ko wa go nɔɔna teo wone

 # 63 Adoa we o ba meero laga

Adoa we o ba meero laga
Adoa we o ba meero laga
Gaszaare nà tu dɛ ne dé wa ta mo
Dé yage nabwona bia taa duri ba seiga
Adoa we o ba meero laga owoo
Adoa we o ba meero laga
Kanbɔn-zwona ná nwoŋi dé wa ta mo
Fela wa mage teo pa ko yare tɛ

 # 64 Nabwona bia na lage chena de wa mi mo

Ayeilwooi lɛɛro ywooi
Lɛɛro te jege mankanno
Lɛɛro te jege mankanno
Nabwona bia daa na lage chena dé wa mi mo
Nɔɔno ta kwei kwaga o dale sana yera ne
Nabwona bia laam ná lage chena dé wa mi mo
Nɔɔno ta kwei kwaga o dale sana yera ne
Nabwona bia ná lage chena dé wa mi mo
Tega ná nwoŋi yé pa na Badono ni
Bachangwa bia
tega ná nwoŋi yé pa na badono ni
tega ná nwoŋi yé pa na badono ni
A we tega ná nwoŋi yé pa na badono ni
Bachangwa bia tega ná nwoŋi yé pa na badono ni

Bachangwa bia tega ná nwoŋi yé pa na badono ni
Nabwona ná lage chena dé wa ta mo
Nɔɔno ta kwei kwaga o dale sana yera ne
Ayeilwoo lɛɛro ywooi
Lɛɛro te jege mankanno
Nabwona bia ná lage chena dé wa ta mo
Nɔɔno ta kwei kwaga o dale sana yera ne

 # 65 Nɔŋɔ kom dom wɔ mo

Nɔŋɔ kom dom wɔ mo
Nɔŋɔ done amo ywoo
Nɔn-kapua mo done ne ywoo
Nɔŋɔ done amo
A maa we nɔŋ kom dom wɔ mo
Nɔŋɔ done amo ywoo
Nɔn-kapua mo zwɛ ne ywoo
Nɔŋɔ done amo ywoo
Nɔn-kapua mo zwɛ ne ywoo
Nɔŋɔ done amo ywoo-oo

 # 66 De wora de ni laseina

Nam ba dé wora dé ni laseina tua
Wusuŋ bia bwoo!
A ni laseina dɔ naa
O zege yeim ywoo?
Nam ba dé yi da dé ni laseina
Wusuŋ bia bwoo
A ni laseina dɔ naa
O zege yeim ywoo?

 # 67 Wusuŋu bia nwoŋi na a ni

Nwoŋi na á ni 2x
Wusum bia bam
Nwoŋi na á ni kɔgɔ na gare balei
Wusum bia ywoo
Nwoyi na á ni 2x
Nwoŋi na á ni kɔgɔ na gare balei

 # 68 O bwoŋi se o de debam chwoŋa ne

O bwoŋi se o de debam chwoŋa ne ywoo
Kayela wom zaŋe se o de debam chwoŋa ne naa

Feila kam nam bwoŋa
O bwoŋi se o de debam chwoŋa ne na
Feila kam nam via
O bwoŋi se o de debam chwoŋa ne na
A deyaa weei yaya weei.

 # 69 Wɛ toone ba chuli wolo wolo

Wɛ toone maa ba chuli wolo wolo ba go gweeru naa
Ba nɔne gweeru naa
Toone na nɔne gweeru ywoo
Wɔ toone maa ba chuli wolo wolo ba go de kwoo
Ba nɔne gweeru naa
Toone na nɔne gweeru ywoo.

 # 70 O gare wɛ ne

Eei wɔ o gare wɛ ne mo yere yaa wi gwooi
Ti bu wom gare wɛ ne mo yeei ei wei
Teo kom bu gare wɛ ne wɔ ne wɔ bɔ jwoŋi mo na
Nenɔna bwooi o gare wɛ ne naa ei wei
Teo kom bu gare wɛ ne wɔ ne wɔ bɔ jwoŋi na
Ta dé bu wom we o gare wɛ ne naa a weei
Teo kom bu gare wɛ ne wɔ ne wɔ bɔ zeim naa
O gare wɛ ne mo yere yaa ni gwooi
Botara bwooi o gare wɛ ne naa ei wei
Teo kam bu gare wɛ ne wɔ ne wɔ bɔ zeim naa
Eei wɔ o gare wɛ ne mo yere yaa ni gwooi
A wo nɛ na
O gare wɛ na naa ei wei
Ta de kwo wom we o gare wɛ ne naa wɔ ne wɔ bɔ zeim naa
O gare wɛ ne naa
Awi gwooi
Eei bia bam gare wɛ ne naa ei wei
Teo kam bu gare wɛ ne wɔ ne wɔ bɔ o zeim ywoo

 # 71 O kwi bworo bworo

O kwi bworo bworo o dona maa maa mɔm se ba yaa lage bɛ
Mo o nɔɔno maama
Kayela mo o nɔɔno maama eei
O nɔɔna maama ko mo ne pa o kwia o yera ba
Zura ywoo
Mo o nɔɔno maama ko mo mo pa o kwia o yera ba zura naa

Mo o nɔɔno maama
Kayela mo o nɔɔno maama

 # 72 A nyaana bam nam zaŋe pa de kwi

A nyaana bam zaŋe pa dé kwi nɔn-ŋom bu gwoo
A nyaana bam ba nam zaŋe pe dé kwi nɔn-ŋom
Bu ywoo toone ba jege nɔɔno nea
Ko nam ná tu ko daa to wolo ba ne ko tu ja jei
Ko nam ná tu ko daa to wolo ba ne ko tu ja jei
Toone ba jege nɔɔno nea
Toone ba jege ko ná to wolo ba ne ko tu ja jei
Ko jwa ná tu ko daa to wolo ba ne o tu ja jei
Toone ba jege nɔɔn nea-aa

 # 73 Kanbɔŋa le natera ywoo

Kanbɔŋa le natera ywoo
Debam bere wa le seo ywoo
Baga ná le seo o bere wɛ na ba na duri ba seiga
Beyere wa ma dane o vere nabwona wonnu
Debam Baga ná le seo o bere wɛ na ba na duri ba seiga
Beyere wa ma dane o vere nabwona wonnu
Gɔl-kanbɔŋa le natera naa
Debam beyere wa le seo o bere wɛ-ɛɛ-ɛ

 # 74 A dugi napana doa

A wa yage pa ta ba yera naa
Kukula bia yage pa ta ba yera wo-lɔnno ywoo
A dugi napana doa
Kukula bia laŋe wɛ nia teem na
Ba wa ye lira nɔɔna
Nabiina tage tage ba ga mo mo-n da
Ba we n ye lira nɔɔno n ware n dwei ywoo 3x
Napana doa
Ba tage tage ba ga mo mo-n da
Ba we n ye lira nɔɔno n ware n dwei ywoo

 # 75 Tuu kum wo chwoŋa ne ywoo

Tuu kum wo chwoŋa ne ywoo
Tuu kum wo chwoŋa ne ywoo
Debam de maama ye gwala jea wonnu
A we tuu kum wo chwoŋa ne ywoo

Tu-bale kam wo chwoŋa ne ywoo
Debam de maama ye gwala jea wonnu

 # 76 Ba na yage debam daane

Ba ná yage debam daane ywo
Nawura wa lɔ sam ga yɛ wone
Ba ná yage debam daane ywo
Nawura wa lɔ sam ywoo
Abam we chwoŋa yeiri ka tu jei o sola
Toone ná yiga de vei la la ba kwei
Chwo-doŋa yeiri ka tu jei o sola
Toone ná nɛ yiga ko vei lela lela

 # 77 Kukura yeiri wonnu

Ei ne kukura yeiri wonnu
A nyam kur-tua yeiri ka tu kɔga meero
Kur-doŋa yeiri wonnu ywoo
Kukura yeiri ka tu ka
Ei ba nam ná yage debam daane naa
A nyam nawura wa lɔ ba sam ga yɛ wone naa
Ei ne kukura yeiri wonnu ywo
A nyam kur-tua yeiri ka tu kɔga meero
Kur-doŋa yeiri wonnu ywo
Kukura yeiri ka tu ka
Ei ba ná yage debam daane na
A nyam nawura wa lɔ ba sam ga yɛ wone
Naa-a-a

 # 78 Nabiinu wo tane de gwala se n jeini yei !

Nanyɔm wa go debam ye gwala kaana baro
Nabiinu wó tane de gwala se n jeini yei naa
Eei ne kawea baro nanyɔm wa go debam
Woa ywoo
N nam wó tane de gwala se n jeini yeim
Wonnu ná wora ko chula bu nyena wɛ
A we tuu wó yare kwori vale-yeilla wone
Logo maama jei se yeim ywoo
Debam tu-bala yare kwori vale yeilla wone
Logo maama jei se yeim
Eei zem maŋa ye nanyɔm wa go debam ye
Gwala kaana baro

Nabiinu wó tane de gwala se n jeini yei ywoo
Ei nam yage pa kwei a pa n nwoŋi
Abam yina mo su yia
Bo nwoŋi bo pɛɛle tega
Yina de nam ba jege yere
Ei zem maŋa ye nanyɔm wa go debam ye gwala baro
Nabiinu wó tane de gwala se n jeini yei ywoo

 # 79 Yeirikuri zaŋɛ wɛ ne

Yeirikuri zaŋe wɛ ne naa
Anyena kam bu zaŋe wɛ ne ywoo ei wei
Se wɔ ne wɔ bɔ zeim logo
Eei ba wa zaŋe wɛ ne naa
Anyena kaan bu zaŋe wɛ ne
Wɔ ne wa ba zeini no naa eei

 # 80 Pɛwɛ chugi bira

Pɛwɛ chugi bira
Anyena kam bu chugi bira pa wiira taŋe ba jaune ywoo
O chugi bira mo ywoo o wei
Pɛwɛ chugi bira mo eei eei
Anyen kam bu chugi bira mo pa wiira taŋe ba jaane ywoo-oo

 # 81 Ba na dege-m naa

Ba do ba jaana
Gwala kam do ka jaana
Ba ná dege-m jaana
Ba ná dege-m naa
Nmo za-n kwaane n duri se n yi chulu tei
Ba do ba jaana
Gwale sem do se jaana
Ba ná dege naa
Nmo za-n kwaane n duri se n yi chulu tei

 # 82 Deem to ba yeigi daane

Deém to ba yeigi daane mo na
Ba bwoi kabɛ neei
A we faŋa to ba yeigi daane neei
Ba bwoi kabɛ neei
Leile bia ba jaŋe se ba lɔre neei
Ba na yeigi mɛ
N ná ti n yiga mmo za-n kwaane n ba

Se n lɔre yaga dɛ.

 # 83 Kabɛ jege yeiga

Kabɛ jege yeiga
Kabɛ jege yeiga
Gwala deém maa zege chwoŋa ne
Kabɛ jege yeiga
Kabɛ jege yeiga
Gwala deém maa seigi chwoŋa ne
Kabɛ jege yeiga

 # 84 N na lage se n lɔre

N náa lage se n lɔre naa
Ba peo
N nam ná lage se n lɔre gwala naa
Ba peo lela
N ná lage se n lɔre naa
Ba peo
N nam ná lage se n lɔre yaga naa
Ba peo lela
N ná lage se n lɔre naa
Ba peo
N nam ná lae se n lɔre gwala kam
Ba peo lela

 # 85 Naanea bu toŋe bena moro

Naanea bu toŋe bena moro
A nam wo dɛ a toŋe
Naanea bu taŋe bena bi
A nam wo dɛ a toŋe

 # 86 Ba na nɔn nɔn ba baa nuŋi gwala pasaa ne

Ba na nɔn nɔn ba baa nuŋi gwala pasaa ne
Nɔn nɔn yeiri Achanea
Debam mo vere taa de jaa vu kukula
Ba vere paare ba tane de pɛɛro naa
Ayaarania ganɛ wo laŋa ne
Ba tan de fera maa ke mare mare nee
Sam yiga gwala maa ke mare mare nee
Debam mo mage naa de jaa vu kukula
Ayaarania ganɛ wo laŋa ne

 # 87 Ba na dege gwala ba baa nuŋi sam wone

Ba na dege gwala ba baa nuŋi sam wone
Ko laare ywoo
Nyowoŋo ko laare ywoo
Ba na dege kayela ba baa nuŋi sam wone
Ko laare ywoo
Nyowoŋo ko laare ywoo
N bere n laare se de daa yage mo ?
Ajɔŋɔ pɛfaro bia jaane ba ga
Moo moo se de daa yage mo?
Ajɔŋɔ pɛfaro bia jaane ba ga

 # 88 Ba yeini ba mage naa

Ba yeini ba mage naa
Ba na mage gwala ka duri logo maama
Ba yeini ba mage naa
Ba na mage gwala ka duri logo maama
Ba yeini ba mage kabaa
Ba na mage gwala ka duri logo maama

 # 89 Bawolo kwara tangwane taa cheiga

Bawolo kwara tangwane taa cheiga
Wusuŋu kwara tangwane taa cheiga
De maama ye baara yerane mo ywo
Awolbia ye kɔŋɔ ko beene ywo
Oh o wow o wow (2)
Debam ye belebele
Ba jea wae ywo

 # 90 Miatu Miatu

Miatu miatu
Nam yein se de jeiri
Chena bwolo ne

Miatu miatu
Nam yein se de jeiri
Chena bwolo ne
Kanbonga lɔge peo
Debam ba peo kwori cheiga
Nasara lɔge peo
Debam ba peo kwori cheiga
Miatu miatu
Nam yein se de jeiri
Chena bwolo ne

 # 91 Ba na go aveiru

Ba na go Aveiru
Ko jege chaveera naa
Ba go nɔɔn babea kayaa ne
Aveiru na yi soŋo
N tan n bere ba
Ne ba done naguri
Ba tan de kwogila ywoo
Ba tan de kwogila ywoo
Aveiru maŋe sabɔrɔ ne

 # 92 Ba na mage taa

Ba na mage taa
Ba na nuŋi Teyolo ne
Ba na mage taa ba
ke Pwo de Soŋo
Ba na kwei tonɔ
Ba wo bwoŋi Teyolo yere

 # 93 Kaana baro yein ba taa twe ywo

Kaana baro yein ba taa twe ywo
Kawura baro yein ba taa twe naa
Kaana baro yein ba taa twe ywo
Kawura baro yein ba taa twea
Saa Kuchula bu ye nywon-kasɔŋa ye nɔɔ gware
Gweeru jaane ye o bu yeiri jam?
Kaana baro yein ba taa twe ywo

 # 94 Baa yaare yaare se ba baa jeini ya

Baa yaare yaare se ba baa jeini ya 2x
Baa yaare yaare se ba baa jeini ya 2x
Nakɔŋɔ Kawɛ bia ba
Abam ye gundaaro naa
Nawura ye chilacheeru naa
Baa yaare yaare se ba baa jeini ywo

#95 A ze go amo wo nyɔ ywo

A ze go amo wo nyɔ ywo
A ze go amo wo nyɔ ywo
Amo wo nyɔ jana a choori nɔɔn yera ne err
Awio wio wiooo!
A ja n yuu a lɔɔre naa
A ja n nabwoga a lɔɔre naa
A yage n kwaga ne vora na yaare tei
Hanyaa gwa bam
Ba na pɛ ko ni de wora de di

 # 96 Ba go ba ga

Ba go ba ga
Gwala na tu ba go ba ga
Debam kwo ye gambaa kɔgɔ
Ba twe ba maga
Gwala na tu ba go ba ga

 # 97 De wa jeeri daane chena bwolo ne

De wa jeeri daane chena bwolo ne
De wa jeeri daane chena bwolo ne
Atia maa ye tuu naa
Tuu maa ba mɔnno fɔga
Atia maa ye gweeru naa
Gweeru maa ba mɔnno fɔga
Debam wam ba gaa yiga tɔge ywo
De waa jeeri daane chena bwolo ne

 # 98 Gwala de debam tetare ywoo

Gwala de debam tetare ne ywoo
Ba ná mage neei
A we gwala de debam tetare ne ywoo
Se ba ja ba nwoŋ
Gwala to debam tetare ne ywoo
Dé yi da dé bwoŋi
Se ba ja ba nwoŋi

 # 99 A na bugi naa

A na bugi naa
Gwolo logo neA bugi ywo
A na bugi naa
Gwolo logo ne
Bugi ywo
Nave bia wo laŋa ne

 # 100 Bia wo mage kaba

Ba mage Kaba
Dé mage kaba dé zege te-jeeri ne
Bia wó mage Kaba
Ba mage Kaba ba zege te-jeeri ne
Dó nam wó mage ywoo

Kasem Texts English Translations

 # 62 We have suffered oo
We have suffered oo
Offspring of the poor have suffered
We have suffered oo
We have suffered oo, offspring of the poor have suffered
When you work they beat
When you are tired they still beat
The Whiteman came and said I should kill people
The Asante came and said I should kill people in the town

 # 63 Adoa says he needs no food
Adoa says he needs no food
When Gazaare comes we shall shoot arrows
Children of the poor have to run and hide
Adoa says he needs no food oh
Adoa says he needs no food
When the Asante comes out we shall shoot arrows
The Whiteman wants me to blast the town

 # 64 If poor man's children want exchanges of arrows we shall shoot
Ayeilwooi, this is undermining oh
If the poor man's sons want exchanges of arrows we will
People let's lean against the kappork tree
Ayeilwooi, this is undermining oh
If the poor man's sons want exchanges of arrows we will
People let's lean against the kappork tree

When the season comes
Don't give them the chance
Sons of the crow,
When the season comes
Don't give them the chance

I say when the season comes
Don't give the the chance
Sons of the crow
When the season comes
Don't give them the chance

If the poor man's sons want exchanges of arrows
We will

People let's lean against the kappork tree
Ayeilooi, this is undermining

If the poor man's sons want exchanges of arrows
We will
People let's lean against the kappork tree

#65 Whom has the scorpion stung?

Whom has the Scorpion Stung?
A scorpion has stung me oo
A pregnant scorpion has stung me oo
I ask whom has the Scorpion Stung
A scorpion has stung me oo
A pregnant has stung me oo
A scorpion has has stung me oo
A pregnant has stung me oo
A scorpion ha has stung me oo

 # 66 We are looking for "laseina" (lesser god)

Come, let's see, laseina has come
Sons of Wusuŋu check whether laseina is asleep
Where is he standing, oh?
Come let's meet there and look for laseina
Sons of Wusuŋu
Check whether laseina is asleep
Where is he standing, oh
Son of the land has arisen, who will save him

 # 67 Sons of wusuŋu come out and see

Come out and see
Sons of Wusuŋu
Come see how a crowd is better than a few
Sons of Wusŋdu
Come out and see
Come see how a crowd is better than a few

 # 68 He called to put us on the path

He called to put us on the path
The difficult man is standing to put us on the path
The Whiteman is calling
He is calling to put us on the path
The Whiteman can walk
He is calling to put us on the path
Adeyaa weei, yaya weei

 # 69 Death fears no one

Death fears no one, a lion has been killed
They that stepped on the lion
Death has stepped on the lion
Death fears no one, they have killed our father
They have stepped on a lion
Death has stepped on a lion

 # 70 He has arisen

Eei, who has arisen?
Your name is Wi
A native of the land has arisen
Yeei ei wei
Son of the land has arisen
Who will save him?
He is up and calling, ei wei
Son of the land has arisen, who will save him
Tell the son to stand up
Son of the land has arisen
Who will help him?
He has arisen,
His name is Wi
We are orphans. But he has arisen ei wei
Son of the land has arisen
Who will help him?
Eei, who has stood up,
His name is Wi.Can't you see
He has arisen, ei wei
Tell our father that he has arisen
Who will help him?
He has stood up
Mr. Awi

Eei the children have arisen, ei wei

 # 71 He weeps helplessly

He is crying uncontrollably
His enemies' are happy and making fun
That is the only person he has
Brave man! that is his only person eei
His heart is burning for that is his only person
His only person taken away
That is why he is crying helplessly
That is his only person
Brave man! that is his only person

 # 72 My brothers, let us mourn

My brothers, let's mourn a good person
My brothers, let's mourn a son of the land
This death is not to be seen
But what can you do when it falls on you
Death is not to be seen
One doesn't have to waste time when death strikes
When it falls on any one, you do not have to sit unconcerned
Death is not to be seen

 # 73 The slave raider has removed his sandals

The slave raider has removed his sandals
We shall also remove a cutlass
When Gazare removes a cutlass and shows it up
People run into hiding
Strength is used to rob the poor
When Gazare removes a cutlass and shows it up
People run into hiding
Strength is used to rob the poor
A powerful slave raider has removed his sandals
We shall also remove a cutlass and show it up

 # 74 I swear by the sling

I say let me tell who they are
Sons of Kukula, let me tell their weaknesses
I swear by the sling
Sons of Kukula have tasted God's medicine
They say I am a medicine man

People have spoken and failed, I am who I am
They say I am an untouchable medicine man
I swear by the sling
They have spoken and failed, I am who I am
They say I am an untouchable medicine man

 # 75 The elephant is on the way

The elephant is on the way
We all, are in the hands of the slave raider
I say the elephant is on the way
The male elephant is on the way
We all, are in the hands of the slave raider

 # 76 If they leave us face to face

If they leave us face to face
Clans will build their houses at market sites
If they leave us face to face
Clans will build houses
You think a path is closed to its owner
When death comes with speed
Even a new path will lead to its owner
When death comes with full speed

 # 77 A dog does not know things

Yes a dog does not know things
My brother, a dead dog knows no food
A strange dog knows nothing
A dead dog knows no food
But if they leave us face to face
My brother clans will build houses in the markets
Yes a dog knows nothing
My brother, a dead dog knows no food
A strange dog knows nothing
A dog knows not its owner
Yes if they leave us face to face
My brother, clans will build their houses in markets

 # 78 Who will challenge the slave raider
And remain the same?

Thirst will kill us, slave raider husband of women
Who will challenge the slave raider and remain the same?
Yes, Kawea's husband, thirst will kill us
But who will challenge the slave raider and remain the same?

A lion will roar from the vallies
I say an elephant will roar from the vallies
The world is in trouble
Our elephant will roar from the vallies
The world is in trouble

Ei today thirst will kill us
Slave raider husband of women
Will a human being challenge the slave raider and remain the same?
Let me give it to your heart
Your eyes are full of tears
Tears that are nameless
Ei today thirst will kill us
Slave raider husband of women
Will a human being challenge the slave raider and remain the same?

 # 79 Yeirikuri rise up
Son of Anyena Kam rise up
Who and who will help this world
Ei they say he should rise up
Son of Anyena Kam rise up
Who will come and help, eei

 # 80 Pewe has punched the wall
Pewe has punched the wall
Son of Anyena Kam has punched
The wall for wolves to scatter
He has punched the wall
Pewe has punched the wall, eei eei
Son of Anyena Kam has punched
The wall for wolves to scatter

 # 81 When they pursue you

They chase to capture
The slave raider chases to capture
When they chase you, fly
When they chase you
Just run till you reach a sacred place
They chase to capture
The slave raiders chase to capture
When they chase you
Just run till you reach a sacred place

 # 82 Years ago they sold one another

In the olden days they sold one another
They call them slaves
I say in those days they sold one another
They call them slaves
Today children do not care to know
Where marketing is done
When you are ready, you try and come
So that you will know market day

 # 83 Slaves have market

The slave raider is standing on the way
Slaves have market
The slave raider is standing on the way
Slaves have market

 # 84 If you want to know

If you want to know
Come to the hills
If you want to know about the slave raider
Come to the hills now now
If you want to know
Come to the hills
If you want to know the market
Come to the hills fast fast
If you want to know
Come to the hills
If you want to know about the slave raider
Come to the hills fast fast

#85 Son of naanea has worried for thousand years

Son of Naanea has worried for thousand years
But I have not taken part in working
Son of Naanea has worried for hundred years
But I have not taken part in working

 # 86 When they move out and meet the slave raider inside pasaa

When they move out and meet the slave raider inside Pasaa*
No one knows Achaanea*
We fought them through to Kukula*
We took over titles and confiscated their guns
The people of Ayaara are buffalos on the battlefield

They and the fra*are in readiness
The distant slave raider is in readiness
We fought them till Kukula*
The people of Ayaara are buffalos on the battlefield

 # 87 When they pursue the slave raider into town

When they pursue the slave raider into town
There is a cry
Nywoŋo*, there is a cry
When they pursue such a useless person into town
There is a cry
Nywoŋo*, there is a cry

Are you crying for us to leave you again?
Ajɔŋɔ big clan failed to capture
Are you crying moo moo for us to leave you again?
Ajɔŋɔ big clan failed to capture

 # 88 They usually fight

They usually fight
They usually fight the slave raider
and he runs in every direction

They usually fight
They fight the slave raider
and he runs in every direction

They usually fight slaves
They fight the slave raider
and he runs in every direction

 # 89 Bawolo divinities, deities listen

Bawolo divinities, deities listen
Wusuŋu divinities, deities listen
We are all men of valour
Awoli's offprings are coming in multitudes
ee ee ee ee ee(chorus)
Their hands are in distress

 # 90 Strong men, strong men

Strong men, strong men
Let us meet on the battlefield

Strong men, strong men
Let us meet on the battlefield

The slave raider has given a gun shot
We do not listen to gun shots
The Whiteman has given a gun shot
We do not listen to gun shots

Strong men, strong men
Let us meet on the battlefield to know who is who

 # 91 If they kill aveiru

If they kill Aveiru
It is a shame
They have killed a great man in the bush
Aveiru, if you get home
Tell them that they have eaten groundnuts with its shells
Aveiru has remained in the bush in sabɔrɔ

 # 92 They fought till they got to teyolo

They fought till they get to Teyolo
They fought till they get to Pwo and Soŋo
Anytime you pick a book you will see
The name of Teyolo

 # 93 Husband of women allow them to insult

Husband of women allow them to insult
Husband of women allow them to insult
Kawura's husband allow them to insult
Husband of women allow them to insult
Kawura's husband allow them to insult
Son of Saa Kuchula is a nursing lioness
Who cannot be provoked
If the leopard attacks,
Won't its offspring know how to attack?

Husband of women allow them to insult

 # 94 They will hover, hover and come to perch

They will hover, hover and come to perch (4)
Nakɔŋɔ Kawɛ's offsprings
You are tall kapok trees
Our adversaries are chilacheeru (some aimless bird)
They will hover, hover and come to perch.

 # 95 If i kill i will suck

If I kill I will suck
If I don't kill I will suck
I will suck blood from someone and belch err
Awio wio wio wiooo! (chorus response)
I will skin you from the abdomen
I will leave your back as sorcerers suffer
Hanyaa (resonse- we concore) conquerors
If they expose it, we shall devour

 # 96 They will teach him a lesson

They will teach him a lesson
If the raider comes they will teach him a lesson
Our father is a man of host
They insult, they beat
If the raider comes they will teach him a lesson

 # 97 We will face each other on the battlefield

We will face each other on the battlefield
Atia is an elephant
But the elephant is not dependable
Atia is a leopard
But the leopard is not dependable
Our territory cannot be trespassed
We will face each other on the battlefield

 # 98 The slave raider is in our neighbourhood

The slave raider is in our neighbourhood
If they pursue him
I say the slave raider is in our neighbourhood
They want to capture someone
The slave raider is in our neighbourhood
Let us rise and call
So that they come out

 # 99 Iam tired on the land of the slave raider

I am tired on the land of the slave raider
If I get tired on the land of the slave raider
Nave's children are on a strange land

 # 100 People will beat slaves

They have beaten slaves
Let’s beat slaves outside the town
Children will beat slaves
They will beat slaves off the town
It is not a single person who will beat him

Glossary

Azaksuk:	A deity found in Fiisa, Sandema among the Bulsa
Bulsa:	An ethnic group found in the Upper East Region of Ghana and subjects of this study
Buli:	Language spoken by the people of Bulsa
Fao:	An annual thanksgiving festival celebrated by the Kasena
Fiok:	An annual thanksgiving festival celebrated by the people of Bulsa
Fela:	A term used to refer to the Whiteman or European by the Kasena
Gonja:	An ethnic group found in the Northern Region of Ghana
Gwala:	A term used by the Kasena in referring to the slave raider and the act of slave raiding
Gwolo:	A term used by the Kasena to refer to a faraway place. It is especially used within the context of slavery to define the foreign enslaver
Dabli:	A word that refers to a slave among the Dagomba
Dagomba:	An ethnic group found in the Northern Region of Ghana
Kabah:	A word that refers to the slave among the Kasena
Kasem:	The language spoken y the Kasena
Kukula:	A river deity among the Kasena found in Kayoro near Burkina Faso
Yoma:	A term for slave among the Bulsa
Zambao:	A deity found on Chaina hills among the Kasena