THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL GRIEVING PROCESSES: XYLOPHONE DIRGE PERFORMANCE AND HEALING AMONG THE DAGAABA

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ABSTRACT

The Dagaaba are an ethnic group found on both sides of the Black Volta in the Upper West Region of Ghana and Burkina Faso. Like many West African communities, funerals are extremely important in the culture, not just for the burial, but for the ritual performance of mourning. One of the key rituals performed is the chanting of funeral dirges that are sung, played on the xylophone, and played on the drums, all simultaneously. Each varies depending on the sex, gender, and social status of the deceased. However, these dirges target the living more than the dead.

Transcribed and translated verses within this category were analyzed within the Dagaaba cosmology and using ethnopoetics and theories of grief, mourning, and attachment. These sociological, psychological, literary, and musical elements, when synthesized, paint a picture of the Dagaaba funeral dirge as a method of promoting not only individual consolation, but also the reaffirmation of bonds among and within communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thinking back on the past several years, I realized that my journey to this point began in 2017. While still in undergrad, I began to think about what I wanted to do for my Master's. Due to my father's passionate interest in our Dagaaba culture, I was also exposed to YouTube videos from the area showcasing cultural festivals, funerals, and dances. Growing up, I had always heard of the importance of funeral celebrations, in particular the importance of the xylophone. I consider the trip I took to Ghana in 2017 to be my first homecoming (I also visited Ghana as an infant but have no memories of the time). It was there that I finally was able to meet my extended family. Growing up, the only close relative outside of my immediate family I knew was my great-uncle, the late Archbishop Emeritus of Tamale, Most Reverend Gregory Ebo Kpiebaya, who would come to visit us in Canada every few years. On this trip I was able to stay with him in Tamale for several weeks. It was around the time of my trip that he had just published the book "Dagaaba Customary Marriage and Traditional Family Life," which I read this book dozens of times while I was there, and we had many long talks where I asked him question after question about our culture.

After graduating with my bachelor's in psychology and health studies, I wanted to focus on learning more about my own culture. Luckily, in my home my father had collected many rare theses and books on Dagaaba culture. When I decided to pursue my Master's, I emailed my great-uncle to tell him of my research topic: Dagaaba funeral dirge performance. He was excited that I would also be pursuing cultural research and was supportive of my choice.

The Interdisciplinary Studies program at York University was a perfect match for what I wanted to do. Without this program I would not have been able to combine my love for psychology, sociology, music, and literature. I am very thankful for the existence of this program.

I would also like to thank my supervisory committee, Dr. Michaela Hynie, Dr. Sylvia Bawa, and Dr. Naah Yemeh, who were there to support and guide me over the past two years. My thanks also lie with the gɔribe who graciously allowed me to interview them and who provided great insights for this research.

I cannot forget Dr. Robert Bowman, under whom I had the great privilege of learning ethnomusicological theory. This course was pivotal in building my theoretical framework and research methods. I cannot thank him enough for giving me the opportunity to learn from him and my classmates.

I thank my family in Ghana who took care of and assisted me during my research trip, and my family in Canada for their support and encouragement over the last two years. Of course, I would also like to thank my great-uncle Bishop, who, although he was not able to see the result, truly ignited my passion for Dagaaba cultural research.

Mwin bar'ka.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my grandfather, Matthias Kuwabong (c. 1920-1996), who played the *kuor* in his youth.

This thesis is also dedicated to his younger brother, my great-uncle, Most Reverend Gregory Ebo Kpiebaya, Archbishop Emeritus of Tamale (c. 1933-2022). His book "Dagaaba Traditional Marriage and Family Life" had just been published when I went to visit Ghana in 2017. This book was my introduction to a many cultural aspects, and my conversations with him about our culture, and his support of my idea to pursue the topic of Dagaaba funeral dirge, helped me reach this point.

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GLOSSARY OF DAGAARE WORDS

This glossary contains many of the Dagaare words used throughout this thesis. Some words are included with their dialectical variations as multiple forms of the words were used across the research from different areas of Dagao.

ariba:	maternal uncle
baloo/balu:	clan; "a territorially unbounded, exogamous descent group that includes all those who regard themselves as patrilineally related without being able to name an actual common ancestor" (Doggu, 2015, p. 31)
Bagngmen:	god of the initiates
bagr:	sacrifice (look in Kuukure, Bagah)
Bangkaang/ Bagr pla:	clean Bagr/white Bagr; one of two branches of the Bagr association
Bangdegre/ Bagr sɛbla:	dirty Bagre/black Bagr; one of two branches of the Bagr association
bewaa:	a recreational dance
beɛrmine:	senior brothers; males of one's own generation that are older than oneself; singl. beɛri
bɛndaari:	the only dance performed by the Emuola using the xylophone
bilagni:	the third portion of the kuurbine cycle; var. bɛlanw-mɛ
bine:	Dagaaba funeral dance
bin-maala:	a dance performed by both men and women
bin-vaara:	a men's dance that includes twists, turns, and leaps
boore:	a patrilineage consisting of the "main house" (common ancestor's homestead) and those built nearby by his direct male descendants; root word for "seed meant for sowing"; also known as doglo
bugbugra:	diviners
Dagaaba:	Dagara, singl. Dagao
Dagao:	the land traditionally where the Dagaaba live
Dapare:	the spirit world
dasule:	shadow
dɛɛrba:	chorus
dɛgaar:	the second section of the kuurbine cycle; var. degaar
dɛgabɛ loba:	female counterpart of bin-vaara
dieo:	an apartment in which one nuclear family lives in a yiri; a room
dɔgra:	"one who originates from the same male of female genealogical line or stock as the speaker" (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 46)

duma:	totem; also called yaaba
enga:	body
faa:	evil; var. fare
gandaa:	strong man
gɔbaa:	a musician who posseses prfound socio-cultural knowledge on the xylophone and has attained a high level of technical mastery of the instrument; pl. gɔribe, gɔore
gyil:	xylophone; two variations: the daga-gyil has eighteen keys while the lo-gyil has fourteen keys; pl. gyile
gyilbie:	xylophone texts; singl. gyilbiri
gyinna:	spiritual force that is contained by all living entities
gyinne:	nature spirits; can be good (gyin sonne) or evil (gyin fare); singl. gyin
jonga:	a geographical location where large numbers of Dagaaba have settled to farm outside of Dagao or where they have migrated to look for seasonal work
kongkono:	dirge chanter; literally 'one who cries', 'cry crier'; pl. kongkonibo
kongkombie:	the text of chanted dirges; singl. kongkombiri
kodeo:	the secondary rites performed on the seventh day after burial
kogii:	a vengeful ghost; pl. kpiinkogre
komaale:	final funeral rites held months to a year after the burial; celebration of life
kontombili:	fairies, dwarves, beings of the wild; central figures in most Dagaaba myths; singl. kontombile
kpaabo/komoɔ:	chanted ancestral praises
kpagru:	a repetitive baseline with little improvisation played with the back end of the gyil mallet
kpankpol/kponkolo:	an earth-pit xylophone
kpeɛmine:	senior sisters; females of one;s own generation that are older than oneself; singl. kpiema
kpegruu:	the only dance done by the Ekuola of Nanville that uses the xylophone
Kpiime:	ancestor spirits; singl. kpiine
kpiin kyiir:	death whip; a punishment inflicted by a ghost on their living relatives if their instructions are not followed
kpiin noba:	death people; those close to the deceased
kuor:	a hard shelled gourd; also refers to the drum made of this gourd
kuurbine:	Dagaaba funeral dance music
kuu tumpaambie:	dirge played on the tumpaani
kyeɛrɛ:	singer
lagne:	the dirge performance; also a type of funeral dance found among the central Dagaaba
liga:	rosewood; used for crafting xylophone keys

loŋo:	frog; totem of the Etuolo clan
lobri:	dirges played on the lo-gyil; male variation deblu; female variation pɔglu
maamine:	mothers; singl. ma
maakomine:	grandmothers; can refer to the collective maternal departed relatives in the spirit world; singl. maakoma
maal-eŋna:	prop
mabile:	junior mother; a woman of your mother's generation who is younger than one's biological mother
Manlarla:	a subgroup of the Dagaaba speaking this particular dialect; share borders with the Lor dialect in the west in Burkina Faso, the Wala to the south, the Monyarla to the north and east, and the Dolimbo to the south-west (Bagah, 1995, p. 85).
Manouri:	west; literally the mouth of the river
Naa:	chief, king
Nabagle:	a hunter
Naangmen:	Supreme Spirit; the Creator; God
nenseɛ/nyaãaãkpeen:	a ghost
Ngmeme:	deities through which sacrifices, offerings, and prayers are made to Naangmen; singl. Ngmene
nyuo:	leopard; totem of the Ekuola clan; also known as kɔlaa, loɔra
ŋmanzeɛ:	red pigeon; totem of the Emoɔla clan
paalaa:	a catafalque on which the corpse is displayed
paapir:	spider's egg membrane; used to cover holes drilled in gourds to create resonance when playing the xylophone
piira:	a prelude, in free time and tempo, played unaccompanied on the daga-gyil by the gɔbaa (Dankwa, 2018, p. 160)
pito:	locally brewed beer made from millet
pooro:	paternal aunt
saamine:	fathers; singl. Saa, zo, ba
saakomine:	grandfathers; can refer to the collect departed paternal relatives in the spirit world
samuni:	east; literally the bottom of the sky
Sangmen:	(var. Saangmen); rain god
sazu:	sky
sie:	spirit
song:	good; var. sonne
Tendaana:	the custiodian of the Tengbane; the oldest of the patrilineage who traditionally first settled the land; pl. Tedaamba
Tengbane:	Earth god
Tenge:	the Earth
Teŋkpiine:	spirits of the recently dead
tigbe:	a short repetitive melodic pattern that ends the piira

tuumpani:	royal talking drums
vaarfo:	umbrella/cane dance
vuuro:	breath
wirimba:	inside-out
wogye pila:	white burial cloth
yagu:	whitewashing; var. yaga
yanggan:	body
yidaana:	the oldest sane male of the oldest generation of a patriclan
yidaandao:	the oldest sane male of the oldest generation within a household
yiri:	house
yirdeme:	extended family unit that lives in a yiri
yɔɔbili:	junior/younger siblings; girls and boys of one's own generation
za-soba:	a homicide; someone who has killed another human being
zo kpoŋ:	senior father; a male of one's father's generation that is older than one's biological father

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

A dirge is a song of grief and lament, most times intended to accompany funeral or memorial rites. The dirge is an oral literary genre found in many cultures globally and refers to poetry used to commemorate the dead (Saanchi, 1992, p. 9). Funeral dirges have been a global cultural phenomenon since ancient times. Today, there are still many cultures that include dirges in their funeral rituals. Among the Dagaaba (also known as Dagara) (sing. Dagao), an ethnic group found on both sides of the Black Volta mainly located in the Upper West Region of Ghana with a population that spills into Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, dirges compose an important piece of funerals. In fact, among the Dagaaba, a funeral is not considered to be complete without the performance of dirges. Among the Dagaaba, not only are dirges chanted by *kongkonibo* (dirge singers; sg. *kongkono)*, they are also played by the xylophonists (*gɔribe;* sg. *Gɔbaa*) (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 9). This thesis set out to analyse how the dirge performance functions as part of a healing process for the bereaved to process their loss and adjust to new realities.

Objectives

This study set out to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the social, psychological, and spiritual experience in Dagaaba culture contextualize the structure and function of funeral rituals?
2. How do the linguistic, literary, and musical elements of Dagaaba funeral dirge interact with social, psychological, and spiritual experiences of the Dagaaba?
3. How does the performance of Dagaaba funeral dirge function within the wider theory of community participation in grief?

Literature Review

One of the most influential and often cited texts on the Dagaaba is Jack Goody's (1962) "Death, Property and the Ancestors: A study of the mortuary customs of the Lodagaa of West Africa." In this book Goody considers relevant themes as illustrated by earlier European colonial administrators and ethnologists, but uses his own extensive ethnological fieldwork to avoid some of the errors made by these predecessors. He provides great detail from the day of death through to the final funeral rites and on to the intergenerational transmission of property. Of particular relevance to this study is the detailed descriptions of the mourning behaviours and rituals of the bereaved, general spectators, and agnatic clans of the deceased. Approximately 52 years since its publication, this work acts as an historical reference in comparison to more recent studies as some of the customs mentioned in this book are rapidly disappearing with cultural, social, and economic changes that have occurred in the past decades.

Another work often cited is Edward Kuukure's (1985) "The Destiny of Man," an athropologico-theological study of the relationship between Christian eschatology and what the Dagaaba/Dagara believe to be the "ultimate destiny of man." This book provides in-depth information on Dagaaba cosmological concepts such as the spirit world, the origin and nature of man, religious activities, and on traditional social structure and organization. Of particular relevance is the chapter on death and its conceptualization and rituals associated with it among the Dagaaba.

Bagah's (1995) thesis on healthcare utilization among rural Dagaaba also contains significant information on Dagaaba social structure, cosmology, and funeral rites. Theses by Gbal (2013) and Doggu (2015) also go into great detail on Dagaaba belief systems and mourning and burial rites, with Gbal (2013) also comparing Christian funeral liturgy and the Dagara funeral rites and

the inculturation of these traditional rites in into Roman Catholic funeral liturgy. Although Gbal (2013) and Doggu (2015) devote some attention to dirge performance, Saanchi's (1992) thesis is dedicated to studying the chanted dirges of the Dagaaba as a verbal art. Based on his own literature review, this thesis appears to be the first and most detailed analysis of chanted dirges among the Dagaaba. Saanchi details the context and role of chanted dirges in Dagaaba funerals, their use of language and structure, and provides transcription and translation throughout the text and as an appendix.

In "Gyilbie ne Tumpaambie," Yabang (1981), a Gɔbaa and scholar, provides a compilation of transcribed xylophone and drum musical texts, a majority being dirges used in funeral announcements or at funerals. Written entirely in Dagaare, Yabang also provides description of the uses and features of these musical texts, as well as their positive and negative aspects. However, there is no analysis of these texts in this book. Portions of this work are translated and analysed in Kuwabong's (1990) paper on Dagaaba xylophone dirge and the rhetoric of creative performance. This paper examines the interaction between the simultaneous dirge chanting and xylophone dirges and examines selected xylophone dirges with respect to their use of various rhetorical devices. Yemeh (2002) focuses on the transcription and translation of chanted and xylophone dirges, with his main purpose being preservation rather than analysis. He also provides some musical notation for the xylophone dirges.

Bernard Woma, another Gɔbaa and scholar, wrote on Dagara funeral music and dirge as forms of public discourse and examines the socio-political dimensions of Dagara funeral ritual through textual interpretations of xylophone music and chanted dirges (Woma, 2012). Examining the repertoires of specific gɔɔre, Kuutiero (2006) and Kyoore (2018) both analyse the repertoire of the late Gɔbaa Bergyire/Bɛrgirɛ. Kuutiero (2006) examines xylophone texts as a communication

medium for social commentary and the poetry and themes of the texts. Kyoore (2018) mainly examines Bɛrgirɛ's xylophone texts and recorded performances. Both Kuutiero (2006) and Kyoore (2018) provide transcriptions and translations of these songs, however Kyoore's are more extensive and cover multiple full songs. Dankwa (2018) and Hien (2019) subsequently take even more musicological approaches in their theses. Dankwa studies the nature and purpose of music in Dagaaba funerary rituals and how music evokes, intensifies, and sustains emotional behaviours during the funeral using performance and affective concepts. Hien provides a musical ethnography of the Dagara of Burkina Faso focusing on three genres of xylophone music: bawr-binɛ, bɛwaa, and ko-gyil. He also examines the relationship between music and Dagara social structure and kinship systems, Dagara musical philosophy, and Dagara musical aesthetic conventions. Both Dankwa (2018) and Hien (2019), like Yemeh (2002) provide musical notation for select aspects of the xylophone dirges, as well as analysis of some musical texts.

All of these previous studies, along with many others, provide important perspective and context on Dagaaba culture and ritual practices, however those focusing specifically on xylophone texts are few. Additionally, much of the previous research occurred among the northern Dagaaba (from Nandom further north into Burkina Faso). As a rather varied ethnic group with many dialects and a variety of cultural practices, this research is interested in the same phenomenon among the southern Dagaaba.

In *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community*, Somé (1993) outlines the essential role of rituals in maintaining community among the Dagara, including his personal experiences. My research will be one of few studies on the Dagaaba dirge performance that is centered on the Manlarla subgroup. In all the studies on funeral dirge among the Dagaaba, the psychological impact is mentioned, but not explained in depth, particularly detailing the "healing" aspects funeral dirges.

My research investigates Dagaaba funeral dirge from an interdisciplinary perspective that involves psychology, sociology, and literary theory to outline how the content and performance of funeral dirge facilitates the healing of the bereaved. My study will be the first that applies an African psychological communal grief framework (Nwoye, 2022) to Dagaaba funeral performance.

Definition of Concepts

The Principle of Bifocality

African psychology recognises the simultaneity of realms of being; that is, the physical, mystical, spiritual, ordinary, social, psychological, cultural, and moral sides of continental Africans. As part of a post-colonial society, Africans have a type of double civilization, African and Global. This allows African psychology to draw from the best knowledge traditions of both civilizations. African psychology is a *both-and* style of psychology (Nwoye, 2022, p. 116).

The Principle of Duality and Interdependent Ontology

In African and Asian cosmologies, the notion of "to be" involves the idea of "to belong" (Nwoye, 2022). Among the Dagaaba, this concept is expressed in the phrase "N'taan be mang be" ("We are, therefore, I am") (Bagah, 1995, p. 168). This is an idea fundamental to African and other non-Western cultures that are communal and stress interdependence. The principle of duality proposes that multiple interpretations of any issue exist side by side (Nwoye, 2022, p. 117). Interdependent ontology states that nothing in life lives in complete isolation from another; everything is interconnected (p. 117). This "everything" includes not just the natural, but the supernatural world as well.

Diunital Rationality

Diunital rationality is "the notion of the unity of opposites or the blending of contraries" (Nwoye, 2022, p. 119). For example, this diunital logic allows Africans to believe that the ancestors, though dead, are still living and have the power to influence the living.

The Notion of Double or Multilayered Consciousness

Nwoye (2022) deconstructs and reconstructs W.E.B Dubois' definition of multilayered or double consciousness into a positive concept in continental Africa (p. 127)[1]. This multilayered consciousness allows Africans to exist in a complicated environment, drawing from the ancient and the modern Africa world. For example, whether a Dagao is Catholic, Muslim, or other, when they die, the traditional funeral is still performed. This is because one can belong to another religion and believe in the presence and influence of ancestors at the same time. This defines seeing and acknowledging all separate yet simultaneous dimensions of oneself as positive and adaptive (p. 128).

Theoretical Framework

An interdisciplinary framework integrates information, data, tools, perspectives, concepts, and theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge to study issues that are beyond the scope of a single discipline (Cohen Miller & Pate, 2019, p. 1213). Each discipline comes with a set of theoretical frameworks which are shaped by culture. Reaction to stimuli is partially dependent on culture which shapes psychological processes. Psychology can be

[1] The original concept of double consciousness, as written by W.E.B Dubois: "[T]he Negro is . . . born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in the American world—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others . . . of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body" (Nwoye, p. 126-127)

revealed through language and literature. In this sense, the sociological and psychological frameworks are constantly interacting, resulting in art (literature, music, painting, etc.) as an expression of psychology and culture. Hence, to study the musical performance of a culture, one must understand the social culture and psychology of the people, making ethnomusicology, which is the study of why and how human beings are musical, inherently interdisciplinary (Rice, 2014, p. 1).

In this research I apply an interdisciplinary ethnomusicological framework that integrates concepts and theories from sociology, psychology, and oral literature. First, each theory will be explained, concluding with their integrated application to the Dagaaba funeral dirge performance.

Theory of Ritual

In van Gennep's *Les Rites de Passage* (1909), he proposed that rites of passage function as a means of social regeneration and contain three parts: the rites of separation, transition, and the rites of reincorporation (Britannica, 2024). Rites of separation help those concerned leave behind the roles and obligations related to the previous phase; the transition period occurs as the group or individual prepares for the next phase; and rites of reincorporation help the individual or group to take on their new social identity/identities (Bagah, 1995, p. 78, 181).

To understand ritual behaviour, we must first define what "ritual" is. In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim (1912) defined ritual as "the means by which collective beliefs and ideals are generated, experienced, and affirmed as real by the community" (Bell, 2009, p.10). In this research I use Marshall's (2002) sociopsychological model of ritual theory regarding its effect on belief and belonging (see Figure 1). Marshall (2002) defines belief as

being a way to express the certainty, credulity, and confidence that result from rituals (p. 360). Belonging is defined as a step beyond group membership; it is a sense of unity and social bonding and one of the most noted outcomes of ritual (p. 360).

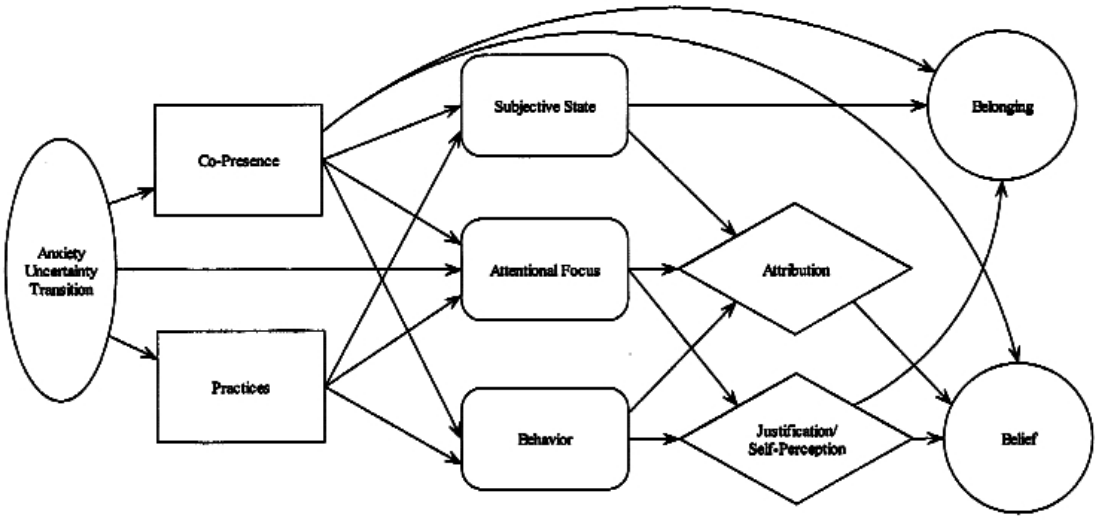


Figure 1. Marshall's (2002) Socio-psychological Model of Ritual and its effect on belief and belonging.

The Dagaaba funeral dirge performance can be described as a positive and public rite, a ritual that usually occurs as a type of display or performance (Marshall, 2002, p. 364). The dirge performance is a structured activity that requires proper observation, and the incorporation of rhythmic movement (p. 363-364). Two other vital aspects of ritual must be included to understand ritual's effects on belief and belonging: co-presence and attentional focus.

Co-presence. Under collective shock, people have a strong impulse to gather, increasing the frequency of social interactions. Although this impulse is independent from the intention to engage in ritual practice, it still profoundly impacts those assembled (Marshall, 2002, p. 361). In times of stress and uncertainty, people instinctually feel the need to validate the usually ambiguous or incomplete information they have regarding the situation with the goal of reducing

uncertainty rather than obtaining accurate information. This leads to a preservation and/or escalation of belief (p. 362). Simply having contact with other individuals present activates multiple attachment mechanisms and leads to social cohesion (p. 362).

Co-presence also results in social facilitation, in which the presence of others facilitates more intense and prolonged performance of well-learned or repetitive tasks. The physiological arousal that occurs also directly affects subjective states (p. 362). Conformity is another effect of co-presence. Individuals in said co-present group conform to one another through very subtle behavioural changes, such as conversational rhythms, posture, muscle tone, facial expressions, etc. (p. 363). This conformity increases to the effect of emotional contagion. The mood of a co-present group tends to converge and create a positive feedback loop, leading to an intensification and spread of said mood. This mood convergence creates a sense of bonding between those co-present (p. 363).

Attentional Focus. Key characteristics of positive rites include rhythmic movement and the expenditure of tremendous amounts of energy, effort, and time (Marshall, 2002, p. 363-364). Music accompanying rhythmic action is known to produce changes in brain functioning, attentional focus, and subjective state (p. 364). The performance of funeral dirges is a method of organizing the attention of the mourners, with greater collective emotion generated the higher the level of attentional focus (Knottnerus, 2014, p. 315).

Collective Emotion. The social niche is defined as "the extent to which emotions emerge from within, and area at times partially constituted by, the dynamics of an agent's ongoing interaction with evolving social contexts" (Krueger, 2014, p. 156). Ideational and material factors directly shape the experience and expression of emotion. Ideational factors include mental structures such as values, norms, and rules that inform the display of rules and "emotion scripts" (p. 159).

Material factors include physical structures that create the context in which the emotions occur, as well as the various techniques used to support that emergence (p. 159). At a collective gathering such as a funeral, the Dagaaba participate in coordinated collective behaviour.

Coordinated Collective Behaviour. The ability of people for mutual coordination allows them to align their goals, intentions, and actions with others in the vicinity; synchrony of movement is found to enhance cooperation and prosocial activity, and increase social unity (Pàez & Rimé, 2014, p. 207). Some collective emotional behaviours will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

The impact of rituals on emotional energy (EE). A successful ritual depends on solidarity and membership symbols, such as actions, gestures, or particular words. Emotional energy is defined as a longer-lasting feeling that individuals take from the group, giving them confidence, enthusiasm, and initiative (Collins, 2014, p. 300). Certain participants receive more EE than others, such as the bereaved in the case of the funeral dirge performance. However, this only occurs if the ritual succeeds. For example, if the funeral dirge performance is sub-par, it is assumed that the collective emotion is not created, causing EE to fall, which leaves participants depressed, unmotivated, and alienated (Collins, 2014, 303).

Theory of Community Grief Work in Africa

Nwoye (2022) suggests that "successful mourning in the African context is brought about by the systematic presentation of several biological, cognitive, social, spiritual, and cultural works of the community in its supportive care of the bereaved" (p. 434). The facilitation of mourning in African communities has five stages, each targeted to heal different aspects of memory. The five stages are as follows: 1) breaking of bad news and solidarity crying with the bereaved, 2) limited re-parenting and systemic practice, 3) promotion of positive cognitive adaptation, 4) rituals of

cleansing, breaking bonds, and leave-taking, and 5) rehabilitation and reconciliation (Nwoye, 2022, p. 435-441). The four aspects of memory that are targeted for healing are fact, behavioural, event, and prospective memory. The Dagaaba funeral dirge performance operates in the first and third stage, working to heal all four aspects of memory mentioned below. This theory is best outlined with an example, and so will be further elaborated on in Chapter Three using the Dagaaba funeral.

Fact Memory. Fact memory refers to the idea that we seek clarity regarding the facts around an event. In the case of a death, questions such as whether it really took place, where, when and who might be responsible must receive satisfactory answers to prevent cognitive dissonance (Nwoye, 2005, p. 148).

Behavioural Memory. Behavioural memory refers to a person's existing knowledge of how grieving people are attended to in the culture and the expectation to be treated in this culturally appropriate way. It also refers to cultural memory of specific processes for grieving and mourning that acts as a blueprint on how to proceed and facilitate their healing (p. 148-9).

Event Memory. Event memory concerns the negative mindset the bereaved may enter in that they are reminded of previous adversity and may feel like they are under special threat (p. 149).

Prospective Memory. Prospective memory refers to "the bereaved's preoccupation with the disruptions wrought by death and the loss of dreams for the future" along with their concern on what must be done to provide the deceased with a decent burial (p. 149).

Stage 1: Solidarity Crying with the Bereaved. Solidarity crying with the bereaved is a form of coordinated collective behaviour. Ideational and material factors are involved in this behaviour; the norms which include solidarity crying, and the context of the funeral and

specifically the funeral dirge performance. Solidarity crying validates the bereaved's emotional expression and shows empathic availability. This helps to address both fact and behavioural memory (Nwoye, 2022, p. 436).

Stage 3: Promotion of Positive Cognitive Adaptation. According to Nwoye (2022), "[i]n traditional African culture, it is assumed that the way a mourner experiences a death depends on how he or she interprets the loss" (p. 438). This stage is the community's attempt to challenge negative meanings the bereaved makes out of their loss. These speeches or performances aim to promote ""multiple descriptions" of the meaning of loss in order to uplift the bereaved's self-image and prospective memory" (p. 438). Coping with recent traumatic events is best done by confronting and working through the threats they produce, something that is seen in the content of many Dagaaba dirges (p.438). Event and prospective memory are healed at this stage.

Detached Attachment Hypothesis

The detached attachment hypothesis refers to the alteration that takes place in the attachment relationship between the deceased and the bereaved and the successful performance by the bereaved of the mourning rituals sanctioned by the culture and community (Nwoye, 2022, p. 129). The mourning rituals symbolise the breaking of culturally sanctioned bonds between the two individuals, but without complete closure of every element of attachment between the two. The attachment between the two transforms to a different and more spiritual plane (p. 130). This hypothesis is based in attachment theory and similar to the concept of continuing bonds.

Attachment Theory. According to attachment theory, children develop an attachment bond with their primary caregivers, with varying quality of the attachment (Field et al., 2005, p. 278). Attachment bonds also form between adults but differ in that both partners serve as an

attachment figure to the other (, p. 278). Although physical distance regulation was initially emphasized in early literature, it was soon found that a child's sense of felt security was also based on the attachment figure's responsiveness to their emotional needs, particularly when under stress. As cognitive ability develops, the internalization of early attachment experiences forms an internal working model that allows the individual to anticipate when the attachment figure would be capable and ready to respond when needed even when they are not currently physically present (p. 278). This is considered the "psychological proximity" of the attachment figure. Central to this theory is the individual's belief in the availability of the attachment figure, as in the possibility of being reunited with them. Therefore, the death of an attachment figure is psychologically disorganizing because it nullifies this possibility (p. 279). Following Bowlby's (1980) phasic model of grief, the bereaved eventually enters the internalization and reorganization stages of grief.

Internalization occurs when the bereaved is able to internalize the regulatory functions of the attachment figure, allowing for greater self-regulation (p. 283). The following reorganization phase is characterised by the bereaved's internal model of attachment to the deceased revising the goal of reestablishing physical proximity to achieving felt security via psychological proximity, which is known as a continuing bond (p. 286).

Cultural Performance Theory

Cultural performance theory strives to explain the relationship between the foundations of human experience: community, culture, and performance (Davis, 2009, para. 2). A cultural performance is a discrete event that can be observed and understood within that cultural structure with certain characteristics (para. 3). There are four tenets of cultural performance theory, which are features specific to culture: process, play, poetics, and power (para. 4).

Culture as Process. Cultural performance acts as a way for people to create, discover, and negotiate meaning in the world. Performative human behaviours are acts that tell a story, create reality, critique society, or remember history though oral communication (Davis, 2009, para. 5,6). All of these characteristics can be found in Dagaaba funeral dirge performance.

Culture as Poetics. Cultural performances are both reflective and reflexive. Cultural performances reflect ongoing social processes and how society functions; they have built-in meaningful messages about the world that are picked up by multiple senses. They are reflexive in that they can lead to change. Cultural performances provide opportunities to critique, enact, comment, and evaluate the norms and values of a culture. Performance reflexivity occurs when a sociocultural group, in response to a cultural performance, turns and reflects back on itself, the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, social structures, and other components that make up the members' public selves (Davis, 2009, para. 9). Culture as poetics ties into the theory of ethnopoetics.

Ethnopoetics

First proposed by Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock, ethnopoetics is "an interdisciplinary construct that attempts to correct the Eurocentric bias against non-Western, traditional ways of speaking and meaning deriving an interpretive frame from discourse in its own cultural context" (Quick, 1999, p. 95). This construct encourages insider analysis and interpretation, interpretation of oral literary pieces in their cultural context, the assigning of meaning to oral texts based on the cultural traditions of the performer and the audience, and close observation and participation in live performances (Alembi, 2003, p. 23).

Understanding Xylophone Music as Poetic Text. The Dagaaba language is important in their perception and understanding of music (Hien, 2019, p. 68). Among the Dagaaba, vocal music is significant as the audience is attracted by the messages conveyed by the texts of the songs. In fact, the language used is poetic, with the strong use of idioms and other figures of speech (Kuutiero, 2006, p. 110). The xylophone language is grounded in the spoken language. The xylophone has its own grammar and syntax, similar to those of a poet, and its language is mainly grounded in the spoken language of the Dagaaba (p. 110). Applying what Finnegan (1970) wrote about African drums, Kuutiero (2006) justifies that the xylophone, like certain African drums, communicates through a direct representation of the spoken language, itself simulating the tone and rhythm of speech (p. 110). Therefore, its music, or singing, falls into the category of verbal art.

Conclusion: Application to Dagaaba Funeral Dirge

The Dagaaba funeral encompasses all stages of rites of passage, with the funeral dirge as part of the rites of separation. Co-presence is an important aspect of fostering collective emotion and is aided by the performance acting as a means to focus the attention of participants and promote social facilitation. This social facilitation leads to emotional contagion, producing a positive feedback loop that, along with ideational factors, contributes to solidarity crying (as in the theory of grief work in Africa) with the bereaved, and encourages catharsis. The emotional energy and empathic availability facilitated by the performance aides in the healing of the memory of the bereaved. The dirge performance particularly assists with the redefinition of attachment to the deceased through solidarity crying and positive cognitive adaptation, facilitating internalization. The funeral dirge performance increases community solidarity, and the feelings of belief and belonging to the community.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

Methodology

This study was performed using qualitative methodology. Each specific qualitative method used is outlined below.

Sampling Method of Data Collection

Deliberate sampling was done to identify research participants and fields of observation. As I am familiar with the Manlarla dialect of Dagaare, spoken in the Kaleo traditional area of the Nadowli District, the research occurred in this area. Observation of funeral proceedings occurred in the village of Nanville.

Research participants were selected based on their extensive knowledge of traditional Dagaaba culture and were well versed in knowledge of the role of the xylophone. Research participants are current and former Dagaaba xylophonists from the Nadowli District. Potential research participants were identified through a snowball sampling technique. This included persons living in both Ghana and Canada.

Research Instruments

Participant Observation. Participant observation involves the researcher both observing the subject of research and taking part in what is being researched. I participated in and observed Dagaaba funerals, specifically the activities of various groups (bereaved, dirge chanters, xylophonists and drummer, etc.). This method is important in studying topics with cultural components as culture is learned through socialization and enculturation (Gilman & Fenn, 2019). While I acknowledge their role as a foreigner, I also belong to the cultural group being observed,

and this insider-outsider position presents unique challenges and opportunities that will be elaborated on in the discussion. However, because I have partial socialization and enculturation, it enhances participant observation.

In-depth interviews. In-depth interviews allow researchers to gather a variety of perspectives on their research topic. The information disclosed is also based on the research participant's worldview, position in society, and the position of the interviewer as an insider or outsider. However, results of each interview may vary depending on the information being disclosed and how comfortable the research participant feels with the researcher. To combat this, I had a guide known in the community to facilitate comfort and discussion in some of the interviews. As I am from the same ethnic group as research participants and related to or known by some, making me less likely to be seen as an outsider.

The interviews conducted were informal, with participants asked for consent for recording for use in research (Gilman & Fenn, 2019). The loose structure of interviews allows for a free flow from theme to theme as the conversation progresses. Following the organic flow of the interviewee rather than strictly following a predetermined list of questions allows the interviewee to share what is most important and relevant to them, rather than the researcher assuming what is most significant.

Xylophone players were interviewed to answer each research question. Players were of varying ages, allowing for multiple perspectives on changes in traditional practice over time.

Review of Documents. Documents relevant to Dagaaba ethnography and funeral rituals were read, compared, and synthesized into explanatory chapters outlining relevant concepts and

processes of Dagaaba culture. These include the materials cited in the literature review as well as Kpiebaya's (2016) "Dagaaba Customary Marriage and Traditional Family Life."

Recording Tools. Interviews and funeral observations were recorded. Both an audio recorder and digital camera were used to enable analysis at a later date. These recordings are durable, allowing them to be a record of Dagaaba funeral dirge culture that can be archived.

Research Period and the Selection of Research participants. I attended two funerals in Ghana between June and July 2023 for participant observation. Interviews taking place in Ghana were done in person in June 2023, while the interviews in Canada were recorded via Zoom in December 2023. The research participants were as follows:

Table 1

Research Participant Details

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Location	Details	Village of Origin
JS	~ 40s	Ghana	Current gɔbaa	Sankana
PY	~ 70s	Ghana	Researcher	Dorimo
IL	~ 60s	Canada	Former gɔbaa	Chang
SJ	~ 70s	Canada	Former xylophone player	Charkpong
RN	~ 30s	Ghana	Current gɔbaa	Nanville

Methods of Analysis of Research Materials. The data collected from the field was transcribed and translated into English. Analysis involves a translation of each dirge, identification of concepts in each, and identification of literary and psychological strategies. As I have limited knowledge of the language, consultation with language experts occurred to ensure

accuracy. Audiovisual material was analysed for the performance aspects of the funeral dirge. Interviews were analysed using thematic analysis for key concepts and key words that appear frequently and signal commonly held beliefs among participants.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations while completing this study. Because of the brief nature of the trip to Ghana and the unpredictability of when funerals will occur, only two funerals could be observed. There was also limited opportunity to record as at the time of attendance, there was a gap in the continuous performance where no playing was occurring. Also, because of the free flow of people through the funeral ground, there were interruptions in the audio recording. A few potential respondents were unfortunately too busy to offer their insights within the limited research time frame. It was later found that the recorded material from the funeral ground was unfortunately not usable as the words were not intelligible for translation.

There were also mild complications during translation from Dagaare to English as the translator is most familiar with southern Dagaare, and a majority of sources were in the northern and central Dagaare dialects.

CHAPTER THREE: A BRIEF ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE DAGAABA

History and Ethnic Identity

On both sides of the Black Volta River, where it forms the boundary between Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire, live an ethnic group called the Dagaaba (also referred to as the Dagara) (see Figure 2). A majority of the Dagaaba live in northwestern Ghana in what is called the Upper West Region (Saanchi, 1992). The most popular hypothesis traces the origin of the Dagaaba to Dagbon (the territory of Dagomba) in what is now called the Northern Region of Ghana (Bagah, 1995, p. 41). According to Bagah's (1995) summary of Tuurey (1982), a Dagaaba historian:

> . . . [T]he Mole-speaking Dagomba were a loosely organised group of people without a centralized political structure. However, towards the beginning of the 15th century, a "conquering band of strangers" imposed themselves upon these loosely organized people and founded the Dagomba Kingdom. These conquering bands of strangers reportedly descended from Tohajie, the Red Hunter, who left his Zamfara home state in present day northern Nigeria for a location in Gruma in today's Burkina Faso. Tohajie's grandson, Gbew, apparently left Gruma for Pusiga (near Bawku) in the UER [Upper East Region] of Ghana . . . While in Pusiga, Gbewa produced eight sons one of whom, Sitobo, imposed himself on the Mole-speaking people and founded the Dagomba Kingdom . . . (p. 41)

Under the Dagomba King Na Nyagse (1476-1492), there was an armed conflict over who had rightful ownership of the land, the original settlers or the foreign self-imposed overlords; this ended in a brutal massacre of the local Dagomba and a sizeable number decided to break away and find new land away from the oppression of tyrannical rule (p. 42). This group eventually

ended up in an open space of land that stretched from east of the Sisaala people westward to the Lobi settlements along the Black Volta (p. 42).

Again, there have been many theories on the etymology of "Dagaaba," but according to Bagah (1995), Etuolo elders from Nyimbale place its origin with the Lobi terms *Da* ("roam, to push") and *Gaar* ("wild, ahead") (p. 45). The compound term *Da gaar* can then be translated as "push ahead" or "roam wildly" (p. 45). If, indeed, the Dagaaba broke away from the Dagomba and moved into Lobi territory, leading to the latter's involuntary departure, the Lobi would certainly view them as *Da-gaar* ("wild roamers").

After the people had settled and developed their own unique language, the Dagomba word *ba* ("we") was added to the Lobi *da gaar*, to form the term *Da gaar ba* ("we who roamed"/"we who pushed ahead") (p. 45). However, the Dagaaba who later migrated into Burkina Faso refer to themselves as Dagara (from the Lobi term *Da gaar*) (p. 45).

There are also groups on non-Dagomba Dagaaba: the Guombo, Esuolo, Monyarla and Emuola (p. 47). The Guombo trace to the Konkomba of north-eastern Ghana, the Monyarla to Zini in the Sisaala district of Tumu in UWR (Upper West Region) of Ghana, and the Emuola who trace to Mogho in Mossi territory in Burkina Faso (p. 47). The Waala, another subgroup of the Dagaaba, are descendants of Mandingo and Hausa traders and primarily Muslim (p. 47). Oral tradition states that the people of Kpila are descended from the Dioula, an ethnic group of Mande origin.

Because of the diverse origins of the Dagaaba, they display considerable cultural and linguistic diversity (Kuukure, 1985, p. 23-26). The research performed in this study was limited

to participants from the southern Dagaaba, which includes the Nadowli-Kaleo District (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Traditional Homeland of the Dagaaba ("Dagaare language." 2024)

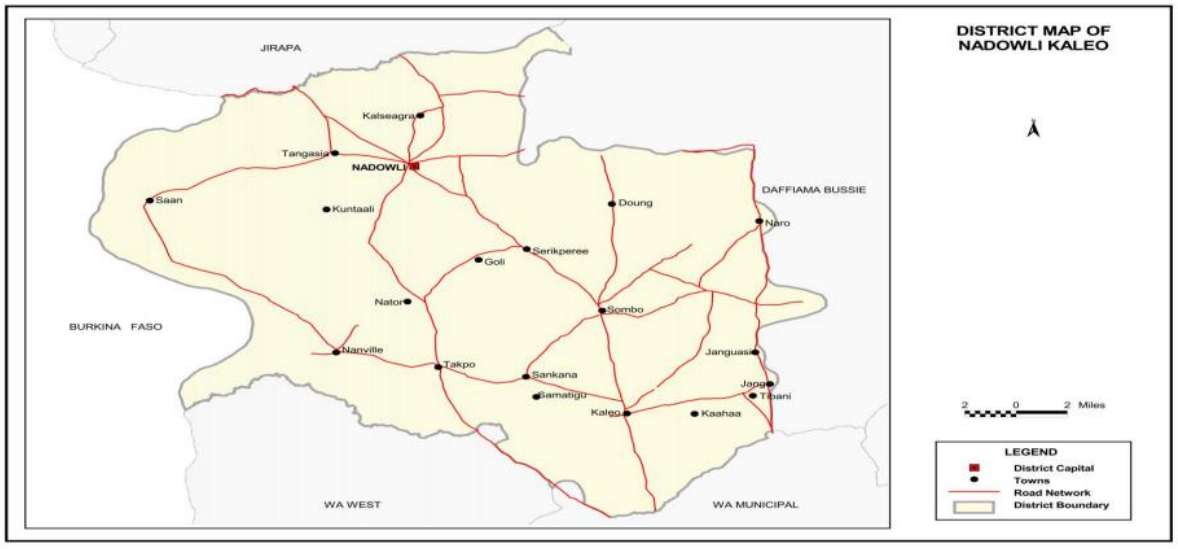


Figure 3. Nandowli-Kaleo District (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014)

Socio-Economic Life

The Dagaaba are mainly an agricultural people, cultivating cereals such as millet, guinea-corn, maize, and rice, along with beans, groundnuts, bambara beans, yams, sweet potatoes, tiger nuts, and vegetables (Saanchi, 1992, p. 19). Women, along with assisting in farming, engage in other activities such as pito-brewing, making of straw baskets, clay pottery, spinning and weaving, and the making of shea butter and dawadawa (Gbal, 2013, p. 15; Saanchi, 1992, p. 19). These crops are supplemented with meat from fish, guinea fowls, chicken, turkey, goats, sheep, pig, cattle, and wild game (Bagah, 1995, p. 59; Gbal, 2013, p. 15).

In recent decades, some Dagaaba have migrated to more fertile farmlands outside of Dagao and formed settlements made up almost entirely of Dagaaba around Damango, Bole, Kintampo, Techiman, Nkronza, and other towns (Saanchi, 1992, p. 18). They can also be found in large numbers working as underground miners in mining towns such as Obuasi, Tarkwa, and other towns in southern Ghana (Bagah, 1995, p. 15; Saanchi, 1992, p. 18). There are also large numbers found in mining towns in other parts of Ghana (for example, in Bolgatanga, Tamale, Kumasi, Accra, and Takoradi) (Saanchi, 1992, p. 18).

Socio-Political Organization

The Dagaaba form polycephalous communities, or as Bagah (1995) describes, “mini theocratic republics with *Tendaamba* as Judges, almost similar to the time of the rule of Judges in ancient Israel” (p. 64). The main areas of Dagaaba social organization are descent groups, ritual congregations, and overlapping family networks (Bagah, 1995, p. 67; Dankwa, 2018, p. 46).

Members of a nuclear family unity include a man, his wife or wives, and their children and dependents (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 56). They usually live in an apartment/room as part of an extended family unit (*yirdeme*).

Yirdeme: Extended Family Unit

Traditionally, the Dagaaba live as extended family units (*yiri*) in a house composed of several apartments joined together by corridors. Each nuclear family unit is entitled to an apartment or room (*dieo*) in the house. Therefore, each house may be occupied by one or more brothers and their family units, their parents, and/or other relatives. The ***yidaandao*** is the oldest sane male of the oldest generation within the household (Bagah, 1995, p. 64). The *yidaandao* commands respect and others in the family submit to his authority in carrying out their respective duties and obligations (Bagah, 1995, p. 64-65; Doggu, 2015, p. 30).

Patrilineage (Boore/Doglo)

The patrilineage (*boore/doglo*) consists of what is considered the "main house," a common ancestor's homestead, and all homes built, usually near the main house, by his direct male descendants who trace back two to four generations to this common ancestor (Doggu, 2015, p. 30)[2]. This common ancestor links members of a patrilineal-exogamous group (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 45). *Boore* is the root word for "seed", specifically one meant for sowing. The ***yidaana***, the oldest sane male of the oldest generation of the patrilineage, is considered to be a living representative of the ancestors, and, along with elders of the same generation, he maintains the

[2] Patrilineages only trace back a few generations as the family multiplies, people move out and establish their own houses, and the new patrilineage begins. However, people can trace back to previous patrilineages.

rules and customs established by their founding ancestors (Bagah, 1995, p. 65). The *yidaana* exerts social control not through force, but through persuasion and the looming threat of spiritual sanctions as he can appeal to ancestral authority to act if a member of the lineage transgresses the moral order (Bagah, 1995, p. 65; Kuukure, 1985, p. 37). All decisions are reached through discussions and informal consensus among the *yidaana* and other elders (Bagah, 1995, p. 65).

Clan (Baloo/Balu)

According to Doggu (2015), the *baloo* is comprised of "a territorially unbounded, exogamous descent group that includes all those who regard themselves as patrilineally related without being able to name an actual common ancestor" (p. 31) The story of this putative ancestor usually involves his being saved from imminent danger by an animal or inanimate object, who he then declared the totem (*duma/yaaba*) of the clan (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 51). The clan and totem are considered to have a familial relationship and it is therefore prohibited to kill, maltreat, or eat said totem. In fact, according to Kpiebaya (2016), "[t]he totemic animal is believed to have consanguineous relationship with all the clan members, and is entitled to proper burial just like any clan member" (p. 51). The clan, as a lineage, are considered to be related consanguineously, despite historical, geographical, and cultural distance (Kuukure, 1985, p. 34; Doggu, 2015, p. 31). Therefore, all marriages are exogamous. In most villages, there are a number of different patriclans, each with a *yidaana*, the oldest sane male of the oldest generation of the clan. His role includes supervision of inherited customs, marriage arrangements, distribution of farmlands, settling of disputes, and forging relationships with the other clans in the village (Bagah, 1995, p. 66). Some clan totems include the leopard (*nyuo/kɔlaa/loɔra*) of the Ekuola clan, the red pigeon (*ŋmanzeɛ*) of the Emoɔla, and the frog (*loŋo*) of the Etuolo (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 52).

The Earth Priest (Tendaana)

The *tendaana* is the custodian of the ***Tengbane*** (Earth god) and the most important determinant of social order and well-being among the Dagaaba (Bagah, 1995, p. 67). The *tendaana* is usually the elder of the patrilineage that traditionally first settled the land (Bagah, 1995, p. 66; Dankwa, 2018, p. 28; Kuukure, 1985, p. 38). As a primarily agricultural society, the *Tenge* is considered sacred and must be treated with respect (Bagah, 1995, p. 67). The *tendaana* is responsible for maintaining this relationship between Tenge and the community. He is responsible for performing the customary sacrifices to the *Tengbane* at both planting and harvest time and for the validation of any conversion of untilled land (Kuukure, 1985, p. 38). As the custodian of the land, he is vested with the ritual authority to stop feuding and mediate disputes that threaten to lead to the breaking of taboos, which will require extraordinary sacrifices (Kuukure, 1985, p. 39).

Chief (Naa)

The history of chieftaincy among the Dagaaba varies. While in some areas of Dagao, chieftaincy was forced upon them by the British during the colonial period, in other areas chieftaincy predated European colonialism (Dankwa, 2018, p. 45). For example, in the Kaleo traditional area, Mossi princes from Burkina Faso settled and established a chieftaincy system that was accepted by the original Dagaaba[3]. Chiefs now take on most of the administrative and juridical functions that the *tendaana* was once in charge of, however, the *tendaana* is still recognized as the custodian of the land and exerts his influence and authority in matters related to *Tenge* and the *Tengbane* (Bagah, 1995, p. 68).

[3] Their descendants became the Emuola clan of Kaleo (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 47).

Impact of Socio-Political Structure on Social Behaviour

The practice of exogamous marriage creates links between previously unrelated communities. According to Hien (2019), "a [Dagao] will by all means find a relationship tie between him and other fellow [Dagaaba]" (p. 56). This can be seen in the kinship terms used in Dagaare.

Kinship Terms. Among the Dagaaba there is no word for cousin. The concept of first-, second-, or third-degree relationship is only considered in matters of marriage (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 49). All males in the same generation as one's father are called their *saamine* (fathers), and for females of the mother's generation, *maamine* (mothers); they can be differentiated by whether they are older or younger than one's parent. For example, a woman younger than one's mother but of the same generation would be called *mabile* (junior mother) while a male older than one's father would be called *zokpoŋ* (senior father). The same holds true for girls and boys of one's own generation, who collectively are *yɔɔbili* (junior brothers/sisters) or *kpeɛmine/beɛrmine* (senior sisters/ senior brothers) (p. 49). There are also terms that distinguish maternal and paternal uncles and aunts. For example, one's paternal aunt (one's father's sister) is called *pooro* while one's maternal uncle is called *ariba.*

Dɔgra. *Dɔgra* refers to "one who originates from the same male or female genealogical line or stock as the speaker" (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 46). This has a broader meaning than *boore* as it includes the matrilineage.

In this way, people are socialized to view the wider community as family, and thus a Dagao extends their hospitality and solidarity far beyond traceable genealogy. The unifying bonds of common descent and common allegiance to the *Tengbane* have a strong influence on the social

behaviour of members, leading to a multitude of cooperative acts and the restraining of aggression (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 49).

However, Kpiebaya (2016) also notes that:

> . . .[I]t must be said that there is, at the same time, very little cooperative spirit among the Dagaaba. By this I mean that there is often no concerted effort to do things that would benefit many, especially those outside one's relationships. The attitude is that one acts for personal or family gain and not for the common good. . . This is a weakness in the Dagaaba concept of family. Of course, I am also aware that to do things for the good of the family, is to do things for the general social good as the family is a unit of the general society. Thus, the reasoning behind this behavioural practice is that the Dagao believes one must first sacrifice for the family before doing so for the outsider. For without a strong and united family, the society cannot be strong and united in times of great need (p. 50).

Traditional Beliefs and Concepts

The Dagaaba believe that there is a spiritual dimension to every aspect of life (Dankwa, 2018, p. 53). As Bagah (1995) writes, "For [the Manlarla], to live is to be caught up in a web of religious drama. This is fundamental as it implies that they live in a spiritual universe" (p. 107). This interdependent ontology presents itself among the Dagaaba as the universe consisting of three overlapping and interacting worlds: the supernatural (spirit), natural (physical), and social (human) worlds (Bagah, 1995, p. 111; Kuukure, 1985, p. 53).

The Supernatural World

Naangmen (Supreme Spirit, Creator). *Naangmen* is the omniscient, omnipresent, transcendent, all-knowing creator and sustainer of all things from whom all life emanates (Bagah, 1995, p. 116). He is the ultimate source of good, evil, fate, luck, talent, etc. (Dankwa, 2018, p. 53). Rather than being seen as "good" or "evil", *Naangmen* is viewed as the supreme balancer of good and evil (Bagah, 1995, p. 187). This concept of balance permeates the belief system of the Dagaaba. Anything created by *Naangmen* has both *enga* (body) and *sie* (spirit), so the Dagaaba believe that everything, both animate and inanimate, are living entities with *gyinna* (spiritual force) (p. 121).

Most religious concepts and activities such as acts of observance, worship, and offerings, focus on less remote forces, intermediary agents through whom *Naangmen* manifests Their powers. These spirits include the ancestors and nature spirits (Bagah, 1995, p. 118; Dankwa, 2018, p. 53).

Ancestor Spirits (Kpiime). The concept of ancestorhood is built on the belief that the human spirit lives on after physical death. It is the culmination of a process of funeral rituals through which the soul, wandering just after death, is transformed into an ancestor (Dankwa, 2018, p. 54). Not every deceased person can become an ancestor. Prerequisites include advanced age, parenthood, a "good" death, and having been well-esteemed in the community (Kuukure, 1985, p. 66). *Kpiime* not only act as powerful intercessors between their living families and *Naangmen*, but also reveal failed obligations of their descendants that have led to illness and provide guidance in how to correct them (Bagah, 1995, p. 124).

The Natural World

Gyinne (Nature Spirits). Everything created by *Naangmen*, both animate and inanimate phenomena, are believed to be living entities with a *gyinna* (spiritual force). *Gyinne* are immortal and cannot be destroyed, even when the physical aspect is dead or destroyed. Many human activities inevitably lead to destruction. For example, in the course of farming, things are destroyed (such as plants, trees, animals, insects, etc.), releasing the *gyinne* from their physical forms. Therefore, human beings are surrounded by many *gyinne*. The Dagaaba believe that some of these *gyinne* may avenge their destruction by sending misfortune or illness (Bagah, 1995, p. 120-121). However, there are both good (*Gyin sonne*) and evil (*Gyin fare*) *gyinne*. Some *Gyin fare* are seen as having the role of harming individuals as a corrective sanction from *Naangmen* (Kuukure, 1985, p. 61). *Gyin sonne* are seen as *Naangmen's* representatives and, seemingly independently, use their delegated powers and authority to "provide, deprive, or deny the necessities of life such as rain, fertility, blessings, protection, and health" (Bagah, 1995, p. 118). Regular sacrificial rites are performed to *Gyin sonne* to pacify and appease them for the well-being of individuals and the community (Kuukure, 1985, pp. 60-73; Bagah, 1995, p. 119). These *Gyin sonne* are elevated to the position of *Ngmeme* (deities) (Bagah, 1995, p. 121). The objective is to maintain a healthy relationship between the human and natural world despite the inevitable destruction of natural resources (Bagah, 1995, p. 122).

Ngmeme (Deities). A *Ngmene* (deity, singl.) may be represented by images, icons, or an altar that are considered as receptacles and a means of contact through various offerings and sacrifices (Bagah, 1995, p. 131). They can be regarded in the same manner in which a Christian or Muslim regard the church or mosque as the "House of God" (p. 131).

Tengbane (Earth God). The *Tengbane* has the most wide-reaching powers after *Naangmen*. Everything on or in the land, such as people, crops, and animals, and even lost objects made of iron, are under the *Tengbane's* power (Kuukure, 1985, p. 63). The Dagaaba believe that man himself comes from the *Tenge* (Earth Deity) and must be put back into it after his death (p. 63). This is why those who break the taboos of the *Tengbane* are rejected from having a proper burial. These taboos include interpersonal aggression (bloodshed and jealousy), self-destruction (suicide and witchcraft), acts of deprivation (theft and disrespect), sexuality (sex outside the house), and depletion of the community (sale of members) (Bagah, 1995, p. 132; Kuukure, 1985, p. 63). Violating any of these taboos can generate certain ailments, such as snake bites, headache, dysentery, dropsy, ailments of the stomach, and accidents in pregnancy (Bagah, 1995, p. 132). The *Tendaana* has the important role in processing the sacrifices needed to neutralize the *Tengbane's* punishments (Bagah, 1995, p. 66). The observance of the same taboos binds each autonomous community together by way of moral code (Dankwa, 2018, p. 47).

Sangmen (Rain God). *Saa* (rain) is essential in agricultural communities. Both *Sangmen* and Tengbane are associated with the fecundity of people, animals, and the land (Kuukure, 1985, p. 62). *Sangmen* is associated with *sazu* (sky), and *Sazungmen*, and by association, *Sangmen,* appear to be more powerful than *Tengbane* as they provide nourishment (water) for the *Tenge* (Bagah, 1995, p. 133). Water accidents, accidents of lightning, boils, rashes, guinea worm, and river blindness are all believed to be related to *Saangmen* (Bagah, 1995, pp. 133-134).

Kontombili. There are many translations for the meaning of *kontombili* (singl. *kontombile*), including “fairies”, “dwarves”, or, as Goody translates, “beings of the wild” (Bagah, 1995, p. 135). Kontombili are described as being about two feet tall, with pointed ears and “with genitals so long they have to roll around their necks, and hair so long it touches the ground” (Somé, 1997,

p. 69). These spirit beings play a unique role in the creation myth, known as the *Bagr* myth, and between the spirit and human world. As stated by Kuukure (1985), "[t]he wild bushes are their domain just as the cultivated areas are man's domain. The wild animals are their flock . . . their crops the wild fruits" (p.71). They are the central figures in most Manlarla myths, especially the myths of creation and the origin of death (Bagah, 1995, p. 136). They are considered the originators of man's culture, as the myths state that the *kontombili* first showed man the medicinal properties of many plants, how to cultivate the land, cook food, make iron, shoot with bow and arrow, brew *pito* (beer), play the *gyil* (xylophone), and methods of procreation (Kuukure, 1985, pp. 71-72; Bagah, 1995, p. 136). Diviners (*bugbugra*) often consult with them when divining. Although *kontombile* are known to use their superior knowledge and power to exploit humans, they can also be used by humans for material gain (Kuukure, 1985, p. 72). However, the person must then become a devotee of that *kontombile*, which comes with its own associated taboos, sanctions, and necessary rituals (p. 72). They are also associated with *Bagngmen* (God of the Initiates) (p. 70).

Bagngmen (God of the Initiates). *Bagre* is a religious association with two branches. Among the Manlarla, a subgroup of the southern Dagaaba, the associations are known as *Bangkaang* (Clean Bagre) and *Bangdegre* (Dirty Bagre); these correspond to the *Bagr pla* (white Bagr) and *Bagr sɛbla* (black Bagr) as they are known in other parts of Dagao (Bagah, 1995, p. 137; Tengan, 2006, p. 44). Only those "chosen" may be admitted into the *Bagre* association. This can be found out through consultation with a diviner if revealed to the individual in dreams. One may also be possessed by *kontombile,* who act as agents of *Bagngmen*. Most often the reasons people are called into *Bagre* association are medical, "to ward off trouble" (Kuukure, 1985, p. 70).

The Social World

Philosophy of Life: "N'taan be mang be" ("We are, therefore I am"). The Dagaaba believe that balance is essential to ensure human life. A failure to maintain balance invites supernatural wrath to restore the upset balance or requires reconciliations, prayers, sacrifices, and offerings. Balance is obtained through the maintenance of a complex web of relationships with themselves, nature, and the spirits. A disturbance in a relationship must be reconciled as quickly as possible, and as a result much of their lifetimes are spent maintaining healthy relations and reconciling broken relationships (Bagah, 1995, p. 110). Overall, the motivation for both individual and group actions is the maximization of the collective good (p. 190).

According to Bagah (1995):

> Within the philosophical framework of N'taan be, Manlarla healing process can best be understood within three dimensions of life. First, life is holistic, that is, the spiritual, natural and social worlds are viewed as integral parts of one cosmic whole and thus balance is essential within each and between them for proper functioning of all constituents at all levels. Second, life is a web of interconnecting relationships that may change in form but not in content at different points of human transition and, therefore, deviations by individuals or family groups are regarded extraordinarily unhealthy for proper functioning of the system. Third, life is "self" identification within community, that is, to answer the question "who am I?", a Manlarlo will say "we are, therefore, I am" and not "I think, therefore I am", so common with self-identification in the West (p.167).

Music-Making Among the Dagaaba

As stated by Dankwa (2018):

> Musical performance among the Dagaaba is not rigidly defined as an activity that occurs only in specific places, bounded by time and a set of norms that distinguishes it from the mundane. Rather, it is thought of as a part of everyday life. Gyil playing in the farms by individuals who want to flex their tired muscles, lullabies sung by mothers to put their babies to sleep, or the playing of the wulee flute by cowherds while tending cattle in the fields are all recognized as forms of performance (pp. 64-65).

Among the Dagaaba, music is largely a participatory activity. The sharp separation between performers and audience as found in western music does not exist in their musical tradition; rather than performing "to" an audience, the Dagaaba perform "with" the audience (Hien, 2019, p. 77). The success of any musical social occasion is determined by how deeply the audience gets involved with the music (Dankwa, 2018, p. 66). This is demonstrated through additions to the sonic atmosphere by singing, dancing, hand-clapping, ululations, and so on, which are always expected (Dankwa, 2018, p. 66; Hien, 2019, p. 77).

There is a distinct divide between "light" and "serious" music; "serious" music, such as funeral music, occurs in a context where there is a network of interactions between humans and the supernatural (Dankwa, 2018, p. 65). In Dagaaba society, all musical instruments "cry" or "weep" apart from the human voice that sings (Hien, 2019, p. 69).

Gyil (Xylophone)

Origin and Spiritual Significance. A commonly held myth of the origin of the xylophone among the Dagaaba attributes both its construction and repertoire to the *kontombili* (Woma,

2013, p. 39; Dankwa, 2018, p. 76-77; Hien, 2019, p. 74). One account of the myth, as written by Woma (2013) (cf. Vercelli, 2006) goes as follows:

> According to the legend, a Dagara hunter (*nabagle*) was on a hunting expedition when he heard the *kontombili* playing the gyil. Drawn to the beautiful sound of the gyil, the hunter consulted the *kontombile* (singular) to learn the art of making the instrument and all the knowledge associated with the performance techniques of the gyil. Hesitant about the hunter's request, the kontombile taught the hunter how the gyil was made as well as all the mysteries and taboos associated with the instrument . . . After learning the art and knowledge of making and playing the gyil, the hunter with the help of his fellow hunters, used their magical powers to kill the kontombile and took the gyil to their people, claiming that God gave it to them as the musical instrument of the Dagara people. Up till this day, the kontombili are still attracted to the sound of the gyil, but also harbor animosity toward humans (p. 39).

There are various versions of this myth among the Dagaaba, but the core component is that the xylophone originated from *Naangmen* and was passed down in some way to humans via the *kontombili*. The *gyil* is, from its origin, an instrument tied to the supernatural. Therefore, the fact that there are taboos and rituals associated with it is only natural. Recalling the notion of balance and the presence of *gyinne*, the building of a *gyil* requires the destruction of life (the rosewood tree), so it is necessary for the makers to take precautionary measures (Dankwa, 2018, p. 92-95). Also, as the *gyil* is made of a living entity with both *enga* and *sie*, the notion of the *gyil* keys being "alive" is all too logical.

Structure. The *gyil* is a pentatonic instrument made of fourteen (*lo gyil*) (see Figure 4) or eighteen *(daga gyil*) (see Figure 5) carved wooden boards (the keys) of rosewood (*liga*) (Dankwa, 2018, p. 61; Kuutiero, 2006, p. 108). Originally, *gyile* were made with brown

rosewood because of its high ability to repel moisture, which results in a more sustained and better tone when played; however, due to scarcity, *gyile* are now usually made with red rosewood (Dankwa, 2018, p. 85). The keys are of varying widths and lengths arranged horizontally in length order and tied together with hide or twine onto a wooden framework. Underneath the keys are hollow hard-shelled gourds (*kuor*); holes are drilled in these gourds and covered with spider's egg membrane (*paapir*) and act as resonators for the sound, creating a buzzing effect (Dankwa, 2018, p. 86; Kuutiero, 2006, p. 108). This buzzing effect is believed to invoke the spirits of the *kontombili* (Woma, 2013, p. 40). The gourds are attached in corresponding size order with the keys (the largest gourd under the longest key, etc.). Notes are struck on the keys with two *gyilbie* (rubber-tipped mallets) (Kuutiero, 2006, p. 108). The (*daga*) *gyil* is approximately 1.4 meters long with the height at the lowest point at about 30 centimeters and at the highest 61 centimeters (p. 108). It is believed that *kontombili* are drawn to the sound of a newly made xylophone, so the new instrument must be purified to cleanse both the bad spirits in the wood and the *kontombili* as they tend to hover around a newly made *gyil* (Dankwa, 2018, p. 82; Woma, 2013, p. 39).

Figure 4. The lo-gyil (Eckardt, 2011)

Figure 5. Alex Woma performing on a daga-gyil at the Kukur Bagr Festival, 2018 (Aubeuf, 2021).

The Gyil Musician. Both nature and nurture are factors in the creation of the *gyil* musician. An infant born with clinched fists with the thumbs placed between the index and the middle fingers is believed to be destined to be a master *gyil* player; this hand position is the same as the way the *gyil* musician holds the mallets used to beat the *gyil* (Hien, 2019, p. 74; Woma, 2013, p. 45). However, enculturation is still needed for the "natural" talent to reach its full potential. There is no formal training system; as in many cultures, the traditional method of learning is through observation and imitation (Hien, 2019, p. 93). This requires thorough exposure to the instrument, its repertoires, and the appropriate socio-cultural contexts in which the *gɔribe* (xylophonists) and their techniques can be observed (Dankwa, 2018, p. 99). Starting from a young age, children may begin to play on the *kpankpol* or *kponkolo*, an earth pit xylophone (Hien, 2019, p. 109). Multiple *gɔribe* interviewed for this research mentioned the importance of this style of xylophone in the beginner's learning process.

Gɔbaa (Master Xylophonist). *Gɔbaa* is a title given to a musician who possesses profound socio-cultural knowledge on the xylophone and a high level of technical mastery and dexterity on the instrument (Dankwa, 2018, p. 102). Most attain this status reach it in their late forties, but there are some prodigies who attain this status at a much younger age. Interviewee IL had his talent recognized early and even as a child was playing alongside his grandfather at funerals. Another exception was the late Bernard Woma, who became known internationally for his promotion of the *gyil*.

Repertoires.

***Bagre*[4].** The *gyil* is also used during initiation into the Bagre association. According to the Bagr myth, initiation began "at the behest" of the *kontombili* (Kuukure, 1985, p. 96). There are many and various reasons for joining the association, a majority being medical:

> . . . [T]o ward off mystical trouble, to protect oneself against the misfortunes of life, like scorpion stings and suicide (WB 7-10 and passim), to gain important and useful knowledge (BB 5278) of the realities of life and death, and of God (p. 96).

Another reason is being diagnosed by a diviner or being possessed by the *Bag-ngmin*, one of many *ngmeme* that can possess a person and oblige them to make a shrine to it (p. 70). The *gyil* is played at the graduation of the initiates.

Church. The *gyil* was introduced to Catholic Mass after Vatican II's allowance of "inculturation", which encouraged the adaptation of indigenous practices in Catholic

[4] For a detailed explanation, read Goody's (1972) *The Myth of the Bagre*. A summary of this is found in Kuukure (1985).

congregations (Dankwa, 2018, p. 116). Currently, the *gyil* and *kuor* drum are used to celebrate Good Friday in the form of a traditional Dagaaba funeral (see Appendix).

Recreational Use. Other than funerals, the Manlarla do not use the *gyil* recreationally, with the exception of the Ekoula from Nanville and Kaleo, who use the *gyil* when dancing *kpegruu,* and the Emoula, who use it to dance *bɛndaari* (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 3) (see Appendix). Whereas the Manlarla use only the *gangari* drum to accompany *bawaa*, from Nandowli northwards the *gyil* is used. Other than *bawaa*, *bine*, the style of dance performed at funerals, is also performed accompanied by the *gyil* at various festivals such as the Kakube Festival of Nandom and Kobine Festival of Lawra (see Appendix).

Gyil Kɔkɔrɛ (The Voice of the Xylophone). According to Hien (2019), another myth of the origin of the *gyil* states suggests that the instrument was originally tuned to the human voice:

> According to the first legend, there were two friends: one was gravely sick and the other came to sympathise with him. Seated by his sick friend's side, he regretted his imminent death in these terms: "When you die, whom will I chat with?" His sick friend asked him to bring some carved woods from *liga* (a type of tree). And while the agonizing friend was revealing his last wills, the other friend was carving the woods to imitate the pitches of his voice. And when he definitely died, the living friend was playing the *gyil* reproducing his departed friend's voice (pp. 164-165).

"*Maa benu iere'i. Gyilbir nokyoloo Ole nu iere.*" ("It is not I speaking. It is the pointed mouth of *Gyilbir.* He is speaking.") (Dankwa, 2018, p. 181). The Dagaaba attribute to the *gyil* a voice in the likeness of a human being (Hien, 2019, p. 164). Xylophone language is grounded in the spoken language (Kuutiero, 2006, p. 110). As Dagaare is a tonal language, the keys of the

instrument are tuned to correspond to the possible tonal sounds in the language. Xylophonists will attribute the message relayed in their playing to the xylophone itself.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE DAGAABA FUNERAL

Death and Dying Among the Dagaaba

Death is seen as a social evil that disturbs the equilibrium of the community (Gbal, 2013, p. 16). Indeed, death removes people not only physically, but socially from their community. As an ongoing and integrated system, the death of any member of a society is a threat to the society's existence and solidarity (Bagah, 1995, p. 193). The roles they once performed and the statuses they occupied are left vacant, disrupting the daily activities of those they relate to. One purpose of funeral rituals is to help everyone move into their new social roles, both the living and the dead, which counteracts the disruption and restores balance to society (p. 219).

The Dagaaba believe that the destiny of the *enga* (body) is to provide a livelihood, suffer pain, die, and be disposed of; meanwhile the destiny of the *sie* (spirit) is to "nourish the death-body, exit it in sleep and at death and continue life in a different domain" (p. 109).

Death is more than just the separation of body and soul. As explained by Kuukure (1985):

> Such a separation, as seen earlier, is the normal, daily experience of the living, not of the dead. The human constituents serve only as so many means and ways of expression and manifestation of the self, of the human personality. At death the breath (**vuuro**) is cut off (**mwaa na**), is finished (**baar a**), the shadow (**dasule**) disappears, the body (**yanggan**) decomposes. The self merely loses these modes of being, these manifestations of itself. They are reintegrated into the world while continuing to belong to the self in its new state. Death consists, therefore, in the suppression of the possibility of manifesting the self under these precise forms or levels in the land of the living (p. 111).

Hence, death is seen as a person leaving their "pilgrim" home and returning to their "real" home in the spirit world (p. 111). When someone dies among the Dagaaba, the person is said "to have departed" ("*O kyen a*"), "to have gone home" ("*O kuli ye*") (p. 11).

Causes of Death

Every human death is thought to have an external cause; "natural" causes do not provide sufficient explanation for the death of a human being (Kuukure, 1985, p. 110; Bagah, 1995, p. 187). There are three levels of causation present in each death: immediate, efficient, and ultimate. Depending on what is determined to be the cause of death, the death can be categorized as "good" (*song*) or "bad" (*faa*), each distinction modifying the way in which the funeral will be conducted (Kuukure, p. 113).

Immediate Cause. The immediate cause of death is the method through which the deceased was killed. This is always an element of the natural world, such as disease, poison, lightning, etc. (p. 110).

Efficient Cause. The efficient cause is an agent of the human world. The Dagaaba believe that there is always an agent of the human world behind the killing of the deceased (e.g., curses, sorcerers, witches, etc.) (Bagah, 1995, p. 187).

Ultimate Cause. The ultimate cause is an agent from the spirit world, for example, the ancestors, a ghost, a *Ngmeme*, a *kontombile*, or a personal tutelary. Above all, *Naangmen* ultimately allows the death to occur (p. 187).

Good and Bad Death

Kuu song (Normal/Good death). The Dagaaba believe that the destiny of the elderly, those with grandchildren, is to die (Bagah, 1995, p. 186). This is because they are considered to have "established their houses" and won an honorable place in society (Kuukure, 1985, p. 110). These deaths are considered to result from the person having finished their life cycle on earth. At the funeral of an elderly person, it is not uncommon to hear, "*O ba saang kuu*" (He/She has not spoiled/wasted death) or "*O kuu meng ta*" (It is time for him/her to die) (Bagah, 1995, p. 186).

Kuu faa (Abnormal/Evil death). Any death seen as a punishment from the ancestors is seen as *kuu faa*. This includes death through lighting strike, suicide, those declared as "witches", the death of a neophyte during *Bagre* initiation, the death of someone who has committed fratricide, death as a result of theft, and death connected to certain diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis, and dropsy (Gbal, 2013, p. 19; Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 80). People who die this type of death are treated and buried differently, and in some cases rituals must be performed before and/or after burial to prevent the punishment from affecting other relatives (p. 19).

Structure of Funeral Rites

In every culture, rites of death are performed to "maximize individual health and community wellness by minimizing disruptive and disintegrating factors caused by death" (Bagah, 1995, p. 183). Indeed, death affects both the psychological and social realities of the living. Psychologically, the loss of someone disrupts the psychological proximity associated with the deceased as death nullifies the possibility of being reunited physically (Field et al., 2005, p. 279). Socially, the death of someone in the community can lead to the taking up of new identities and abandonment of old identities that no longer have meaning (Bagah, 1995, p. 196). In any case,

the disruption caused by death requires adjustment in order for the world to return to its normal state.

Ceremonies and rituals are used to confront death through concrete acts which enable the bereaved to accept and integrate the death as a transition from the social realm to the spirit realm (Bagah, 1995, p. 183). Nwoye (2022) proposes five stages in the facilitation of mourning in African communities by the targeting of different aspects of memory. This chapter will follow the structure of a typical Dagaaba funeral while applying this theory of community griefwork.

Immediately After Death

Any death is first reported to the *yidaandɔɔ* (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 83). If the deceased is an adult or adolescent, the cause of death must first be found out through divination (Kuukure, 1985, p. 113). As soon as the person is determined to have died a "good" death, the elders of their lineage consult a diviner to seek permission from the ancestors for the funeral to go forward. The diviner contacts the spirit world and negotiates with the ancestors on behalf of the lineage concerned (Bagah, 1995, p. 202). If permission is granted, the elders come together to "*lɔɔ tampɛloŋ*" (throw ashes), asking the ancestors and spirits to "make the hot thing cool" (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 81). An offering of a red cock (for a deceased male) or red hen (for a deceased female) is made to the ancestors with the request of a fitting funeral and preparing the deceased for the journey to the spirit world (Bagah, 1995, p. 202). At this point, the elders inform the head of the undertakers, or sextons, to begin preparing the corpse and *paala* (catafalque) on which it will be displayed (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 83).

Stage One: Breaking of Bad News and Solidarity Crying with the Bereaved. There is always a judicious effort made to break the bad news of the death to the bereaved at the

appropriate time and in the appropriate setting (Nwoye, 2022, p. 436). Among the Dagaaba, inappropriate locations include the marketplace; if the person to be informed is there, they must be called out of the market first. For close relatives being informed from a distance, the most appropriate times are, as Nwoye (2022) states, liminal periods of the day, such as the early morning or late evening (p. 436). This allows them the space to assimilate stressful information and have neighbours, friends, and family available for support.

For those in the village, the immediate family are usually nearby when the deceased passes; the elders are then informed and act as witnesses to confirm the death. The news of the death is made public with loud wailing and lamentations from the family. Those nearby rush over to the house, and, once informed of the death, they also begin to cry in solidarity with the bereaved. This solidarity crying shows empathic availability and validates the bereaved's distressed reaction (p. 436). The care and physical presence of community members during this time makes the news of the death, which at this stage may not feel real, more concrete in their mind, solidifying their fact memory. Behavioural memory is addressed by this reaction, as their actions match the bereaved's expectations of support as experienced in the culture. The presence and support of others also activates multiple attachment mechanisms involved with social cohesion (Marshall, 2002, p. 362).

Kuori Wuobo/Wuofo

The public funeral rites officially begin with the cry of the chief mourner, a male relative, "*N saa woi!*" (Alas my father!) or "*N maa woi!*" (Alas my mother!) depending on if the deceased is from their patriline or matriline. For example, if the deceased is from the bereaved's mother's family, they will shout "*N maa woi*!" even if the deceased is a male relative. This is not a direct appeal to the crier's father or mother, but rather an appeal to the men and women of the lineage

who have become ancestors (Dankwa, 2018, p. 240). This is closely followed by the crying of women and children (Kuukure, 1985, p. 114). Relatives of the deceased cry out in the same way, as a cry of frustration and asking the ancestors "why they have visited [the surviving kin] with death" (Gbal, 2013, p. 30). Mourners and sympathizers reply to these wails with repeated short gasps and shouts of "*Woi*!", "*Ah!*", or "*Eh!*" (Dankwa, 2018, p. 156). The wails are accompanied by the playing of the *tuumpani* (royal talking drums) and the firing of muskets (*malifare*) (Bagah, 1995, p. 206).

Tumpaani (Royal Talking Drums). The *tumpaani*, which can be heard from a distance of fifteen to twenty kilometers, are used to announce the death to surrounding villages. The drummer plays a dirge (*kuu tumpaabie*) that informs on the sex of the deceased. The *tuumpani* are kept on the funeral ground and sounded periodically until the corpse is buried (Yemeh, 2002, p. 17). In other areas of Dagao, the *lo-gyil,* a smaller xylophone that has 14 keys, is used to announce the funeral. These dirges are called *lobri* and come in two forms; *deblu* are played when a man dies and *pɔglu* are reserved for women (Dankwa, 2018, p. 123).

Wuobo Gyilbie/Lobri. The *wuobo gyilbie,* or *lobri*, are death announcements played on the *lo-gyil*. Some examples for a man's funeral are as follows:

Kong-wong-yele tammo *La laare baa.*	Kong-wong-yele's bow Is brushed aside.
Kong-wong-yele tammo *La tilli tulimo.*	Kong-wong-yele's bow Is placed upside down
Kong-wong-yele yiri *La leɛ dabuo* (Yabang, 1981, p. 1)	Kong-wong-yele's house Has been abandoned

Examples for a woman's funeral are as follows:

Saa-dabie mɔna, *A mɔng ka workporo* *Pɔge saadog mɔna/ Mɔda-bie mɔna* *Mɔng ka doge wɛle/ A mɔng ka vorkporo.* *Kɔɔ tong neɛ pɔge,* *Neɛ pɔge kong gaa* *K'o sagɛɛ meng,* *Kyɛ pɔge soba kong sage* (Yabang, 1981, p. 16)	The best cook has made a mistake today, And the meal is watery (Dankwa, 2018, p. 193) A woman's soup pot/ Stirs and the pot splits in two If you send someone's wife Someone's wife will not go Even if she will go, The parent of the wife will not agree

Dressing and Displaying of the Corpse

The corpse is ritually bathed by old women and dressed in beautiful clothing meant to honor the dead. Funeral clothing is placed *wirimba* (inside out) and the pockets cut off. This is to prevent the deceased from hiding anything, especially the souls of living relatives, to take with them on their journey to the afterlife (Bagah, 1995, p. 207-208). The undertakers are invited and shown the corpse and the attire to be used in decorating the body and catafalque. The decorations directly represent the deceased's earthly attainments; for example, a hunter's catafalque would be decorated with quivers of arrows, dry animal skins, and the skulls of beasts (p. 207). Some common items found at the catafalque include money thrown by sympathizers, crops, animals, calabashes, pots, and sticks (p. 207). The undertakers quickly assemble the catafalque and place the deceased on it.

Paala (Catafalque). The *paala* is a catafalque where the deceased is displayed for public viewing and mourning (Doggu, 2015, p. 87; Naaeke, 2010, p. 61) (see Figures 6 and 7). The *paala* is covered on the top by a straw mat and pieces of traditional cloth are used to cover the mat and provide shade for the body (Naaeke, 2010, p. 61-62). It is made in the form of an

armchair and used to be raised from the ground so it could be seen from afar; in the present, many catafalques are no longer raised. Two older women stay with the deceased and use leaves to fan the body and chase flies away (Somé, 1993, p. 101). The space created by the *paala* acts as a transitional abode for the deceased (Doggu, 2015, p. 97). The direction of the *paala* indicates whether the deceased is male or female; men are sat facing east (*Samuni*) and women facing west (*Manuori*)[5]. The Dagaaba believe that when the corpse is seated on the *paala* it can transmit information to the ancestral world and therefore speak to the deceased directly (Dankwa, 2018, p. 148-149).

Figure 6. Naa Chiir Konkuu Der on the catafalque, 1999 (Nandom Video Diary, 2016)

[5] This is to do with the well-defined gender roles in relation to the rising and setting of the sun. Men face *Samuni* so the rising sun informs him to prepare for the hunt or the farm. Women face *Manuori* to keep track of time to know when to prepare food for her husband and children when they return from the farm at sunset (Bagah, 1995, p. 211).

Figure 7. Closer view of Naa Chiir Konkuu Der on the catafalque, 1999 (Nandom Video Diary, 2016).

Undertakers. "*No wegu soba ba mogra O tuora*" ("A person with a long face cannot suck his own wound") (Goody, 1962, p. 67). Among the Dagaaba, the funeral preparations are not made by the immediate bereaved relatives. The bereaved are not expected to be in any state to deal with anything other than their grief. Rather, they have reciprocal burial groups, where one lineage will plan and execute the funeral for the other. This relieves the bereaved's prospective memory as they do not have to stress over the funeral arrangements; it also addresses their behavioural memory in that they are comforted that the community is looking out for them in the way they are enculturated.

Stage Two: Limited Reparenting and Systemic Practice. After crying in solidarity with the bereaved, the community moves to try and maintain balance in the bereaved's usual activities. People will volunteer to take over responsibilities such as tending to the needs of their children, preparing for guests, cleaning the compound, fetching water, and cooking (Nwoye, 2022, p.

437). According to Nwoye (2022), in traditional African culture it is believed that a person in the state of bereavement is "usually weak, confused, destabilized, unfocused and incapable of attending to day-to-day responsibilities" (p. 437). These supportive behaviours allow the bereaved the space to focus on mourning their lost loved one and to rest, as this is important to promote healing and resilience.

Greeting the Funeral

Funerals and their attendance take priority over all other activities. Common Manlarla expressions such as "*Ba ba zogre kuore*" (One does not refuse to attend a funeral) exemplify this mindset. This does not mean that every funeral in one's community must be attended. For example, one may fail or refuse to attend a particular funeral because of ill health or a perceived "wrong"; attending the funeral of someone who has wronged you and has not atoned invites divine retribution (Bagah, 1995, p. 201). In any other situation, one is expected to attend a funeral in their community, however briefly, to share their condolences with the bereaved (Somé, 1993, p. 102). Emphasis is placed on physically viewing the deceased as even the funerals of those who one may know by sight but not by name should be attended (Doggu. 2015, p. 90). Visiting the *paala* acts as a kind of "check-in" ceremony. If it is noticed that you did not attend the funeral, when inevitably a death occurs in your family, the relatives of the deceased from the unattended funeral will hesitate to come to yours, disrupting the cycle of mutual attendance and support (Somé, 1993, p. 103).

Men and women arrive and greet the funeral separately. As newcomers arrive on the funeral ground, they move into a cleared space and utter their cries, which are identical to those of the chief mourner and again depend on their relation to the deceased. The groups divide themselves by their relation to the deceased identified through the typical crying shout. Unrelated

sympathizers cry out "*Woi!*" or "*Gandaa woi!*" (Alas! Great man!) as they approach the *paala* (Doggu, 2015, p. 93; Gbal, 2013, p. 30). They then pause in from of the *paala* and look closely at the deceased's face for a few moments before turning around and walking back to their original spot. They do this three times for a deceased male and four times for a deceased female (Gbal, 2013, p. 27). After this, the men disperse and join the male chorus around the *gyile* (xylophones) for the dirge performance or form another group and begin chanting themselves (Doggu, 2015, p. 90; Hien, 2019, p. 146). Women gather around the *paala* where women's dirges are being performed.

Behaviour of the Bereaved

Although men have a ritualized way of greeting the funeral, those most impacted by the death are not restricted by this formality. The close bereaved *kpiin noba*[6] (death-people), men and women, are expected to unleash their emotional distress (Bagah, 1995, p. 26; Somé, 1993, p. 105). This may include running, jumping about, throwing themselves on the ground, or other potentially self-harming acts (Dankwa, 2018, p. 256; Doggu, 2015, p. 97; Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 84). This is why soon after a death, people Somé (1993) refers to as "containers" are assigned to every close relation of the deceased (p. 105). The *kpiin noba* are labelled with cords of fiber of long stripes of hide around the waist, wrist, or ankle so they are easily recognizable to those who have come from afar and may know the deceased but not his relations (Gbal, 2013, p. 29; Kuukure, 1985, p. 114-115; Somé, 2003, p. 106) (see Figure 8). These containers follow the bereaved discreetly to "ensure that the mourner knows well how to distinguish between a grief that helps the dead soul to go home and a grief that kills" (Somé, 1993, p. 106). They are also identified through body marks made with ashes or kaolin clay, although this practice is

[6] Also known as *kotuodeme/kutuosob* (Dankwa, 2018; Doggu, 2015)

disappearing (Bagah, 1995, p. 213; Dankwa, 2018, p. 151; Gbal, 2013, p. 29). The chief mourner and lineage members move to and fro, throw their arms about and engage in other physical and emotional gestures of grief while being closely followed by the containers (Dankwa, 2018, p. 156). As people express their grief, others will join them giving both physical and emotional support to the person grieving. Their role is also to control the bereaved's grief as the Dagaaba believe that grieving past the human limit will lead to your death: "The more one grieves, the more one gives to the dead and the more one moves closer to being with the dead" (Somé, 1993, p. 105). The expression of grief is gender specific; men echo the grief of other men and women echo the grief of other women (p. 107). As all of this is occurring, the funeral dirge performance is ongoing. This is a continuation of Stage 1 of Nwoye's (2022) theory of African grief work.

Figure 8. A picture of bereaved family members who are labelled (Gbal, 2013, p. 30).

Funeral Dirge Performance

Among the Dagaaba, funeral rituals such as the funeral dirge are believed to help the bereaved navigate the permanent physical separation from a loved one and assist in their adjustment to

their new life situation (Bagah, 1995, p. 216). The dirge performance is the main event of any Dagaaba funeral celebration (Saanchi, 1992, p. 33). The dirge's role specifically is to assist in the proper completion of the grieving process, which occurs through its content, sound, and performance, and participation of the community. The importance of dirge performance is reiterated in most texts detailing Dagaaba funeral rituals. The Dagara people believe that one experience that all humans share is grief, and it takes the right kind of music and poetic dirges to "set grief ablaze at funeral ceremonies" (Somé, 1994, p. 61). Direct members of the extended family participate in the performance of dirges as both chanters and xylophonists.[7] Dirge performance includes many elements which will be discussed in detail in the upcoming chapter. Saanchi (1992) outlines the many participants involved in funeral dirge performance.

Dirge Chanters (Kongkonibo). *Kongkono* (pl. *kongkonibo*) literally translates to 'cry crier', 'one who cries' (Saanchi, 1992, p. 43). They are improvisers whose function at the funeral is to recreate and reproduce knowledge of people's genealogy and publicly express praise or criticisms to the deceased and his/her family. The content of their songs is a repository of family histories, praise names, and elaborations on family and individual qualities (Dankwa, 2018, p. 65). As with the xylophone, becoming a *kongkono* requires a long process of enculturation to gain the skills, knowledge, and competence needed to perform at funerals, along with an innate musical aptitude (p. 66).

The content of dirges is vast as the chanting of dirges goes on for several hours at minimum. Included is praise and elevation of the deceased's ancestors, lamenting the loss of deceased by praising and extolling their goodness, while also taking care to point out that their worthiness is

[7] Direct members of the extended family include the paternal relatives, maternal relatives, and in-laws of the deceased.

not an isolated case; they belong to an equally worthy family, with the ancestors, though invisible, participating and hearing the praise (Saanchi, 1992, pp. 58-61). There is praise of deceased's relatives as well to imply that the deceased not only belong to a worthy lineage, but his current relatives are also praise-worthy. However, critique of the deceased's relatives can also occur, bringing any wrongdoings to light for them to change their ways. In praising the deceased, the dirgers draw attention to the magnitude of the loss, revving up the intensity of mourning. Funeral dirges act as a form of public discourse through which oral history and traditional beliefs are communicated to the participants and the community (Woma, 2012, p. 34). Overall, the dirger also functions as a social critic of relatives, community, and even ancestors. Of course, they make sure to empathise with the bereaved as well (Saanchi, 1992, p. 76).

Male Chorus. The male chorus surrounds the dirge performance ensemble. When the dirge chanter makes an especially profound or wrenching statement, they hum in agreement.

Kpiime. The deceased and the ancestors are listed as participants in the dirge performance. The performance is not only of importance to the living, but also necessary for the well-being of the deceased as well. The dirge performance acts as a listing of credentials presented to the ancestors to allow the deceased to journey to *Dapare* (land of the ancestors). The commendation of the living is important to the ancestors to prove that the deceased is worthy based on their conduct in the physical realm; this is why at times the ancestors are addressed directly in the dirges (Saanchi, 1992, p. 33).

Others. The deceased, chief mourners, bereaved family, "containers", and general mourners and sympathisers are all also participants in the funeral dirge performance (Saanchi, 1992, pp. 41-42). The impact of the funeral ensemble, particularly what is being chanted, strikes a chord not only with the bereaved, but with other sympathisers who may also need catharsis. This

situation's emotional contagion allows everyone in the community to grieve, not just for the recently deceased, but for their own losses as well. The intense atmosphere of this ritual creates a positive feedback loop of intensifying grief within which the community can experience a general catharsis.

Stage Three: Positive Cognition Adaptation. Contrary to Nwoye's (2022) description of this stage, many dirges are performed to incite grieving, not challenge the negative emotions of the bereaved. Some also allow the bereaved to consider their situation in light of describing other, worse situations that could have been faced. However, there are also dirges that are performed to soothe and comfort the bereaved and others to incite grief through activating the prospective memory of how life will be difficult without the deceased.

> The xylophones play day and night, and the funeral goes on, its tone eventually changing from grief to resignation and finally to acceptance. This is the effect of the physical presence of many people, the comfort of friends and joking partners and the very performances of the series of established ceremonies, conducive to the painful re-adjustment to the loss of the dead man" (Kuukure, 1985, p. 116).

This will be explained in more detail in next chapter detailing dirge performance.

Burial

The performance of dirges lasts from one to three days. When burial "permission" is given by elders of the bereaved lineage, the ritual chief or someone else delegated by him goes before the xylophonists and says, "*A baare ye ye*" ("All is finished/ It is over") (Bagah. 1995, p. 209; Doggu, 2015, p. 103). This is a ritual expression understood that invites sympathizers to the xylophonists, thereby "deserting" the corpse and allowing the undertakers to prepare the body for

burial. The women surrounding the stand in lamentation move away. At this point, a burial rhythm is played three or four times depending on the sex of the deceased (Bagah, 1995, p. 209). The undertakers approach the stand, throw off all decorative materials and wrap the body in *wogye pila* (white thick burial costume); among the Manlarla white signals purity, blessing and holiness, so burying in this colour symbolizes acceptance of death by the survivors and blessings for the deceased while they are journeying to the place inhabited by purified (holy) spirits (p. 209).

By this time, the extreme grief manifestations that had calmed down are vigorously renewed as at the beginning of the funeral (Gbal, 2013, p. 33). The undertakers take the corpse and quickly dismantle the catafalque, gathering all the various decorations and gifts which are now considered dangerous to those uninitiated as undertakers. It is believed that a person becomes barren by walking over the remains of the catafalque (Bagah, 1995, p. 210). The close relatives of the deceased are held tightly by companions to prevent them from following the body to the grave or getting near the fast-disappearing catafalque (Bagah, 1995, p. 210; Gbal, 2013, p. 33). This is to prevent any soul loss arising out of shock and disbelief (Bagah, 1995, p. 210).

A grave may be dug anywhere as indicated by the family elder. For those of high status, the grave is either dug inside the compound house or the façade of it. Men are buried at dawn and women in the evening, again symbolising the gendered division of labour as earlier mentioned[8] (Goody, 1962, p. 144; Kuukure, 1985, p. 117). The presence of the grave being on ancestral family land and near the house is very important (Gbal, 2013, p. 89). For those who are buried

[8] Another reason for these times for burial is the belief that, as the soul is believed to be able to temporarily leave the body of the living, someone's soul could be relaxing in the grave and during the burial accidently get covered up, which could lead to the death of the person (Bagah, 1995).

away from home (e.g. those who die overseas or in another region and their body is not able to be transported to their village) a second burial occurs in which relics of the person, such as clothes, hair, fingernails, etc. are buried on ancestral family land. This also includes "taking the funeral home," so the traditional funeral rites such as the performance of dirges can occur despite the lack of a corpse, or the person already having been buried.

Rituals of Purification

Whitewashing (Yagu/Yaga). The rubbing of clay on the widow or widower of the deceased is meant to 'purify' them from 'dirt' resulting from the sexual intimacy they shared with the deceased (Gbal, 2013, p. 37). Before a man is buried, his widow(s) must undergo this ritual. The whitewash is made of a mix of clay and ashes from the dead man's garment, which ritually symbolizes his body (Bagah, 1995, p. 213). Refusal to participate in this rite means that either "her religious affiliation does not allow it, or she is implicated in her husband's death" (Bagah, 1995, p. 214). In the case of the latter, she will be purified after confession before they continue with the rite. The whitewashing ushers the widow(s) into a state of 'impurity' until the *komaale*, the final rites of separation that occur some months to a year after the burial (Bagah, 1995, p. 214). During this period the widow is not allowed to remarry or have sexual contact as the deceased husband, as a ghost, "continues actively to fulfill his earthly roles, in particular the control over the sexuality of his wives and over his yet undivided estate" (Kuukure, 1985, p. 120). It is only after this gradual separation and re-integration into society that the woman can have sexual contact with a man or get remarried (Gbal, 2013, p. 37).

Post-Burial Rituals

Kodeo. The kodeo is the first of the secondary rites on the seventh day after burial and is performed by the deceased's lineage (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 86). The kodeo enables relatives who for some reason could not attend the primary rites to personally share their condolences (Bagah, 1995, p. 217). Lineage members also try to find out "real" causes of death through a diviner, who ritually consults with the deceased (Bagah, 1995, p. 217). The family is informed of unfinished business of the deceased, such as settling debts, promises made by them to others or others to them, and so on (Bagah, 1995, p. 218; Gbal, 2013, p. 39). Family or community members may offer help by taking in some of the children or offering to pay for education and training (Nwoye, 2022, p. 442). Plans are then made for these things to be fulfilled. All outstanding matters that would plague the bereaved are dealt with at this point.

Komaale. The *komaale* is celebrated some months to a year after the funeral. Discontinuities in normal life caused by death must be restored and roles voluntarily abandoned must be redistributed to facilitate the continuity of life without the deceased (Bagah, 1995, p. 219). During this celebration of life, the deceased's spiritual ties with the living are broken, and other rituals are performed to allow the deceased to integrate into the spirit world. It is after the *komaale* that the deceased leaves the transitional zone they have existed in since their death and move on to the spirit world.

According to Kpiebaya (2016), the *komaale* is designed to:

i) Redistribute the rights and duties of the deceased, as well as to dispose of his material possessions, especially those things that were symbols of authority. It is

meant to sever the authority of the deceased over his/her surviving wife/wives and children.

ii) Lift the taboos imposed on the widow/widows, or widower of the deceased.

iii) Educate the children that their bread-winner is no more and therefore, they should not be too choosy about food.

iv) Confer "ancestor status" on the deceased. It gives the deceased the right to join the ancestors and be part of them, and to be honoured as an ancestor (pp. 87-88).

Stage Four: Rituals of Cleansing, Breaking of Bonds, and Leave-Taking. Widows and widowers who were whitewashed are given a ritual bath, publicly clearing them of having been complicit in their spouse's death. According to Nwoye (2022),

> The common therapeutic goal of these experiences . . . [is] to promote behavioural pattern breaking between the bereaved and the deceased and to inaugurate and consolidate the phenomenon of detached attachment in the relationship that now exists between the bereaved and the deceased . . . [T]he bereaved is now free to reestablish his or her life in the absence of the dead without experiencing feelings of guilt or disloyalty (p. 441).

The whitewashing ritual and other rituals of bond-breaking, such as the *kodeo* and *komaale*, mark the separation between the deceased and the bereaved; in their prospective memory the bereaved can now move forward with their life in spite of this loss, such as getting remarried, or taking up the deceased's abandoned social roles in the community. Their behavioural memory is also addressed here as they are assured that they have done everything culturally sanctioned to ensure that the deceased moves on in peace.

Ancestor Shrine. An image of the deceased is carved and placed in the family byre together with the carved figures of other ancestors, serving as shrines for ancestor veneration (Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 90). After the final ceremony a woman's carving is transferred to her natal home and placed near the shrines of her patrilineal forebearers, allowing her to be once again incorporated into her birth lineage (Kuukure, 1985, p. 66). Sacrifices and offerings of food and drink are placed beside it (Doggu, 2013, p. 141). Those who die childless or have committed fratricide are not entitled to an ancestor shrine (p. 66).

Stage Five: Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. The *kodeo* and *komaale* help in healing the prospective memory of the bereaved as all outstanding matters to do with the deceased are addressed and settled, removing the anxieties on how to face the future from the bereaved (Nwoye, 2022, p. 442). The bereaved are reassured that they will be able to continue living in spite of this loss, promoting positive cognition and healing.

Journey to Dapare (The Afterlife)

From the moment of death, the deceased is trapped in between the spirit and physical world until the funeral rites are properly performed.

Teŋkpiine

From the moment of death until they depart on their journey to the spirit world, the deceased person exists and manifests themselves as a *nenseɛ/nyaãaãkpeen* (ghost). This form is left behind when the due funeral rituals are performed. More specifically, *teŋkpiine* are spirits of the recently dead, who also exist in this transitional zone between the physical human, non-ancestral spirit zone, and ancestral spiritual realm (Bagah, 1995, p. 126). Because of their close relationship to the *kpiin noba* (the bereaved, close family), they visit their human family frequently and pay

close attention to and ensure the appropriate funeral rituals are carried out both correctly and in a timely manner. As they now exist in a spiritual realm, the *teŋkpiine* provide spiritual links between the spirit world and their relatives in the human world mediating between lesser deities (*ngmeme*), *Naangmen*, and humans (Bagah, 1995, p. 127; Kuukure, 1985, p. 123).

According to Kuukure (1985), "[a]t this stage the ghost is not only restless but even dangerous to the living, particularly his closest survivors—wives and progeny" (p. 120). As mentioned previously, it is believed that "some dead people "capture" women and children "in order to perpetuate their network of social relations in the next world" (Bagah, 1995, p. 208). Close relatives of the deceased are protected by the tying of twines to their ankles, right ankle for females and left ankle for males (Bagah, 1995, p. 208). It is believed that if their instructions, usually revealed through dreams or divination, are not followed, the living will be warned or punished through ***kpiin kyiir*** (death whip) This can manifest as illness or even death in the family believed to be caused the *teŋkpiine* to transform into a *kogii* (pl. *kpiinkogre*) (a vengeful ghost) (Bagah, 1995, p. 227).

Kpiinkogre. *Kpiinkogre* are angry troubled souls of the dead whose funerals have not been properly handled or died in such a way that the prerequisite funeral rites were not performed; they are stranded between the grave, spirit world, and human world (Bagah, 1995, p. 129; Kuukure, 1985, p. 120). As Somé (1993) writes, "[a] village in turmoil is a village that has some unfinished business with its dead" (p. 108).

Kpiime (Ancestor Spirits)

As mentioned above, it is essential that funeral rites be performed properly and in a timely manner for the sake not only the departed, but also their surviving relations. If the funeral rites

are not performed, the *teŋkpiine* cannot undertake their journey to Dapare (the land of the ancestors), where they then become *kpiime* (ancestor spirits).

It is through the funeral rites themselves that the deceased is transformed into an ancestor spirit. Not every person is destined to be an ancestor (Kuukure, 1985, p. 65). Some prerequisites include advanced age, parenthood, a proper death, and having been well-esteemed in the community (p. 66). "Not even death is credited with the power to transform the immaturity of a child into the necessary maturity of an ancestor" (Doggu, 2015, p. 82). The difference between those who become ancestors and those who do not is that ancestor spirits continue to enjoy the jurisdiction and rites they enjoyed in their lifetime, and they still have a vested interest in their family.

This is not to say that the deceased who do not become ancestors do not go to *Dapare*; they simply do not have the power attributed to the ancestors. Another important factor for being an ancestor is being remembered. Those who may have been ancestors in the past, once their names are forgotten, simply become part of the group of familial spirits. When making prayers, people may call upon the help of specific ancestors by name, but they can also appeal to the larger group of familial spirits by calling upon their *saakomine* (grandfathers) and *maakomine* (grandmothers).

Those who die "bad" deaths are unable to enter *Dapare*. They are doomed to stay in the transitional zone between the physical and spiritual realms. However, in some cases, if the family performs certain sacrifices to atone for whatever offenses the deceased committed against others or the gods, they can be permitted to enter *Dapare*.

Funeral Variations

Unweaned Infant

At this young age, the child is regarded as a *kontombili* that "has come to trouble the parents with this pretense of mortality" (Goody, 1962, p. 208). An unweaned infant with no younger siblings was traditionally buried in a mound grave to the side of crossroads leading to the mother's home. "In this way the "spirit" will be confused and miss the right road of return to reincarnate into the mother's womb" (Kuukure, 1985, p. 117). There is no public ceremony performed, and only immediate relatives are informed (Kuukure, 1985, p. 113).

Adolescent

At the death of an adolescent, only the *kuor* is used; it is believed that if they use the *gyile* at a funeral of an adolescent with no siblings, the mother will become barren (Doggu, 2015, p. 158-159).

Adult (with no children)

The funeral is intense but brief as they are still considered a child but someone who was cut down in their prime (Doggu, 2015, p. 78).

Homicide (Za-soba)[9]

In this context, a homicide (*za-soba*) is someone who has killed another human being (Goody, 1962, p. 62). Their body "becomes more dangerous in death" and is untouchable until a rite of

[9] For more information on homicides see Goody, 1962, pp. 62-63, 111-117.

mock homicide is performed, after which the corpse is sprinkled with a preparation of special herbs and water (Kuukure, 1985, p. 114).

Others

Other special cases include if the deceased is a *tendaana* or in that lineage, a custodian of a Rain shrine, or they were killed by lightning (Kuukure, 1985, p. 114).

Factors Leading to Changes in Dagaaba Funeral Celebrations

Introduction of Christianity and Islam

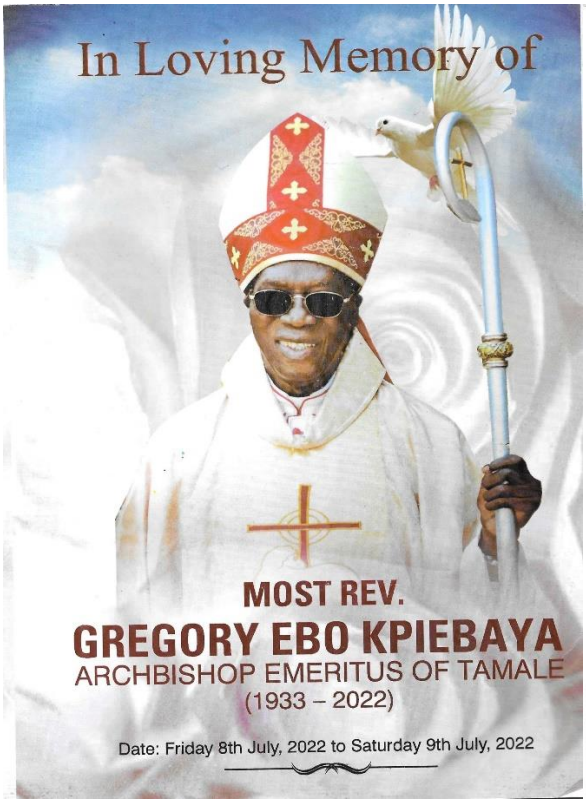
The performance of Dagaaba funeral rituals has received changes since the introduction and conversion of many Dagaaba to Christianity and Islam. The Wala, a majority Islamic subgroup of the Dagaaba who reside in the town of Wa, do not perform the traditional Dagaaba funeral, but rather perform the rites prescribed by Islam. However, Muslims from more rural areas will have both the Islamic rites performed and a traditional funeral.

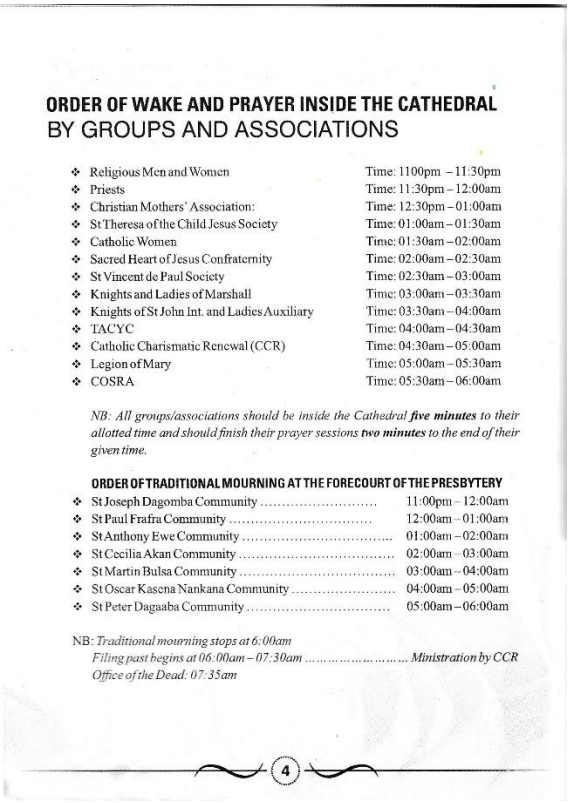
Among Catholics, a mass is requested, however the performance of dirges still occurs. Post-Vatican II the Catholic Church's encouragement of inculturation has led to the co-mingling of both traditional and Roman Catholic funeral rites[10]. Good Friday service, which celebrates the crucifixion of Jesus, is also performed as a combined mass and traditional funeral (see Appendix).

The funeral of Most Rev. Gregory Ebo Kpiebaya, Archbishop Emeritus of Tamale, organized by the Church, included seven hours of traditional mourning in which various ethnic groups, including the Dagaaba, were allowed time to traditionally mourn. His home village of Nanville

[10] For more on the indigenization of worship in the Catholic Church, please see Dankwa (2018), pp. 115-122.

also organized a separate traditional funeral, and on July 01, 2023, Archbishop Kpiebaya's *komaale* was held in Nanville and included mass service.





ORDER OF WAKE AND PRAYER INSIDE THE CATHEDRAL
BY GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS

❖ Religious Men and Women	Time: 1100pm – 11:30pm
❖ Priests	Time: 11:30pm – 12:00am
❖ Christian Mothers' Association:	Time: 12:30pm – 01:00am
❖ St Theresa of the Child Jesus Society	Time: 01:00am – 01:30am
❖ Catholic Women	Time: 01:30am – 02:00am
❖ Sacred Heart of Jesus Confraternity	Time: 02:00am – 02:30am
❖ St Vincent de Paul Society	Time: 02:30am – 03:00am
❖ Knights and Ladies of Marshall	Time: 03:00am – 03:30am
❖ Knights of St John Int. and Ladies Auxiliary	Time: 03:30am – 04:00am
❖ TACYC	Time: 04:00am – 04:30am
❖ Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR)	Time: 04:30am – 05:00am
❖ Legion of Mary	Time: 05:00am – 05:30am
❖ COSRA	Time: 05:30am – 06:00am

NB: All groups/associations should be inside the Cathedral ***five minutes*** *to their allotted time and should finish their prayer sessions* ***two minutes*** *to the end of their given time.*

ORDER OF TRADITIONAL MOURNING AT THE FORECOURT OF THE PRESBYTERY

❖ St Joseph Dagomba Community	11:00pm – 12:00am
❖ St Paul Frafra Community	12:00am – 01:00am
❖ St Anthony Ewe Community	01:00am – 02:00am
❖ St Cecilia Akan Community	02:00am – 03:00am
❖ St Martin Bulsa Community	03:00am – 04:00am
❖ St Oscar Kasena Nankana Community	04:00am – 05:00am
❖ St Peter Dagaaba Community	05:00am – 06:00am

NB: *Traditional mourning stops at 6:00am*
Filing past begins at 06:00am – 07:30am ..... Ministration by CCR
Office of the Dead: 07:35am

4

Figure 9. Cover of the liturgical programme for the funeral of Most Rev. Gregory Ebo Kpiebaya, Archbishop Emeritus of Tamale, a Dagao from Naville.

Figure 10. The order of traditional mourning for the Catholic Church funeral is shown on the bottom half of the page. Traditional mourning practices of not only the Dagaaba, but other ethnic groups, occurred.

As can be seen even in these few examples, the performance of dirges is the most essential aspect of Dagaaba funeral and remains even as other funeral rituals have fallen to the wayside[11].

[11] Some rituals such as the whitewashing of widow(er)s and the orphan's meal have almost completely disappeared among the Dagaaba, however the message and moral implications still have social meaning. For example, if it is known that a woman was having an affair and her husband dies, people will link his death to her infidelity. Likewise, if a man's wife dies, people may hint that he used her for "money rituals."

Conclusion

The Dagaaba funeral is a complex and multifaceted performance of grief that involves the community in the healing of the bereaved and the explicit management of grief, social roles, and attachment. This event follows Nwoye's (2022) five-stage theory of community participation in grief work in Africa. Memory aspects are shown to be attended to in each stage of the funeral process, facilitating healing. The most crucial event of the Dagaaba funeral is the performance of dirges. In the next chapter, Dagaaba funeral dirge performance will be examined in detail, looking at its structure, themes, performance, and how these aspects all contribute to grief processing.

CHAPTER FIVE: ASPECTS OF GYILBIE (XYLOPHONE DIRGES) AND KONGKOMBIE (SUNG DIRGES)

Introduction

The dirge performance is the most important part of the Dagaaba funeral, a continuous performance that lasts from the time the death is announced until just before burial, which can be between one to three days, or 24 to 72 hours. There are actually three dirge performances that occur at the same time. The *gyil* and men's chanted dirges occur simultaneously around the *gyile*, while the women's dirges, unaccompanied by music, occur around the *paala*. The focus of this research are *gyilbie* (*gyil* music texts), however they cannot be analysed before first considering the wider context in which their performance is occurring. In this chapter the concept of speech surrogacy in relation to the *gyil* is explained, the structure of both *gyil* and chanted dirges are explained, and the performance of *gyil* dirges is elaborated on.

Kongkombie (Chanted Dirges)

Structure of Performance

The performance of *kongkombie* requires two *kongkonibo* who Yemeh (2002) labels as the prop (*maal-eŋna*), singer (*kyeɛrɛ*) and a chorus (*dɛɛrba*) (p. 21). The singer elaborates on or repeats the initial phrase from the prop, with the chorus acting as "lamenting interjections" that vocalise their agreement with the impact of the statements (Saanchi, 1992, pp. 47-48). The structure of each verse of the dirge is as follows:

Prop (*Maal-eŋna*): (initial line)

Singer (*Kyeɛrɛ*): (additional line)

Chorus (*Dɛɛrba*): Hmm

Singer (*Kyeɛrɛ*): (repeats line or adds line)

Chorus (*Dɛɛrba*): Hmm-hmm-hmm

An example from Yemeh (2002) is as follows:

Maal-eŋna: E Mabiihi waeŋ *Kɔnsõõhẽ koŋ ta te ka te nyu be?* *Kyeɛrɛ: Ka Kɔnsõõhẽ koŋ ta te,* *Wuli te bao zie ka te te sigi!* *Dɛɛrba: Hõõ* *Kyeɛrɛ: N ma-bie! K'e kpɛɛ te naara,* *E na waana ka te kulee yee* *Dɛɛrba: Hõõ Hõõ Hõõ* (p. 44)	Prop: Your relatives have come And not even plain water to drink Singer: If you can't get us water Show us the path to the river Chorus: Humm Singer: Mmabie, if you go and delay, When you return we will be gone home Chorus: Hummhummhumm (p. 65)

Delivery. There is no standard line length nor style of delivery (see Appendix). Each *kongkono* delivers their message in a personalized manner based on inspiration from the current moment and the context (Hien, 2019, p. 155). The *konkonibo* remain at one place while performing, often shaking their heads or nodding for emphasis (Saanchi, 1992, p. 40).

Kpaabo/Komoɔ. *Kpaabo* are chanted praises of ancestors and are often performed by women when doing repetitive tasks such as blending shea nut paste or grinding at the millstone (Saanchi, 1992, p. 38). A major component of dirge chanting at funerals involves knowledge of the deceased's family history, praise names, and family, individual, and clan qualities (Dankwa, 2018, p. 65).

Female Dirge Chanting. Women also perform *kpaabo* at funerals (see Appendix). Unlike the men, the women's performance involves one chanter and is more emotive, as the chanter may even sob and move about during her performance. This is done with no instrumental

accompaniment. The performance takes place near the corpse and is done with a softer tone (Banzie, 2022, p. 68).

Mixed Performance

In recent years there have been occasions of women joining the men's dirge performance around the *gyile*. Women are expected to perform in the male style in these cases. "Women performing the *lagne* are expected to have broken voices like men and be masters of the history to boldly shout out their poetic words just as their male counterparts do" (Banzie, 2022, p. 72). A potential reason for this new development may be a change in how the Dagaaba view traditional music performance. As the number of capable *konkonibo* decreases, women who have the knowledge and skill have stepped in to allow this tradition to continue. There may also now be less emphasis on the strict divisions between men's and women's musical performance (see Appendix).

Figure 11. Mixed-gender performance of kongkombie (Banzie, 2022).

Gyilbie (Xylophone Texts)

How does one understand what the *gyil* is saying? How are the notes struck on the *gyil* understood and written down as text? According to Yabang (1981):

> Ka neɛng ba waa toowono, o aa mang deɛ e la muu bee kpalaa kpalaa lɛne gyilbie . . . wommung . . . A nang waa ka yeltegrɛ ne yelbulo la ka a gyilbie . . . mang yele kora toowoni mo (p. ii).

> If one does not understand, one would just be ignorant about xylophone texts and their language. It is because they are heavy statements and germinal words that they are xylophone language . . . and speak to those who understand (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 9).

Tòòwonibo[12] *(*singl. *Tòòwono)* are those who understand the language of drums and xylophones (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 10). The process through which the *gyil* transmits messages that can be written as text is called speech surrogacy.

Speech Surrogacy in Dagaaba Gyil Music

It is important to note that there is a difference between fitting words to music and speech surrogation, as Hogan (2011) explains:

> When humming the melody of a popular song, it is possible to identify that song based upon its melody, and then apply its widely known text. However, the difference in speech surrogation is that it relied on an established vocabulary consisting of musical and linguistic conventions, which can then be manipulated to generate new meanings. The way that this functions in Birifor xylophone music is not through the codification of a certain phrase as having a fixed meaning, but rather through a combination of musical practices which frame each note as potentially discursively meaningful in context (p. 238).

Dankwa (2018) describes three processes through which *gyil* players use speech surrogacy: direct transmission, contraction, and enphrasing.

Direct Transmission. In the case of *gyilbie*, speech surrogacy follows the grammatical structure of the Dagaare language. As defined by Dankwa (2018), melodic groups are a group of notes in sequence that make grammatical sense when translated into syllabic units (p. 191). By the player pausing at the end of each melodic group, the listener can distinguish different groups,

[12] The *tòòwono* also includes the person who can dance well to the rhythm; they understand the language of the drum not in translating it verbally, but translating it into body movement and steps.

allowing them to reinterpret the notes as speech. A majority of *gyilbie* are transmitted using this method.

Contraction. Contraction involves the "abridgement of lexical units, such that multisyllabic words can be represented by a single note" (p. 196).

Enphrasing. Enphrasing "involves putting syllabic units within a larger phrase to clarify its meaning" (p. 196). Words may become more homophonic when turned into speech surrogates because of similar tonal qualities; enphrasing allows the listener to use the surrounding contextual information to understand what is being conveyed (p. 198).

Dagaare is a tonal language which primarily has two tonal levels, high and low, which are used to express "both lexical and grammatical oppositions as in the Dagaare verbs, *dá* ('push'), *dà* ('buy'), and as in the declarative and hortative readings of pronouns e.g., *ùkúlî lá yîrì* or *úkúlî yîrì* ('He went home' or 'He should go home')" (Bodomo & Mora, 2007, p. 84). This tonality helps in the mapping of phonemes to *gyil* notes and understanding what is being communicated.

Other than pausing at the end of melodic groups, there are other factors in the style of *gyil* playing that help it to resemble the spoken language. For example, at the syllabic level, notes are struck quickly to imitate the pace at which they would be spoken or sung, increasing the *gyil*'s sonic resemblance to spoken syllables (Hogan, 2011, p. 237). Most importantly, one requires cultural immersion to be a *tòòwono*; repeated exposure to the various *gyilbie* is the only way to learn what they mean. As Hogan (2011) and Dankwa (2018) observed, even senior performers could be unclear about the meaning of some songs; in order to learn and increase their repertoires, they would ask the player what the melody he played means and memorize it. As Hogan (2011) writes,

> [T]he act of surrogation requires a certain competency and fluency with the particular tonal and rhythmic conventions of communication through the *kogyil*, and that only certain phrases have established meaning in the sense of being fixed. The phrases that do have established meaning, gain them through either a conversation outside of the moment of musicking, or through singing by a xylophonist during a performance. Through these two processes, the grammar and vocabulary of surrogation expands and contracts according to the memories of xylophonists and audiences (pp. 242-243).

Although the base text melody is consistent in every performance of a particular *gyilbie*, each performer adds their own flair and style when playing, particularly with the supporting melodies. Doggu (2015) uses the word "embellishment" to describe this phenomenon:

> The way the songs are played and embellished is to some extent dependent on whether there is a second xylophone that provides the support parts, and, in the absence of a second xylophone, how constantly or fragmentarily the lead xylophone player plays the support part (p. 89).

An example in which the *gyil* player also vocalizes the *gyilbie* is from the late Bergyire/Bɛrgyirɛ, a very influential *gɔbaa* from Nandom. In the following example, transcribed and translated by Kyoore (2018), Bergyire sings each melodic unit before playing it, allowing one to hear how each phoneme is mapped to each note (see Appendix).

N me buɔle a tengan guu	I call in vain to Mother Earth
N lɛ e mninɛ?	What can I do?
N na kpina yo	I will die
Dagaara lâ	And Dagara people will rejoice
Yel bii bii zuo na	They are too conspiring
Dagara iru biir biir yaga	Dagara are too conspiring
Dagara iru fââ fââ yaga	Dagara do very bad things

Kyen bulâ te bɛl nyɛ	Walk a little and see
Yââ kur mɛ na!	I am fed up!
Suur kur mɛ na!	I am furious!
A milɛ milɛ zuo na	There is too much conspiracy
A gôló gôlô zuo na	There is too much conspiracy
Pure lɛ	Just a little,
Ââ pââ bang Naamwin	Who knows God
Ââ pââ bang teng gan	Who knows Mother Earth
Ne yaga bɛa bang yâ	When a bunch of people are not smart
Kûû me ku te baare	Death claims them all
Pure lɛo	Just a little
Naamwin ir fua	God created you
Wa sigr fu yoo	And now decides to humble you
Sag kɛ ûû yoo	Please accept your fate
Pure lɛ	Just a little
Fu bɛ tɛr benɔnɛ yaga sââ so bɛɛ	You don't have a lot of enemies inherited from your father
Sââ so bɛɛ,	Inherited from your father
mâ so bɛɛ (pp. 144-145)	Inherited from your mother (pp. 144-145)

What about those who are not *tòòwonibo*? According to *gɔbaa* RN, this does not hinder the dirges' effectiveness: "Though not everyone may get the meaning, and comprehend the intricacies, the emotional impact of the dirges do not solely depend on understanding but provides the emotional connection to the bereaved family and the deceased soul."

Instrumental Ensemble

Gyil Daa and Gyil Pɔg

During the performance, two *gyile* are used, one of which is referred to as the "male gyil" (*gyil daa*) and the other as the "female gyil" (*gyil pɔg*) (Woma, 2012, p. 42). This is because of the difference in sound between the two; the *gyil daa* has a more heavy and dominant sound while the *gyil pɔg* has a "treble sound like [the] female voice" (Hien, 2019, p.112). The *gyil daa* is used by the main *gɔbaa* and plays the *gyilbie*. The *gyil pɔg* plays supporting melodies with one hand to enrich the main melody while playing the *kpagru* with the other (Hien, 2019, p. 73;

Woma, 2012, p. 43). These counter melodies can also be expressing other *gyilbie* related to the theme of the main melody's text (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 5).

Kpagru. *Kpagru* (*kpaaro*) is a repetitive baseline with little improvisation played with the back end of the *gyil* mallet. As Woma (2013) writes, "*kpagru* is the foundation upon which the music enjoys its rhythmic flow and density . . . [W]ithout it, the music loses its rhythmic power and musical taste" (p. 43).

Gyil-Buule. The *gyil-buule* is a wrist band with metal jingles that can only be worn by a *gɔbaa* who has taken the *gyil tiin* (*gyil* medicine) (Dankwa, 2018, p. 103; Woma, 2013, pp. 42, 45). The bells reinforce the percussiveness of the music as they are worn on the dominant hand of the *gɔbaa* as he plays.

Kuor drum. The *kuor* is a gourd drum covered by monitor lizard skin that provides the constant pulsing rhythm that is danced to (Woma, 2013, p. 44).

Kuurbine Performance Cycle

There are three sections with different musical characteristics: *piira, degaar,* and *bilagni*. When the *gyile* are first brought out, they are sounded by the head *gɔbaa* of the deceased's family before the performances begin.

Piira/Piiru

Dankwa (2018) describes the *piira* as "a prelude, in free time and tempo, played unaccompanied on the daga-gyil by the gɔbaa" (p.160). During this time, the *gyil* player can test the spacing of the keys, adjust his movements, and adjust loose keys to better pair them with their corresponding resonating gourds (Dankwa, 2018, p. 161; Hien, 2019, p. 70). One may ask

why they would need to test the instrument, but one should remember that the *gyile* built by different lines differ in sound and are not tuned exactly the same (Hien, 2019, pp. 111-112). As the *gyil* player is not using their own *gyile*, but those provided at the funeral ground, they must learn the intricacies of the instrument before they begin to perform in earnest. Each artist's *piira* is unique to them, so much so that others can identify who is playing from a distance by their *piira* (Dankwa, 2018, pp. 161-162).

Tigbe. All *gyil* players end their *piira* with a repetitive short melodic pattern in a descending mode; this alerts the other musicians that they are ready for the next section of the cycle, and also serves to enable the *gyil* player and the *kongkono* to orient themselves. During the *tigbe*, the *kongkono* and the *gyil* player establish a comfortable tonal center that is comfortable for the *kongkono* (Dankwa, 2018, p. 162).

Deciding the Kongkonibo. The *kongkonibo* also perform dirges as a "warm-up" and to decide who out of those available will perform. All the while, they face the xylophonists. Once they have decided the two *kongkonibo* and established the tonal center with the *gɔribe*, they turn to face the corpse. The *kongkono* signals his readiness with a stylized shout (*wuobo*) of "*Wo yaa! Wo yaa!*" a sign for other men to assemble around the *gyile* as the chorus.

An example of this warm-up is as follows:

Kyeɛrɛ: Anyee-yaa	Singer: Anyee ya
Dɛɛrba: Hõõ	Chorus: Hmmm
Kyeɛrɛ: Loɔraa kpɛ tuu	Singer: The Leopard has entered a thicket!
Dɛɛrba: Hõõ	Chorus: Humm
Kyeɛrɛ: Yɛ loɔraa ganagana	Singer: Space out and surround
Kyɛ boɔra boŋganlee	Search for
Dɛɛrba: Hõõ	Chorus: Humm
Kyeɛrɛ: Yɛ loɔraa ganagana	Search for a terrible thing
Kyɛ boɔra tɛora	Look for a marksman

Dɛɛrba: Hõõ Hõõ Hõõ (Yemeh, 2002, p. 33)	Chorus: Hummhummhumm (p. 54)

Synchrony of Performance

Although the *lagne* and *gyilbie* are being performed simultaneously, the *kongkonibo* are not restricted by the melodies of the *gyile* (see Figure 10). Instead, they reach a different style of synchrony as described by Kuwabong (1990):

> . . . [T]here is a point of harmony which occurs twice in every text performance of both groups. The point of coincidental connection occurs first after the second and third lines of the sung dirge where the chorus comes in to respond in a solemn mournful way with a humm. While the chorus is humming, the xylophonist at the moment too ends a line on the deeper keys of the xylophone . . .
>
> . . . So at the point of where there is to be a pause both dirgers and xylophonists harmonise (pp. 13-14).

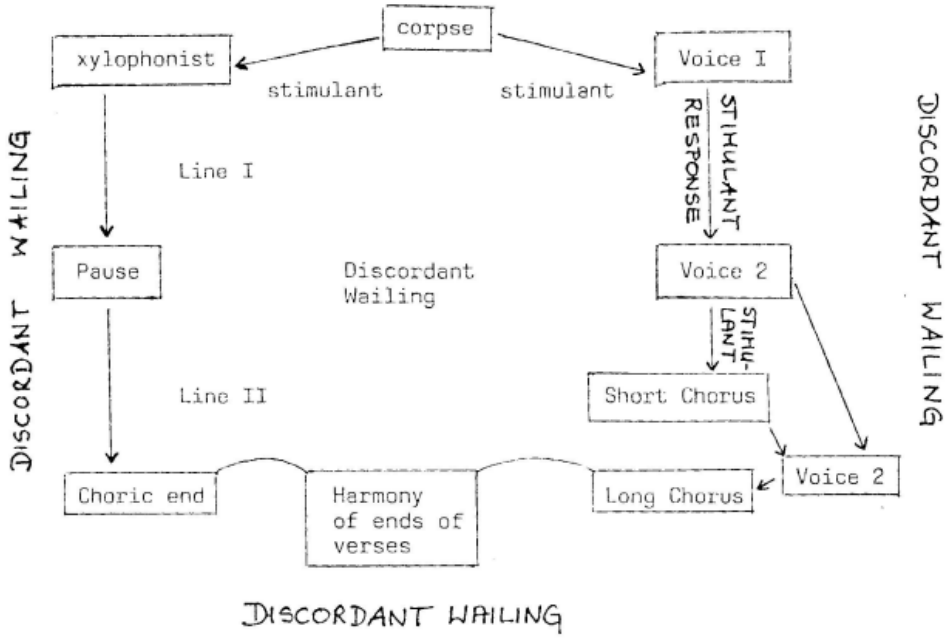


Figure 12. Concurrent Connection Diagram (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 14)

"It is an outstanding example of an interplay between language, music, and emotional expressions, occurring as a fluid mix of speech, song, and wailing" (Dankwa, 2018, p. 210).

Continuous Flow of Performances

A beebu tere la zanne-ngmeɛbo ne a buulung kyoɔroo baapaaba lambori (Yabang, 1981, p. 38).

This [continuous performance] also gives room to learners and straining of the porridge among friends (eating together entertaining together; learning to play and drinking/carousing together, socializing).[13]

[13] Uncited translations were written by a Dagaare expert.

The dirge performances continue through the night. As most people have gone to sleep, this gives the young people the opportunity to practice playing at an actual funeral. Playing at a funeral is a big feat, so this time to practice where nobody minds them gives them the experience to then attempt to play during the daytime at a funeral. One must truly have mastered the *gyil* as funerals can be complex. An example as described in an interview is when there is a joint funeral of both men and women; as many of the dirges are categorized by sex, the *gɔbaa* is charged with creating a neutral performance.

Themes

The themes of dirges performed depend on a variety of factors, such as the age of the deceased, their marital status, gender, social status, manner of death, and so on. They can generally be sorted into two main categories: praise and non-praise (Dankwa, 2018, p. 225). They are also divided into *degaar* and *bilagni* and are performed in a cycle[14].

Degaar/ Dɛgaar

Degaar are oriented around themes that will arouse intense emotions on the mourners (Dankwa, 2018, p. 170). This is especially so when the accompanying *lagne* highlight the attributes and accomplishments of the deceased (p. 172). People do not dance to *degaar*[15].

Bilagni/Bɛlanw-mɛ

Bilagni prepare mourners to come to terms with the misfortune that has occurred, bring them some psychological relief. They are usually more consolatory and uplifting than *degaar*

[14] Hien (2019) goes into detail on the *dɛgaar-bɛlanw-mɛ* cycle and how it differs by gender. Consistent with the Dagaaba association of the number three with men and the number four with women, for a man's funeral three degaar are performed followed by three bilagni, and four of each at a woman's funeral (p. 148).
[15] *Degaar* are not danced to in the Nandom area according to Dankwa (2018), but in Burkina Faso, both men and women dance to *degaar* (Hien, 2019, p. 147).

(Dankwa, 2018, p. 173). Subjects like sexual misconduct, stealing, gossip, alcoholism, deceit, laziness, and other awkward and unacceptable behaviours in Dagaaba society are discussed in *bilagni* (p. 173). They both educate and admonish the living, but also divert the attention of the mourners from intense grieving. It is during this part of the performance cycle that people may dance.

Praise

As stated by Yabang (1981),

> Ka amine meng danna a kũũ vore sang nuuri bee dɔɔlong toma, bee a kũũ bale dɔɔlong bee gandaalong yɛlɛ (p. 37).
>
> Some [gyilbie] praise the deceased for the great achievements during his life or other brave deeds, or his family, male kinsmen's bravery or heroism.

This applies to both gyilbie and kongkombie. Dirges in the praise category not only praise the deceased, but their living family and ancestors as well. These praises are based on the Dagaaba ideal for a man or woman (Saanchi, 1992, p. 51). These messages, though positive, deepen the feeling of loss among the bereaved. By praising the deceased, they even more emphasize the hole which they have left in their family. Praises may emphasize their prowess or importance in gendered tasks as well.

Gendered Praise: Men. Traditionally, three roles associated with men are that of a farmer, hunter, and warrior, and many dirges focus on these roles. Praising the deceased as a "great hunter" or "formidable warrior" recalls historical memory of when these roles were often used[16].

[16] Hunting of large game is now no longer occurs as most in the area extinct, and there are no inter/intra-ethnic wars of the Dagaaba in recent times.

As farming is the main socio-economic activity of the Dagaaba, referring to the deceased as "*koɔre gandaa*" (great farmer), "*kukuri naa*" (master of the hoe handle), or "*koɔraa bie*" (child of the farm; great farmer). Most if not all Dagaaba men fulfill this role as farmers at some point in their lives, so this is referenced for every male deceased of the community (Dankwa, 2018, p. 227). Personal traits such as bravery, benevolence, endurance, and his achievements are also praised (p. 225). Their role as a leader in the community or as head of household, as protector and provider for their wives and children. "The death of a man is considered a major disaster to the household and the entire community" (p. 226).

An example is as follows:

Prop: O maŋ koɔraŋ *Gyaliŋgyiihi ba sigre kolaa!* *Singer: O maŋ koɔraŋ* *Ka gyaliŋgyiih ŋmaa nyuuro waloo*	Prop: When he is farming Birds never go to the river! Singer: When he is farming Birds gather to drink his sweat (Yemeh, 2002, p. 21)

As Yemeh writes, the Dagaaba dirge creates larger than life descriptions of the deceased similar to those found in epics (p. 21).

Gendered Praise: Women. For a woman, her role as a mother and wife are generally praised. Many of these dirges emphasize the impact of the loss on the widower. Because of the highly gendered division of labour, the loss of either spouse causes significant disruption to the lives of the surviving spouse and their children (Dankwa, 2018, p. 228). They may emphasize that the widower would not have been successful without the support of his wife:

She helps in sowing and harvesting. Moreover she takes refreshment to the man on the farm. If the man were to combine his farm work with cooking, the progress of his work would be

retarded. Thus the dirgers in praising the deceased are also reminding the husband that he has lost a great helper and companion (Saanchi, 1992, p. 54).

When it is a woman that has died, her cooking is often mentioned, as that may be considered the most important task that a woman performs. Other tasks such as fetching water, taking care of guests, or fetching firewood are also evoked (Dankwa, 2018, p. 227).

Maal-eŋa: E mabiihi waɛŋ *Kɔnsõõhẽ koŋ ta te ka te nyu be?* *Kyeɛrɛ: Ka Kɔnsõõhẽ koŋ ta te,* *Wuli te bao zie ka te te sigi!* *Deɛrba: Hõõ* *Kyeɛrɛ: N ma-bie! K'e kpɛɛ te naara,* *E na waana ka te kulee yee.* *Deɛrba: Hõõ Hõõ Hõõ* (Yemeh, 2002, p. 44)	Prop: Your relatives have come And not even plain water to drink Singer: If you can't get us water Show us the path to the river Chorus: Humm Singer: Mmabie, if you go and delay, When you return we will be gone home (p. 65)

Praise of Ancestors. The deceased's ancestors also receive praise during the dirge performance. They are also present, and still considered to have a strong relationship with the living family.

K1: A da waa nakyigri nakyigkpong *K2: Nakyigkpong* *K1: A waa nakyigkpong* *A mang tiiree, ti maale loomo* *C: Haa* *K2: Nakyigkpong tiiri, ti maale loomo kyɛ wɛ* (Saanchi, 1992, p. 60)	K1: He was a great carnivore among carnivores K2: A great carnivore K1: He is a great carnivore when he vomits, vomits to feed the cubs C: Haa K2: The vomit of a great carnivore, it makes itself hungry to feed the cubs (pp. 60-61)

This discusses the greatness of one of the deceased's ancestors, who was a very strong man who was able to provide for his dependents even if that meant he went without.

Praise of Deceased's Relatives. Praise of the deceased's relatives reminds the living that they and the deceased belong to a worthy lineage. The examples below are from a mixed dirge performance (female *kongkonibo* and male *gɔribe*) from the funeral of a Nanvillu married to Sankana (see Appendix):

Sankanee yee ba zaa la tangkparima yong *huu* *Sankanee Lonkoree ba zaa la tangkparema yong* *huu* *Sankanee Lonkoree ba zaa la tangkparema yong* *huu* *Sankana Lonkoree bang da mang de kare neng ngmaakpaɛ* *huu* *Lonkoree da pore ba nyɛrɛ kparema* *huu* *Lonkoree da pore ba nyɛrɛ* (Banzie, 2022, pp. 77-78)	People of Sankana, aren't you supposed to be fully armed? huu Lonkoree of Sankana, aren't you supposed to be fully armed? huu Lonkoree of Sankana, aren't you supposed to be fully armed? huu Lonkoree of Sankana were those counted upon to dispel slave raiders huu The people of Lonkoro were so numerous that they were incomparable huu The people of Lonkoro were so numerous that they were incomparable huu

and

Suglo mine kaa bong boore ka a maale *huu* *Suglo mine band da mang kare neng ngmaakpaɛ* *huu*	Suglo and others used to tend seeds in abundance huu Suglo and others, were those counted upon to dispel slave raiders huu

Suglo mine band da mang kare neng Zambaremɛ *huu*	Suglo and others were those counted upon to dispel 'Zambaremɛ" huu (Banzie, 2022, p. 95)

These dirges evoke the historical memory from the 1890s when Zabarima slave raiders[17] when the people of Sankana fought off Babatu and his men, also using the famous cavernous rocks to hide away (Holden, 1965, p. 77). This event is still remembered through oral history. In this way, they show that the deceased "belongs to a line of praiseworthy people who have deep roots in the distant past, and blossoms in the immediate present" (Saanchi, 1991, p. 61).

Non-praise

Comfort. Yabang (1981) writes,

Amine mang moora kora la a kũũ voba (p. 37).

Some gyilbie say comforting words to the deceased's relatives.

Not all dirges are designed to intensify the grief felt by the bereaved. They are also used to comfort the bereaved.

[17] The Zabarima (also known as Zarma) are originally from the Sahel along the Niger River valley, with a majority of the population in Niger and Nigeria, and smaller numbers in Benin, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. A small group of them arrived in Dagomba in the early 1860s as traders, mercenaries, and/or malams. "By the late 1880s, they, and their kinsmen ad others who had joined them, had conquered and were continuously controlling an area stretching from Ouagadougou to Wa; by the late 1890's their power had been broken by the British, French and Germans . . ." (Holden, 1965, p. 60).

Cause of Death.

A lɔɔra la sekpɔga bee yele yelgbulo kora a kuori deme, ka ba na kong ũũ kyɛ bɔ, a maale ka a vũũ naa tɔɔ la wa uri (Yabang, 1981, p. 37).

They [dirges] tell riddles or opaque statements (give hints about the possible cause of death) to the bereaved, so that after the funeral they can search for the cause of death, and solve the problem so this type of fire will not ignite again.

Remember that there are always three levels of the cause of death; so this may expose the efficient cause or ultimate cause. For example, the ancestors can 'send for' someone who has not yet lived his full lifespan because he is needed by the ancestors (Gbal, 2013, p. 18). They could have been targeted by a witch or wizard, or had spiritual warfare done to them by an enemy; these may also be out to get the deceased's immediate associates. This warns them and gives them the push to figure out what exactly happened and potentially to protect themselves from the same fate.

There are also negative aspects, as written by Yabang (1981):

Amine wɛgrɛ la dɔng voba kpakyagreng, bonso a mang boɔra ka a wuli ka dɔma la ko a kũũ; lenso a waana ne la benni taa ne beele taa (p. 39).

Some reveal enmity among the living, because they try to suggest that an enemy caused the death of the deceased, this therefore brings the testing and suspecting of each other.

The dirge chanters may directly point out which human actors were involved, challenging them at the funeral ground and placing responsibility for the death on them.

Criticism and Insult Dirges.

Amine ere la noba olo; ka banang nang be a kuori yengeng bang a kũũ o voba yelsɔgla; a pɔge de a leɛ toora ne ba (Yabang, 1981, p. 39).

Some reveal people's secrets (disgraces people); if they are still at the funeral grounds and know disturbing secrets of either the deceased or the living; and maybe use this to insult them.

A mang song la ka voba ngmɛ ba gyɛng nyɛ ka ba meɛrong taa la faalong bee (Yabang, 1981, p. 38).

It helps the living to examine whether their ways have any evil.

A wullo, goɔra, kpaana la voba (Yabang, 1981, p. 38).

It teaches, restricts, and warns the living.

As stated by *gɔbaa* IL, ". . . the gɔbaa has that power to sit there and *just say it.*" This public social sanctioning can lead people to change their wayward behaviours. In this way the *gɔbaa* acts as a social critic, identifying actions and behaviours in the community that are against cultural norms or are immoral. This can act as a wake-up call to those who feel targeted by the message being sent.

Where the deceased has died in questionable circumstances or where there was neglect on the part of relatives, dirgers will point out and be severe on those they assume to be responsible (Saanchi, 1992, p. 65).

Amine meng mang ngmaarɛɛ zɔɔre a kuori yengeng. Ka a gɔɔre mine meng gba pɔge gyennɛ taa (p. 40).

Some generate fights at the funeral ground. And even cause some xylophonists to test each other (contest, vie, challenge).

For example, if the *gɔbaa* or *kongkono* identifies someone at the funeral as having been responsible for the demise of the deceased, this can lead to an altercation between the accused and the bereaved. Some who are being insulted could also possibly lose their temper at the *kongkonibo* or *gɔbaa*, but usually the insults come to an end with a donation of some money to the performers.

Rebuking the Deceased. Even the deceased can fall victim to criticism. For example, they may rebuke the deceased for deserting their loved ones in an untimely manner; this particularly happens at the funerals of adults who pass on before their parents; this is against the natural order of things and is seen as them abandoning their duty, which is to give their parents befitting funerals (Dankwa, 2018, p. 231). They can also allude to the deceased causing their own death through their action or inaction, whether that be not listening to good advice, or slighting spiritual beings.

The Performance of Grief and the Social Niche

It is a social norm to cry at a Dagaaba funeral; not crying leads to suspicions that one was involved in the person's death. Of course, everyone who goes to the funeral will have a large emotional reaction to the death of the deceased, but they must still partake in the situational performance of grief. The social niche describes "the extent to which emotions emerge from within and are at times constituted by the dynamics of the agent's ongoing interaction with evolving social contexts" (Krueger, 2014, p. 156). Emotions are also shaped by the material and cultural features of the environment; they are thoroughly situated (p. 165). Both ideational

factors and material factors of social niche shape the experience and expression of emotion (p. 156).

Ideational factors are mental structures like values, norms, and rules informing display rules (p. 165). Like the behavioural memory of Nwoye (2022), we remember how to behave and what is expected in particular situations, including emotion-based behaviours, such as wailing and crying. Material factors include physical structures (resources, settings, tools) that make up the context in which the emotions occur as well as various technologies to support their emergence (p. 164). In the case of dirge performance, the setting is funeral ground, with the context being the death of someone known to the participant, and the technology is the sung dirges and *gyilbie* played that promote mourning. As Dankwa (2018) writes, "[t[he ceremony imposes a requirement of emotional behaviour on all funeral goers, regardless of social status, to which are attached values that continue to govern its practice" (p. 211).

Wailing. Vocalizing acts as a process of self and interactive regulation, as well as a means to coordinate the experience of the self with others (Akunna, 2015, p. 50). When the bereaved are so impacted by the dirges that their wailing intensifies, there is emotional contagion that moves many to also join in the wailing (Dankwa, 2018, p. 232). This positive feedback in turn deepens the emotional reactions of the bereaved.

The wailing of sympathizers may not only be a performance of solidarity with the bereaved:

> Neɛ neɛ mang wa kpi la ka a kɔɔre gba, kyɛ ka o la wa wong ko paalaa gyilbie, ka o teɛrong gyɛre. Pɔgeba eng gba ba meng yaare kyɛ la maaleng kono a ba neɛ na; ka anang e kuori zie gba kyɛ kanga mang wa kono hiine la ka noba na teɛre ka a kũũ paalaa na la ka o kono, zaayee a o nen sirikyi na yɛlɛ la ka o leɛ teɛre, a kono (p. 39).

> Even where a person's relative died a long time ago, but if they hear a fresh funeral's *gyilbie* it confuses the person's mind. Women in particular easily start mourning afresh for their departed relative; when it is at the funeral grounds, even someone may be crying and heaving to such an extent to make people believe the person is mourning the newly deceased, not knowing that it is his/her long-time dead relative he/she remembers and is wailing so much.

A participant's event memory of their own experience being the bereaved at previous funerals activates their behavioural memory, allowing their emotional state during those previous events to resurface in the face of such collective emotion. This gives them a chance to grieve again if the one time was not enough, since this is the culturally appropriate time where an open display of volatile and extreme emotion is permissible. Within this social niche, with the impact of memories of previous funeral attendances directly related to the individual and the emotional contagion caused by the sonic atmosphere, people can be moved to mourn intensely for someone other than the current deceased. This reaction shows that the individual still needed more time to grieve openly as the environment rekindles pangs of grief (Somé, 1993, p. 103). Funeral attendance allows for multiple opportunities to mourn openly, a possible factor in the near lack of pathological grief in Africa (Nwoye, 2005, p. 444).

Behaviour of Bereaved Family

Grief often comes in waves, with sudden, intense reactions (pangs of grief) that can be triggered by internal or external reminders (Kristensen, Dyregrov, & Dyregov, 2017, p. 538). When it is triggered, that is when the bereaved take off running, start wailing more intensely, or break into dance. The dirges are the external reminder; their performance creates a sanctioned time to experience these pangs of grief to the fullest in a supportive environment. The close

bereaved *kpiin noba*[18] (death-people), men and women, are expected to unleash their emotional distress. The chief mourner and lineage members move to and fro between the *gyile* and the *paala*, throw their arms about and engage in other physical and emotional gestures of grief while being closely followed by the containers (Dankwa, 2018, p. 156). This may include rocking body and head back and forth, breaking into half runs towards the corpse, running, jumping about, throwing themselves on the ground, or other potentially self-harming acts (Dankwa, 2018, pp. 256-257; Doggu, 2015, p. 97; Kpiebaya, 2016, p. 84). This is why soon after a death, people Somé (1993) refers to as "containers" are assigned to every close relation of the deceased (p. 105).

Containers. As people express their grief, others will join them giving both physical and emotional support to the person grieving. Their role is also to control the bereaved's grief as the Dagaaba believe that grieving past the human limit will lead to your death: "The more one grieves, the more one gives to the dead and the more one moves closer to being with the dead" (Somé, 1993, p. 106). Containers follow discretely behind the bereaved as they pace the funeral ground. They mimic their actions; if they take off running in a random direction, they must keep pace.

> Such a person would duplicate every action channeling grief that the mourner expresses and will do so almost synchronously, but while doing this, he will keep a keen eye on the other who may go out of bounds at any time . . . [T]he assistance from a person who does not feel the urge to express his grief in this particular way is like having an extra eye that knows where the boundaries are (Somé, 1993, p. 106).

[18] Also known as *kotuodeme/kutuosob* (Dankwa, 2018; Doggu, 2015)

A mang vɛng la ka oba kponni ba woore lɛɛ ka ba pɛmmo za ate baare, kyɛ ka ba pɔge kpɛ samang ta kɔkɔrɛɛ (Yabang, 1981, p. 39).

It causes people to empty their bags/wallets/purses until they exhaust their capacity to borrow, and maybe go into debt for a long time.

When the funeral ensemble is performing very well, the bereaved will go and throw money to them; they may also throw money to stop them from hurling insults at them.

Kuori zie gyilbie mine mang e la ka lagne ɔre, ka noba heli pɛmɛ a dɔlle ba gbɛɛ. A ngaa mang song la ka teɛrong gyɛrmɛ seregyeere fẽẽ ka a kotuuri deme teɛrong ta maaleng lugi ne a kuori kommu ne a yel-nyɔge ka-a-toore telare lɛ. Kyɛ a kuori kommu la a lagne agebo meng (p. 39).

The xylophone dirges can make the funeral intense, and people groaning and pacing. This helps to ease a little the mental pain of the immediate family/bereaved so that their minds may not be overwhelmed with the mourning and the events will not go too far (be shifted to a distance). But the mourning is also the dancing.

Psychomotor agitation is defined as “aimless, repetitive locomotion frequently observed in the case of a depressed person” (Barré, 2001, p. 177). The constant movement of the bereaved, the pacing and breaking into a run, are signs of psychomotor agitation. Exercise, particularly dance, is known to help with alleviating this tension and anxiety that causes restlessness (p. 177).

Dancing. Dancing is more of a direct response to the instrumental than to the sung dirges. This outbreak acts as a momentary release from intense grieving (Dankwa, 2018, p. 257). The closer one’s kinship ties with the initiator, the more one is compelled to join in the dance (p. 257). In various Africa societies, dance is used to convey salient symbolic meanings (Akunna,

2015, p. 39). According to Akunna (2015), along with promoting the purgation of affective feelings, dance "regulate[s] the body's response to stress by shutting off the source of pain and reducing suffering to manageable proportions, in part through the release of endorphins (pp. 44, 51). Consciously focusing on kinetic movement increases body-self awareness, leading to increased emotional regulation, (p. 52). Regulation of bodily motion acts as a way of regulating the disharmonious, despairing, and conflicted psycho-emotional state of mind of the bereaved during the funeral:

> Sometimes a large group of fifteen to twenty people will come out to join a primary relative battling with his sorrow. The whole group will end up as a line of dancers dancing exactly what the relative is doing in the front of the line. It is understood in the ritual that the feeling of the person in front of the line will be transmitted to every person as they dance together in one line.
>
> This sharing of personal feeling is a form of silent and physical support to the person grieving. The dancers will move back into the surrounding groups when the person in the front stops dancing, turns around and starts walking toward the chanting crowd. At that moment, one after the other, the dancers will do as the grieving relative does (Somé, 1993, p. 107).

An example of this behaviour was observed during Somé's own funeral in 2021 (see Appendix).

The intense polyrhythmic character of African instrumental music, aligned with multi-metric dance rhythms, arouses and spurs empathetic or sympathetic movement responses based on varieties of expressive moods (Akunna, 2015).

According to RN, the dance can also be an expression of joyous words coming from the gyil and the dirge chanters. In this way the participants honour the deceased and turn the funeral into a more holistic commemoration that embraces both sorrow and celebration (RN interview, 2024).

Most dancing occurs at funerals of the elderly, those who are considered to have lived a full life (Dankwa, 2018, p. 258). This dancing occurs as a celebration of their accomplishments and shows the quality of life they lived. Once dancing is initiated, funeral becomes celebratory. The *gɔbaa* can decide when it is time for this by changing how he plays; the people know when he is playing for dancing. However, even at very highly emotional funerals, people can break into dance. This dance is not from enjoyment, but rather a form of relieving physical agitation, as Akunna (2015) describes.

> I can actually change to play [in an] entertaining [way], and then they will come [to dance]. Because they know at this point . . . yeah, you can dance. . . [At young people's funerals], generally that entertaining is very limited, but some emotional people can still break into dancing. Even the mother. You can see a *really* sad mother beginning to jump and dance . . . [but] they are not dancing for real . . . (interview with IL, 28 December 2023)

***Bine*[19].** *Bine* is the style of dance that is performed at funerals and at the Kobine Festival[20]. Men and women dance separately, but both dance in lines towards the *paala* (see Appendix) (Hien, 2019, p. 147).

Bin-vaara is a men's dance that includes twists, turns, and leaps[21] (Dankwa, 2018, p. 174; Hien, 2019, p. 148). At some point in the funeral, elderly men perform what is called *vaarfo*,

[19] Dance not common among the southern Dagaaba, but more common in northern and central. The southern Dagaaba do transition to dance at the funeral of an elderly person as turns to celebratory atmosphere.
[20] *Bilagni* are also played recreationally.
[21] According to Hien (2019), this is called *bin-vaara* in Burkina Faso (p. 148).

where they “raise their walking sticks or folded umbrellas and break into half runs, leaping and stomping their foot in unison . . . [T]he men are said to be dissociating themselves from activities they performed with the deceased” (see Appendix) (Dankwa, 2018, p. 174).

Bin-maala is a dance performed by both men and women and described as “more artistic” than the *bin-vaara* (Hien, 2019, p. 148).

Dɛgabɛ loba is seen as the female counterpart of *bin-vaara* and is characterized by the stamping of the feet (p. 148).

Lagne. This is what the funeral dance is called among the central Dagaaba. Both men and women do a kind of jumping dance run (see Appendix).

Other Dances. Among the southern Dagaaba, they do not have funeral specific dances; rather, in the cycle of dirge performance, there will be periods where the dirges stop and dance music is played, usually on drums.

In Relation to Nwoye’s Five Stage Theory of Community Participation in Grief Work in Africa

The dirge performance covers aspects of stages one and three of Nwoye’s (2022) theory of grief work in Africa. There is continued crying in solidarity with the bereaved throughout, and the labeling of the bereaved allows them to be continually monitored by the containers and others to ensure their safety. Conscious mimicry allows the bereaved to unleash their emotions more fully, and in turn feeds back into the emotional atmosphere created at the funeral ground. Promotion of positive cognition occurs after first allowing for catharsis through the dirges inciting grieving behaviours. After a certain amount of time is allowed for intense grieving, the content changes to milder topics (*bilagni*), allowing for further catharsis through dancing, before cycling back. Behavioural memory, fact memory and prospective memory are all targeted

through the content of the dirges and the general atmosphere and behaviours of both the bereaved and those around them. By the time for burial, the bereaved's prospective memory of the worry of giving the deceased a proper wake is assuaged; their prospective memory of how they will cope with the difficulties of life without the bereaved are also assuaged by the constant presence, participation, and care of the various members of the family and community who come to support them during the funeral. This orchestrated by the *gɔribe*, *kongkonibo*, and sympathizers in concert.

The *gɔribe* and *kongkonibo* practice performance reflexivity in the content of their dirges. The social commentary and criticism allows them and the listeners to turn back and look on their actions, relationships, cultural symbols, meanings, social structures, and so on, potentially leading to change. The *kongkonibo* and *gɔribe* do not fear repercussion as they are given authority on this stage to openly share their opinions; because of this, people are also more likely to listen, especially if *gɔbaa* who can play and chant at the same time.

An example was given by *gɔbaa* IL about the funerals of young people who were dying in the south-central part of Ghana. These young people would go to *jonga*[22] and many would die tragically trying to cross the Volta River when the small boats used would capsize. As most Dagaaba cannot swim, as IL says, "our people die first." not because of witches at home, but because they are entering danger. At their funerals, oftentimes people would say its witchcraft and blame an elderly man or woman: ". . .[T]hey will say it's some old lady in the village. No . . . It's the risk of moving into unknown peril that is killing the young ones. It's *not* somebody at home who's sitting in the village . . . How could an old lady in the village go to the Volta and

[22] *Jonga* is a geographical place where large numbers of Dagaaba have gone to settle ad farm or look for seasonal work.

drown—you know? But they, they don't think like that . . ." (interview with IL, 28 December 2023).

At these times, IL would play the *gyil* and then pause and chant what he has played for the listeners to understand. In this way he was able to convince them that it was not witchcraft that led to the person's death, but rather their being in a dangerous and high-risk situation.

Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices are used in both chanted and *gyil* dirges, but in this section I will specifically be talking about gyilbie.

C.K. Yabang, gɔbaa, professor, researcher, compiled xylophone and talking drum pieces in Gylbie ne Tumpaambie (Dagaaba Drum Language) (1981):

> Ba nang mang wa ngmeɛrɛ gyile, ba deɛ bam ang bonna kpulkpulo weɛ lɛ, yɛlɛ la ka a gɔɔre mang yele kora a noba nang be be bee kyɛllɛ, ka kuori yegeng la bee, ka deɛne zie le, ka ba na bang bee e yelkang. Lɛnso gyilbie la a gyile ngmeɛbo voonoo na wulibu bee yɛlny graa nang mang kpeɛre sagra neɛ yam poɔ, a waa ka yelgbulo/sekpoga, lɔba, lugo, yelsenkpegɛ bee yelkpagla/ la ka a gɔbaa bee gɔɔre lɔɔra bee pɛllɛ kora toowonibo (p. 1).
>
> When they are playing xylophone texts, they do not just play them anyhow, it is language that the xylophonists speak to those listening whether it is at a funeral ground, or play ground, so that the listeners will hear or do something. That is why xylophone pieces are the method of playing to teach or expose a problem in one's emotions or mind, it is clouded language (such as riddles, proverbs, riddle-proverbs, words of wisdom or metaphors) that the gɔbaa or gɔɔre throws to or carves for those who can understand (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 8).

Kuwabong (1990) adds to this list irony, hyperbole, anaphora, assonance, ideophones, paradox, metaphor, symbolism, parallelism, repetition, alliteration, and rhythm. All these will be explored with the analysis of dirges in the next chapter, but first it is important to discuss the concept of riddles and proverbs among the Dagaaba. Both proverbs and riddles are used in many *gyilbie* and *kongkombie*.

Proverbs

According to Nketia (cf. Kyoore, 2011):

> The value of the proverb to us in modern Ghana does not lie only in what it reveals of the thoughts of the past. For the poet today or indeed for the speaker who is some sort of an artist in the use of words, the proverb is a model of compressed of forceful language. In addition to drawing on its words of wisdom, therefore, he takes interest in its verbal techniques—its selection of words, its use of comparisons as a method of statement, and so on (p. 216).

Proverbs are divided into categories, such as those describing a person's behaviour, the need for humility and caution, nature as symbol, expression of opinion using custom, objects as symbols, commentary on social mores, evoking how nature works, alluding to people's intelligence (Kyoore, 2011, p. 215-243). For example, a proverb mentioned in Chapter 4 of this thesis was "*Nɔ wogo sob bɛ mɔgrɛ u tuɔra ɛ*" ("The long mouthed person cannot suck his or her own wound"). No matter how capable and independent one is, there is nobody in life who does not need other people's help in order to survive; there are just some things you cannot do by yourself (p. 227). Proverbs reveal how the Dagaaba perceive their world, and their relationship with other human beings as well as the flora and fauna that surround them. Proverbs create opportunities for people to learn and be educated on all aspects of life.

A few proverbs on death compiled by Doggu (2015) are as follows (p. 173-174):

Kuu beyang daa (Death gives no notice)

Naangmen kuu sa tengan kuu (Death from God is preferred to that which is caused by evil of man)

Yɛb faa sa yãã (A bad brother is better than his grave)

A *gyilbiri* proverb is as follows:

Iri ka ba daa lɔɔ *Seɛ la do* *Dɔɔ ka ba kpongno* (Yabang, 1981, p. 3)	Rise and be pushed down It is better Than to squat and be knocked (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 26).

According to Kuwabong (1990),

> Here, the philosophy of not allowing oneself to be oppressed through a cowardly acceptance of oppression is expressed. One must strive even if one is destroyed in the process. Probably the stoical nature of the Dagaaba derives from this philosophy. It also explains the constant search of the Dagaaba for a better mode of existence (p.27).

Riddles. Riddles and proverbs are closely related among the Dagaaba; some consider the categories together as riddle-proverbs. One difference, however, is that riddles always have a definite answer. For example, this riddle is also a *gyilbiri*:

Ba bɛlɛ zɔng lee *K'o daara (Riddle)* *O kong da kpɛ moɔ* *Ka ba dɔgre o. (Answer)* (Yabang, 1981, p. 28)	They have deceived a blind child And he is wandering (Riddle) He will surely wander into the bush And they will punish him (Answer) (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 27)

In this riddle, “blind” is used metaphorically, meaning the person was naïve. It implies that the deceased was misguided, misadvised, innocent, or gullible, and was punished for it.

Conclusion

The Dagaaba funeral is the definition of organized chaos, with multiple elements of performance and community participation occurring simultaneously. The success of positive psychosocial effects relies heavily on the dirge performance. The dirge performance acts as a form of re-remembering the deceased through the language of praise; discussion of the deceased helps to ease the pain of the bereaved. References to the deceased’s ancestors also heals the prospective memory of the bereaved as they are comforted by the fact that the deceased will be joining their ancestors in the spirit realm.

The dirge performances occur in cycles, cycling from intense grieving, to other social topics, to dancing, and back to intense grieving. This continuous cycling not only prevents the bereaved from entering a state of grief “that kills” (Somé, 1993, p. 106), but it also allows people coming to the funeral from afar to join in the mourning when they arrive. The lead gɔbaa is most responsible for the orchestra and for controlling the collective emotional atmosphere. Around the *gyile* and the *paala* are the areas where people can express the depth of their emotions. The dirge performance provides a culturally sanctioned time for the expression of strong emotions. The dirge performance provides the social context in which the bereaved and other participants can experience catharsis and solidarity. Behavioural memory is healed in the bereaved when the other participants support them in a culturally accepted way. Mimicry of crying, wailing, and dancing by those around the bereaved validates their feelings and expressions of distress and show empathy for their situation. These mimicked emotional behaviours may also activate the event memory of participants, who may then be moved to openly mourn their own, previous

losses. Indeed, any funeral one attends allows them an opportunity to mourn again, as many times as needed, to heal from their loss. Nwoye (2022) suggests that this is why pathological grief is not found in African communities (p.444).

The dirge performance is also an occasion for social commentary by the *kongkonibo* and *gɔribe*. During this time, the topics of dirges switch from the impact of the loss to issues in society, immoral behaviours, criticism, and reflecting on the community and culture. This time is not only a reprieve for the bereaved, but also a time in which the feeling of belonging is strengthened within the community, increasing solidarity. Other dirges aim to comfort the bereaved, targeting their prospective memory by reminding them that the intense feelings they are suffering at the moment do not last forever. The bereaved are able to begin re-defining their attachment to the deceased from a physical attachment to a spiritual one.

The features of the poetry of dirges were briefly outlined in this chapter. The language of dirges makes use of numerous rhetorical devices, as well as proverbs and riddles. The proverbs and riddles are a culturally relevant form of condensing meaning. The next chapter will focus on the analysis of selected *gyilbie*.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF GYILBIE

Introduction

In 1981, *Gyilbie ne Tumpaambie* (Xylophone and Drum Dirges) was published. It contains a multitude of both xylophone and drum surrogate texts transcribed by Yabang, a *gɔbaa* and academic. This work acts as the primary source for the texts analysed in this chapter, with some translations from other works such as by Kuwabong (1990) and Kyoore (2018)). Translations not cited were those done in conjunction with a Dagaare language expert for the purpose of this study.

These texts will be analysed using the theory of ethnopoetics. I will be looking at not only the rhetorical devices used, but also the cultural context in which these texts are performed, explaining their significance and the themes discussed, and how they psychologically impact those who hear and understand them. Unfortunately, a majority of these texts do not have audio, however there were some that happen to have been recorded. These will have the audio in the Appendix. In Yabang's (1981) collection, the dirges are organized by men's, women's, children's, and general, however many of them cut across these categories. For ease of citation from the original text, each dirge will be titled with the initials of the section in which it is found, along with the verse number. Each citation will include the page number as well.

DKG is Dɔɔ Kuori Gyilbie. PKG is Pɔge Kuori Gyilbie. BKG is Bibile Kuori Gyilbie. KG is Kuori Gyilbie.

Dɔɔ Kuori Gyilbie (Men's Funeral Xylophone Dirges)

DKG 9.

O ba di naa sɛre, *Kyɛ ka ba nyɔge ko;* *N saa ba di naa sɛre,* *Kyɛ ka ba nyɔge ko* (Yabang, 1981, p. 3, verse 9)	*He has not become famous* *And they took and killed him* *My father has not become famous* *And they took and killed him*

Among the Dagaaba, other than the deaths of very elderly people, whose deaths are considered to be the natural completion of their life cycle on earth, the deaths of people in their prime and adolescents are considered particularly tragic and unnatural. Dagaare is by nature a very metaphorical language. "*O ba di naa sɛre*" literally directly translates to "He has not eaten kingship yet." The word *naa* has many meanings, including chieftancy, royalty, wealth, and fame; it can also be used in reference to a grandfather (*naabaale*) (Ali, Grimm, & Bodomo, 2021). This implies that the deceased has died before reaching the goals within one's life-cycle. For example, to become an ancestor, one must be of good social standing, have some accomplishments in life, have lived to an old age, and have married and had children and grandchildren. In this dirge, "*naa*" may be referring to these accomplishments and social standing that were not yet achieved by the deceased. The alternative meaning of "*naa*" may also refer to the fact that the deceased did not yet have grandchildren.

This dirge emphasizes the unfairness of the death of someone still in their prime. As such a death is considered to be unnatural, blame is laid on an amorphous group, most likely referring to enemies or other human or supernatural agents thought to be behind the death. This dirge expresses the pain that the bereaved must feel at this tragic event, bringing into the open their

event memory (Nwoye, 2005). The poetic nature of this dirge can be seen in the assonance of /a/ throughout the text and the rhyming of *saa* and *naa*. The epistrophic change from "*O*" (he) to "*n saa*" (my father) makes the dirge more personal, perhaps suggesting a relationship of the g*ɔbaa* to the deceased. The parallelism between the first two lines and the subsequent two lines increases the emotionality of the dirge by personalizing the lament. This shared grief with the bereaved through the xylophone is a form of crying in solidarity with the bereaved and encourages them to mourn even more strongly.

DKG 8.

Koɔraa yi kukuri zu le; *Koɔraa bie kukuri la kɔɔ;* *Gankyinni dɔɔlong la kpɛ;* *Ka yɛ na yɔɔ n noɔre yɛ wa* (Yabang, 1981, p. 2, verse 8)	*A farmer falls from the hoe;* *A great farmer's hoe handle is broken;* *Gankyinni's manliness is finished* *If you will pay my mouth then come*

According to Yabang (1981), this dirge is performed for the man who has been seated in state overnight; as in, this is performed on the day after mourning through the night (p. 2). For men's dirges, farming is an activity commonly mentioned and used as a base for allegory, allusion, metaphor, and other rhetorics. This dirge praises the deceased, Gankyinni, as a great farmer (*koɔra bie*). This dirge uses farming as an allegory for his death. Falling from the hoe is used as a euphemism for death. The breaking of the hoe handle is symbolic of the end of ability to farm, as well as his life. The hoe handle may also be a form of synecdoche, representing Gyankyinni himself. They also personify the concept of manliness (*dɔɔlong*). *Gankyinni dɔɔlong la kpɛ* translates literally to "Gankyinni's manliness has entered." This was explained as in it has entered a hole, like the grave, or, like the sun, has set. Farming is considered to be a masculine

activity as the division of labour makes it so that a majority of farm labour is done by men. His manliness finishing is symbolic of the end of Gankyinni himself.

This dirge touches on the bereaved's prospective memory, as they have lost a strong provider, increasing their sense of loss and distress at their future troubles without this family member, stimulating mourning.

DKG 20.

Dakoɔre doge bɛndaa, *Ka a ba be;* *Dakoɔre dul dul ka poɔ pi;* *Dakoɔre fare buulung,* *Ka a ba be;* *Ka pɔgekoɔre kyɛng ta la helli;* *A la la helli* (Yabang, 1981, p. 4, verse 20)	*A bachelor cooks beans* *And they are not cooked* *The bachelor wolfs it down and his stomach is bloated* *A bachelor boils porridge,* *And it is not cooked* *An unmarried woman goes over and laughs haughtily* *And laughed and laughed haughtily*

Although *dakoɔre* means "bachelor," in some Dagaare dialects it is also used to refer to widowers, who, by virtue of their wives passing, are technically bachelors once more[23]. This dirge is performed at the funeral of a man who died unmarried, whether a young widower or a bachelor. The text highlights the imbalance caused by the lack of partner; traditionally, the wife handles domestic activities such as cooking. His struggles with cooking highlight the imbalance in his life; he must complete the tasks of two people as he is unmarried. The discomfort of bloating caused by eating undercooked beans is a sensation relatable to many and paints the deceased in a pitiful light. The unmarried woman, *pɔgekoɔre*, laughing derisively at the bachelor

[23] A widower is also called kodɔɔ.

is sudden. This implies that there were marriage options available for the deceased, but instead of marrying he continued to struggle alone, and this purportedly led to his death. This dirge serves as a cautionary tale to listeners who are either unmarried or are widowed early and have not remarried, demonstrating for them a bleak future if they continue on this path. In a way it is a form of shaming those who are not getting married, provoking them to action.

This dirge parallels the cooking of beans and porridge. It is not uncommon to undercook beans as they take a long time to cook, but the bachelor even struggles with making porridge, one of the simplest meals. This emphasizes the foolishness of his decision not to marry and its negative impact on his survival.

The language used in this dirge is descriptive. For example, rather than saying "*Dakoɔre **di** ka poɔ pi*" (The bachelor **eats** and his stomach is bloated), they use "*dul*", which can be translated as "to eat a large amount" (Ali, Grimm, & Bodomo, 2021, p.112, "duli"). The duplication as "*dul dul*" implies an intensification of this concept, hence the translation being "wolfs down". The woman's laugh is also further described using "*helli*", which means "a sharp shout e.g., during hearty laughter" (Ali, Grimm, & Bodomo, 2021, p. 148). The repletion of "*helli*" again intensifies the action, painting her laughter as more of a mocking laugh than anything else. There is the use of assonance of /a/ and alliteration of /p/.

Pɔge Kuori Gyilbie (Women's Funeral Xylophone Dirges)

PKG 7.

Dakoɔre la bɛlle omenga;	*It is the bachelor that deceives himself*
A te tu yagre.	*And went and dug clay*
A yagtuoro mɔɔ la ang?	*Who is going to carry the clay?*
Dakoɔre la bɛlle omenga;	*It is the bachelor that deceives himself*
A te kɔ tanga seɛ	*Went and farmed at the foot of the hill*
O ngmaaguuro mɔɔ la ang?	*Who is going to chase the monkeys away?*
(Yabang, 1981, p. 17, verse 7)	

Many *pɔge kuori gyilbie* focus on the plight of the widower. Traditionally, Dagaaba women made their own pots out of clay. Men may go and dig up the clay that their wives will then use to make these pots. Also, while farming, a man's wife and children act as deterrents for animals that would attempt to eat the crops by chasing them away. In this case they specifically mention monkeys (*ngmaaguuro*), that are known to live on hills and "descend like vandals to eat the maize" being grown at the foot of the hill. The widower in this dirge portrayed to be in a state of denial that his wife has died by continuing to do activities that only work if one is married. This is both a description of the first stage of grief, denial, and a method of reminding the widower of the partner he has lost.

This dirge also implies that the widower and his wife had no children; otherwise they would be available to help chase the monkeys away. We can infer, then, that this is the funeral of a young woman, perhaps not married for very long.

There is parallelism found in the two sections of this dirge, that referring to clay and that referring to farming. Both of these situations emphasize the disruption to the widower's life by the death of his wife. This activates the prospective memory of the widower, highlighting

potential fears about what will happen in his life since this tragic event. By bringing this to light, this encourages the widower to grieve more fully, aiding in his healing process.

PKG 11.

Laabil gbelenggbeleng ngmɛrɛɛ, *Yɛ kong la nyɛ meɛrɛ k'o mɛ.* *Laabil gbelenggbeleng ngmɛrɛɛ,* *Lɛ la iri bɔ meɛrɛ k'o maaleng mɛ* (Yabang, 1981, p. 18, verse 11)	A delicate pot is broken You will not find a potter to mould (it)? A delicate pot is broken You should rise up and get a potter to mould (it) (Kuwabong, 1990, cf Yemeh, p. 56)

This dirge is one performed at the funeral of an unmarried young woman. According to a tradition recorded by Goody, it is stated that "God created all mankind as a potter does his pots" (Goody, 1962, p. 209). The pot (*laabil*) is used to represent the woman who has passed; it being broken is a euphemism for her death. This dirge denies that the woman has died, requesting that they should find a "potter" to repair it. This denial is common in funerals, especially those of young people whose deaths are considered unnatural and coincides with the human grieving process before the bereaved have processed their loss.

This connection between women and pots is also found in the *Bagre* myth, where "man has the earth and woman has the pot" as a metaphor for reproduction (Kuukure, 1985, p. 77). So, more specifically, the pot can also be referring to the deceased's womb, and the loss of her reproductive potential. They use the ideophone *gbelenggbeleng* (delicate) as she was still young. Family life is of vital importance among the Dagaaba and marriage and having children are considered to be the normal life course. Therefore, the death of a young unmarried woman is particularly tragic as she has been "conquered" by death; she will not become an ancestor, nor continue her lineage.

The request to find a potter can be viewed as an indirect appeal to *Naangmen*.

PKG 29.

Bipuulee fo mabiiri zaa kulee *A fo mabiiri nang ba wa?* *Fo mabiiri be soring* *Fo mɔɔ bang ka ba na wa-eng?* (Yabang, 1981, p. 21, verse 29)	Young woman your mother's children have all gone home Haven't your mother's children returned? Your mother's children are on the way Do you know whether they will come at all?

This is an apostrophic dirge, directly addressing a female maternal relative of the deceased. This bereaved relative may be from the same generation as the deceased as they specify "your mother's children" (*fo mabiiri*). "Gone home" is of course a euphemism for death, as the spirit world is considered to be our true home (Kuukure, 1985). The questions asked are in a way taunting and provoking the bereaved to tears as they know that their relatives have already passed on and cannot come. This would make the bereaved mourn not only for this recently deceased maternal relative, but for others who have passed before.

This direct addressing of the bereaved will also spark sympathy in general sympathizers for her plight of having lost many maternal relatives. It may also remind sympathizers of their own losses, leading them to also mourn with the bereaved.

This particular dirge and similar ones are also chanted by *kongkonibo*, such as the one transcribed in chapter 5 where they call on the deceased woman to receive her visitors and bring water.

Bibile Kuori Gyilbie (Children's Funeral Dirges)

These ones do not only apply to a child's funeral, but also those addressing the plight of the orphan at the death of a parent.

BKG 6.

Koɔraa bie ngmaa saabo *K'o na di,* *K'o dɔndɔma tanne;* *K'o de lɔɔ.* (Yabang, 1981, p. 24, verse 6)	A farmer's child cuts sao In order to eat, His enemy shouts, And he drops it (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 22)

This dirge is performed at the funeral of a farmer in reference to his children left behind. It implies that the farmer's child starves to death, which is ironic as a farmer grows food, but with his death, there is no one to provide for the child. This dirge also demonstrated the wickedness of people in the treatment of orphans. The image painted by this dirge, along with the sight of the deceased's children on the funeral ground, evokes sympathy in mourners, and empathy to the difficulties these children will face in the future.

BKG 21.

Bibil ba taa soba, *Ba taa soba,* *Onang wa leɛ sunkpuli zalla;* *O nang ba taa saa* *Ba taa ma,* *Lɛ la k'o leɛ sunkpuli zalla* (Yabang, 1981, p. 26, verse 21)	The child who has nobody Who has nobody He/She has become the dangling flower of the locust bean (sunkpuli) Since he/she has no father, Has no mother, That is why he becomes the dangling flower of the locust bean

This dirge uses familiar environmental imagery to create the simile of the orphan as a *sunkpuli zalla* (the dangling flower of the locust bean). Those growing up in Dagao will be familiar with the seasonal bloom of *sunkpuli.*

Figure 13. A picture of a flower of the locust bean with half of the flower removed ().

The flowers are large and round, and attached to the branch by a thin stem, leaving the flower dangling. These flowers are quite delicate and are easily dislodged. From strong wind, to rain, to birds and bees attempting to extract nectar, many of these flowers drop and do not mature into locust beans. The use of the word "*zalla*", which means "hanging, or swinging (Ali et al., 2021, p. 324) depicts the precarious nature of the orphan's existence. The orphan, like the *sunkpuli*, has no protection and is left vulnerable. This image of the orphan as vulnerable evokes empathy and sympathy in the mourners at the precarious situation the orphan now finds themselves in after the death of a parent. Mourners who may themselves have grown up as orphans will relate strongly to the dirge, causing them to mourn not for the deceased, but for the orphan left behind, and perhaps for the younger version of themselves. This may also act as a

reminder of the extended family's responsibility to care for orphans, particularly the orphan's paternal family, namely their father's brothers, who are considered to be their fathers as well.

This dirge may also be performed at an orphan's funeral, reminding the community of their failure to ensure that the orphan was cared for. Because of this lack of care, their life was cut short, like the *sunkpuli* that falls from the tree, not having the opportunity to grow to adulthood. This dirge serves as a social commentary on the plight of orphans in society, and the type of suffering they undergo.

PKG 24.

Ma nenzaglaa bie mang kpi la *Ka ba yeli ka soɔbang nyɔge;* *Ka soɔba bie meng nang kpi;* *Ang meng nyɔge ona?* (Yabang, 1981, p. 26, verse 24)	When somebody's child dies And they say that a witch has snatched him/her; When the witch's child also dies; Who also took that one? (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 22)

As described in previous chapters, there are almost always considered to be multiple causes of death, the immediate, the efficient, and the ultimate (Bagah, 1995, p. 187). The efficient cause refers to the person thought to be behind the death, often a witch, sorcerer, or someone who placed a curse. Witch accusations are rather common. As mentioned in previous chapters, even deaths that on the surface appear completely natural are traced back to a witch or other source. Most of those accused of witchcraft are elderly people, particularly women, whose spouses have died, or elderly people who have survived when many younger members of their extended family have passed on. These accusations can lead to isolation, hostility, banishment, and, in the past, execution (Kuwabong, 1990). This dirge is a satiric riddle that prompts the listener to think before jumping to the conclusion of witchcraft as the cause of death.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, because of their role, the *gɔbaa* is very persuasive. This ability may change the mind of the bereaved into not thinking of the child's death as caused by witchcraft. This also challenges the bereaved's event memory, reminding them that they are not the only ones who have suffered the loss of a child, and even those who they label as witches may have gone through similar tragedies.

Kuori Gyilbie (Funeral Dirge Texts)

DKG 3.

Zampong nyonkasom *Kyɛ ko seɛne;* *Zampong nyonkasom* *Kyɛ ko seɛne* (Yabang, 1981, p. 2 (verse 3))	Prickly hedgehog But killed a porcupine Prickly hedgehog But killed a porcupine

This rather simple dirge is actually a complex allegory. First consider the image of these two animals, the hedgehog and the porcupine. Not only is the porcupine much larger than the hedgehog, it is also more dangerous. Porcupines have quills that are loosely rooted, easily detaching and becoming embedded in an attacker (Everson, 2015). These quills are barbed. Hedgehogs, in contrast, have unbarbed spines that are firmly embedded in the skin and undetachable. Their methods of defense against predators also contrast: the hedgehog uses its quills as body armor, rolling up into a spiky inedible ball. The porcupine, however, has quills that detach, and can also "shoot" these quills to injure an attacker from a distance.[24] Even a loud shout can stop a hedgehog in its tracks.

[24] It is commonly said that porcupine "shoot" their quills, but they actually shake them off, as they are loosely attached, which gives the appearance of the quills being "shot out" (Everson, 2015).

Knowing these characteristics of the hedgehog and porcupine, the image painted by this dirge seems improbable; compared to the porcupine, the hedgehog seems relatively weak or harmless, yet it managed to kill a porcupine.

This dirge contains implied analogies comparing people to the two animals, one of which is the deceased as the porcupine. The characteristics of the porcupine, when translated to a human, are praiseworthy. This dirge implies that the deceased was a strong man, a protector, and a warrior; traditionally, both hunting and warfare were done using arrows, of which the quills are a metaphor. If the porcupine is a metaphor for the deceased, then the hedgehog is a metaphor for the human agent behind his demise.

This dirge is actually a Dagaare proverb, which is also found in a song by Yidaana Small (see Appendix), with the lyrics of:

Zampong ko seɛne;	Hedgehog kills porcupine;
O mabie k'o ko	It is his mother's child he has killed
Pontiri ko longa;	Toad kills frog;
O mabie k'o ko	It is his mother's child he has killed

Indeed, from a visual standpoint, the hedgehog and porcupine can be seen as "siblings". This leads to the idea that the person behind the death was a relative of the deceased. This relative is someone unexpected, someone considered to be weaker or harmless in comparison to the deceased. This dirge, as stated by Yabang (1981) is one that gives hints as to the efficient cause of death, the members of the community behind the death (Goody, 1962, p. 210).

The use of the hedgehog to represent the one behind the death also implies that this relative is a witch (*soɔba*). Among the Dagaaba, it is known that witches can disguise themselves by

wearing the hide of a number of dangerous animals, such as birds, bats, snakes, and hedgehogs[25] (Bagah, 1995, p. 140). This dirge both exposes that a relative, someone you would not expect, was behind this man's death along with the fact that this relative is a witch.

Upon hearing this, the bereaved, after the funeral, may go to a diviner to inquire about who was behind the death.

Structurally, this text is relatively straightforward, with two lines repeated. This continuous restatement as it is played leaves a deep impression on those who understand; as said in earlier chapters, people are most likely to believe the *gɔbaa* or *kongkono* when they make such a statement. Knowing the cause of death also aides in healing the fact memory of the bereaved (Nwoye, 2022).

The word used to describe the hedgehog is particularly descriptive. The adjective *nyonkasom* cannot be translated directly into English, but the concept describes something like a clump of spikes, such as a bunch of spiky, thick bushes or bramble. Another explanation is when one gathers leaves and bramble into a heap. This describes the nature of the hedgehog's spikes, their density and spikiness. There is also the use of assonance of both /a/ and /o/ in *zampong nyonkasom*, which adds to the rhythmic cadence of the dirge.

[25] It is said that if a hedgehog is crossing one's path, you shout "*Ng piili ng zampong*!" If the hedgehog freezes, it is a real hedgehog; however, if it continues moving, it is a witch that is in disguise. A few minutes later, the witch will cross your path again as a slightly larger and more ferocious animal. This will continue. The way to defeat the witch is by throwing soil or sand at it.

DKG 11.

Bamoɔ nyɔge bontuo, *A naa de lɔɔ bare;* *A naa de lɔɔ bare;* *Kyɛ bare k'o nyɔge o dong* (Yabang, 1981, p. 3, verse 11)	Bamoɔ catches an evil thing, They should have thrown it away They should have thrown it away But left it and it bit him

Bamoɔ refers to a hunting dog (literal translation *ba* (dog) *moɔ* (bush)). This dirge implies that the deceased was responsible for his own death, comparing it to a hunting dog who catches something dangerous, such as a venomous snake, and instead of letting it go or killing it, holds onto it until it bites him, leading to its demise.

This can imply that the deceased went and committed some evil or broke a taboo and this resulted in his death. It could also imply that he saw that something bad was happening in the family, and, instead of being proactive and getting rid of the problem, allowed it to continue.

The bereaved will reflect on what caused the deceased's demise. This could make them mourn more at the preventable nature of the death, if only the deceased had acted differently. It may also help them accept that the deceased was responsible for his own death. This dirge can serve as a warning to others that this could happen to them if they are not careful. The repetition increases the feeling of regret at their actions.

DKG 52.

Gang saanaa naabo la	It is the broken/spoiled/weakened cow pen's cow
Ka gbengnime nyɔgra;	That the lion catches
Gang saana naabo la	It is the broken/spoiled/weakened cow pen's cow
Ka gbengnime wollo lɛ	That the lion makes uneasy
(Yabang, 1981, p. 10, verse 52)	

This dirge uses symbolism to represent the situation that caused the demise of the deceased. The cows are representative of the household of the deceased, and the cow pen representative of not their physical home, but the spiritual protection that is provided by *ngmeme*, the ancestors, and tutelaries. The lion is a representation of death. There is a saying that "Ma dang kpine mang wegi ka nanne nye zo kpe sogle (Only after one's protective walls have cracked that scorpions can find a place to hide in his house)" (Bagah, 1995, pp. 128-129). Among the Dagaaba, transgression of spiritual or moral code have repercussions that involve divine intervention in the form of illness or *biripuore*, the withdrawal of protection. On the levels of cause of death, Bagah (1995) writes:

> The ultimate causal level is conceptualized within the understanding that if a transmitting and/or efficient agent can penetrate the protective walls of ancestor spirits, gods, living-dead and tutelaries, then these protective powers must have withdrawn their protection . . . Manlarla believe that before these powers withdraw or relax their protection, something grievous must have compelled it (p. 170).

Once this protective shield, like the cow pen, is withdrawn, that is when malevolent spirits and evil human agents, such as witches, can exert their supernatural power (Bagah, 1995; Goody, 1962).

After consulting with a Dagaare expert, the use of "wollo" may be an error during the typing of the manuscript. The closest word would be *wolowolo*, which means restive, of which a synonym is uneasy (Ali, Grimm, & Bodomo, 2021). Using this translation, the dirge can be interpreted as this withdrawal of spiritual protection making the rest of the bereaved uneasy, as they may now also be easy targets. It could be that there have been many sudden deaths with no explanation until now. There is also the saying "Ka deo ba ire fo wala ka yenge na nye fo? (If the "house" doesn't deliver you how can the "outside" get you?)" (Bagah, 1995, p. 143). A member of one's household's behaviour could lead to the withdrawal of spiritual protection for the entire household, leading to various illnesses and even death. This dirge implies that there is someone in the deceased's household, maybe even the deceased themselves, who has disrupted the relationship with protective spirits. This dirge may prompt the bereaved to look within at their own behaviour or consult with a diviner to see what they have done to cause this withdrawal of protection. Things such as breaching a taboo, making a false oath against a god, and behaving contrary to custom are actions that lead to this withdrawal (Bagah, 1995). This may enable them to repair this relationship with the spirits and reinstate their protected status.

It was also suggested by the expert that the word *worro* in place of *wollo* makes more sense. *Worro* means "gathering, collecting (in heaps)". This creates parallelism between the second and fourth lines as a form of restatement.

This dirge also serves as a warning to others listening of the real consequences of immoral behaviour.

DKG 40.

Bikpeeb paala nang hĩĩne	The new orphan sits and heaves
Bikpeeb koraa enga maaɛ	The old orphan is at peace
Bikpeeb paala zeŋ sigre	The new orphan sits and quakes
Bikpeeb koruu eŋa maŋ wɛ	The old orphan is at peace
Bikpeeb paala zeŋ miine	The new orphan sits and shivers
Bikpeeb koruu eŋa maŋ na	The old orphan is at peace
Bikpeeb paala zeŋ figre	The new orphan sits and quivers
Bikpeeb koruu eŋa maŋ wɛ	The old orphan is at peace
(performed by Bergyire; see Appendix) (Yabang, 1981, p. 8, verse 40)	

If interpreting this as the bereaved being the child(ren) of the deceased, the new orphan is the bereaved. Even if one is an adult, after a parent has passed, technically one becomes an "new" orphan, and dirges in this theme will be played at the parent's funeral. The old orphan may be a euphemism for the deceased; most likely their parents have already passed on, making them an orphan from time. The dirge contrasts the state of the old versus new orphan's emotional states. For those experiencing fresh grief, the description of the new orphan's behaviour would parallel that of the bereaved at the funeral. If interpreting the old orphan to be the deceased, the dirge is stating that they are finally at rest.

This may also be used to comfort the deceased if interpreting the old orphan as someone who has been an orphan for a long period of time. The dirge insinuates that as time passes, the new orphan will attain the same peace that the old orphan is experiencing. The pangs of grief that the bereaved are experiencing will lessen over time, and they will be able to make peace with the passing of the deceased. This helps to heal their prospective memory (Nwoye, 2005). This dirge may also provoke sympathy in other mourners who may be "old" orphans themselves, reminding

them of their own grief when they initially were orphaned. This shared identity as being orphans promotes solidarity in the community to support the bereaved.

PKG 30.

Yɛ dang nyɛ nenfaa *Ka ba lɔɔ bare?* *Yɛ ba bang ka nenfaa* *Ka bam ang taa!* (Yabang, 1981, p. 21, verse 30)	Have you ever seen a bad person That they have thrown away? Don't you know that it is the bad person That they keep?

The Dagaaba worldview revolves around a complex web of relationships and interrelationships. As sung in a similar dirge by Bergyire, "*Fu ni faa sa a kpor wɛ*" (Your bad relative is better than empty grave) (Kyoore, 2018, p. 167). This can be interpreted as being a general reflection on society. It is better to have a bad relative than to have none at all. As the Dagaaba philosophy states, "*N'taan be, mang be* (We are, therefore I am)". Society relies upon the cooperation of the majority.

This may imply that the deceased was someone who was not well-liked, but this dirge reminds the funeral attendees that their death is still a loss to the family and the community. The bad person may also end up being useful. For example, someone who is disliked for being aggressive may end up being a key defender if the family is attacked. All people have merit; there is some use in everyone. Even if you think you would be better off without someone, it's better that they be alive than dead. There is copious use of alliteration with /a/ throughout this dirge, and symploce is *Yɛ . . . nenfaa*.

KG 13.

Neng-yaga waa nga *Kpankyãã meɛlong* *Ngmena na wa la* *Ka a zaa suori kari* (Yabang, 1981, p. 29, verse 13)	Many people are just like Autumnal dew drops The sun will come And they will all drop kari. (Kuwabong, 1990, p. 21)

This dirge acts as a reflection on the destiny of man. The dirge compares people to dew drops, which can be seen as countless. *Kpankyãã* is the time between October and November, after the rains have stopped and as the harmattan approaches. This period is marked by strong winds. The adverb "*kari*" cannot be directly translated into English. "*Kari*" is an ideophone that mimics the sound that unripe fruits make when they fall off the tree. For instance, strong winds during *Kpankyãã* are known to knock off the final unripe fruits of trees. The use of "*kari*" brings with it the metaphor of those who die as unripe fruit. People who have not yet reached the end of their life will die. The sun refers to Death; traditionally, it is believed that *Dapare* lies somewhere to the west, the direction in which the sun sets (Kuukure, 1985, p. 121). If the sunset represents Death, then the sunrise would represent life; when the sun rises, the dew sitting atop of leaves and grass evaporates, disappearing, in reference to the end of life in general. This dirge is a reflection on how many people die before they have "ripened", reached maturity, or old age. This acts as a reminder that everyone will die, and that the bereaved are not under any special threat; death is something everyone will experience.

Untitled, source from Yabang (n.d.).

Kɔɔ deɛ daangmane	That you should get a calabash of pito
Kɔɔ deɛ daangmane	That you should get a calabash of pito
Ka dɔndɔmang wa boɔra for bɛrɛbo	When an enemy wants to poison you
Kɔɔ deɛ daangmane	That you should get a calabash of pito
Ka- dɔndɔmang wa boɔra for beɛbeɛ/eebo	When an enemy wants to harm you
Kɔɔ deɛ daangmane	That you should get a calabash of pito
(Kuwabong, 1990, cf. Yabang)	(Kuwabong, 1990, p. 23)

This dirge is performed at the funeral of someone who is suspected to have been poisoned. Pito is traditionally drank in a calabash, a dried half gourd that acts as a bowl or cup, and is therefore an opportunity for someone to slip in poison as it is uncovered. Someone who suspects that an enemy is trying to poison would be wise to not go and drink pito in an open area, or to accept a calabash of pito from certain people. In a way, this dirge chastises the deceased for not having the wisdom to be careful of poisoning.

A similar dirge as performed by Bergyire (see Appendix) goes as follows:

Zene bɛnɔnɛ kɛ zene dââ	In the presence of enemies you drink pito
(4 times in different tones)	(4 times in different tones)
Lɛna bɛnɔnɛ de fu tiɛru	Allow enemies to know your thoughts
	(Kyoore, 2018, p. 145)

People may congregate at “bars” to drink pito and chat. This dirge again refers to the foolishness of the deceased, or the listener, to be willingly make oneself vulnerable in the presence of enemies. Particularly if one is drinking the alcoholic pito, one is more likely to reveal information that could be detrimental for the wrong people to know. Allowing the enemy to know your thoughts is handing them the information they need to destroy you. This acts as a warning to listeners to be cautious.

Conclusion

This is only a tiny fraction of the number of *gyilbie* that exist among the Dagaaba, most of which have not been recorded or transcribed. *Gyilbie* serve as emotionally stimulating social commentary that can both aide in cathartic crying and give comfort to the bereaved. This chapter attempted to briefly analyze a few *gyilbie* that have been transcribed. Using the concept of ethnopoetics, the *gyilbie* were analyzed within the Dagaaba cultural context, and this background was used to look at the psychological and sociological ramifications of their performance. *Gyilbie* contain the cultural, religious, and philosophical concepts of the Dagaaba.

As stated in previous chapters, the bereaved are those who most need to go through the grieving process in order to restructure their attachment to the deceased. The dirge performance creates a space for the bereaved and others to express emotions at a level that is not considered socially appropriate in normal circumstances. The social niche in which participants find themselves influences their solidarity crying with the bereaved, as the sound of the xylophone, along with the messages being conveyed by the *kongkonibo* and *gɔbaa,* and the behavioural memory of this communal mourning within this community compels and influences the funeral participants to also mourn.

The centrality of the funeral dirge performance gives the participants a shared focus of attention, and with this shared attention, a stronger collective emotional experience (Knottnerus, 2014). This performance acts not only as a means of creating a collective emotional experience, but also serves to reiterate tradition, morals, and norms of the society, in the end creating an atmosphere and feeling of belonging among attendees. This in itself assists in the healing of the bereaved. Importantly, we must not forget the spiritual aspect of this performance; the deceased

also relies on the dirge performance to appeal to the ancestors of their worthiness to enter *Dapare*.

This chapter examines *gyilbie* in isolation from *kongombie*. In order to fully describe the impact of the dirge performance, both would need to be analyzed at once. However, this is beyond the scope of this research.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Summary of Research

The purpose of this study was to analyze how the Dagaaba dirge performance aides in the healing of the bereaved. The study was done using an interdisciplinary approach combining African psychology, sociology, and literature, namely ethnopoetics. The research was completed through participant observation of funerals in Ghana (Nanville), in-depth interviews with five xylophone experts (*gɔribe*), and a review of literature relevant to the Dagaaba, specifically their funeral rituals. In order to summarize the results of this research, I will answer each of the objectives listed in the introductory chapter.

How does the social, psychological, and spiritual experience in Dagaaba culture contextualize the structure and function of funeral rituals?

Among the Dagaaba, social, psychological, and spiritual experiences are co-occurring and interdependent. There is a great focus on balance in relationships with the physical world, the social world, and the spirit world. This interdependent ontology plays a role in the importance of kinship among the Dagaaba. One not only has to maintain relationships with the living, but also with the dead. Ancestors are believed to play an important role in the lives of the living, with the power to intercede for their living relatives or to punish them. Death disrupts the ongoing system within which the deceased was integrated, threatening the structure of the community as a whole. The funeral rituals are performed in part for the living bereaved and in part for the deceased, in order for those involved to move on to their new social roles. Until the final funeral rites, the deceased if believed to still be hanging around as a ghost (*teŋkpiine*); without the performance of the funeral rites, the deceased is trapped in between the physical and spiritual realms. The

Dagaaba believe that if the funeral rites are not carried out properly, the deceased may become a malevolent ghost (*kogii*) that punishes those responsible, leading to illness or even death.

The biggest event of a Dagaaba funeral is the dirge performance, which occurs continuously through the night for at least two days. The ritual space created by the dirge performance focuses the attention of funeral attendees, the content aligning the collective emotion of the group. The *gɔribe* and *kongkonibo* have the role of inducing mourning behaviour or relaxing the tense atmosphere. The themes explored in xylophone dirges (*gyilbie*) and sung dirges (*kongkombie*) are similar, of course, the main focus is on loss, but they also act as social commentary on issues of morality, cultural norms, praise, history, and criticism.

The dirge performance provides an opportunity for cathartic crying while also demonstrating community support for the bereaved. The bereaved is able to express the depth of their grief while being cared for by "containers" who ensure that they do not cause harm to themselves or others. The dirges also encourage solidarity crying with the bereaved, with the collective emotion amplifying the effect of the dirges and leading to more mourning. The presence of numerous attendees, as custom encourages people to attend the funerals of those they know, even if just by sight, increases the feeling of solidarity within the community, particularly for the bereaved, creating the image of a large support system that will assist them in adjusting to the loss.

How do the linguistic, literary, and musical elements of Dagaaba funeral dirge interact with social, psychological, and spiritual experiences of the Dagaaba?

Even just the sound of the *gyil* can activate people's memory and the emotions they associate with it. In the southern Dagaaba, the *gyil* is almost exclusively used for funeral dirge performances. The *gyil* acts as a speech surrogate, layering its poetry with that of the chanted

dirges into a multi-layered poetic performance. The content of dirges are entrenched in Dagaaba culture. Through the use of myth, allegory, proverbs, and imagery of the local flora and fauna, the dirges are able to have a powerful impact on the listener who understands. As Yabang (1981) writes, there are many different roles that the dirges play in the psyche of those who understand. Buried within metaphor and allegory, the *gɔbaa* can hint at the cause of death, criticize the deceased or their family, critique society, and praise the deceased. As a highly respected member of the community, a *gɔbaa*'s word is considered seriously, giving them influence in the thought processes of the community. The continuous cycle of dirge performance throughout a funeral makes the playing of the *gyile* an essential aspect of the soundscape that is culturally necessary for mourning.

The ancestors are also believed to be present at the dirge performance, and therefore the performance acts as a report that elaborates on the deceased's strengths and weaknesses. This performance is considered essential for a funeral to be considered properly done.

How does the performance of Dagaaba funeral dirge function within the wider theory of community participation in grief?

The performance of funeral dirge embodies two aspects of Nwoye's (2022) community participation in grief work in Africa, solidarity crying and promotion of positive cognition. The themes expressed in the dirges touch the hearts of attendees and encourage them to mourn in solidarity with the bereaved, even if not for the deceased. The collective emotionality of the funeral event is increased and sustained with these performances. At a certain point, dirges that encourage and comfort the bereaved are also performed to improve their mental state and for them to begin redefining their attachment to the deceased.

Contemporary Issues

This thesis describes the ideal funeral performance from historical perspective. However, there have been changes to the funeral performance over the past few decades that are concerning, mainly the condition of the *gyile*, their construction, and a decline in the number of *gɔribe* from the southern Dagaaba.

Maintenance and Construction of Gyile

Some of the interviewees expressed concern about the state of a lot of the *gyile* that they have seen; many have not been properly maintained, with the keys being held together haphazardly with rope instead of leather. I myself have also witnessed this both in person and in videos available online. This greatly impacts the sound produced by the *gyile*, decreasing the efficacy of the performance. There is also a lack of people who have inherited the technique of building the *gyil*. Although they may learn, there is no financial reason to do such laborious work, and thus many with the skill do not pass it on as they also work to sustain themselves.

> . . . [T]he xylophones themselves are no longer well maintained anyways because the older people who used to do it, they are all dying and the young people don't care . . . In my family now, I don't even know if anybody can carve one; probably I will be one of the last who know how to do it . . . (IL interview, 2023)

Decline in Number of Gɔribe

A common complaint heard from both interview participants and in general conversation with other Dagaaba is the decline in the quality of the funeral dirge performance. One participant even described them as "mediocre" and "rubbish".

> . . . [M]y family used to be a lot of strong gɔbire but, as time goes they are all gone to school they don't care, so [the performance is] getting diluted . . . the quality is *hugely* declining (IL interview).

Another reason mentioned by interview participants was the lack of *kpankpol/kponkolo*, which are a type of in ground xylophone. A hole is dug and loose keys are placed on top. This is where children initially begin their exploration of playing the xylophone, until they reach a level to begin playing the *gyil*. These use to be found all over villages, but according the the *gɔribe* interviewed, they are no longer around. This appears to be important for the initial early exposure to the *gyil* as *gyile* are only brought out for funerals among the southern Dagaaba. Limited use, along with time constraints due to the formal education system, and no ease of access to *kponkolo* are all factors that have led to the decline in the number of *gɔribe*.

Another important factor is the lack of a formal training method. As mentioned previously, the method of learning is largely independent and done through constant observation and practice.

Formalized Music Education

In my discussions with *gɔribe*, there is a consensus that there now needs to be a formal system created for teaching the *gyil*. An example to follow may be the late Bernard Woma, who opened the Dagara Music Center in Medie, Accra, Ghana.

Future Research

More dirge performances need to be recorded for posterity; if people have worried about the decline in the quality of performance over the past decades, there is no better time to record what is left than now. Recordings, transcriptions, and translations would provide a physical record of some of the countless *gyilbie* that exist. For clarity, it would be ideal to record outside the funeral

context to clearly hear the *gyile* in isolation, however many do not feel comfortable performing these dirges outside of their context.

Conclusion

This thesis only scrapes the surface of the complexity of Dagaaba funeral dirge performance, but it provides an ethnography of the Dagaaba and the structure and function of the dirge performance. More research still needs to be done, especially among the southern Dagaaba. In conclusion, the Dagaaba funeral dirge performance is an essential and important cultural phenomenon that is critical to the proper processing of grief.

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Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of Ritual Theory Presented Here. From “Behavior, Belonging, and Belief: A Theory of Ritual Practice,” by D. A. Marshall, 2002, *Sociological Theory, 20*, 360-380. Copyright 2002 by American Sociological Association.

Figure 2. Distribution of Dagaree Speakers. From “Dagaare Language,” by Wikipedia.

Figure 3. Map of Nadowli-Kaleo District. From “2010 Population & Housing Census: Nandowli-Kaleo District,” by Ghana Statistical Service, 2010, *2010 Population & Housing Census: District Analytical Report: [name of District Or Municipal Assembly], 217*. Copyright 2014 by Ghana Statistical Service.

Figure 4. Photograph of a lo-gyil. Adapted from *Plattenxylophon, Ko Gyilli, Kogyil, Gyil, Jolõbuo*, by S. Eckardt, 2011, Wissenschaftliche Sammlungen der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. sammlungen.uni-goettingen.de/object/record_kuniweb_676143

Figure 5. Alex Woma performing on a daga-gyil at the Kukur Bagr Festival, 2018. Adapted from *Alex Woma performing at the Kukur Bagr Festival,* by M. Aubeuf, 2021, YouTube. youtube.com/watch?v=eSGVFwlbP0

Figure 6. Naa Chiir Konkuu Der on the catafalque, 1999. From *1999: Funeral of Naa Chiir Konkuu Der*, by Nandom Video Diary, 2016, YouTube. youtube.com/watch?v=SwUi6zZ1N70&t=2258s

Figure 7. Closer view of Naa Chiir Konkuu Der on the catafalque, 1999. From *1999: Funeral of Naa Chiir Konkuu Der*, by Nandom Video Diary, 2016, YouTube. youtube.com/watch?v=SwUi6zZ1N70&t=2258s

Figure 8. A picture of bereaved family members who are labelled. From "Death and Funeral Rites of the Dagara People of Ghana in the Celebration of the Roman Funeral Liturgy: An Approach towards Inculturation" by F. T. Gbal, 2013.

Figure 9. Cover of the liturgical programme for the funeral of Most Rev. Gregory Ebo Kpiebaya, Archbishop Emeritus of Tamale, by D. Kuwabong, 2024.

Figure 10. Liturgical programme showing the schedule for traditional mourning at the funeral of Most Rev. Gregory Ebo Kpiebaya, Archbishop Emeritus of Tamale, by Delimwini Kuwabong, 2024.

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APPENDIX

Links to each video are provided as well as all videos in this appendix can be found in order in a YouTube playlist:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNQx4IriHrKRxu2eygQSw2pA6hBdbuEdq&si=yfmU2awf6E50U3H7

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj0lIfJJLtk&ab_channel=Jean-JacquesRAPINE

Video 1. Good Friday service among the Dagara in Burkina Faso. Funerailles Dagara (Jean-Jacques Rapine, 2007). The chanting of dirges during the Catholic mass can be seen, as well at the traditional dancing in lines towards the cross, which represents where the *paala* would be.

youtube.com/watch?v=iHQLDSpUlfs

Video 2. Kpegruu/kpeghuu dance by the Bawaala of Kaleo and Nanville (Tuumpani TV, 2022).

youtube.com/watch?v=xnwGF5z9amo

Video 3. The people of Lawra dancing Kobine at the occasion of Fr. Paul Donnibe's Thanksgiving Mass on 13 August 2017 (Better World Today, 2018).

youtube.com/watch?v=pxN0GJtYI2w

Video 4. Wa funeral of Janet, the wife of the appeal court judge Lord Zubaru (Austin C. Pruett, 2018). Among the second group of performers, the one furthest left on the screen is clearly marked as a family member by the cloth wrapped around his arm.

https://youtu.be/Zhi_Sb8h59Q?si=sfDSfPIi3HcQVV1G

Video 5. Woman singing dirge under the paalaa at the funeral of Doris Fuseina, who died immediately after childbirth, in Nanville, 2021 (Banzie, 2022). From "A study of contemporary performance of lagne (dirges) among the Nanvillee of upper west region, Ghana," by D. Banzie, 2022.

https://youtu.be/OjxHO9g2Pck?si=ol71KH9VAXJVPlM1

Video 6. A video providing captions to a song performed by *gɔbaa* Bergyire in the 1980s as an example to demonstrate speech surrogacy with the xylophone (as seen on pp. 73-74).

https://youtu.be/dd6hfuhI7ZY?si=IiORquWI6jqg3rlr

Video 7. Dagaaba Funeral Lagni at Sankana by Nanvillee.

Captioned video of a solely men's dirge performance at the funeral of a woman from Nanville who had married to Sankana. Adapted from "A study of contemporary performance of lagne (dirges) among the Nanvillee of upper west region, Ghana," by D. Banzie, 2021.

https://youtu.be/n83QNnb961U?si=Vst3oSF8cXS8v7tk

Video 8. A captioned video of a mixed gender dirge performance with female *kongkonibo* in 2021 at the funeral of Edward Nanbigne. Adapted from "A study of contemporary performance of lagne (dirges) among the Nanvillee of upper west region, Ghana," by D. Banzie, 2021.

https://youtu.be/P7Xz7ZCx5zs?si=ZRiUahZJ9nadbKhy

Video 9. Excerpts from Malidoma Somé's funeral in Dano, Burkina Faso. Malidoma Somé (1956-2021) was a medicine man and diviner in the Dagara culture, as well as a professor and teacher of tribal traditions. In the video, his wife (the tall woman wearing black) can be seen exhibiting mourning behaviours such as dancing and running towards the paala. She is closely followed by her containers and other women who dance in solidarity with her. Other dances can also be seen. Adapted from the YouTube video "Funeral ritual for Malidoma Patrice Somé" by The BARKA Foundation, 2022.

The full video can be found here: youtube.com/watch?v=relsnFj5HLg

youtube.com/watch?v=TPHMNhEq1TQ&t=2s

Video 10. Kakube Festival 1999. Here one can see a variety of funeral dances performed (Nandom Video Diary, 2015).

https://youtu.be/ES2PCRW95OU?si=SYsAFDyDK6IKq2sl

Video. 11. The “lang-ne” dance of the central Dagaaba (Dakurah Bie, 2023). Note that the dirge performance itself also called lagni/lagne.

https://youtu.be/ia1yd7Lh-_Y?si=cxiM2s9ZNX9usPgA

Audio 1. Yidaana Small Track 2, recorded 1994, a portion of which is seen on page 113 (DKG 3). Excerpt heard from 0:35 to 0:46.

https://youtu.be/BXMOtJiX2Z8?si=zv79bSjacG08CGue

Video 12. Excerpt of a xylophone performance by Bergyire as seen on page p. 119 (DKG 40). Adapted from “B3kuon3 Tugzi3 Berdijere Mixed” by Jean de Dieu SOME, 2018, on YouTube.

https://youtu.be/6kwaCzjKPvU?si=MR8dw9fQigWyNGZd

Video 13. Captioned video of dirge performance by Berygire as seen on p. 122. Adapted from "Bergyire-part 1," by Lewiz Zinia, 2020, on YouTube.

Lyrics with translation:

Zene bɛnɔnɛ kɛ zene dââ	*In the presence of enemies you drink pito*
(4 times in different tones)	*(4 times in different tones)*
Lɛna bɛnɔnɛ de fu tiɛru	*Allow enemies to know your thoughts*
Dagara e Dagara la	*Dagara poke fun at Dagara*
Wooh wooh wooh wooh	*Wooh wooh wooh wooh*
Zene bɛnɔnɛ kɛ zene dââ	*In the presence of enemies you drink pito*
Zene bɛnɔnɛ kɛ zene dââ	*In the presence of enemies you drink pito*
Pââ bɛlnyɛ pââ bɛlnyɛ	*Just look at this, just look at this*
Nyɛ nibɛ mnɛa	*Look how people are*
Nyɛ nibɛ mnɛa, pââ bɛlnyɛ	*Look how people are, just look at this*
Nyɛ nibɛ mnɛa, huuh huuh	*Look how people are huuh huuh*
Zene bɛnɔnɛ ɛ zene dââ	*In the presence of enemies you drink pito*
Zene bɛnɔnɛ man fu yel za	*In the presence of enemies, you reveal all your secrets*
Lɛna bɛnɔnɛ de lɛ kun fu	*Then enemies use them to kill you*
Naamwin yel Naamwin yel	*God said it, God said it*
Tengan yel	*Mother Earth said it*
Zene bɛnɔnɛ zene saab	*Eating porridge in the presence of your enemies*

Mɛ fu taa nyɛ bɛnɔnɛ ɛ zene dââ	*You saw enemies, yet holding pito in their presence*
Bɛ ye kyɛ bɛ ye kyɛ	*They say, they say*
Zene bɛnɔnɛ man fu putiɛru	*In the presence of enemies, you reveal all your thoughts*
Lɛna bɛnɔnɛ de fu tiɛru huuh aaah	*That's how enemies learn all your secrets*
Mɛ fu taa nyɛ bɛnɔnɛ ɛ zene saab	*You saw enemies and ate porridge in their presence*
Mɛ fu taa nyɛ bɛnɔnɛ ɛ lang nyun dââ	*You saw enemies and drank pito with them*
Bɛ ye kɛa	*They say*
Mɛ fu taa nyɛ bɛnɔnɛ lang dini saab	*You saw enemies and ate porridge with them*
Lɛna bɛnɔnɛ de fu yâ yel	*That's how enemies learn your secrets*
Bɛ ye kyɛ	*They say*
	(Kyoore, 2018, pp. 145-146)