

Celebration of Love: An Aspect of Ga Women’s Discourse on Love in *Adaawe* Song- Texts

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ABSTRACT— *Love is a subject that has received a lot of attention in literature, and poetry especially has seen much on love than any other genre, probably because it is traditionally seen as the creative exploration and expression of an individual’s emotion and passion. A genre of Ga oral poetry that has love as its primary subject is the adaawe songs that are sung by Ga maidens. This paper examines an aspect of Ga women’s discourse on love in the songs, particularly, how love is celebrated. This was done based on the theoretical premise that literary texts, which adaawe songs are considered to be part of, are informed by social, cultural and historical discourses at the place and time they are created. The songs were analysed, paying attention to content and style, and the analysis revealed that where love is celebrated, it usually expresses the personae’s happiness and pride in having their partners as lovers. Two media were identified by which the personae in adaawe songs celebrate their love for their lovers as well as their lovers’ love for them – open declarations and actions.*

Keywords--- Celebration, discourse, love, oral poetry, oral literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Love may ... be a universal phenomenon, but culture and language play a crucial role in defining it at every stage, from sexual arousal to codified sentiment, from norms of comportment to ‘significant stories’. Idioms of love have a very long history, and within every culture or cultural area, there will always be more than one available at any given time – prescriptive, poetic, commonsensical, satirical, religious, gender-specific, and so on” (Orsini, n.d.). Poetry particularly has seen much on love than any other genre, probably because it is traditionally seen as the creative exploration and expression of an individual’s emotion and passion. Thus, poetry, whether oral or written, explores the question of human love in a unique way and contributes a unique commentary on the subject (O’Dwyer, 2009).

Adaawe songs are an example of gender-specific idiom among the Ga people, a group of coastal dwellers located at the southern part of Ghana, which has love as its primary subject. The genre has a long history of existence, and the fact that it deals with love shows that the concept of romantic love has, for a long time, existed among the Ga people – an observation which challenges the Eurocentric view that the African does not have a concept of romantic love (Joseph, 1987). This paper examines an aspect of the discourse on love in the *adaawe* songs. Specifically, it examines how the personae in *adaawe* songs celebrate the love they have for their lovers as well as the love their lovers have for them.

2. ADAawe AND ITS PERFORMANCE

Adaawe songs are used for a performance known as *adaawe*. *Adaawe*, as a performance, is a form of recreation for Ga maidens, which involves singing and dancing. Its primary function is to entertain, but in doing this, it presents some discourses. The major discourses of *adaawe* songs border on love and marriage, and this could be attributed to the preoccupation of young women, the owners of the genre, at that stage in their lives. As Coker (2012) observes, it is a common sub-culture among the youth to share with peers narratives about their romantic love moments with the opposite sex, and as suggested by Owen (1987), Pearson, West & Turner (1995) and Coker (2011a), cited in Coker (2012), women are more relationally attuned than men are. These assertions are what are exemplified by Ga maidens, whose preoccupation with love and intimacy is made manifest in the songs they use in their performance of *adaawe*.

In a real sense, *adaawe* provides a platform for the young women to give commentaries on significant social issues that affect them. Their fears, disappointments and excitements are expressed in the songs that are used for the performance. Aside providing a platform for the young women to express their views on issues affecting them, the performance of *adaawe* also allows the young women to band together, which allows them to express themselves as a

social group. They feel comfortable to belong to the group because the performance territory creates a demarcation for the participants, which excludes men. The isolation of the women from men enables them to regard each other as a social network or focal group (see Agovi, 1994). Also, the unison with which they sing and clap their hands gives them the assurance that they are together. This sense of togetherness gives them the encouragement to express themselves freely without inhibition.

Furthermore, the physical context of performance has an important function, in that it insulates the performers from censure. The Ga people have much restriction on what could be expressed openly and what could not, but with the insulation provided by the performance territory, issues that may otherwise not be openly expressed because they may be considered obscene are expressed openly. This is because at the performance session, an isolated context is temporarily created outside the everyday life in which some issues, for instance sex, cannot be discussed openly.

Traditionally, *adaawe* was performed in the evening when the moon was out. This was so because until the invention of electricity, the moon was an important source of light at night. The young women (usually dressed in white chemise) gathered at the *blohuj* (square) and the performers form a closed circle with the *boma* (the “cantor” or the caller of the tune) standing in the middle; she calls a tune which the other performers, *asafo*, respond to. Unlike the general pattern of Western European folk-songs, the individual singer does not stand out in a dominant position as against a passive audience; instead, she interacts with the chorus (Finnegan, 1970). Also, no one person monopolizes the position of the “cantor” or the caller of the tunes; each participant is given an opportunity to call tunes during the performance.

3. ORAL LITERATURE, ORAL POETRY AND SONGS

The paper is rooted in two complementary concepts – oral literature and oral poetry. Oral literature, also identified by various scholars by such terms as *orature*, traditional literature, folk literature and folklore, simply means literature delivered by word of mouth (Okpewho, 1992). The special feature about oral literature, which marks it different from written literature, is its dependence on orality for its composition as well as transmission, and memory for preservation, but this does not defeat its character as literature (Finnegan, 1970). Literature is defined on the basic principle of creativity in terms of language use, and oral literature, just as written literature, exhibits this quality to the maximum level (Scholes, Kaus & Silverman, 1975; Henderson, Day & Waller, 2001).

But literature is also a reflection of culture. As Gunn (1983, p. 3) puts it, “literature is one facet of culture.” Evers (1983), in his essay, “Teaching American Indian Oral Literature,” also observes that the creation of literature is an act of imaginative response to distinctive cultural values. The two observations suggest that an adequate interpretation of literature cannot be attained without considering the influence it receives from its cultural milieu and, closely related, historical milieu. Indeed, Miruka (1994, p. 39) makes this observation about literature:

Literature, being based on a given time in history, place and society, has a setting. All literature is a product of a given social setting. They give a glimpse of the influences bearing upon the people. It can be stated confidently that literature is a sisterwing to history. The only difference is that history gives facts as they are while literature seeks to interpret the facts using language in an artistic manner and presenting the same reality in fiction.

Following from the above, the concept *oral poetry* denotes the class of poetry that has come to be recognized as poetry conceived and delivered by word of mouth. According to Lomax & Abdul (1970), African written poetry is a reflection of oral poetry. This statement is affirmed by Fraser (1986), who also observes that a relationship exists between the oral and written verse in West Africa. A clear example which he gives is the ability of Kofi Awoonor to transfer the cornucopia of aural sensation of Akpalu’s dirges to the various poems in his *Rediscovery and Other Poems* (1964). The reason why oral art forms like *adaawe* songs should interest us is that they have a lot to offer us, as Africans, in shaping our literary tradition, a process which is already taking place (see Okpewho, 1988; Kalu, 2000; and Akinyemi, 2007).

The fact that oral poetry is not written can likely discount it as literature (Lorentzon, 2007); however, Finnegan (1992) argues that it is important that oral poetry is studied in courses on literature. She intimates that oral poetry is not odd, and that it is a common occurrence in human society, whether literate or non-literate. She also maintains that there are parallels and overlaps between oral literature and written literature, and she proves this by categorizing some oral poems in terms of Western literary study. Accordingly, she identifies epics, ballads, panegyric, odes and lyrics. According to Finnegan (1992), the lyric, which she defines as a short non-narrative poem that is sung, is the most common form of oral poetry and can probably be regarded as universal in human culture. Lyrics, according to Finnegan (1992), come with diverse functions. Thus, there are love lyrics, psalms and hymns, songs to accompany dancing and drinking, political and topical verses, war songs, initiation songs, “spirituals”, laments, work songs, lullabies and many others. Miruka and Sunkuli (1990), on their part, define lyrics as poems or songs expressing strong personal feelings of romance, performed privately or in public, individually or communally. They also see lyrics as love songs. This is

because love and marriage are probably the commonest themes in lyrics (Finnegan, 1970, p. 252). These two themes also happen to be the predominant themes in *adaawe* songs.

Even before Finnegan's (1992) argument that oral poetry be studied in courses on literature, Okpewho (1988) admits "the oral traditional poetry of Africa" as part of literature. Therefore, in his anthology of African poetry, Okpewho (1988) includes both African oral and written poetry. In his own words, "The ... perhaps more important aim of this anthology is to give the oral traditional poetry of Africa its deserved place both in the literature curriculum and in our general understanding of what poetry tries to do" (p. 3). Most importantly, Okpewho (1988) makes a statement which has implications for this paper. According to him, one needs to abandon the false assumption that poetry necessarily has to do with words or the order in which they are arranged. As he observes, a group of measured lines which describe a situation is simply a verse, and may have very little that is poetic about it. On the other hand, it is possible for a combination of music and movement (dance) in a performance that has no words at all to be described as very poetic. To Okpewho (1988) therefore, the essence of poetry lies in its power to appeal strongly to one's appreciation and, in a sense, lift one up. In fact, some *adaawe* songs do not contain many words: sometimes, a song is composed of just a line or two, which will be repeated several times. That nature of such *adaawe* songs could discount them as poetry, but Okpewho's (1988) observation suggests that they are equally good poetry.

Joseph (1987), in a paper entitled *Zulu Women's Bow Songs: Ruminations on Love*, examines love songs that are associated with the *umakhweyana*, a bow instrument played by unmarried Zulu girls, and discovered from her corpus of bow songs a tradition of love songs in Zulu society which reveals much about a romantic concept of love. As she observed, "It is not unlikely that a similar situation exists in other African societies" (p. 96). Indeed, the *ayabomo*, which was studied by Agovi (1994); the *nwonkoro*, by Anyidoho (1994); the *woyi tëddëte* and the *woyi ndëri*, by Ndione & Mitsch (1993) all reveal much about an African concept of romantic love.

Hammond (1970) hints on a tradition of love songs in his collection of various songs that are used for entertainment among the Ga people, which include *adaawe* songs. According to Hammond (1970), some of the *adaawe* songs evoke happy feelings while others are sorrowful, addressing issues such as disappointment and ingratitude on the part of young men in love relationships. However, since Hammond's (1970) main import for producing the work is to bring people's attention to some of the Ga oral forms that are no longer common with the people, and not to analyse them for their discourse on love, he hardly makes any effort to analyse them to reveal anything about the concept love. This paper, in its small way, examines the songs to reveal an aspect of Ga women's discourse on love in them.

4. METHODOLOGY

The work is a qualitative one, which involves data from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data constitute songs that were recorded on the field and the secondary data consist of songs taken from Hammond's (1970) *Obɔade Lalai*.

Creswell (2003), in citing Wolcott (1994), states that qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive, which means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data. The interpretation includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analysing data for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically, stating the lessons learned, and offering further questions to be asked. "It also means that the researcher filters the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific sociopolitical and historical moment," (Creswell, 2003, p. 182). According to Creswell (2003), the methods of data collection in qualitative research are traditionally based on open-ended observations, interviews and documents, and these were chiefly the methods that were used to collect data for the present study.

In line with Wilgus's (1986) observation that the interview is a necessary method for collecting musical folklore and folksong, as it provides significant contextual information which can be gathered only through that medium, after conducting recording sessions, during which some *adaawe* songs were recorded for transcription and translation, some interviews were conducted to obtain useful background information on specific songs.

The analysis, which was primarily based on the transcribed texts, dealt with content and style. However, since oral literature goes beyond the text, and by definition is dependent on performance, the analysis took into consideration issues pertaining to the performance context which are useful in clarifying points which cannot be explained from the texts.

5. THE CELEBRATION OF LOVE

Love, as presented in *adaawe* songs, is celebrated on grounds of the pleasure it produces in the person who celebrates it. In the songs that deal with this theme, love is presented as a phenomenon which produces a happy feeling in the personae. This happiness is portrayed through the personae's expression of love for their partners and or revelation of

how much their partners love them. The celebration usually takes the form of showing pride in the lovers concerned and expressing happiness for having such lovers. A marked feature of these songs is the reference to the personae's lovers with such words as *shientse* and *lɔbi*, both denoting lover. Sometimes, the words, *shientse* and *lɔbi*, are modified with the possessive pronoun *mi* (my) and the intensifier *diɛntse* (own). Generally, the celebration of love in *adaawe* songs is carried out through two media – open declarations and actions.

5.1 Celebrating Love through Open Declarations

In celebrating love through open declarations, the persona uses words to express her heartfelt love for her lover as well as her happiness and pride in having such a lover, and the manner in which this is done indicates the strength of passion that is aroused in the persona. These songs are usually expressed in very forceful and picturesque terms, as in the examples below:

In the first example, the persona celebrates her love for her lover as well as wards off an invasion of their love by another person. She does these through an open declaration of the relationship that exists between herself and her partner, and the fact that no other person will be allowed to interfere in that relationship,

Call:	Soyaama, Soyaama, Akwele, Akwɔkɔ Kɛ amɛsɛɛho Tawia, Ago shiɔ nɔ ni efɛɔ ejwɛ, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, Akwele, Akwɔkɔ And their sibling Tawia, Ago added, they become four, Ajo!
Response:	Soyaama, Soyaama, Akwele, Akwɔkɔ Kɛ amɛsɛɛho Tawia, Ago shiɔ nɔ ni efɛɔ ejwɛ, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, Akwele, Akwɔkɔ And their sibling Tawia, Ago added, they become four, Ajo!
Call:	Soyaama, Soyaama, Mi diɛntse mishientse, Mi kɛ lɛ yi enyɔ ei, Mɔ ko mɔ ko bɛ mli, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, My own lover, Just the two of us There is no other person, Ajo!
Response:	Soyaama, Soyaama, Mi diɛntse mishientse, Mi kɛ lɛ yi enyɔ ei, Mɔ ko mɔ ko bɛ mli, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, My own lover, Just the two of us There is no other person, Ajo!
Call:	Soyaama, Soyaama, ~shɔ meelee ni yaa, Misuɔlɔ ko ta mli ei, Efɔ mi nine aahu, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, Ocean-going vessel, A lover of mine is on board ei, He waved at me for a long time, Ajo!
Response:	Soyaama, Soyaama, ~shɔ meelee ni yaa, Misuɔlɔ ko ta mli ei, Efɔ mi nine aahu, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, Ocean-going vessel, A lover of mine is on board ei, He waved at me for a long time, Ajo.
Call:	Soyaama, Soyaama, Mi diɛntse mishientse, Mike lɛ yaawɔ ei, Saatso miikpokpo ei, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, My own lover, I am going to sleep with him ei, Bed is shaking ei, Ajo!
Response:	Soyaama, Soyaama, Mi diɛntse mishientse, Mike lɛ yaawɔ ei, Saatso miikpokpo ei, Ajo!	Soyaama, Soyaama, My own lover, I am going to sleep with him ei, Bed is shaking ei, Ajo!

The song is organised in four stanzas, each making a declaration in a call, which is repeated as a response. The declarations of the persona show that she is proud of her man, happy to possess him as a lover, and will not wish to lose him to anybody. These ideas, which are expressed in the calls, are emphasized by the repetition of each of the calls as responses. It is discernible from the song-text that there is another woman who is trying to interfere in the persona's relationship with her lover. As the persona celebrates her love for her lover, she also addresses the intruder or potential intruder and makes her aware of the fact that her interference will not be entertained.

What can be deduced from the discourse is that romantic love exists between only two people, and no matter the nature of relationship that exists between one of these two people and any other people, be it his or her family members, they are not allowed to interfere in the love relationship. This is why sometimes people reject their families in pursuit of

their love relationships. Even though the persona in this song does not reject her family and demonstrates that they have a role to play in ensuring that she does not lose her lover to another person, she also demonstrates that they are not allowed to interfere in the love relationship itself. This is to say that whatever goes on in the love relationship must be of concern to only the two people involved and not any other person. It is common practice among the Ga people and many other African peoples that families sometimes interfere in issues which have to do with their members' choice of love partners. The song presents a contrary position on the practice. It recognizes the importance of families in the lives of individuals; however, it also recognizes the need for families not to interfere in the relationships of their members.

The persona's recognition of the importance of her family is made known when she tells her rival that she (the persona) is part of four siblings,

Akwele, Akwɔkɔ	Akwele, Akwɔkɔ
Ƙε amεεεho Tawia	And their sibling Tawia,
Ago shiɔ nɔ ni efεɔ ejwε, Ajo!	Together with Ago they become four, Ajo!

Perhaps, this is to warn the persona's rival that she may have to contend with four people if she tries to compete with the persona.

It is probable that the persona is a twin or a sibling of twins, and this is seen in the use of the names *Akwele* and *Akwɔkɔ*, which are Ga names given to female twins, and *Tawia* and *Ago*, which are Ga names given to the two children who come immediately after the twins. Twins and their two siblings who come after them are revered among the Ga people. Hence, the persona deploys the reverence that the Ga people have for twins and their two siblings who come after them as a weapon to instil fear in her rival.

The reverence that the Ga people have for twins is demonstrated by the annual ritual which is performed for them a day before the annual Ga *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. During the performance of the ritual, some horns, which are referred to as the horns of twins, are bathed in water which contains some leaves (Amartey, 1990). According to Amartey (1990), the Ga people believe that twins are a reincarnation of the buffalo because they behave just like buffalos behave. Thus, the Ga people believe that twins and their two siblings who come after them possess some mystical powers, which they could deploy to defend themselves when necessary.

As said by Amartey (1990), the Ga people observed that buffalos never walk individually (they always walk in pairs), and an attack on one of them is considered an attack on both of them, a characteristic they have observed about twins too. It is believed that twins and their siblings who come after them are so united in spirit that whatever happens to one person affects all of them, and just like buffalos, any confrontation with one of them is considered a confrontation with all of them. In this light, the persona recognizes her relationship with her siblings and identifies herself with them. Right at the opening of the song, the persona makes her rival aware of her identity, which is associated with twins. As indicated earlier, this is probably to warn her that she would have to contend against four people if she tries to contend with her.

In another vein, the persona does not take note of any other person or people around, not even her siblings, and recognizes the presence of only two people – her lover and herself,

Mi diɛntɛ mishɛntɛ,	My own lover,
Mi ƙε lε yi enyɔ ei,	Just the two of us,
Mɔ ko mɔ ko bε mli, Ajo!	There is no other person, Ajo!

This may sound like a contradiction of the first position the persona took, where she identifies four people that her rival must oppose if she tries to compete against her (the persona). However, it is a demonstration of the power of romantic love. When two people are in love, they see themselves in a world of their own where even their families are not welcome.

The persona does not only see her lover and herself as people in a world of their own where there is no room for interference from anybody, she also expresses her pride in having her companion as a lover, “Mi diɛntɛ mishɛntɛ,” (My own lover,). This is to say that in a love relationship, each partner must show pride in the other. When a person shows pride in having a partner as a lover, it assures the latter of the former's unflinching love for the latter, and this impels the latter to reciprocate that love.

It is certain that just as the persona loves her lover and shows pride in having him as a lover, the persona's lover also acknowledges and appreciates the love he receives from the persona. This is expressed in the fact that on the *ɲshɔ meelee* (ocean-going vessel), he waves at the persona for a very long time, perhaps, to indicate that he really appreciates the persona and that he is going to miss her,

ɲshɔ meelee ni yaa,	Ocean-going vessel,
Misuwɔlɔ ko ta mli ei,	My lover is on board ei,
Efɔ mi nine aahu, Ajo!	He waved at me for a long time, Ajo!

A vivid image is created in the above lines, which draws on the Ga people's experience with the ocean. The people are close to the ocean so they often witness people sailing on the ocean. They have seen people travel to "nshosee" (overseas), which connotes a distant place, and it can be assumed that the persona's man is on such a journey. This assumption is based on the fact that he waved at the persona for a long time. Among the Ga people, as it is the case in all Ghanaian cultures, and probably most African cultures, waving at a person is a sign of bidding farewell, especially when the person is going on a long journey. Most often, the longer the time spent on waving at a person shows how much one is going to miss the person. It also shows how far apart the two people are going to be separated from each other. The image of the persona's man on-board an ocean-going vessel, waving at the persona is therefore significant as it allows one to visualise how much the persona's man appreciates the persona for the love she has for him.

That the persona is acknowledged and appreciated for the love she has for her man goads her to even get wilder with the celebration of her love for him when she goes erotic. Here, she defies norms by celebrating her love making with her lover – something which should be considered private. Even so, she conforms to culture by presenting, "at the stylistic and technical levels, muted and euphemistic portrayal of the sexual" (Asaah, 2006),

Mi diehtse mishiehtse,	My own lover,
Mikε le yaawo ei,	I am going to sleep with him ei,
Saatso miikpokpo ei, Ajo!	The bed is shaking ei, Ajo!

Among the Ga people, and indeed Africans in general, issues about sex are considered taboo subjects, which are not to be discussed openly. On occasions like *adaawe* performance however, there is a kind of poetic license, which allows performers to express themselves freely on any subject, including sex. Thus, *adaawe* songs make use of erotic expressions and images but these are used only symbolically to create excitement. The shaking of the bed, though not a graphic portrayal of the sexual, creates a vivid erotic image.

In the next song, the persona does not have to compete with anybody over her lover, but she is not oblivious of the fact that if a person does not appreciate or show pride in a lover, the person is likely to lose that lover to someone else. In this vein, she celebrates the love between her and her lover and openly declares that she is happy to have him as a lover,

Call:	Eηoo minaa fe nine, Eηoo minaa fe nine, Atse le aha mi ei, woyya ei,	I am very happy, I am very happy, Call him for me ei, we are going ei,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Mi diehtse mishiehtse, woyya ei,	My own lover, we are going ei,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Eηoo minaa fe nine, Eηoo minaa fe nine, Mishiehtse, mo mimli, Ba miba ei,	I am very happy, I am very happy, My lover, hold me, Come have I come ei,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Mishiehtse, laa mikue, Ba miba ei,	My lover, put your arm around my neck, Come have I come ei,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Eηoo minaa fe nine, Eηoo minaa fe nine, Mibe nye; mibe tse, woyya ei,	I am very happy, I am very happy, I have no mother; I have no father,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Awusa ji mi ei, woyya ei,	I am an orphan ei, we are going ei,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Eηoo minaa fe nine, Eηoo minaa fe nine, Mishiehtse, mo mimli, Ba miba ei,	I am very happy, I am very happy, My lover, hold me, Come have I come ei,
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Atse le aha mi ei, Ba miba ei,	Call him for me, Come have I come ei
Response:	Eηoo minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.

Call:	Eḡḡ minaa fe nine, Eḡḡ minaa fe nine, Atseḡ mi Kweinye, Ba miba ei,	I am very happy, I am very happy, My name is Kweinye, Come have I come ei,
Response:	Eḡḡ minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.
Call:	Awusa ji mi ei, Ba miba ei,	I am an orphan ei, Come have I come ei,
Response:	Eḡḡ minaa fe nine.	I am very happy.

Each stanza of the song opens with a happy declaration in the first line of the call, “Eḡḡ minaa fe nine” (I am very happy), which is repeated in the second line of the call and the single lines which are presented as responses to the calls. The repetition of the declaration emphasizes the persona’s happiness with her lover.

In the first stanza, the persona makes an urgent request that her lover should be called for her, “Atse ɛ aha mi ei, wḡḡya ei” (Call him for me ei, we are going ei). The urgency of the request is expressed through the interjection *ei*. The fact that the persona is desperate to see her lover and requests that he should be called for her is an indication of her happiness with having him as a lover. This happiness is also expressed using the same interjection *ei*. Thus, *ei*, as used here, does not only show urgency, it also shows that the persona is really happy with her lover.

The persona’s satisfaction with having such a lover is even heightened when she refers to him as, “Mi diḡḡtse mishieḡtse” (My own lover). The use of the possessive “Mi” with the emphasis “diḡḡtse” shows that the persona is proud to have her companion as a lover and is not shy of publicly announcing him as a lover. As mentioned earlier, the reference to a persona’s lover as “Mi diḡḡtse mishieḡtse” or “Mi diḡḡtse milḡbi” (My own lover) is a very common occurrence in the *adaawe* songs that celebrate love. This reference denotes the importance that the personae attach to their lovers. As a sign of her pride in having her man as a lover, and as a way of announcing him publicly as a lover, the persona tells her lover in the second stanza,

Mishieḡtse, mḡ mimli, Ba miba ei, Mishieḡtse, laa mikue, Ba miba ei,	My lover, hold me, Come have I come ei, My lover, put your hand around my neck Come have I come ei,
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The focusing of the verb *ba* (come) in “Ba miba ei” (Come have I come ei) is an indication of the persona’s pride in having her man as a lover and her willingness to be with him. Generally, the words in the stanza depict the persona’s total submission to her man. However, the persona would also want to have some assurance that her lover has some affection for her in return. Putting one’s hand around another’s neck could be interpreted as a sign of profound affection for the latter. Thus, by responding to the persona’s request of putting his hand around her neck, the persona’s lover is also telling the persona that he has affection for her.

Apart from showing her pride in having her man as a lover, the persona in this song also expresses her confidence that her lover can provide something which is missing in her life – parental love. Thus, in the third stanza, the persona declares,

Eḡḡ minaa fe nine, Eḡḡ minaa fe nine, Mibe nye; mibe tse, wḡḡya ei,	I am very happy, I am very happy, I have no mother; I have no father, we are going ei,
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The persona therefore comes to her lover not only for him to be a lover, but also to be a mother and a father. Whenever one is going somewhere with one’s parents, one is sure that one is in safe hands. The persona’s declaration that she is going with her man shows that she sees him as someone who is able to provide her the same security which she would have received from her parents. To emphasize her state of being motherless and fatherless, yet having confidence that her lover can provide her security, the persona declares, “Awusa ji mi ei, wḡḡya ei” (I am an orphan ei, we are going ei).

It is most likely for one to consider the pronouncements of the persona as frivolous. She seems to anticipate this, so as a way of indicating that she is serious and conscious of her pronouncements, the persona declares her identity in the fifth stanza, “Atseḡ mi Kweinye,” (My name is Kweinye), and affirms the fact that she has no parents but has confidence in her man to give her protection,

Awusa ji mi ei, Ba miba ei,	I am an orphan ei Come have I come ei,
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“Kweinye” which literally translates as “Kwei’s mother” would suggest that the persona is a mother. This is not necessarily the case. Among the Ga people, the names that are given to the children of a couple are fixed, and the names are usually given by the man. Thus, even before the couple give birth, they already know the names that their children will bear, and these names identify the children with the man’s family. The persona’s identity as “Kweinye” could

therefore be interpreted as an affirmation of her attachment to her man, as by extension, she identifies herself with the man’s family. This is to say that, even before any formal institutionalisation of the persona’s relation to her man, she has done her own quasi institutionalisation. This shows that the persona did not come to her lover through any inducement, but because of her love for him and confidence in him. In effect, this song teaches us to be proud of our lovers, but it also defines the kind of lover that a person should be proud of – a dependable lover.

The idea of showing pride and happiness in a lover is also expressed in the next song. Just like the example above, the persona expresses an anxiety and urgency to seeing her lover,

Call:	Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!	Hurry up and call him for me!
Response:	Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!	Hurry up and call him for me!
Call:	Mi diɛntse mikome milɔbi,	My own one and only lover,
Response:	Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!	Hurry up and call him for me!
Call:	Mi diɛntse mikome milɔbi,	My own one and only lover,
Response:	Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!	Hurry up and call him for me!

The persona’s desperate call for her lover, which is expressed in, “Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!” (Hurry up and call him for me!), and its repetition as responses in the above song, is possibly not for any wrong reason, but because of the fact that his presence is a source of happiness for her. The repetition of “Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!” (Hurry up and call him for me!) as responses to the calls adds to the rhythm of the song, and creates a sense of urgency which allows the audience to appreciate how desperate the persona is to have her man around her. The persona’s show of desperation to see her man is an indication that she is happy whenever her man is around her, and her happiness in having her lover around her is a suggestion of her pride in having him as a lover. This pride is what she expresses in her reference to her lover as, “Mi diɛntse mikome milɔbi,” (My own one and only lover,). Thus, she personalises her man and sees him as her monopoly. The words, “Aye oyai ni atse le aha mi!” (Hurry up and call him for me!), create a vivid image of urgency and desperation, where we see a restless young woman waiting impatiently to see a lover that she has missed so much.

An even more forceful expression of anxiety is presented in the next song. Here, the persona’s eagerness to see her man is expressed through a metaphor,

Call:	Aaden kuma ei!	Aaden thirst ei!
Response:	Ee ee ei!	Ee ee ei!
Call:	Aaden kuma ei, Ataa Kofi miiba, Edamɔ ɲshɔ hiɛ eɲma mi wolo;	Aaden thirst ei, Mr. Kofi is coming, He is on the ocean and wrote me a letter;
Response:	Afi oo ko miiba ei! Edamɔ ɲshɔ hiɛ eɲma mi wolo.	An Afi oo is coming ei! He is on the ocean and wrote me a letter;
Call:	Awushi oo ko miiba ei!	An Awushi oo is coming ei!
Response:	Edamɔ ɲshɔ hiɛ eɲma mi wolo.	He is on the ocean and wrote me a letter.

The metaphor in the song is expressed in the comparison between the yearning of the persona to see her lover and the yearning for water when one is thirsty, “Aaden kuma ei” (Aaden thirst ei). It must be noted that water is a necessity of life, and to the Ga people nothing can assuage thirst better than water. Indeed, this idea can be recognised in other Ga poetic media too. For instance, a portion of the libation text that is used during the out-dooring of a child pronounces,

Wɔje bu	When we dig a well
Wɔje nu nɔ	We should get water
Wɔye wɔnu	When we fetch and drink
Wɔkɔji anɔ ajɔ wɔ	We should have relief

Again, one Ga proverb says, “Anuuu nu atoo ahrabata” (You do not drink water in advance against harmattan). It can be deduced from the above examples therefore that, to the Ga people, and indeed people everywhere, water is what assuages thirst. In the same vein, the only thing that can better relieve the persona of her thirst for her lover is the presence of her lover himself. Although some kinds of drink can provide relief from thirst, the experience is not the same as with water because water is the only natural substance that has the quality to quench thirst completely. That is why the letter that the persona’s man writes her does not assuage her thirst for him.

In the previous songs, the personae express their deep love for their lovers, and eloquently declare their happiness and pride in having them as their lovers. In songs that follow however, the personae express their happiness not with having their lovers as lovers, but with the love their lovers have for them.

In the first example, the persona shows extreme excitement about the fact that she is loved by her man and declares,

Call:	Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ema tsu eha mi ei!	He loves me ei, so that he will build me a house ei!
Response:	Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ema tsu eha mi ei! Jeee shika ni ena, Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ema tsu eha mi ei!	He loves me ei, so that he will build me a house ei! It isn't that he has made much money, He loves me ei, so that he will build me a house ei!
Call:	Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ehe mashij eha mi ei!	He loves me ei, so that he will buy me sewing machine ei!
Response:	Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ehe mashij eha mi ei! Jeee shika ni ena, Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ehe mashij eha mi ei!	He loves me ei, so that he will buy me sewing machine ei! It isn't that he has made much money, He loves me ei, so that he will buy me sewing machine ei!

The love that the persona's lover has for her in this song may be interpreted as true love. This may be interpreted as such because the persona's man will build her a house and buy her a sewing machine, not because he has all of a sudden become rich, but because of the love he has for her,

Jeee shika ni ena, Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ema tsu eha mi ei! Jeee shika ni ena, Esumɔɔ mi ei, koni ehe mashij eha mi ei!	It isn't that he has made much money, He loves me ei, so that he will build me a house ei! It isn't that he has made much money, He loves me ei, so that he will buy me sewing machine ei!
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Certainly, one of the things that can drive a person to do this is love. However, it must also be noted that a man can give some of these promises just to beguile a woman into believing that he loves her so much.

Some time ago, among the Ga people, one of the most valuable gifts a man could give a woman was a sewing machine. This was something that was coveted by most women, and a man who was able to provide it was seen as a loving partner. In fact, it became customary for a man to provide a sewing machine as part of the bride price and women placed so much value on this. No wonder the persona attributes her lover's promise to provide it as a symbolic expression of his love for her since he will provide it anyway, even though he has not become rich.

Indeed, it will not have been anything spectacular if the persona's lover is providing the items because he has become rich. Providing them at a time he is not rich shows how much he values the persona and desires to make her happy. This is an indication that he really loves the persona. Thus, the house and the sewing machine are symbols of love. It must be noted that the items mentioned have not yet been provided, but the persona trusts that her lover will provide them. Where there is true love, there is trust, and this is what is demonstrated in the song. There is no doubt that the persona also appreciates her man. The excitement with which she declares that her man loves her, "Esumɔɔ mi ei..." (He loves me ei...) is indicative of her happiness and pride in having such a lover. The repetitions of the persona's declarations in the responses also give emphasis to the belief that the persona has that her man loves her.

Although the song under discussion demonstrates true love, it also portrays a trait that has crept into the fabric of society, which is materialism. To show that one really loves a partner, one would have to lavish many material things on that partner, and this is what is epitomized in the song. Indeed, the persona's man may be providing the house and sewing machine just to concretise his expression of love for her; however, the fact remains that the persona recognizes that love only through the provision of the materials.

Thus, without these material things, the persona may not realise that her man loves her. This is quite unfortunate because it means love can now be equated to the provision of material things. This is where ladies can fall prey to men who can go to any extent to provide the material things just to have what they want, in most cases sex. It may not be a surprise if the persona's lover makes the promises just to gull the persona into believing that he loves her so much in order to satisfy his selfish interest, as other *adaawe* songs show semblances of this.

In the next song, the persona articulates her confidence that her lover will bear a tassel that is appearing (probably pregnancy) and this may be because of her awareness of the fact that her man loves her. For this reason, she expresses excitement over the appearance of the tassel:

Call:	Egba ahwanya, ahwanya miiba	It has tasseled, tassel is appearing.
Response:	Egba ahwanya, ahwanya miiba Milobi baatere, ahwanya miiba. Egba ahwanya, ahwanya miiba	It has tasseled, tassel is appearing. My lover will carry, tassel is appearing. It has tasseled, tassel is appearing.

There is every reason to believe that the persona's lover really loves her, and she is aware of this. That is why she shows so much excitement over the appearance of the tassel and does not entertain any fear that her man may not accept to carry or bear it. It is not too certain what the tassel could be referring to, but it is probable that it could be referring to pregnancy. This is because since the Ga people are farmers, tassel could be a symbol of fruitfulness or fertility, and with its association to relationship between a man and a woman, pregnancy can only be the possible reference. If tassel refers to pregnancy, then it could be said that the persona knows that her man really loves her and is ready to accept responsibility for the pregnancy. That is why she is excited about the pregnancy. In other songs, a contrary situation takes place, where the lovers of the personae deny responsibility for pregnancies. It must be noted that the persona's lover has not yet accepted responsibility for the pregnancy, but because the persona knows that he loves her, she is confident that he will accept responsibility. The issue of trust comes in here too. Because of the love the persona's man has for her, she has so much trust for him, and it is that trust which inspires the confidence in her that he will accept responsibility for the pregnancy. The persona's trust for her man is a sign of her own love for him.

5.2 Celebrating Love through Actions

In the songs that have been considered so far, the personae express their love for their lovers through words, and tell us, either overtly or covertly, about the love their lovers have for them. Using words to communicate love for a lover does not however constitute the only means of expressing love for a lover in *adaawe* songs. Sometimes, one does not have to use words to express love for another person. Actions, they say, speak louder than words, so in the songs that follow, love is demonstrated through the actions of the parties involved.

In the first example, the persona declares that she is going to buy cassava and return to pound fufu for her lover to eat so that in the evening, she will go to her lover for him to make love to her,

Call:	Miyahe duade ei,	I am going to buy cassava ei,
Response:	Miyahe duade ei,	I am going to buy cassava ei,
Call:	Miyahe duade ei,	I am going to buy cassava ei,
Response:	Miyahe duade ei,	I am going to buy cassava ei,
	Miyahe duade	I am going to buy cassava
	m'bashi fufui	to come and pound fufu
	maha mishientse ni eye	for my lover to eat,
	koni gbɛkɛ ni maya jɛmɛ	so that in the evening, I will go there
	koni eshi mi nɔ ko.	for him to pound me something.

There is a popular saying that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. This is to say that cooking for a man is usually judged by most men, particularly African men, as a show of love and care for the man, and it engenders a mutual relationship between a man and a woman. Thus, women who are able to satisfy men with delicious meals are more likely than not to attract these men to themselves. By cooking for her lover, the persona in this song also shows that she loves and cares for her lover, and by that, makes an effort to attract him to herself. This makes it more possible for her to get whatever she wants from her lover. Indeed, the persona needs love from her lover, and she is aware that the only way she can receive much of it is by also showing it to him, which she does by way of cooking for him.

There is an expectation that the persona's lover also needs to meet to demonstrate his own love for the persona and this involves a reciprocation of the actions of the persona, not through cooking but lovemaking. This results in a sort of mutual exchange. While one party satisfies the other's need for food, the latter is also supposed to satisfy the former's sexual needs. What is being demonstrated here is that love is a give-and-take affair, and requires efforts on the side of both parties involved to satisfy each other's needs. That is why the persona expects her lover to reciprocate the love she has for him.

The song has an erotic undertone, which is expressed in the persona's act of pounding fufu and whatever her lover is supposed to pound for her. This gives evidence of erotic love among the Ga people as well as shows the importance of sex in an erotic relationship. The action of lovemaking is implicitly compared to fufu pounding. The word "shi" (pound) is used to draw the comparison between how the pestle goes up and down when fufu is being pounded and how the male reproductive organ operates during sexual intercourse. In fact, in a version of the song, the line, "Koni eshi mi nɔ ko" (For him to pound me something) is rendered "Koni eshi mi tso" (For him to pound me a stick). Here, there is a metaphoric comparison between the male reproductive organ (perhaps in its erect state) and a pestle.

Just as in the song above, the persona in the next song also shows her love for her lover through her actions. However, here, she does not show her love by cooking for her lover, but by washing her lover's clothes,

Call:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe, Mi kɛ lɛ yi enyɔ mama he,	I am going to wash my own things, The two of us our cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,
Call:	Awushi oo ko mama he,	An Awushi oo's cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,
Call:	Ajo oo ko mama he,	An Ajo oo's cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,
Call:	Abla oo ko mama he,	An Abla oo's cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,
Call:	Aku oo ko mama he,	An Aku oo's cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,
Call:	Afi oo ko mama he,	An Afi oo's cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,
Call:	Ameɲ oo ko mama he,	An Ameɲ oo's cloth,
Response:	Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe.	I am going to wash my own things,

The song opens with a declaration in a call, “Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe,” (I am going to wash my own things,) and continues paradoxically, “Mi kɛ lɛ yi enyɔ mama he,” (The two of us our cloth.). The paradox shows that the persona takes pride in associating herself with her man. This is shown in the fact that she sees her man's cloth as her own cloth too, and the pride the persona has in associating herself with her man is emphasised through the repetition of “Mi diɛntɛ miyafɔ minii ahe,” (I am going to wash my own things,) as responses to the calls in the song. Also, the persona's pride in her association with her man is expressed in the fact that she expresses good wishes for her man. The expressions “Awushi oo ko” (An Awushi oo's), “Ajo oo ko” (An Ajo oo's) and the rest are expressions of good wish, which show that the persona is happy with her man and takes pride in him. Hence, her good wishes for him.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper examined the celebration of love as an aspect of the discourses on love in *adaawe* songs. It was realised that, in *adaawe* songs, love is celebrated either through an open declaration or through actions. The celebration of love takes the form of showing pride in a lover. It usually expresses the personae's happiness and pride in having their men as lovers. Some marked features of the songs that celebrate love are the use of words of endearment such as *shientɛ* and *lobi*. In addition, the personae express their desperation about their desire to see their lovers, and sometimes, they declare their identity as a way of indicating their seriousness about what they are saying. Generally, it was observed that the Ga people, specifically Ga women, have knowledge about the concept of romantic love and they express this in the *adaawe* songs which they sing during *adaawe* performances.

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