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### STORY-TELLING: A MEMORY AND REMEMBRANCE ACTIVITY IN THE AKAN TRADITION OF GHANA, IN WEST AFRICA



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#### ABSTRACT

*Story-telling in the Akan tradition of Ghana, West Africa, is an oral literature genre handed over orally from generation to generation. It is as old as the Akan state, and occurred usually under the moonlight, but today, it is also found in the afternoon, especially in the schools. Story-telling is best enjoyed when performed. A story-teller needs an audience to perform a great story, normally, since the democratic audience participation system embedded in the performance process, motivates the teller and also enhances the process for all present at the event. The story-teller and the members of the audience are delighted and they leave the event with lessons for life. The stories have a way of delighting, informing and teaching, being sometimes “parables”, or reflections of what goes on in the society, or even historical allusions concerning what went on in the past. In the Akan tradition, these stories are thus folk stories, also called folktales, because they belong to the ethnic group or community; they are publicly-owned. However, a story-teller has to rely on his or her memory to deliver a good story. Yet, a teller recreates the people’s “old” story, by reproducing the internalised skeletal formula, and may bring some transformations, modifications or innovations to bear on an existing publicly-owned story, thereby individualising it. The creative genius of this teller is then called into question. Therefore, story-telling becomes a memory and remembrance affair. This paper uses two Akan folktales from Ghana to demonstrate the use of memory and remembrance in story-telling in Africa. It examines the narrator; narrative-patterns and techniques of narration; performers and performance; and the role of the audience in oral performance.*

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**Keywords:** Story-telling, Akan, Oral literature, *AnansesEm*, Memory and remembrance, Story-teller, Audience.

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#### Contribution/ Originality

The paper’s primary contribution is finding that Akan story-telling is a memory and remembrance activity that goes to reinforce the aesthetic value of the tale as a cherished heritage in Ghana and Africa.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION: STORY-TELLING AS A GENRE

Story-telling plays a vital role among the Akans of Ghana in West Africa. Memory and Remembrance, in turn, play a very important role in Akan story-telling otherwise known as the Akan Folktale (rendition). The tale is from a distant past and belongs to the community but has to be remembered by the narrator who must bring it to life by

recounting it. But then, it needs a good audience to help tell a good story by performing it. The Narrator and the Audience become the performers in the story-telling situation and, for success, a lot depends on the knowledge and skills which will be brought to bear on the process by these, that is, the Narrator and the Audience Participants. The process of telling is a complicated one with roles clearly cut out for the narrator on the one hand and the participants on the other. This paper examines the narrator; narrative-patterns and techniques of narration; performers and performance; and the role of the audience in oral performance, with respect to two Akan folktales. The paper concludes that story-telling in Africa, especially among the Akans of Ghana in West Africa, is a memory and remembrance affair, with the narrative pattern, techniques and the actual roles of narrator and audience mostly embedded in the narration or the story-telling process, which becomes more vivid during performance. The paper is a contribution to African story-telling scholarship. It is recommended that studies on story-telling be intensified at all levels in the various educational institutions as a means of perpetuating and also enhancing the usefulness of the cultural heritage.

## 2. THE NARRATOR IN THE STORY-TELLING PROCESS

The Narrator, also called the Story-teller or Teller in this paper, is the “democratically elected” leader of the particular story-telling performance. He or she is the one charged with the main telling. It is on him/her that the burden of narration rests. Among the Akan groups of Ghana, the Narrator is male or female, young or old. There is no special class of narrators. The Narrator is recognised by the other members attending the session. He or she commands respect but is also expected to prove his/her worth by delivering a good story. The term “story” is interchangeable with “tale” or folktale in this paper. Neely (2014) provides an interesting explanation of “story-telling”. According to her, “story-telling can seem like a lofty, magical topic, but it’s actually one of the simplest, oldest ways to promote anything (p. 2). In the Akan situation, story-telling is actually one of the simplest, oldest ways to promote entertainment and a good moral fibre for the society.

The narrator/story-teller needs to tell a story, not just any story but a good story. These stories come in various kinds among which are the ever popular folktales or the Akan oral narrative commonly known as *Anansesem* (literally meaning Spider Story or Stories). Folktales/story-telling in the Akan tradition should entertain, inform and instruct. These story-telling functions may be conveniently put into two: provision of entertainment and instruction.

Therefore, story-telling must not deviate from these ends. Or it will only be a waste of time as the ignorant person observing its performance might rashly assume. A story told must be believable and, in order to do justice to the story, the story-teller (teller) has a duty to be a skilled person. Story-telling requires a skilled person. Story-telling must be an art. The art of story-telling also requires a story-teller with a good memory and the ability to remember the event underpinning his or her story.

They are events affecting human beings and may touch on almost all aspects of communal life including the social, historical, political, economic, religious and others. They may be old such as the past historical events or new such as topical issues of the current times. Whether events are old or new, it becomes important that the story-teller recounts them as correctly as possible while employing a certain art or skill. The accent here is on art, that is, the art of telling a story and not talking “raw” history, politics or whatever –per se.

So equipped with the core events to rely on and tell the story as a work of art, the story-teller falls on the twin words Memory and Remembrance. Memory- that ability to store knowledge, thoughts, experiences, and the like – and, Remembrance- that ability to recollect stored knowledge, thoughts, experiences and the like. The teller falls on Memory and Remembrance in two main ways: By relying on himself/herself and by relying on the active participation of the listeners who are his/her audience. Memory and Remembrance would be observed to reveal the

importance of Akan story-telling as performance. This is because a story-telling performance brings the narrator face-to-face with the audience who are active participants, invoking the collective memory but also adding freshness to the tradition so that it remains useful.

### 3. THE NARRATION OR THE STORY-TELLING PROCESS

The narration is the main delivery of the story or tale. Story-telling is a dynamic two-way communication activity; it is a process and requires, at least, two people to enact a real performance in the Akan way. The two people as performers become Narrator and Audience, the term Audience referring to the listeners, who are the other member(s) participating in a story-telling session. One may talk of an intrapersonal communication situation, where an individual may choose to tell a story to himself/herself. In the Akan situation, this would be referred to as story-telling/performing with the folk hero the Spider (*Ananse*) who gives the story its name - *Anansesem*, but this is less common and not the focus of this study. Once two or more people are assembled for the story to be performed, there will be the need to assume the roles of story-teller and listener/audience. This means that even if only two people are available for the purpose, one starts as teller and the other becomes the audience. The roles may reverse when the previous teller shifts to become the listener and vice versa. The two perform the story together, from beginning to end while they follow the patterns and techniques from old, even though they are free to introduce fresh ideas or innovations, exhibit knowledge, etc. Needless to say, the more the members available for a performance, irrespective of age, gender, creed, social status, or class, etc., the better and the more interesting and rewarding. It must be noted that, always, only one individual from the group of people starts the story as the teller and the rest become the audience. Since others also are potential carriers have stories to perform, the current teller, is mainly a “*primus inter pares*”. In the real story-telling situation, it is observed that the story-telling activity actually reveals certain interesting aspects of it such as those concerning the narrative patterns and techniques of narration; performers and performance; and the role of the audience in oral performance.

#### 3.1. Narrative Patterns and Techniques of Narration

Akan story-telling is observed to be formulaic. The good Akan story has both content and form relying mainly on stock formula; the nature of the Akan story both in content and form of performance reveal it as containing a carefully designed artistic plan with stock formulas for the opening, the body and the ending.

The Akan story has a content that embraces a situation(s) or context (the setting) and characters who are actors. The Akan story is essentially a narrative of a special kind; it is also drama and poetry and best appreciated when performed. The content deals with a situation(s) and characters that are major and minor in importance. The content also contains songs. The story needs to entertain and or inform but must have a lesson for the audience/society. Usually, the characters are of various kinds-humans and non-humans even though the non-humans are given human qualities and made to represent humans. An Akan story-teller, together with his/her audience, performs the story in such a way as to fulfil the functions/expectations of the story-telling tradition. To do this well, these performers ought to remember the various formulas that have been used since the beginning of the story-telling tradition.

The content structure of the story to be told follows a seven-element pattern or part thereof: a setting depicting an initial circumstance which causes the main character to exit, probably encounter another character or something on the way, and or acquire something. How positively or negatively the hero/heroine applies what has been acquired usually leads to a consequence and the end of the “quest”. The final overall picture as to the actions and inactions of the hero/heroine and the relationship with the other characters spells out the resolution which, in turn, sums up everything and makes a point about the story as a whole. The resolution as the final part of the story told, touches on

the Akan society, culture and general worldview. The seven elements in the structural pattern are: Initial Circumstance(s), Exit, Encounter, Acquisition, Application, Consequence and Resolution (see (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011b; Mireku-Gyimah, 2014)).

The performance of the Akan story entails various techniques occurring throughout the performance, from the beginning, to the middle and the ending and corresponding to the structure of a good composition: with an introduction, a body and a conclusion. A story-teller and the audience must rely on memory and remembrance to fulfil the demands at each stage during the story-telling performance. The techniques to follow are found in the opening, which is a dialogic call and response style; the middle which is filled with intra-narrative songs and/or musical interludes, which may also be accompanied by drumming and dancing, various forms of audience comments, interjections and the final ending formula which the narrator follows to exit properly and allow another participant to smoothly assume the role of narrator and continue with the story-telling performance session.

### 3.2. Performers and Performance

The two people or groups of people at a story-telling session are the performers who become Narrator/Story-teller and Audience at various points at a story-telling performance(s). Most Akan stories are quite short in length but a performance needs time and may consist of only one long story, or few shorter stories, or it can be a session lasting several hours and many participants may get the chance to tell their own stories, some of which could sometimes be different versions of a previous teller's story. Usually, a long story may be told by only one teller, who may be an old respected person or an acclaimed or invited teller. Usually, however, many in the audience also have stories to tell and would participate more actively if they know they will get the opportunity. A story-telling session is and must therefore be democracy in practice. Everyone with a say must have their say once there, by following the established principles. But first and foremost, the story-teller must be chosen and approved. Approval will be seen in the response he/she gets when he/she gives the opening call: We load it on your (own) head which is actually the literal meaning of *yesesa soa wo (ara)*, the corrupted form being "see soaw".

Each party must play its role and play it well in order that the story-telling performance would achieve the standards by meeting the societal expectations demanded of it, and be a success. In other words, the performance must not become a "waste" of time. Thus the narrator's part must be enhanced by recalling what events to weave the story around and which particular kind(s) of character to select and for what reason(s). The narrator recalls what qualities of which characters can best bring out the picture to be created as the story. Memory and remembrance are essential tools in all this.

The narrator/story-teller young or old would be acceptable to the audience at a story-telling performance if the story-teller can follow the style or format for telling stories the Akan way. If the narrator/story-teller is unable to apply the techniques normally used, it is likely that he/she would be told what to do, or say, before he/she can carry on. This means that the narrator/story-teller ought to start with what the formula has been – from old – that is, for generations! He/She must remember to say that which "we have been saying and saying over the years, that is, for generations, in the Akan tradition of story-telling. And this is actually the literal meaning of the actual starting formula: "*Anansesem se see o!*" "*Yense se nse se o!*" This is what we have been saying and saying" (see Mireku-Gyimah (2011a;2011b;2014)).

It would then be observed that story-telling among the Akans of Ghana in West Africa is a means of connecting the present with the past and vice versa; it is a recollection of what existed (yesterday) and what exists (today) and which must continue to exist (tomorrow). The essence is that story-telling must continue in the Akan society because it is an important activity with a crucial role to play in the socio-cultural development of the society. It is first and

foremost an invocation of the collective memory to recollect why the story-telling tradition and how the Akan story must be told.

Apart from this link with the past, story-telling among the Akans is a memory and remembrance activity also because of all the other special laid down formulas. Indeed, in a study of the performance and the techniques of the Akan folktale (AF), the author observes that the tale/story *Anansesem* (literally meaning Spider Story or Stories),

has unique techniques of performance: there is a literary presentation constituting a structured pattern, namely an extradiegetic introduction that sets the ground rules and calls for co-operation of narrator and narratee(s), the main body of the story that enjoins the participation of both narrator and narratee(s), and a decisive conclusion that invites a willing narratee to provide another story. Throughout the introduction, the main body of the story and the conclusion, there are laid down formulas and both narrator and narratee(s) are free to make comments, ask questions, sing *mmoguo* or even dance. It is concluded that the AF has a unique structured pattern of literary presentation and techniques of performance that attract and sustain interest as well as serve as a powerful tool to drive home moral lessons” (Mireku-Gyimah, 2014).

As previously noted, the narrator/story-teller must follow laid-down formula to deliver a good story. No matter how rich the content of one’s story might be, that story cannot be told anyhow, - the story-teller cannot ignore the rules of story-telling. In order to assess the ability of the story-teller to deliver a story to expectation, the story must be performed, not just read as a fluid continuous text. The Akan story is prose but also drama and poetry at the same time. Story-telling is therefore a performance activity, for it is in performance that the skill of a story-teller face-to-face with the audience is best appreciated. The story-teller needs an audience but, again, not just any audience. Interestingly, the audience in the Akan story-telling performance also has a role cut for it as well. The audience is thus active, not passive and, as active participants, they must also follow the “rules” to assist the story-teller to deliver a good story.

### 3.3. The Role of the Audience in the Oral Performance

The members of audience in the Akan story-telling process have an important role to play to help the teller achieve the success of the session as a whole. It is a communal affair where “the actors and audience are co-performers” (Fretz, 1994; Fretz, 2009) even though only one is elected as the teller (“actor”) at any point in time. Memory and Remembrance would affect the story-telling as a performance, that is, where both the story and the audience interact this way to give a good story. First, when the “would-be” story-teller gives the opening call, the audience participants would respond and pledge allegiance, symbolising approval. Thereafter, they become particularly involved in the performance while following the audience roles. Hence, in the Akan story-telling performance/situation the audience is active and the ability to recall communal events, etc. lies with all the members participating in the story performance together with the story-teller. This is true of the participants whether young or old, for these participants are usually knowledgeable and contribute to the success of a story (story-telling performance) in diverse ways, for example, by assisting the story-teller to recall events, names of characters in the original stock of the community’s stories etc. that the current teller, who is only a “*primus inter pares*”, appears to have forgotten (see, for instance, Tale 22: “...”; in Mireku-Gyimah (2011a).

Memory and remembrance become *sine qua non* to both the narrator/story-teller and the audience in the Akan story-telling performance. Both must recall the knowledge, thoughts, experiences, sensations, etc. stored in the mind and use them in the performance. Knowledge of the socio-politico-religio cultural environment of the society as well as those of other places must be brought to bear on their contributions at any particular story-telling session. For

example, knowledge of even animals in the environment and their characteristics become vital since these animals feature mostly in the stories as the characters though given human qualities. Additionally, knowledge of the wise sayings/proverbs becomes important because, sometimes, a proverb captures a situation so vividly that it must be brought in to tighten a point made either by the narrator or a fellow audience participant during the performance of the story. Furthermore, knowledge of songs meant for the interludes (*mmoguo*) and the narrative songs is no less important. But all this knowledge must be backed by memory and remembrance. In the African Akan story-telling situation, it must be recalled from memory; it must be remembered and used when and where necessary.

#### 4. MEMORY AND REMEMBRANCE ILLUSTRATED IN AFRICAN AKAN STORY-TELLING

Memory and remembrance are illustrated in African Story-telling with two folktales. The two tales are very much Akan (Asante) stories, commonly referred to as *Anansesem*, literally meaning spider stories. They are randomly selected from the book published by the author (Mireku-Gyimah, 2011a) *50 Akan Folktales from Ghana: English and Akan Versions*. Saarbrücken: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH, which captures the performance dynamics of Akan story-telling, including audience interactions, especially dialogues between narrator(s) and listeners, thought to “enhance most African performances” and considered much important; a “hallmark” in today’s scholarship (see Fretz (2009)). The paper uses only the English versions of the selected tales, which are Tale 22: “Why *Akyekyede* the Tortoise was the Fastest Runner”, (pp. 139 - 141) and Tale 47: “*Kwaku Ananse* the Spider; *Opuro*, the Squirrel and *Pete*, The Vulture”, (pp. 308 – 310). The performance of these tales was captured on video and audio cassettes, transcribed in Akan and translated into English. Like the other tales in the book, these tales amply typify the use of memory and remembrance in the story-telling tradition among the Akans of Ghana, in West Africa.

##### 4.1. The Tales in Brief

###### **Tale 22: “*Akyekyede* the Tortoise was the Fastest Runner”**

In this story, the father of a young woman, *Akosua Gyamea*, organises a racing competition. The fastest runner in this contest is the one who will be able to touch *Akosua*’s breasts first. Tortoise joins the contest. Slow as he is, he still finds it necessary to take part in the race. The truth is that there is a secret meeting of tortoises and a decision is taken. Subsequently, a group of tortoises are lined up in the bushes up to the finishing point. Eventually, despite its naturally slow nature and running pace, Tortoise emerges the winner over *Sonsɔn* the Gazelle and other famous fast runner. He touches *Akosua Gyamea*’s breasts first and so wins her as his bride.

###### **Tale 47: “*Kwaku Ananse*, the Spider, *Opuro*, the Squirrel and *Pete*, the Vulture”**

In this story, the Squirrel moves on trees and climbers to go in and out of a farm he makes. One day, *Ananse* discovers and cleverly cuts a foot path to the farm. When the *Ananse* and Squirrel clash in the farm, a quarrel ensues between them as to ownership of the farm and they take the case to the chief’s court for settlement. And surely, the farm is wrongly given to *Ananse*. *Ananse* tricks the judges into believing that the farm is his just because he has cut a path that leads to it. However, *Ananse* suffers the same fate when the Vulture takes his turn and, tit for tat, assumes *Ananse*’s own deceitful methods to rob *Ananse* of the same farm’s produce. The moral lesson is “You reap what you sow” but the moral is also captured succinctly in the Akan proverb which says: *Hwimhwim adeɛ kɔ sorɔ sorɔ*, which literally means “Easy come, easy go”. Incidentally, this same proverb is the ending of “The Story of *Ananse* and the Vulture” (Gyesi-Appiah, 28-30), a traditional story which is a parallel of this tale.

#### 4.2. The Tales in Full

##### TALE 22: *AKYEKYEDEE* THE TORTOISE WAS THE FASTEST RUNNER

*Narrator:* Thus says the (folk) tale ...

*Audience:* The onus is on you to tell us...

*Narrator:* It says that:

A certain man married and had a beautiful baby girl delivered for him. The girl's name was *Akosua<sup>1</sup> Gyamea*. (This) *Akosua Gyamea* grew into the most beautiful girl in her town; in fact, she surpassed all the women in the town as far beauty was concerned. The father said he wanted to see who the fastest runner was. He said to his daughter that he would give her hand in marriage to the one who would be the first to run and touch *Akosua Gyamea*'s breast. This one – er – what's his name?

*A Participant (quickly supplies the name):* *Sɔnsɔn* the Gazelle...

*Narrator:* ... (Yes) *Sɔnsɔn* the Gazelle - he was the fastest runner at the time. This and that animal wondered saying, "What can we do?" Tortoise was one of the contestants among many, many animals from the animal kingdom that were in this racing contest. *Adowa* the Royal Antelope was in it too.

*A Child Participant:* I haven't seen one before.

*Narrator:* There were many animals, but the Gazelle was unbeatable while the poorest runner of all was *Akyekyedeε* the Tortoise. Tortoise was the most disadvantaged animal as you can see considering its nature and how very slow it moves: "*kotakotakota*". The animals sang as they raced on and each tried to be the first to go and touch the lady's breast. The song (the chorus is "*Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*") went like this:

*Song:*

*Narrator: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Akosua Gyamea's husband*

*Audience: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Narrator: All animals have gone oo*

*Audience: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Narrator: I shall also go oo*

*Audience: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Narrator continues:* Tortoise and his siblings were wise. Their wisdom lay in how they hid themselves by the roadside. They had attended a meeting and ...

*A Participant (cutting in):* A meeting!

*Narrator:* ... And they planned to hide fellow tortoises by the roadside so tortoise upon tortoise was hidden along the road. As each animal ran past his song was always:

*Narrator: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Akosua Gyamea's husband*

*Audience: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Narrator: All animals have gone oo*

*Audience: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Narrator: I shall also go oo*

*Audience: Konkwan the bird konkwan ee*

*Narrator:* And “Tortoise” also filed past. The animals moved briskly “*Kiri kiri kiri kiri*”. Tortoise would be following and also singing:

*Narrator: The bird Konkwan konkwan ee*

*Akosua Gyamea’s husband*

*Audience: The bird Konkwan konkwan ee*

*Narrator: All animals have gone oo*

*Audience: The bird Konkwan konkwan ee*

*Narrator: I shall also go oo*

*Audience: The bird Konkwan konkwan ee*

*Narrator:* Meanwhile *Sonsɔn* the Gazelle had relaxed and was enjoying the breeze somewhere because he knew he was the fastest and therefore the one who would be able to touch *Akosua Gyamea’s* breast first and get her for a wife.

*An Elderly Participant (laughs):* Ha ha ha ha!

*Narrator:* So as the other animals were seriously running and singing along, he could not be bothered at all; he had taken it all for granted. Now when he arrived at the finishing line, he spotted Tortoise who had appeared there already. Tortoise jumped and landed in between *Akosua Gyamea’s* breasts: “fam”. He therefore got the opportunity to marry – er – what’s the name?-

*A Participant (quickly supplying the name of the girl):* *Akosua Gyamea.*

*Narrator:* *Akosua Gyamea.* It was Tortoise who got *Akosua Gyamea* to be his wife.

Now this tale that I have told you, whether it is sweet or not, let some go and let some come. I call upon so and so to perform the next story.

#### **TALE 47: KWAKU ANANSE, THE SPIDER, OPURO, THE SQUIRREL AND PETE, THE VULTURE**

*Narrator:* According to the tale...

*Audience:* Go on and tell us (*We load it on your head*).

*Narrator:* *Kwaku Ananse* the Spider once had *Opuro* the Squirrel as his very good friend. *Opuro* asked *Ananse* to team up with him to make a farm. But *Kwaku Ananse* said to him that he would not do it, yet he would surely partake in the harvest and enjoyment of the foodstuffs. So *Opuro* went ahead and single-handedly made the farm. *Opuro* used to travel on top of trees to arrive at his farm, and then he would work.

*Audience:* Is that so?

*Narrator:* Gradually, he weeded and made a very big farm. One day, *Opuro* went and requested *Kwaku Ananse* to come and help him work on his farm. *Kwaku Ananse* flatly refused the request saying he would not go. *Opuro* never knew that each time he was going to the farm *Kwaku Ananse* would be watching where he (*Opuro*) would pass to reach there. Thus *Kwaku Ananse* got to know that *Opuro* moved from climbing trees to arrive at his farm. He therefore decided to hatch a diabolical plan against the guy (*Opuro*). So one day when *Opuro* was away *Kwaku Ananse* weeded a path straight to *Opuro’s* farm. Thus *Kwaku Ananse* created a way that led to *Opuro’s* farm. *Opuro*, who never found out about this way to his farm, continued as usual to climb trees to arrive at his farm. He and his children would go to the farm to uproot some tubers from the farm for the preparation of their meals at home. When he arrived in the farm one day, he met *Kwaku Ananse* working over there. Surprised, he said, “So you *Kwaku Ananse*, is that how you are? Someone like you, my close friend, how could you treat me this way?” He (*Ananse*) cheekily replied him with a question saying, “Now, you look here, this farm here, does it belong to you?”. He (*Opuro*) also answered him back saying, “And you does it belong to you?” They finally decided to take the case



before the elders (of the town for settlement). So they did that. The elders enquired from *Opuro* saying "Have you cut a path that leads to your farm?" *Opuro* replied, "No" The question was put to *Ananse* also and he said, "As for me, I have cut a path leading to it." They asked further, "*Opuro*, how then do you go to the farm?" Then he said, "I move from climbing trees to arrive there." They said, "If so, we ascribe ownership of the farm to *Kwaku Ananse* because he is the rightful owner (of the farm)."

*Audience:* Pity! Pity!

*Narrator:* So the elders declared *Kwaku Ananse* the owner of the farm (and gave the farm to him).

*A Participant:* Oh *Kwaku Ananse*. This is cheating! This is cheating!

*Narrator:* So when *Ananse* was given the farm, he went and hired labourers. And they weeded the farm neatly. Then some of the corn matured and he harvested and sold them to retailers of corn ("corn buyers"). He collected the money and put it into a basket. On his way home, he felt the need to respond to nature's call. He hid by the roadside the basket containing the money so that he would take it back when he returned from the toilet.

*A Participant:* Nana (Narrator), hold on to your gun.

*Narrator:* I am holding on.

(The participant starts a musical interlude; the chorus is "Empty Empty Empty Snail Shell").

Musical Interlude:

*Leader:* Empty Empty Empty Snail Shell

*I picked it on my way going*

*Audience:* Empty Empty Empty Snail Shell

*Leader:* I picked it on my way going

*Audience:* Empty Empty Empty Snail Shell

*Narrator:* And so *Kwaku Ananse* hid the money by the roadside so that he would take it back and carry it away when he returned from the toilet. Then he cut some plantain leaves and covered the treasure. So after he covered it he left. However, all the while, unknowing to *Kwaku Ananse*, *Pɛɛ* the Vulture had been perching on a tree. He was watching what *Kwaku Ananse* was doing. Immediately *Kwaku Ananse* left the scene, he also came down and covered the money. So when *Kwaku Ananse* returned, he enquired of him saying, "Ah! My friend, what are you looking for?" He replied "It's my money that you have come to cover. He said, "Look here, it's not yours. It's mine". He said, "Let's seek justice at the chief's court. So they went before the chief. Then the chief interrogated *Kwaku Ananse* saying, "Is the money truly yours?" And he said, "Yes". They asked *Pɛɛ* the same question and he also replied, "Yes". Then they asked, "How did you come by the money?" And he explained saying, "Nana the Chief, I went to sell my goods to retailers. On my way back I left the money by the roadside in order to go to toilet. I meant to take it back when I returned. I returned to find *Pɛɛ* sitting on it." Then he said, "If that is so then we shall assign ownership of the money to *Pɛɛ* and give him the money because he is the rightful owner of the money. No person can leave his or her money behind somewhere and say he or she will go somewhere and come back for it. Therefore the money belongs to *Pɛɛ*". So the money was taken from *Ananse* and given to *Pɛɛ*. This is why we say that "*Hwimhwim adeɛ kɔ sorɔ sorɔ*" literally translated as "A snatcher's property easily disappears."

*A Participant:* Nana (Narrator) please what is the meaning of the wise saying "*Hwimhwim adeɛ kɔ sorɔ sorɔ*"?

*Narrator:* "You go and take and someone else also comes and takes it from you. Or you lose it. (You take something from another through foul means and another person also takes it from you through foul means).

*An Elderly Participant:* If you acquire something in a dubious way without actually working honestly for it, you lose it without even realising it.

*Narrator:* So this, my Spider story, which I have related to you, whether it is sweet or not let some go and let some come. I call upon the one who is prepared to perform the next story.

#### 4.3. Analysis of the Tales With Reference to Memory and Remembrance

It is observed that:

There are two groups of performers: the narrator and the others as members of the audience, who participate actively so the two are co-performers:

In both tales, both performers recall and follow the laid-down formulas while exhibiting knowledge of the socio-cultural environment, including the fauna as follows:

1. They obey the starting Narrator/Audience opening call and response pattern in different ways: Call and Response:

In Tale 22: Thus says the (folk)tale .../ The onus lies on you to tell us (p. 139); and

In Tale 47: According to the tale .../Go on and tell us (We load it on your head) (p. 308).

2. The narrator gives the setting and the characters, noting the natural behaviours or characteristics of the animal characters:

In Tale 22: The two main contrasting characters are given as the Gazelle (*Sɔnsɔn*), the fastest, and the Tortoise (*Akyekyedeɛ*), the slowest; the alliterative ideophone “kotakotakota” is aptly used to describe this slowness and the other qualities associated with it. Another fast animal is mentioned as the Royal Antelope (*Adowa*).

In Tale 47: The two main characters are given that is, the protagonist Squirrel (*Opuro*), a rodent that lives mainly on trees versus the cunning Spider, commonly known as a deceiver, clever liar and cheat (the folk hero).

3. The audience participants respond variously to the events, etc. in the narration:

In Tale 22:

In Tale 47: They empathise with the victim, Squirrel when Spider (*Ananse*) manages to cheat him out of his farm. We hear them shouting “Pity!” “Pity!”, and “Oh Kwaku Ananse. This is cheating! This is cheating! But they also rejoice with Squirrel later and rather jeer at Ananse, when the tables turn and he is cheated back, paid in his own coin.

4. A participant cuts in the narration politely, asking permission to start a musical interlude with the words “Nana (Narrator), hold on to your gun to which the Narrator responds “I am holding on”.

5. The co-performers sing songs:

In Tale 22: The Narrator sings as part and parcel of the narration, but the audience help sing the chorus: Her intranarrative song is repeatedly sung by all to the rhythm of the racing animals’ movement.

In Tale 47: A musical interlude *Mmoguo* is “raised” by a participant and sung by all, recalling the lyrics and rhythm from old literally translated as: “Empty Empty /Empty Snail Shell/ I picked it on my way going” (“*Nwanwen nwanwen nwa nwanwen to -o-o-o/ Meekɔ (merekɔ) na mefaae*”). (There is no intranarrative song in Tale 47, there is no *mmoguo* in Tale 22, but there can also be neither of these songs in a tale, yet both types of songs may be found in a single tale). The co-performers enliven the performance a lot with the songs.

6. Participants Reminding, Teaching and Learning:

7. In Tale 22: A participant quickly supplies missing/forgotten names twice in the Narration: Gazelle and Akosua Gyamea

8. A participant asks and receives explanation of the proverb “*East come easy go*” (“*Hwim hwim adeε kɔ sorɔ sorɔ*”) from Narrator and an “Elderly participant”.
9. The Narrator finally ends his story using the laid down formula: “So this is my Spider story which I have narrated to you. Whether it is sweet or not, let some go and let some come. I call on the one who is prepared to perform the next story” (p. 310) (“*Na m’anansesεm a metoeε yi, sε εye de o, sε εnye de o, ebi nkɔ na ebi mmra. Mede soa deε εbetɔ*” (p. 313) )

## 5. CONCLUSION

The paper has examined Memory and Remembrance in Africa, specifically in the Akan story-telling situation of the Akan Society of Ghana in West Africa. It finds that story-telling is really a performance art requiring the interaction of narrator and audience to succeed. It is concluded that the narration process houses other aspects of the story such as narrative techniques and the role of the performance. It is recommended that story-telling be encouraged the more in educational institutions at all levels in Africa, for Oral Literature, like its written counterpart, is in Africa now a major tool for liberation of the continent from “foreign domination” among other things (“Introduction”, ed. Gikandi (2012)).

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