

**Performance, Oral Poetics and Ideo-Aesthetic Heritages in the
'Search for the Soul' of a Poet-Cantor**

Francis Gbormittah

*Institute of African Studies (IAS)
University of Ghana, Legon*

Abstract

This paper examines Eve oral literature in the context of a poetic search for a departed poet-cantor in order to ascertain how dramaturgy and embodiment and oral poetics engage with knowledge production and dissemination. The paper makes a case that beneath the rhetoric surrounding major works pursued in African oral literature, there is still situated a broad topic concerning Eve poetic funeral songs that has rather not received much attention. This study has been carried out by employing a combination of two methods of obtaining information: a collection of ethnographic data from Ueta-Gbota in the Ketu-North District of the Volta Region of Ghana, and relevant critical published works. These data have been textually and qualitatively examined. This approach is convenient and appropriate as it enabled me to describe, analyse and critique adequately data collected, and the subject matter as a whole. The analysis is based on the hypothesis that a 'poetic search for the soul' of a departed poet-cantor creates a platform for some understanding of culture: values, practices, and aesthetic qualities. This study is significant as it has demonstrated and ascribed meaning to this aspect of Eve oral tradition.

Keywords: *Performance; Oral Tradition; Poetic; Dramaturgy; Embodiment; Ideo-aesthetic; Heritage.*

1. Introduction

The study of African oral literature has been rekindled in recent times leading to the publication of a number of literature on its various aspects such as folklore (folktales, legends, mythology), verbal arts and so on. These themes have generated numerous perceptive discussions about the role of oral literature now and in the future. This is understandable because Africa is renowned for its oral culture, demonstrated through rites of passage such as the celebration of births, puberty, marriage and funerals. The critical nature of spoken word in Africa underscores Ruth Finnegan's believe that the continent is the world's foremost in verbal arts (See Finnegan, 2007). Africans therefore, admire the artistic and creative use of language by talented and skilled people such as griots, narrators, tellers of tales, poets, composers, and so on. Oral culture is deep-rooted in Africa to the extent that globalisation and its associated technological advancement has not consumed its practice completely. Anyidoho (2003) provides a scenario where the spoken word is technologies through the means of electronic media. He notes that:

And when Akpalu himself came on the radio, or when his voice boomed into the megaphone of Uncle Kofitse Ashiakpor's gramophone – that miracle of His Master's Voice – everyone dropped whatever they were doing and gathered around the miracle

machine as the greatest of all Ewe poet-cantors spoke and sang to us in our own language (Anyidoho, 2003: 6).

In effect technology has come not to destroy, but rather to enlarge the tradition of orality in a more relevant and innovative manner. This is why it is incumbent upon oral artists to take advantage of new technologies and use them to their benefit. The challenge, however, is how oral artists can take advantage of these technologies and blend them with traditional knowledge to make the necessary impact. I have, therefore, embarked on this study in an effort to offer one more perspective on African oral traditions, specifically, oral literature in the Anlo-Ewe area. The focus really is on dramaturgy (dramatic composition and the representation of physical and symbolic space), embodiment (values, beliefs, practices, and aesthetic expressions) and oral poetics within the context of a 'poetic search for the soul' of a departed poet-cantor.

It should be clear that this is not the first time a study is being carried out into funeral elegies or funeral songs and the poetic values they adopt. Scholars like Ruth Finnegan, J.H. Nketia, Isidore Okpewho, Kichamu Akiraga and Bole Odaga have all published works on some areas of the subject. One scholar and poet who studied and adopted lyrics of Ewe funeral songs in his poems is Kofi Anyidoho. He explored the synthesis of Ewe and Western paradigms to artistically put together his poems (Note 2). Likewise, Kofi Awoonor employs rhythms and themes from Ewe traditional funeral songs in his 1964 and 1971 collections of poems (Awoonor, 1971). Awoonor, in 1974, examined Ewe elegies, particularly Akpalu's funeral dirges in their fundamental style to ascertain their inter-relatedness and significance, and the conditions that motivated Akpalu to compose them (Awoonor, 1974). He further delves into drum interpretations of these dirges as well as their circumstantial meaning. Similarly, J.H. Nketia examines in Akan dirges, themes, language, literary form, social function, structural types, and occasions for performance as well as musical qualities (Nketia, 1955). Ezekiel Alembi also discusses the role of song and dance in the context of a funeral among the Abanyole of the Western Province of Kenya (Alembi, 2009). Ruth Finnegan analyses dirges from diverse ethnic groups in Africa and observes recurring themes in African dirges (Finnegan, 1976). Liz Gunner elucidates on the significance of orality vis-à-vis the development of human culture, noting that:

Orality was the means by which Africa made its existence, its history long before the colonial and imperial presence of the West manifested itself. In this sense, orality needs to be seen not simply as 'the absence of literacy' but as something self-constitutive, *suis generis*. The accepting of this proposition has consequences for an understanding of world culture: namely, it is neither possible nor accurate to take one model that valorizes the written word as the blueprint for how the human race has developed (Gunner, 2007: 67).

This study is carved from a bigger work, in-progress, which involves in-depth examination of specific areas like 'talent-transference and parting rituals,' 'investiture of *Henɔ*,' 'functions of women in the funeral of poet-cantor,' 'performance virtuosity and fraternity among drum ensembles in Ketu-North District,' and 'anti-clockwise movement as a performance style of Ewe songs.' What suffices for this paper is a survey which attempts to combine analysis of ethnographic data with a review of scholarly publications within the general context of performance, oral poetics and artistry.

From the foregoing concise background to the research, hopefully, I have been able to set the agenda for my intentions with this paper.

This paper is organised under eight headings as follows: ‘The Field Site,’ which outlines the socio-economic and political profile of Ueta-Gbɔta; ‘Statement of the Problem and Motivation for the Study,’ makes a case for the questions to be addressed; ‘Objectives and Significance of the Study,’ indicates what I hope to achieve and its importance; ‘Methodology,’ outlines the data collection and analysis approaches; ‘Theoretical Premises,’ presents framework for theories employed thereby providing parameters for the study; ‘The search for the soul of a departed poet-cantor and ideo-aesthetic heritages,’ describes and analysis the poetic search itself; ‘Concepts, contexts and processes of Eve poetic funeral songs,’ discusses poet-cantors’ motivation and perspectives of composition; and ‘Aspects of dramaturgy and embodiment in the ‘poetic search,’” examines dramatic elements and poetic stylistics.

2. The Field Site

The field work was carried out in Ueta-Gbɔta, an Aɲlɔ-Eve speaking community. It is located in the Ketu-North District of the Volta Region. Ueta-Gbɔta is one of the eleven, or so, communities (*tokɔwo*) of the Ueta Traditional Council, which comprises Xi, Dedego, Agɔvi-Ueta, Dekpɔ-Yia, Dekpɔ-Hɔme, Dekpɔ-Dome, Adzɔtsi, Aɖrume, Ualavi, Klenɔmadi, and Atiteti. The traditional council shares boundaries with townships such as Dzodze (approx. to the North), Klikɔ (approx. to the East), Aɲlɔ-Afiadenyigba (approx. to the South) and Avenɔ suburbs (approx. to the West). The people are chiefly farmers and *kete* weavers. Ueta-Gbɔta is noted for its thriving Eve traditional music culture which led to the formation of an ensemble called *Haikɔtu* Performing Ensemble. The poetic search was held in memory of the late *Dumega* Abraham Kɔdzovi Anyidoho also known as Kɔdzovi Nugbegble. Until his death, he was a co-founder of the group and held very important positions as its *Henɔ* (poet-cantor) and *Azagunɔ*, master drummer, (Note 1). According to Kofi Anyidoho, Kɔdzovi Nugbegble “was the last great *Azagunɔ* and *Henɔ* of his generation (Anyidoho, 2015: 9).” This revelation provides the initial impetus to pursue this study.

3. Statement of the Problem and Motivation for the Study

I have endeavoured in this paper to provide insight into Eve oral literature which has not been studied amply, specifically, into the ‘poetic search for the soul’ of a departed Eve singer, composer, performer and a poet. The question really is that, largely, many Eve youngsters have the tendency to believe that performance of funeral rituals, especially, for a poet-cantor is mundane and only offer them the opportunity to socialise at the funeral of another ‘old man’ or ‘woman.’ In this way, they relegate to oblivion the functional values of special funeral rites. Additionally, the fact that some Western scholars faced challenges that affected quality of works they did in the area of African oral tradition must give cause to African scholars to constantly work to set the records straight. Western researchers suffered from inherited biases from missionaries and colonial administrators against Africans and their culture (Okpewho, 2007: 84). Achebe (1994) has a thought-provoking opinion on the flaws of the Western critic on African literature: “the European critic of African literature must cultivate the habit of humility appropriate to his limited experience of the African world (Achebe, 1994: 1192).” However, publications (Note 3) resulting from their research activities remain on the bookshelves. The herculean task for African scholars to return to the field to work to counter the misconceptions in the pages of

these earlier works is a mandatory call.

4. Objectives and Significance of the Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate cultural values, beliefs, practices, and artistic expression through the analysis of 'poetic search for the soul' of poet-cantor and oral funeral poetry, in this way, contribute towards the understanding and appreciation of Ewe traditional values. This study is significant as it will demonstrate and ascribe meaning to African literature within the context of this search. Also, as Anyidoho indicates, it is "a rare tradition in the arts" as "the last time [the *Haikɔtu* Group] performed such a ritual was almost half-a-century ago, for *Hesinɔ* Kligu Yortuvor, a lead poet-cantor for the group, when it was founded (Anyidoho, 2015: 15)." It is, therefore, important to pay attention to this dying tradition, especially so, as about fifty years ago, it was performed for a *Hesinɔ* (female poet-cantor), and this time for a *Henɔ* (male poet-cantor). The two scenarios have different dichotomies, and so shall it impact the performance of rituals differently.

5. Methodology

This work is as a result of firsthand fieldwork and literary analysis. Indeed, many researchers have collected and evaluated data on Ewe oral art forms after the pioneering works of Kofi Anyidoho and Kofi Awoonor in the Southern Ewe region. In this study, the ethnographic method was employed due to its effectiveness on productive lines of analysis and how it integrates anthropology, folklore, literature and linguistics, and enables critical perspectives on forms of verbal art. I am guided by the fact that it is one thing going into the field and another thing knowing what to collect, and yet deciding how best to interpret what has been gathered.

I have relied on two types of data: primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected in the Ueta-Gbɔta community through interaction and interview with six respondents at this survey stage (Note 4). I conducted the interviews in Ewe, the local language of the people. I took many things into consideration in selecting respondents. For instance, I considered age and experience. Some respondents were chosen for the historical perspective they could provide. The degree of competence of such respondents, without a doubt, relates to age and experience. The average age of the respondents for the historical perspective ranges between fifty-five to seventy years. Other respondents were chosen according to their special knowledge concerning the oral arts (composition and singing) and drumming. Even so, some respondents were selected by the virtue of the titles they hold in the group. Most of the interviews were conducted while the performance was on-going so as to experience the atmosphere of originality and authenticity (Note 5). I made sure I had obtained the suitable recording equipment and materials necessary for this field research. Occasionally, I joined in the performance of the songs and dances in order to create an affinity between myself and the somewhat suspicious performers, and to show that I identify with their aesthetic elements. All these were carried out with a focus on the research process itself. Ajuwon (1982), for instance, has explained the strategy of combining participatory-observatory roles:

I not only watched and collected funeral dirges of the hunters, but also I participated in their song-refrains, to the delight of the chanters [...]. As a participant-observer-collector, I paid special attention to the form and procedures of the ceremony, the innovative mode of chanting, the role of the drummers, and the audience's response to the chanter's artistry. These observations proved valuable to me in the formulation of my interview questions (Ajuwon, 1982: viii).

It should be stated that I never encountered any awkward behaviour from the performers and respondents, perhaps, due to earlier researchers such as Kofi Anyidoho's effort in letting the community see the need for documenting folklores, and the roles folklores play in the education of their children so they took an interest in the whole exercise (Note 6). Secondary data was gathered from relevant critical published works on the subject through library research.

The data have been textually and qualitatively analysed in order to draw conclusions regarding hypothesis set for the investigation. The analysis is based on the premise that oral performances provide a platform for understanding of cultural values, practices and aesthetic qualities.

6. Theoretical Premises

As I have mentioned earlier in this paper, many scholars have carried out research on the subject of African oral literature in the past. According to information available, determined collection and documentation of African verbal art forms have been made by ethnographers and foreign researchers of oral literature since the middle of the 19th century. Aspects of oral literature collected comprise fables, proverbs, myths and legends. These works have become valuable as the basis for advanced methodological and systematic studies which have developed in recent years. African scholars who followed these Western researchers adopted carefully conceived approaches in collecting and documenting oral forms to extricate the key values for instructive purposes in the indigenous communities. These scholars include Nketia (1955), Awoonor (1964), Babalola (1966), Abimbola (1975), Okpewho (1979), Anyidoho (1993), and so on (Note 7).

In 1957, Richard Dorson conducted a test to establish the relationship between a written work and oral literature. The results indicated the following three areas: 'biographical evidence,' implying that the author has experienced oral knowledge; 'internal evidence,' signifying the author's understanding of folklore; and 'corroborative evidence,' meaning that the saying, tale song, or custom inside the literary work owns an independent traditional life (Dorson, 1957: 5). Key theoretical hypotheses resulting from Dorson's study is that 'oral literature, by its very nature, is participatory.' It brings together performers, performance, and audience into one integrated manifestation of artistic vigour. This is similar to Richard Bauman's (1995) delineation of performance as a "responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence (Kapchan, 1995:482)." Another central premise is that 'for an oral poetics, art is not the finished product of human imagination but the very process of imagination and creativity (Anyidoho, 1983: vi).' Again, this suggestion is comparable to Conquergood's (1989) and Drewal's (1989) assertions that:

[...] performance is open-ended, but it privileges process, the temporally or processual constructed nature of human realities, and the agency of knowledgeable performers who have embodied particular techniques and styles to accomplish it (Conquergood, 1989: 84;

Drewal, 1989).

The point of these two observations is ‘the perspective of continual creation/recreation as the nature of performance of verbal arts.’ In this respect, it should be emphasised that verbal arts do not come into being “through an abstract devotion to the art of using words, but through concerns that often overflow the bounds of mere verbal virtuosity (Anyidoho, 1983: 8).” Therefore, a theory of funeral poetry can only be developed with due regard to, and understanding of fundamental beliefs and practices related to life, death and the dead. This also explains as having a view of life which acknowledges the fact that the present is in the constant creative interface with the past, and is always with the expectation of future achievements as its essential driving force. In this research, I employed the concept of ‘ethnopoetics’ developed by Dell Hymes (1981) and Dennis Tedlock (1983) to back my arguments. This concept is “an interdisciplinary construct that attempts to correct the Eurocentric and chirographic bias against non-Western, traditional ways of speaking and meaning by deriving an interpretive frame from discourse in its own cultural context (Quick, 1999: 95).” Ethnopoetics’ component of ‘infra-cultural’ is most appropriate for this study as this was, particularly, developed for research into oral poetry by Alembi (2002). It also makes provision for performance, the oral text, and the written text. Other important features of the concept are that it encourages an insider analysis and interpretation (Note 8) of works of art within a true sense of a specific community (Note 9); interpretation of oral literary pieces in their cultural context (Quick, 1999: 95); examination of oral texts beyond mere concern with stylistics in order to elucidate the theme of the study; deep involvement in dialogue and interaction in order to understand the structural and underlying issues surrounding a phenomenon and a community; the assigning of meaning to oral texts based on the cultural traditions of the performer and audience; and a close observation and participation in live performances of a given genre of oral art (Alembi, 2003: 23). The oral-formulaic theory of ‘composition-performance’ turns out to be a guiding hypothesis. According to Milan Parry and Albert Lord (1978), “singer, performer, composer, and poet are one under different aspects but at the same time (Parry & Lord, 1978: 14).” This statement critically corresponds with the personality and works of *Dumega Kɔdzovi Anyidoho*, the poet-cantor under reference, and offers the impetus for its relevance. From the above theoretical standpoints, it should be clear that research in African oral literature has not started recently. The pioneers have made great efforts to locate its study in the mainstream of literature and have put in place some foundational concepts to guide its study. I will now proceed to look at other issues at the heart of this study.

7. The ‘search for the soul’ of a departed poet-cantor and ideo-aesthetic heritages

Death, it is said, is as old as humanity. The same can be said of the practices and rituals linked to it. The dirge or elegy, which I prefer to call ‘poetic funeral songs,’ in the context of my study, and by Cuddon’s (1998) definition of it as “a song of lament, usually of a lyrical mood (Cuddon, 1998: 227)” (Note 10) has a history as a genre that can be traced to prehistoric periods. The phenomenon of mortality and the rites relating to its performance differ from community to community, and even on the global stage. The determinant of what rituals to perform depends on a people’s understanding of the concept of death itself. Since rituals go with poetic funeral songs, the perception of mortality comes to the fore yet again. Whichever way one looks at it, it was not surprising that the funeral of a poet-cantor, like *Dumega Kɔdzovi Anyidoho*, was firmly rooted in the performance of poetic funeral songs. As far as the success or failure in the performance of these songs at everyone else’s funeral can determine to what extend the

deceased had been given a fitting funeral or not, it cannot be denied a poet-cantor for any reason. I will dare say that his spirit would demand an admission of guilt from the group he led for many years, from the people he mentored, and from the community he served.

The authorial presence of the artist in literary creativity has long been established by psychoanalytic theories regardless of Roland Barthes' contrary view on it (Barthes, 1977). Barthes' position was contested by many critics including Stephen Arnold. Arnold observes that:

[...] this unfortunate state of affairs in the Western intellectual establishment, resulting from postmodernism and poststructuralism, is even worse in post-colonial Africa owing to the blurring of all the increasingly porous genres of literature, and there is such distrust of autonomous selfhood, that autobiography is in danger of losing its generic identity (Arnold, 1992: 145).

However, this is not the case with *Dumega* Kodzovi Anyidoho's artistic works (song and drum language compositions). During the funeral, his memory was activated, his autobiography was methodically-etched among his people. He composed and sung his poetry and songs, composed and beat the drums to reflect the patterns of his life. The 'poetic search for his soul' was fascinating and full of rendition of Eve linguistic acumen as his many 'souls could not desert his mortal body.'

Two days before the date of burial and funeral of the departed poet-cantor, the Ueta-Gbɔta *Haikɔtu* Performance Ensemble staged the enactment of *Azagunɔ-Henɔ Dzidzi* (poetic search for the soul of a master drummer and poet-cantor). The entire day was devoted to a performance tour which began from Ueta-Gbɔta at early morning to *Dɔlɔfi*, *Bɔlɔve* and to *Anlɔ-Afiadenyigba* divisions (*Adziehe*, *Lagbati*, *Kpongga*, *Gbonnga*, *Ablɔme*) and ended at *Tsavanya*. The performance at each stop was built around a dramatic moment when a spokesperson for the group announced the sudden disappearance of *Azagunɔ/Henɔ*. It was believed that the deceased occasionally made trips along these routes, and it was likely he 'departed' to visit his work colleagues and relatives in these communities. The emblematic occupational paraphernalia of the deceased such as drumstick (for *Azagunɔ*) and fly-whisk (for *Henɔ*) was exhibited together with his framed photograph. (Figure 1). The photograph, particularly, was conspicuously displayed in front of the procession conducting the search. This is for the avoidance of doubt about the 'target' for the search and for the hosts to confirm the identity of the deceased. A spokesperson for the hosts in these towns at each time assured the group that *Azagunɔ/Henɔ* had visited them but left to the next town. In the last town, *Tsavanya*, it was said that *Azagunɔ/Henɔ* had set off back to Ueta-Gbɔta through the bush along the cemetery. Communal affirmation and reciprocity informed all the activities carried out on the search as a formal announcement of the death of *Azagunɔ/Henɔ* were made and the invitation was extended to other performance groups in the neighbouring communities to support in performing the funeral of one of their own. These elaborate performances moved to a climax on the funeral day (two days later). The search was carried out amidst singing and dancing. Some of the songs performed were specifically composed for the occasion and the rest, old songs, composed by the deceased *Henɔ* and the group. A symbolic token of drinks and cash of One Hundred and Twenty Ghana cedis. (Figure 2) were donated by each group to the *Haikɔtu* Group in support of the funeral. The host groups also assured their counterparts on their participation in the funeral observances.



Figure 1. Framed photograph of the deceased conspicuously displayed
Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah



Figure 2. Drinks and money being presented to the *Haikɔtu* group by the hosts during the search at *Dɔɔɔfi*. Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.

On the funeral day, a ceremonial procession was performed by the *Haikɔtu* group, moving through the four divisions of Ueta: Ueta-Tsavi, Ueta-Anyigbe, Ueta-Asiyɔ, and Ueta-Afegame. (Figures 3 and 4). Prior to the procession, a libation was poured by an elder of the group for a peaceful event. (Figure 5). This ceremony took exactly the form of those performed in the surrounding communities except that an element of a special leaf (*kpɔti makpa*) symbolism was introduced. The *kpɔti* plant is normally used in Ewe communities for compound fencing and as marker poles for land demarcation. On this occasion, its foliage was used to symbolise many song compositions of the departed composer and singer and was carried by members of the *Haikɔtu* group throughout the mission. The leaves were later deposited at the feet of the deceased (laid-in-state) as part of the departing/accompanying items of the deceased to eternity. There were special rituals performed in the drum, song and dance by the *Haikɔtu* Group to bid farewell to their departed *Azagunɔ/Henɔ*. Tribute performances were also performed by affiliate drum groups and persons like *Nyayito* (Note 11) and Master Drummer Gideon Folivi Alorwoyi, respectively. (Figure 6). The *Nyayito* group performed elegiac, expressive and nostalgic songs while Folivi Alorwoyi delivered poetic drum-languages. Other unique rituals performed were talent-transference/surrogate and investiture of a *Henɔ* (Francis Gadogo Vovoli) and an *Azagunɔ* (Ziko Gadogo) to take over from *Dumega Kɔdzovi Anyidoho* (Figure 7),

which were followed by parting rituals. (Figure 8). Again, drumming, singing and dancing heralded these events. As Kofi Anyidoho observes, “The loss of an elder great artist creates an opportunity for the emergence of a younger gifted one (Anyidoho, 2015: 9).” The group later settled down at the town square for a long valedictory performance long into the evening.

Prior to all these, there were three-hour each evening for about three weeks *Hakpa* (song practice) sessions by members of the *Haikɔtu* group to rehearse old songs and compose new ones in preparation for these events and in a display of Ewe traditional songs and culture. These devotees are duty-bound to embark on this ‘expedition.’



Figure 3. Devotees go through cradles and crannies

Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.



Figure 4. Devotees during the procession led by elders.

Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.



Figure 5. An elder of the *Haikɔtu* group offers libation before departure for the search.



Figure 6. Drummer Folivi Alorwoyi in performance.

Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.



Figure 7. Talent-transference and investiture of *Henɔ* and *Azagunɔ*.

Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.



Figure 8. The performance of valedictory rituals.

Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.

I have attempted up to this point to examine the delineation of elegy or dirge, the experience of death and the circumstances that determine the rates relating to its performance. I have also outlined and discussed some of the essential features and performance exactitudes in a ‘poetic search for the soul’ of a master drummer and poet-cantor in Ewe tradition. I will now endeavour to examine the workings dynamics, sophistications and subtleties of Ewe poetic funeral songs.

8. Concepts, contexts and processes of Ewe poetic funeral songs

Poetic funeral songs comprise one of the means through which African values are transmitted. In this regard, the poetic search with its attendant dramatic and embodied activities will instill in the younger generation African communal values and linguistic legacies, which were deliberately woven into the songs; while increased nostalgic feelings among the older folks will be triggered. This will remind the people of Ueta-Gbɔta and the surrounding communities to regard themselves as social corporate beings who have a symbiotic relationship with the community in which they live. On account of this philosophy on the affiliation between the individual (and close society) and his community, attempts are always made to inculcate in members of the community important values. Aside aesthetics efforts, these poetic song performances reinforced contemporary uses of the past and offered an assessment of how the past is constantly fashioned, recreated, possessed, dispossessed, re-lived, experienced, remembered, and forgotten.

It is a generally held view that typical Africans, for that matter Ghanaians, believe in the supreme God and lesser gods in their varied forms, and in their forebears. Most of the time, this conviction is incorporated into poetic funeral songs, hence references to gods and ancestors are common. For example, one of the songs performed by the *Haikɔtu* group goes like:

Agbeme na nɛ wɔm	Life's occurrence has affected me
Metso avɔkpowo dome va tsi ama	I exist among clothes but have none to cover myself
Agbeme na nɛ wɔm	Life's occurrence has affected me
Nugbegble tɔ vem	Nugbegble's experience is painful
Ne eyia medo gbe na ɲgɔgbea wo	When you go, send my greetings to the forebears
Medo gbe na ɲgɔgbea wo	Send my greetings to the forebears
Medo gbe na Aɖiɖi ha wo	Send my greetings to Aɖiɖi and the rest

Likewise, there are mentions of names of individuals, places, and to specific incidents, be it political, economic, health and so on. One case in point is:

Nuya mi dzia, eyae mi kpɔ	The misfortune we seek for, is what we got
Fifia nu ya kea, dzre wɔwɔ me li o	In today's world, there's no squabble
Mile novisi	Promote unity among yourselves
Akpɔkpɔ wo dea klodzi ko wo nɔna	In their world, frogs are always on their knees
Ku me gbea amea ɖe ke o	Death does not spare anyone
Ku be agbeme menye amea ɖeke tɔ o	Death says this world doesn't belong to anyone

Yevuwo minyaa ezu nu mi kpe	The advent of the Whites have brought us distress
Ghanatowo, eya dzi mee miele	Ghanaians, this is what we seek
Nuya mi dzia, eyae mi kpɔ	The misfortune we seek for is what we got
Wo ga gbɔ na kple ame beble	There they come with deceit
Be mi tiam ne ma yi Assembly	That elect me to represent you in Parliament
Ne ma dzra dua ɔ na mi	So I bring development to the town
Eyi Assembly, Ueta ya me nyonyom o	He's elected to Parliament but Ueta hasn't seen dev't
Aleka koe dua ga le	The town hasn't seen development

This song has highlighted political antecedents. This single subject is truthfully treated with musical significance and add-on poetic merits. I can tell that the singer-poet was keenly aware of the options his colonial history had forced on himself and on his people. These songs, like many Ghanaian elegies, provide for prescribed rituals and personal meditations. This implies that elegies in Ghana, like in many other countries, can be used for reasons other than mourning the dead. In other words, elegies provide space for individuals to examine their own existence in the world. It also follows that these elegies can be used to ponder over matters of the community itself. Awoonor notes that “Akpalu made [elegies] vehicles of self-lamentation, philosophy, ideas on morality and ethics, and comments on the total human condition (Awoonor, 1974: 12).” It is for this reason that during the poetic search, elegies particularly dedicated to the memory of the deceased were performed. All these dedications tell the story of life of the departed. Some of the songs allow the group and the general society to convey their appreciation to the deceased for having lived among them and for enjoying his goodwill.

It should be noted that the role of the audience in performance of poetic funeral songs is as important as the poet-cantor's. The audiences support the poet-cantor by singing the refrain, for instance. This sometimes helps the poet-cantor in instantaneous re-composition of the song (Saanchi, 2002: 411). It is also noted that,

The interaction between the narrator-singer and persons present takes many forms, from encouragements formulated as simple ejectives, exclamations, and handclapping to praises, repetitions, questions, and comments on the narrated text (Peek & Yankah, 2004: 55).

It must be mentioned that this audiences are well-versed in performance rudiments of elegies. If the poet-cantor criticises him/herself internally, the audience become his external critics. It is a case of “the native critic, [...] is better equipped than anyone else to appreciate the creative genius of his own culture. [...] partly because his upbringing has endowed him with superior insight into the workings of his society, the ground upon which this truth stands (Lindfors, 1975: 53).” However, the audience in the Western perspective has no ownership to the elegies because they have no hand in their composition. In this light, performers require permission to perform anyone else's elegy. Drama in the performance of African elegies due to oral and drum presentations is another difference between African and Western

elegies. These elements were replete in performances witnessed in Ueta-Gbota. I will provide detail account of drama in these elegies later in this paper. It is also notable that among the Eve, the performance of these poetic funeral songs is not a preserve of only men or women. Both sexes take an active part in rendering elegies. This was exactly the case at the funeral in reference. The role of women was equally prominent as that of their men counterparts. The devotee responsible for carrying and displaying the photograph of the deceased is a woman. This woman was always seen in the front row of any gathering, even in the procession. She also makes 'ideophones' sounds during performances. These roles are reserved for women not for the sake of expediency but for cultural connotations. For instance, carrying a photograph and being in the lead explains that women do not become targets in war, therefore if anyone had anything against the deceased for which the group might be molested, the woman raises the alarm and serves as a buffer between the warring sides. (Figures 9, 10 and 11 shows women are seen here in various performance situations).



Figure 9.

Figure 10.

Figure 11.

Photos credit: Francis Gbormittah.

In examining notions of concepts, contexts and processes of Eve poetic funeral songs, I have demonstrated that apart from mourning the dead, elegies afford individuals the opportunity to examine their own life. The performances of elegies also instill African communal values and linguistic legacies in the people. The case of Ueta-Gbota is worth noting. This study as a whole covers two main areas of the 'poetic search for the soul' of a poet-cantor: dramaturgy and embodiment. I will now examine these in detail.

9. Aspects of dramaturgy and embodiment in the 'poetic search'

Aristotle provides a classical definition of drama when he compares comedy and tragedy to the epic. He observes that song and spectacle is incorporated in comedy and tragedy while these elements are absent in epic. Aristotle then concluded that drama is a story that is acted out, not narrated (Aristotle, 1982: 72). Lisieux's also defined drama as "[...] a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humans, and changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of

mankind (Dryden, 1982: 603).” In this way, play has features of drama. Drama is about the man, it reflects man, and it seeks to instruct man. Drama is also “a staged art, (Di-Yanni, 1994: 755)” comprising performance staged in any location. These features of drama are observed in rites performances in Africa and in most Ewe traditions. Following the definition of drama, I will now attempt to establish the connection between dramaturgy and embodiment, which stand at the centre of this paper, and drama. Dramaturgy refers to the dramatic composition and the representation of the main elements [plot, character, stagecraft/composition, theme, repetition, dialogue and audience] of drama. Dramaturgy gives the performance a structure (Cardullo, 2005:4). Embodiment, on the other hand, has five main notions (Ziemke, 2001: 2). I will work with two which are relevant to my study: historical and social embodiments. Historical embodiment explains how,

[...] cognitive systems are not only structurally coupled to their environment in the present, but that their embodiment is, in fact, a result or reflection of a history of agent-environment interaction and in many cases co-adaptation. [...] for example, [...] knowledge depends on being in a world that is inseparable from our bodies, our language, and our social history – in short, from our embodiment (Varela & Rosch. 1991:4).

The concept of social embodiment has been tackled by Barsalou et al., which they say is a “states of the body, such as postures, arm movements, and facial expressions, arise during social interaction and play central roles in social information processing (Barsalou, Niedenthal, Barbey and Ruppert, 2003)” What the concepts of drama, dramaturgy and embodiment have in common is that they provide means for creation, imitation and representation of space and ‘the self’ in order to promote historical, cultural and social communication. In practical terms, I have examined these concepts in the context of the ‘poetic search for the soul’ of a departed poet-cantor. In respect of dramaturgy, I have looked at the physical and symbolic space and representation of the main elements of drama (mise-en-scène). With reference to the embodiment, I have analysed the nature and scope of knowledge systematically created, exhibited/transmitted by communal action through mutual understanding in a shared reality. Victor Turner refers to this as ‘communitas,’ that is, common experience “most often experienced in liminal states, in transition from one symbolic domain to another, [...], when everyday rules give way to other, sometimes dramatically different, norms, [...] (Kaplan, 1995: 480).” It is about a ‘feeling together’ which everyday experiences cannot promote.

As I have stated earlier in this paper, African elegies are composed of the society in mind. The morals and instructions expressed in these poetic funeral songs are everlasting. Aside their aesthetic attraction, they display values that make them significant to the individual and the community as a whole. These reasons might have accounted for these songs to withstand foreign influence in communities such as Ueta-Gbota. During the talent-transference ritual performance, basic and significant elements of drama such as a refrain leader and actors, and audience were present. The performances were also endowed with music and dance. The new gifted *Henɔ* becomes the refrain leader. The eldest in the group, the new *Henɔ* and the deceased (laid-in-state) are the actors while the rest of the members represent the audience. The mixture and arrangement of these central components together with the use of organised space (well-draped with curtains like the cyclorama on the theatre stage, well-arranged flowers, in this case) in the performance of rituals honouring a poet-cantor is so replete of drama. Although traditional oral drama and written drama share certain common attributes, I am not for once admitting that critiquing oral drama must follow Western conventions because there

are different approaches to their composition, organisation and performance. I am simply emphasising the point that drama exists in oral performances no matter what yardstick is used to test this phenomenon. In fact, Owomeyela (1979) notes that “Traditional festivals incorporate many elements that are dramatic in the sense that they feature elements such as costuming, impersonation and the representation of past occurrences (Owomeyela, 1979: 113).”

Communication in a symbolic domain was so abounding with sounds, smell, taste and words during the search to the extent that this could not elude my attention for analysis. The same can be said about fluidity, timely and orderly presentation of events. For instance, use of space (hosts seated and guests standing) is based on an Eve philosophy of “amedzro sie afɔ le” meaning “strength abound in the legs of the visitor.” So the visitor is the one to extend pleasantries to the host. In the context of the search, it could be said that “nu biala fe abɔe dzidzi na.” This means “a beggar has the longest arm,” or “a beggar has no choice or must have a persevering attitude.” (Figure 12). This is a knowledge system shared by all. In this space, thrived a display of linguistic acumen in pleantry exchanges. The horse-shoe formation, creating arena-like stage (Figure 13) by the *Haikɔtu* group depicts intimacy, familiarity and heightens eyeball to eyeball presentation of the message to the hosts. Some members of the group make entry onto the performance stage in anti-clockwise movement. (Figure 14). (Note 12).



Figure 12.



Figure 13.



Figure 14.

Photo credit: Francis Gbormittah.

The last dramatic element of the performances is the use of costumes. Usually, the Eve do not clad in particular attire and colour at funerals like the Akan do. In most Eve communities, any decent outfit (particularly, African prints) is enough to be used on public occasions, funerals inclusive. However, in this occasion, audience and mourners dress in specific colours, black/indigo and red to portray a state of mourning as it applies in Akan communities. This presents homogeneity in the entire Ueta-Gbɔta township, the emphasising unity of purpose, people with common values and heritages. Also, they become actors on a common stage, performing the same narrative: a ‘search for the soul’ of a departed elder colleague and lyricist.

The poetic songs performed on the search are also vivid with stylistic qualities. Metaphorical references, repetition, piling and association, digression, symbols, ideophones and imagery are some of the stylistic elements identified in these songs. I will examine few of these. Metaphorical references are in most instances about death or the act of dying presented in a language that uses copious mental imagery. It is usually mentioned in an indirect manner as in these lines: “I exist among clothes but have none to cover myself” (Metso avɔkpowo dome va tsi ama). In this viewpoint, the “existence of clothes” means “coming from a family of many people.” “But I have none to cover myself” implies “death has robbed me of them all.” Indeed, the *Haikotu* group was able to enrich their songs through the use of repetition. These occurred in the songs in the form of words, sounds, ideas, phrases, and so on. The following lines provide examples.

Agbeme na nɛ wɔm

Life’s occurrence has affected me

Metso avɔkpowo dome va tsi ama I exist among clothes but have none to cover myself

Agbeme na nɛ wɔm

Life’s occurrence has affected me

Nuya mi dzia, eyae mi kpɔ

The misfortune we seek for is what we got

Fifia nu ya kea, dzre wɔwɔ me li o In today’s world there’s no squabble

Mile nɔvisi

Promote unity among yourselves

Akpɔkpɔ wo dea klodzi ko wo nɔna In their world, frogs are always on their knees

Ku me gbea amea ɔe ke o

Death does not spare anyone

Ku be agbeme menye amea ɔeke tɔ o Death says this world doesn’t belong to anyone

Yevuwo minyaa ezu nu mi kpe

Advent of the Whites have brought us distress

Ghanatɔwo, eya dzi mee miele

Ghanaians, this is what we seek

Nuya mi dzia, eyae mi kpɔ

The misfortune we seek for is what we got

In this manner, repetition encourages participation of the audience when it comes to the parts that are repeated, and the performers to memorise the songs. Owing to the impact of repetition, the group is able to create in their hosts and audiences, sympathy and the feeling of vulnerability of man in the ‘dark world of life.’ It is for the working effect of repetition that Agyekum (2007) observes that repetition as a device in oral literature can be used to achieve the fullness of an effect, to sustain audience attention and interest, to mark off segments in oral performance, and as a formulaic device (Agyekum, 2007: 45).

Another stylistic element in these songs is voice pitch. Only a few of these are observable in these songs. However, it is evident that most African elegies have this effect, more so as most African languages have strong tonal values (Finnegan, 1976; Okpewho, 1983). Ideophones also constitute one of the stylistic techniques that are employed by the *Haikotu* group in their songs. The effect of

ideophones is felt in the form of sounds and words. These made maximum impact on the song text. In the words of Opkewho (1992), ideophones “are not like normal words to which meanings are readily assigned. They are simply sounds used in conveying a vivid impression. In short, an ideophone is an ‘idea-in-sound (Okpewho, 1992: 92).’” For example, throughout the performances, the lead woman of the group intermittently made a sound as “nhummm nhum.” This is a sound indicative of “weight” or “heaviness.” It is interpreted as “weightiness or heaviness” of the heart of members of the group upon the loss of their elder. Also, words like “ele ɲɛɲem” were used occasionally. This word literally means “it is breaking,” but in the context of the event, it signifies “it is ending or coming to an end.” Thus, performance in memory of their departed colleague was coming to an end, and that the life of their colleague is on its last legs. It is a reality that has stricken them.

10. Conclusion

I have attempted in this study to examine African oral literature from the perspective of the ‘poetic search for the spirit’ (by the *Haikɔtu* Ensemble) of one of Ghana’s poetic voices, Kodzovi Anyidoho, whose demise has stirred up the performance of one of the dying traditions of the Eve. The claims advanced and the instances cited in the study point to one central evidence: that cultural values and aesthetic heritage in Ghana, for that matter Ueta-Gbɔta, have much to benefit from oral traditions. The study revealed that cultural values, practices and aesthetic heritage are projected strongly through language, bodily praxis, social and artistic performances during the ‘poetic search.’ Again, the study demonstrated that elegies performed by the *Haikɔtu* group were rich in aesthetic qualities as well as in unrestricted knowledge production and transmission. However, it was discovered that there is the need for societies, generally, to be familiar with knowledge systems of other societies and blend them with African oral culture in order to feature positively in the global sphere as indigenous knowledge is heterogeneous and typically confined to particular communities.

Acknowledgements

I am respectfully grateful to all the resource persons, especially to Prof. Kofi Anyidoho (a poet, literary scholar, educator, and cultural activist) of the Department of English, University of Ghana, Legon, and a nephew and son, by-upbringing, of Dumega Abraham Kodzovi Anyidoho. Prof. Anyidoho whipped-up my interest for the event which led to the initial process of data collection by providing me with a poster, outlining the events of the period although it was still under preparation, therefore, was not in public domain. I was also privileged to receive a personal invitation from him to attend this event. I appreciate his direction, encouragement throughout the period and enormous support for this project. His concern for detail and resourcefulness sustained the completion of this preliminary stage of the research. I am deeply thankful to these resource persons: *Azagunɔ* Zico Gagodo; *Henɔ* Francis Gagodo Vovoli; Tsiami; Zɔmelo and *Azagunɔ* Monako, all of Ueta-Gbɔta. I owe special gratitude to Prof. Esi Sutherland-Addy and Dr. Edward Nanbigne for granting me permission to carry out this research.

Bibliography

1. Achebe, C. (1994). Colonial criticism. In H. Adams (Ed.), *Critical theory since Plato* (pp. 1191-1198). Florida: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich Inc.
2. Agyekum, K. (2007). *Introduction to literature, 2nd edition*. Accra: Media DESIGN.

3. Ajuwon, B. (1982). *Funeral dirge of Yoruba hunters*. London: NOK Publishers International.
4. Akiraga S.K. & Odaga A. (1982). *Oral literature: A school certificate course*. Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books.
5. Alembi, E. (2003). *Singing and dancing the rhythm of life: Oral poetry in the Abanyole community of Kenya*.
6. http://www.lore.fi/arkisto/1_03/ale103.html
7. Alembi, E. (2009). The Abanyole dirge: “escorting” the dead with song and dance. 1-22.
8. <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol8/alembic>
9. Anyidoho, K. (1983). *Oral poetics and traditions of verbal art in Africa*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The university of Texas at Austin, Texas, USA.
10. Anyidoho, K. (1993). *Brain surgery*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
11. Anyidoho, K. (2003, Fall/Winter). The back without which there is no front. *Africa Today*, II(50), 3-18.
12. Anyidoho, K. (2015, August 10). Haikøtu drum ensemble eulogises Dumega Kodzovi Anyidoho. *The Ghanaian Times*.
13. Anyidoho, K. (2015). *Songs for a song-bird*. Funeral brochure of Dumega Kodzovi Anyidoho.
14. Arnold, S. (1992). A peopled persona: Autobiography, post-modernism and the poetry of Niyi Osundare. In Janos Riesz/Ulla Schild (Eds.). *Genres autobiographies on Afrique*. Papers Presented at the 6th International Janheinz John Symposium. Mainz-Bayreuth.
15. Awoonor, K. (1964). *Rediscovery and other poems*. Ibadan: Mbari Publications.
16. Awoonor, K. (1971). *Night of my blood*. New York: Doubleday.
17. Awoonor, K. (1974). *Guardians of the sacred word: Ewe poetry*. New York: NOK Publishers, Ltd.
18. Barsalou, L.W., Niedenthal, P.M., Barbey, A.K. & Ruppert, J.A. (2003). Embodiment in attitudes, social perception and emotion. In B.H. Ross (Ed.). *The psychology of learning and motivation*, 43. San Diego: Academic Press.
19. Barthes, R. (1977). *The death of the author*.
20. Cardullo, B. (2005). *What is dramaturgy?* New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
21. Conquergood, Dwight (1989). Poetics, play, process, and power: The performative turn in anthropology. *Text and Performance Quarterly*. (1), 82-95.

22. Cuddon, J.A. (1998). *The penguin dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*, 4th edition. London: Penguin Group.
23. Di-Yanni, R. (1994). *Reading fiction, poetry, drama and the essay*. New York: McGraw Hill Inc.
24. Dorson, R.M. (1957). Folklore in literature: A symposium. *Journal of American Folklore* 70, 1-8.
25. Drewal, M.T. (1989). *Performers, play, and agency: Yoruba ritual process* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). New York University, New York, USA.
26. Dryden, J. (1982). *An essay of dramatic poesy*. In A.H. Gilbert (Ed.). *Literary criticism: Plato to Dryden*, 18th edition (pp. 601- 658). Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
27. Finnegan, R. (1976). *Oral literature in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
28. Finnegan, R. (2007). *The oral and beyond: Doing things with words in Africa*.
29. Gunner, L. (2007). Africa and orality. In T. Olaniyan & A. Quayson (Eds.) *African Literature: An anthology of criticism and theory* (pp. 67-73). London: Blackwell.
30. Innes, G. (1974). *Sunjata: Three Mandinka versions*.
31. Kapchan, D. (1995). Performance. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 108(430), 479-508.
32. Nketia, J.H. (1955). *The funeral dirges of the Akan People*. Achimota: James Townsend and Sons Ltd.
33. Okpewho, I. (1983). *Myth in Africa: A study of its aesthetic and cultural relevance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
34. Okpewho, I. (1992). *African oral literature: Backgrounds, character, and continuity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
35. Okpewho, I. (2007). Oral literature and modern African literature. In T. Olaniyan & A. Quayson (Eds.), *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory* (pp. 74-84). London: Blackwell.
36. Owomeyela, O. (1979). *African Literatures: An introduction*. Massachusetts: Crossroads Press.
37. Parry, M. & Albert L. (1978). *The singer of tales*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
38. Quick, C. (1999). Ethnopoetics. *Folklore Forum*, 1-2(30), 506-519.
39. Roland B. (1977). *The death of the author*.
40. Saanchi, A. J. (2002). Linguistic parallelism and the Dagaaba dirge. In F. K. Ameka & E. K.

- Osam (Eds.), *New directions in Ghanaian linguistics* (pp. 409-423). Accra: Black Mask Ltd.
41. Varela, F., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
 42. Peek P.M. & K. Yankah (2004). *Women folklore: Ghana*. In P. M. Peek & K. Yankah (Eds.), *African folklore: An encyclopedia*. New York: Routledge.
 43. Ziemke, T. (2001). *What's that thing called embodiment?* Skövde: University of Skövde.

Notes

According to my respondents and literature available about Kɔdzovi Nugbegble, he was an ingenious leader of the group and the society at large. As a poet-cantor, he enjoyed the absolute trust and admiration of the community due mainly to the usual respect to which both the 'word' and those who creatively use it are held in African societies. Kɔdzovi Nugbegble was able to transform his dreams, thoughts, feelings and insights into telling striking stories and poetry through sound (compositions, songs, drum language). He exercised prudence and enormous imaginative caution so that he did not individualise and taint the medium and the message for self-clamoring.

1. This goes particularly for poems contained in: Anyidoho, K. (1993). *Brain surgery*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
2. Examples are: Gordon Innes' *Sunjata: Three Mandinka Versions* (1974) & Finnegan, R. (1976). *Oral literature in Africa*.
3. The respondents are: Kofi Anyidoho, *Azagunɔ* Zico Gagodo, *Henɔ* Francis Gagodo Vovoli, *Tsiami*, *Zɔmelo*, *Azagunɔ* Monako, all of Ueta-Gbɔta and members of the *Haikɔtu* Ensemble. I also spoke to a few members of the group on casual basis.
4. This is the preliminary stage of the entire project so interviews were restricted to main players. I will continue with additional respondents and in-depth interviews in subsequent field trips.
5. During the period, Kofi Anyidoho screened videos of his recent works carried out in the community to the people. Most of the people in the crowd identified themselves, friends and neighbours in the videos.
6. Specifically, Babalola studied content and form of the Ijala hunters chant genre; Abimbola gathered and documented Ifa divinatory poems; Okpewho investigated genre in Africa, and countered the claims made by Finnegan in 1970 to the effect that the epic genre does not exist in Africa.
7. I am an Anɔlɔ-Eve and the key respondents, Kofi Anyidoho comes from Ueta-Gbɔta, so are other respondents.
8. The specific community in reference is Ueta-Gbɔta.

9. Other scholars who define dirges in a similar manner are: Okpewho, I. (1992). *African oral literature: Backgrounds, character, and continuity* (p. 156). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, and Odaga and Akiraga (1982). *Oral literature: A school certificate course* (p. 78). Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books.
10. *Nyayito* is a group that specialises in the tradition of Ewe funeral songs and dance established by Akpalu Vinoko.
11. I am yet to explore the anti-clockwise movement identified in Ewe song performances.

Summary of field activities

Item	Day/Date	Location(s)	Activity(ies)	Significance
1.	Wed. Aug. 12, 2015.	Ueta-Gbota (Evening)	About two-and-half hour rehearsal of <i>Haikɔtu</i> Performance Ensemble of Ueta-Gbota.	<i>Hakpa</i> (song practice) session to rehearse old songs and compose new ones in preparation for a poetic search for the soul of a departed poet-cantor (<i>Henɔ</i>) and master drummer (<i>Azagunɔ</i>), and paying of tribute to his spirit. Members of the <i>Haikɔtu</i> Group are duty-bound to embark on this 'expedition.'
2.	Thur. Aug. 13, 2015.	Ueta-Gbota to Dɔɔɔfi; Bɔɔɔve; Afiadenyigba (Adziehe, Lagbati, Kpoingga, Gboŋga, Ablome); and Tsavanya.	<i>Azagunɔ-Henɔ</i> <i>Dzidzi</i> (poetic search for the soul of master-drummer and poet-cantor) by the Ueta-Gbota <i>Haikɔtu</i> Performance Ensemble.	Communal affirmation and reciprocity: During the poetic search, formal information of the death of <i>Azagunɔ/Henɔ</i> was announced and the invitation was extended to other performance groups in the neighbouring communities to support in performing the funeral of one of their own. It was believed that the deceased occasionally made trips along these routes, and it was likely he 'departed' to visit his work colleagues in these communities. The search was carried out by the singing of praise and remembrance songs specifically composed for the occasion and old songs of the deceased <i>Henɔ</i> . The emblematic occupational paraphernalia of the deceased such as drum-stick (for <i>Azagunɔ</i>) and horse-tail fly-whisk (for <i>Henɔ</i>) was displayed in his memory. A symbolic token of drinks and cash (GH¢120.00) were donated by each

				group to the <i>Haikɔtu</i> Group. The groups also promised to participate in the funeral observances.
3.	Fri. Aug. 14, 2015.	Ueta-Gbɔta	<i>Bɔbɔbɔ</i> performances by the Tanyigbe Etoe Bunzu Casino Group.	This is to honour the memory of a departed artist and a relation. <i>Dumega</i> Kɔdzovi Anyidoho is noted for creating beautiful <i>kete</i> designs/cloths for sale in Tanyigbe where some of his siblings also reside.
4.	Sat. Aug. 15, 2015.	Ueta-Gbɔta and four other suburbs (Ueta-Tsavi, Ueta-Anyigbe, Ueta-Asiyɔ, Ueta-Afegame).	Early morning poetic search for the soul of master-drummer and poet-cantor by the Ueta-Gbɔta <i>Haikɔtu</i> Performance Ensemble. Laying-in-State of and Final Funeral Rites. Tribute performances by the <i>Haikɔtu</i> and the <i>Nyayito</i> Groups, and Master Drummer Prof. Gideon Folivi Alorwoyi.	This search took exactly the form of Thursday activities in the surrounding communities except that an element of a special leaf (<i>kpɔti makpa</i>) symbolism was introduced here. The foliage which symbolises many song compositions of the departed composer and singer were carried by members of the <i>Haikɔtu</i> Group throughout the mission. The leaves were later deposited at the feet of the deceased (laid in the state) as part of the departing/accompanying items of the deceased to eternity. Talent-transference, surrogate and parting rituals were performed followed by investiture of a <i>Henɔ</i> (Francis Gadogo Vovoli) and an <i>Azagunɔ</i> (Ziko Gadogo). Drumming and dancing heralded these events. As Kofi Anyidoho puts it, "The loss of an elder great artist creates an opportunity for the emergence of a younger gifted one." (<i>The Ghanaian Times</i> . Monday, August 10, 2015. p. 9). Poetic drum-language and elegiac, expressive, nostalgic songs were performed.