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ABSTRACT

AFRICAN RHETORIC: ANCIENT TRADITIONS, CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITIES & DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

By

Linford Odartey Lamptey

In this dissertation, I articulate and reclaim African rhetorical traditions and apply an African rhetorical lens for examining how contemporary Ga communities can use digital communications to further cultural practices. I examine ancient Egyptian African rhetorical traditions, exploring the theories and practices of *Maat* so as to articulate themes and characteristics of African rhetoric. I focus on African rhetoric from Ancient Egypt and then highlight some of its practices in contemporary Ghana, including Akan and Ga rhetoric. This dissertation centers and attempts a practice of rhetoric to a local/Indigenous people, The Gas of Ghana, whose cultural and linguistic survival might depend on how they use the Internet and digital technologies to share and celebrate their rhetorics. The Gas, Indigenous to Greater Accra, the capital city of Ghana, have a rich culture similar to the Akans. However, their dwindling population, cycles of poverty, lack of education, and exclusion of their language (Ga) education in the teaching curriculum by successive governments have all contributed to a near-loss of a rich Indigenous cultural heritage. Drawing from interviews with cultural preservationists in Ghana and Ga leaders, I examine how the Gas have used and could use the internet to engage in rhetorical acts of survivance. Some of the research questions shaping this study are: (1) How might minority Indigenous peoples (specifically in this study the Gas of Ghana) use the digital to assert their cultural practices and achieve visibility and survivance? And (2) In what ways can we Africans contribute to the cultural design and decolonizing of our material and digital rhetorics? I apply a combination of local methodological frameworks to understand how local research works with Indigenous communities. These include Indigenous concepts like Sankofa, which means return to the past and fetch from it, Ga *samai* (symbols), decoloniality, Indigenous storytelling. Finally, I close my dissertation by reflecting on the implications of my study for Indigenous technology and cultural studies and for rhetorical theory. This research makes important contributions to decolonial and Indigenous rhetoric, to digital technology studies and technical and professional communication. The African, Indigenous, decolonial rhetorical lens and methodology my dissertation will articulate and then apply to sites of study will help researchers, teachers, and public rhetors consider and create discourses that connect communities across time and space.

AFRICAN RHETORIC: ANCIENT TRADITIONS, CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITIES AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my mother, Henrietta Hazel, and to Miss Mary Keleve who began it all.

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Chapter 1 Overview & Purpose of Study

As a young boy growing up in Accra, Ghana, I participated and witnessed many instances of cultural interactions with communication technologies. We would innovate and create our own kites, for example, combining local innovation with play time in ways replete with meaning and usage for our community. We would use some raw and other materials such as local broomsticks harvested from the leaflets of the palm trees. We would then use individualized strands of the mosquito window net to tie the broomsticks which now form a rhombus-like shape kite and extend the strand of the single window net to create the nose of the kite. It is at the nose that we would have control of the kite in the skies. Open fields in the neighborhood hosted our kites' flying sessions. But kites weren't just for play, our Indigenous innovation was to use the kites for communication. We would fly our kites to invite friends to attend a play session; other children will invite themselves to the field to participate in seeing the kites in the sky. The kites also communication to parents who knew the whereabouts of their kids as they recognized the shape and color of their kids' kites and knew their children were safe and having fun. The kite as technology pushes us to think of ways and how culture, Indigenous practices, simple as they are, can work together. The kite as technology was a way to gather people and create community. Today, this kite principle has evolved into a drone system albeit they have different functionalities and less of community building.

The past shapes and weaves its way to the present. I remember how we used to sit by televisions on Saturday's evening to watch the popular but informative kids' program called By the Fireside. By the Fireside was a reenactment of old folktales through a combination of storytelling and its actual acting repurposed to fit modern times and to teach the youth morality. The folktale is usually called Anansesem, Spider Story or Spider Stories. Ananse, the spider, is the chief character in all the stories. Its terse and didactic nature makes the story appealing to children. By the Fireside was hosted by popular actress, Grace Omaboe (popularly known as Maame Dokono) on Ghana Television, the only state TV broadcasting at this television show served as an example of oral storytelling traditions and contemporary technologies being synthesized. Within the show, the story starts with the narrator, (irrespective of age or status) asking permission of the audience. In the Akan, the opening or invitation goes like this, *Anansesɛm se sɛ o*, which is translated as, The Ananse story says so. The audience responds*, Yɛsesa soa wo*! This could be interpreted in many ways:

- We charge you to tell the tale
- We give you the floor
- The onus is on you

In the Ga language, the narrator invites with a question, "*Mi ta nyɛ aloo mi ka ta nyɛ*" (should I tell you a story or should I not tell you a story?). The audience responds with *ta wo* (tell us a tale) with some exaggerated anticipation and excitement. If the narrator does not get a positive response, there is no telling and the show does not start. While the By the Fireside program reenacted the folktales within contemporary framework, sometimes revising it, the message and purpose stayed the same. For example, in the story of Ananse

and the Wisdom Pot, the pot displays contemporary models. In the story, Ananse sweeps all the wisdom on earth and collects it into one pot. He plans to hang it on top of the tallest tree so that no one would get access to it on earth. He gets to the tree but struggles to climb it. He ties the pot to his stomach and this hinders smooth climbing. Then his son, Ntikuma, who has been watching all along oblivious to Ananse mocks him and suggests to him to rather tie the pot of wisdom to his Ntikuma's back. Ananse initially refuses and demands the son to vacate the scene describing the suggestion as "old-fashioned and impractical." However, after a few unsuccessful attempts at climbing, Ananse reflects and realizes that his son's suggestion is the best. Ntikuma ties the pot to Ananse back who reaches the top of the tree. While at the top, Ananse thinks of himself as a failure since he is not able to collect all the wisdom in the world. After all his efforts in collecting all the wisdom of the world, the son, Ntikuma has wisdom that Ananse has no access to. Consequently, he lets the pot of wisdom down and as it crashes to the earth, wisdom spreads and people start collecting wisdom to be wise. Anyone on earth who never came or made the effort to collect some of the wisdom forever remained without wisdom. The narrator ends the story with,

Me Ananseɛm yi, sɛ ɛyɛ dɛ oo, Sɛ nnyɛ dɛ oo; Mɛkor ama obi aba. Mede soa …which is translated as "this is my story which I have related, if it be sweet or not sweet, take it somewhere else and let some come back to me.". This is a demonstration that storytelling is timeless. It highlights how stories in such societies not only transcend time and space but are not located in central spaces under lock and key. A story teaches a didactic lesson and the above is no exception. It emphasizes the need to eschew greediness and to think about the collective good; that depriving the community of what is valuable will not end well and it is not acceptable. It teaches the young ones the concept of ubuntu which means "I am because we are"). Ubuntu is a South African Zulu proverbial expression that relates to bonding with others. Its full expression goes like this: ubuntu *ngumuntu ngabantu.* This is interpreted as "I am because we are and I am human because I belong" (Mugumbate and Nyanguru, (2013). One's existence is predicated or connected to the existence of others (community). *Ubuntu* emphasizes a philosophical founded ethos in which social relations and or interactions intervene an imbalance relationship or social power structures.

On the basis of this, I propose a symbiotic relationship online as a way of easing tensions online. Symbiotic relations are best expressed in the metaphor:

> The fig tree is pollinated only by the insect *Blastophaga grossorun.* The larva of the insect lives in the ovary of the fig tree, and there it gets its food. The tree and the insect are thus heavily interdependent: the tree cannot reproduce without the insect; the insect cannot eat without the tree; together, they constitute not only a viable but a productive and thriving partnership.

Indeed, there are other stories of Ananse that are far from any didactic lessons, some may recount the cunning and mischievous nature of Ananse or an attempt to explain a phenomenon while others may teach a craft or skill. For example, there is another Anansesem in which Ananse wanted to own the stories in the world which belongs to the

sky god, Nyame. He approaches the sky god who tells him he can have his wish if only he can pay the price of bringing alive a hornet, a python and a leopard. Ananse promises to return with a price. He weaves out a plan. First, he gets a gourd and goes to the bees. He tells them of how his gourd can better save them from rain and lures them into his hornet only to trap them and send them to the sky god. Next, he digs a pit in the paths where the leopard travels and covers it with leaves. The leopard falls into the pot and Ananse offers to help and the leopard accepts, so Ananse leaps and ties a rope to the leopard's tail and lifts him by the branch of a tree. As he lifts the leopard, the rope causes the leopard to spin and subsequently feel weak and helpless. Ananse drags the leopard to the sky god. In the final effort, Ananse goes to the python and tells the python of an argument he had with his wife concerning the true length and strength of the python. He convinces the spider to have his length measured by being tied to a bamboo stick. The python is convinced and agrees. Ananse then ties the python but not for measurement and takes the python to the sky god who felt very impressed. In most of these stories, the story ends with the conclusion that due to Ananse's bad behavior, it hides in roofs and other uninhabited places. By implication, good behavior builds connections and networks; bad behavior destroys communities or bars one from enjoying the pleasures of a community. Stories telling thus, becomes a medium of molding desirable societal behaviors. Through telling we also attempt to explain happenings and the relevance of other natural or living beings around us. We get to understand the important place that material things hold and play in grand scheme. Storytelling in this sense engages the community to keep them exploring and finding better explanations for relatable cultural phenomena without putting cap to knowledge search.

Through television we watched and learned from these stories about the past, our cultural values and how to live harmoniously with others. Television as technology became relevant to us as it fit or aided culture. Still in my youthful days, I saw how technology united my neighborhood. My grandfather happened to own one of the few televisions in the neighborhood. During sporting tournaments such as the soccer--African Cup of Nations, the television set became a means to gather and watch the soccer game. After the game, many stayed behind to discuss the mistakes of certain players or discuss what can be done to win the next match or the new tactic the players can adopt to get even better. Sometimes this generated heated arguments and sometimes these discussions helped form new relationships and build community. While we may have little agency in the design and function of the television set and really not much direct agency in the programming, my family and my community were able to shape how we integrated the television set into our lives and how we used it. Television as technology played an important role in bringing people together, to learn what is happening closer to them and in far off lands, generate necessary discussions, formulate new ideas and form new communities. Radio worked the same way. We listened to live reports of what was going on at the stadium when we could not be there or at the festival grounds. Similarly, I witnessed those days in the 90s when my uncle got a job at the then Ghana Post and Telecom as telecom engineer. His touch-tone telephone---the first and only in our community--served our small community. Friends and family received calls from abroad through his phone. Once again it became the converging point of communication for locals.

Now, 15 years later, with the proliferation of smartphones, many more Ghanaians and Africans are becoming attracted to the internet. The use of mobile communicating apps like Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter has become common. The internet has taken a center stage in the daily engagements of Ghanaians such that the expressions," The internet never forgets" (often said as warning to unapproved cultural acts) is common. Yet, there is more to do in mapping offline experiences to these digital platforms. While many communicate about daily lifestyle, we could do more infusing technology with culture. Nonetheless, I am aware about the tensions between technology and culture (Selfe & Selfe, 1994) and how such can perpetuate discriminative applications unknown to the target Other users (Haas, 2012). Computers can alienate other cultures by preferring certain dominant modes of communication and language preferences. According to Selfe and Selfe (1994) given that:

> technologies have grown out of the predominantly male, white, middle-class, professional cultures associated with the military-industrial complex–the virtual reality of computer interfaces represents, in part and to a visible degree, a tendency to value monoculturalism, capitalism, and phallologic thinking, and does so, more importantly, to the exclusion of other perspectives. Grounded in these values, computer interfaces, we maintain, enact small but continuous gestures of domination and colonialism (p. 486)

Given the Eurocentric and patriarchal provenance of digital media, communication technologies on which we gain access to the internet, communicative technologies may not be culturally situated to meet the needs of developing countries like Ghana. Jin (2013) explains this further, arguing that big corporations, major US media and cultural companies have developed a globalized cultural imperialism which insists on their primacy and interest over the targeted users. For instance, big institutions like the heavily but government supported Hollywood push cultural products to the open market to remain highly visible and competitive mostly for capital or economic gains. For example, out of Hollywood's $915 million in 2010, $204 million was realized from China with the movie, Avatar. These incentives would continue to support western cultural dimensions and continually strip technological use of neutrality in value. Indigenous cultural values of the targeted audience may not be prominent in such engagements with technology as cultural imperialism take precedence. In this paper, I seek not to change the cultural practices, hegemonic or other of any institution or corporation. Diverse cultures are essential to a globalized world. What I seek is to explore how biases, values and preferences can be digitally harnessed by intended technological users like Ghanaians (the Ga people in particular) on the internet to accentuate their cultures as well.

In Ghana, there is a form of cultural preferences with the perception of technology over language. Science and Technology is pitched in the competitive relationship with the Arts. For example, a former Minister of Education speaking at the launch of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) 60th Anniversary Awards Dinner on the theme, "60 Years of Science and Technology Education in Ghana; Achievements, Challenges and Prospects," touted the prospects of science and

technology and ICT education. However, his speech later helps us appreciate the tensions between the arts and technology. He states:

> So, humanities are the most popular courses in all our tertiary institutions, and I think that at our 60th Anniversary, we should drum this idea to policy makers, because we are going to move from relevance to significance, and we can do it if we pay attention to up-streaming training of mathematicians, scientists, technologists and ICTs (Ghanaian Chronicle, August 2011).

Following the call to prioritize science education in isolation to language or communication, it is apparent that we do conceive technology and the arts as mutually exclusive. Language and communication studies serve as a forgone alternative to achieve the scientific and technological goals. In contrast, technology and communication work together well although there are economic, social and political; challenges with the online. These may include the abstract nature of the communication compared to a concrete one, possibility of self-centeredness, control by telecommunication operators and possible loss of cultural sovereignty (Argyle and Shields, 1996). In spite of the seeming separation between communication and the real world, Argyle and Shields (1996) have argued that we miss the mark when we construe virtual reality in opposition to reality. Virtual reality should be understood as an extension of the reality of physical presence; and that virtual reality does well suturing the gaps in reality. When we communicate to others far away through communication technology, the technology brings us a reality by bridging the distance which until then some sense of "reality" communicated to us as 'absence' or non-existence of the other. Therefore, Argyle and Shields (1996) insisted that "presence doesn't just vanish. Technology mediates presence." Within computer communication technology, there are ways that allow us to be present to each other, with our bodies, interacting in a holistic manner" (p. 58). While physical touch may be lost, presence can be revived.

However, the seeming separation of technology eventually might translate to implementing national policies offline where we give less attention to how the arts work together with technology. When we do see how rhetoric works with online composing, it becomes easier to initiate online promotion and revival of Indigenous cultures. The African philosopher, Kwame Gyekye (1997) in his book, "Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience" and focusing mainly on sub–Saharan Africa, argues that there is tension between culture/tradition and modernity. He outlines problems facing African culture. These include

- Reappraising inherited cultural traditions to fit into the present times
- Nation building: integrating and welding together several ethnic groups into a larger cohesive political economy to eliminate tribal/ethnic conflict and transfer to a central government
- Evolving appropriate credible and practical ideologies for the contemporary
- Dealing with traditional moral standards due to rapid change

Mainly the issue has been that Africans may need to invest more time and effort in merging the past and the present. I argue that to do this, we need to move away from the old definition of tradition as "that which comes down or is inherited from the past and becomes an enduring element in the cultural life of a people" (Gyeke, 1997, p. 218) to a more engaging understanding of tradition as "any cultural product that was created or pursued by past generations and that having been accepted and presented, in whole or in part, by successive generations, has been maintained to the present (present might mean a certain present time)" (p. 221). Cultural practices need not be merely inherited. It must critically be interrogated and made fit to the contemporary. Such critical interrogation are not nearly supplanting the roots, identity or the core values of the culture or tradition. Instead, it is to not only make the culture more relatable and practical but also continue to inculcate and serve as a framework that defines the timelessness of cultural values and places on each one the agency to engage in shaping the culture. This gives the opportunity to nurture culture to respond to current needs. All over the world, users of the internet, from the many different cultures and places are taking advantage of the digital to learn, to save cost and to reach out to many people, including experts. For instance, when Kimball (2017) recounts in his paper "Tactical Technical Communication" that their washing machine broke down at home, they were able to diagnose and repair the machine through access to YouTube tutorials videos. Kimball had navigated a culture that calls on repairpersons or taking apprenticeship to fix machine to doing repairs themselves at less cost although a little more time-consuming. Through resources such as YouTube Instructables that has multiple tutorial videos, they handled a current challenge easily. These videos were so accurate they were able to implement and save cost. Considering the advantages that the digital offers, we cannot continue to focus solely on offline resources in supporting local peoples in their effort to revive and enact cultural survivance.

In 2001, the Ghana Commission on Culture which operates under the offices of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts launched the Wear Ghana Festival (Ghana News Agency, 2021). This move was to promote National Identity and encourage patronage of local fabrics/textiles including smock, batik tie and dye and kente. This action, although mainly set in an offline context, was in line with fulfilling their vision of preserving and harnessing cultural heritage and resources to develop a united national community with distinctive African identity. The commission since then has been appealing to citizens to patronize local clothing and take pictures of people, places and institutions that display local clothing of national interests. In March, 2022 the Commission went a step further and introduced elementary pupils in Accra to adinkra symbols as a part of efforts to make them appreciate indigenous knowledge. Further, they collaborated with the National Folklore Board and showcased local foods to the pupils while engaging them in indigenous games like the *pilolo* (a scavenging hunt sort of) and *chaskele* (similar to cricket). This is a very timely move as the Commission believes that this will crucial the dominance of foreign cultures and dominance within the youth circles. Prior to this launch, the Government of Ghana in 2004 launch the National Friday Wear in a collaborative effort through the Ministry of Trade Industry and President's Special Initiative and the private sector to encourage patronage of local textiles from domestic and to inculcate a nationalistic feeling across board. It was also a way to control

the inflow of inexpensive Chinese produced local textiles. While these initiatives are laudable, they remain incomplete. Attending to cultural revival from mainly offline spaces, may have problems with accessibility and longevity. Instead, such initiatives need to be complemented with digitally savvy rhetorical writeups beyond Facebook posting of pictures.

For a culture to be sustained it needs its needs to be reconciled to the present. This is why the digital platform is crucial to the writing and practice of culture. Such digital practice needs to be situated in a decolonial and African ideological or theoretical framework. This is important because Ghana has had a colonial past and this colonial past might interrupt often with the process of promoting its culture. For some of us growing up, we were punished in school for speaking a language other than English. Class prefects were mandated to write names of not only talkatives but those who speak any local language (vernaculars) in class. "Culprits" are whipped or punished in one way or the other. This reflects what Ngugi (1994) describes as the imperial tradition versus the resistance tradition. The imperial system is sanctioned and executed through systems of policing, legislation, and institutions. It targets cultures most seeking to salvage it for a promised future in modernity and science. Decolonization implies the Indigenous ways (Mignolo, 2011) and thus it would be better if we integrate the Indigenous with technology.
Still on the offline efforts at promoting Ghanaian culture, the government in 2019 successfully organized the Year of Return. This was a yearlong program and activities to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the documented enslaved Africans in the United States of America. It particularly appealed to African Americans who can trace their ancestry to Ghana to return home (The program had the support of the Congressional Black Caucus, of The US Congress headed by the Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi. Together with the late civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis, they visited Ghana. That gave the program much more credibility. The program saw many African Americans return or relocate to Ghana and be granted citizenship so they could contribute to promoting Indigenous Ghanaian culture (Africa Renewal, 2020). It was extended in 2020 but was cut short due to COVID restrictions. It is a clear instance of the limitations of offline activities without attributing much agency to the digital. A second edition called "Beyond the Return" was planned for 2020-30 but was disrupted by the covid pandemic.

Recently, Africans, Diasporic Africans, and African-Americans have shown interest in applying African thought to their study (Black studies) and ways of lives, perhaps as a way of decolonization. These African-Americans and Africans in the diaspora seek a return to understanding African ways of thinking, knowledge-making and practices. However, they mostly have struggled on what should constitute African thought and practice. This has led to different arguments and movements to restore African knowledge and African identity aiming to run their affairs with these movements and philosophies. For example, Marcus Garvey in 1914 did set up the Universal Negro Improvement Association to "facilitate the process of extricating the continent and diaspora from its developmental quagmire though his back to Africa movement" (Blake, p. 84). Movements of such kind have collapsed and metamorphosed into other unstable avenues. The movement to return to African ways of thinking and being constitutes what

we have come to know as Afrocentrism. In the Foreword of Hamlet's (1998) work, Asante defines Afrocentrism as the "theoretical notion that insists on viewing African phenomenon from the perspectives of Africans as subjects rather than objects" (vii). It is an attempt to return to Indigenous African practices and to support and build an African thought. Later, Hamlet (1998) expands on this definition with much clarity by viewing Afrocentrism as the "efforts of some African-American scholars to reclaim an African past and illuminate its presence in the culture and behavior of African-American people." (xi). Hamlet (1998) and Asante demonstrate the craving for a return to an African past and to highlight its significant cultural values and practices that may inform their current lives different from the imposition Euro-American models of thinking. They believe that to understand a group of people, one needs to understand what informs their thinking, the social, political and economic situations that have shaped them. Afrocentrism is a call to offset the dominance of Europeans in describing Africans or those connected to Africa.

Indeed, Mudimbe (1988) has argued that Afrocentrism is not African- that it has always depended on European epistemological order and frame of analysis. Mudimbe contends that Westerners including their anthropologists and missionaries have distorted African thought and what we have now as African thought is a composition or may be a hybridization of knowledge and thought system masquerading as African thought. His argument further stresses that colonization reconstructed and manifested new forms of historical and cultural discourses in Africa. The implication then is that Africa communicative practices may not count as rhetorical practices. But African rhetoric does exist. It is thus important that we pay attention to what African rhetoric is. It may respond to the questions that Afrocentrism seeks to answer such as finding ways of communicating that will establish criteria in determining good relationships through the lens of the cosmological, axiological, epistemological and the aesthetic. I do believe that African rhetoric is the panacea and for that matter needs to be studied. In view of this, we may want to pursue what African rhetoric is, what its characteristics are and how it can be made to fit into this modern world of highly driven technology.

Drawing from all this, I propose a return to the study and practice of African rhetoric. There are documentations of it tracing from ancient Egypt. It responds to the questions that Afrocentrism seeks to answer such as finding ways of communicating that will establish criteria in determining good relationships through the lens of the cosmological, axiological, epistemological and the aesthetic. I do believe that African rhetoric is the panacea and for that matter needs to be studied. In view of this, I would like to apply African rhetoric to the conditions of Ghana in an attempt to marry culture with technology. I believe that African rhetoric with its Indigenous knowledge system makes it possible to draw parallels from the digital in the same way St Patrick draws a parallel between Irish mythology and Christianity. Instead of assimilating the Celts of Ireland, St Patrick draws from their tradition's similarities between Christianity. For instance, he embraces their tradition of triple gods *Dagda, Lugh* and *Ogma*, assenting to the number 3, of the trinity in Christianity (Johnson-Sheehan and Lynch, 2007). This helped the process of spreading Christianity. In the same vein, African culture particularly the kente teaches cultural significance that the digital supports. Thus, in the dissertation I will argue

for the interaction of culture and digital compositions as a way of promoting and preserving culture.

Just as my community created and adapted kites for communication and as Ghana society more broadly used television to continue the Anansesem tradition, so too are we Ghanaians and Africans more broadly engaging with digital technologies to continue or to possibly aim to continue our local, customized tradition. My dissertation largely focuses in part on how Ghanaians, including marginalized tribal minorities, navigate tensions, narrate their stories, reconnect to or enact their indigeneity, and share their history within their own communities and to the broader African diaspora via digital technologies. To understand African rhetoric and online communication, it's imperative to consider how communication channels that center on materiality are tied to identity and local/Indigenous expressions of interest within the African practices of decolonization.

Some of the questions I am interested in are:

1. How might we study African rhetoric and culture in digital, global, and material networks?
2. How do Africans (specifically in this study, Ghanaians) communicate via traditional materialist rhetorics and via the affordances of digital technologies?
3. How might minority Indigenous peoples (specifically in this study the Gas of Ghana) use the digital to assert their cultural practices and achieve visibility and survivance?
4. In what ways do online interfaces alienate Africans, and what strategies and tactics are or can be deployed for resistance by the marginalized or the disadvantaged?
5. In what ways can Gas contribute to the cultural design and decolonizing of our material and digital rhetorics?

To address these questions, I first highlight the need for African rhetoric and Africans online and how it underpins decolonization. Then, in the second chapter of my dissertation, I examine African rhetorical traditions, exploring theories and practices from across the continent so as to articulate themes and characteristics of African rhetoric. I trace African rhetoric from Ancient Egypt and then highlight some of its practices during the Malian empire and then finally look at African rhetoric from contemporary Ghana, including Akan and Ga rhetoric. After identifying principles and practices of African rhetoric, I then turn to methodology. In chapter 3, I articulate an Indigenous African methodology for the studying of communities and their use of digital technologies. My methodologies and methods arise from decolonial and Indigenous approaches to meaning-making.

Sankofa, storytelling, talking circles, counter storytelling, interviews and Driskill's (2015) decolonial skillshares are some important theories that center my work on African Rhetoric. Drawing from Legg and Sullivan (2018) that storytelling is inherently characterized by "... survivance, relational, ethical deception, and networked knowledge" (pp.35-36), I contend that storytelling is a knowledge making practice as it recognizes all

agents of knowledge-making including participants, the environment, time, place etc. It supports the Survivance of indigenous ways then means that the teachings and practices of a culture are preserved as Indigenous are told. With contemporary uses of language and the modernization of technology, there appears a tension between local, foreign and global practices. One of such is digital technology amidst online composition. Further, I conduct interviews situated in Indigenous practices such as the Pagtatanong-Tanong Interview method and the Philosophic Sagacity interview method (Chilisa, 2020). Through African rhetoric, I lay the foundation for a decolonial Indigenous lens to study African rhetoric online and in Indigenous communities.

Next, I center and attempt a practice of rhetoric to a local/Indigenous people, The Gas of Ghana, whose cultural and linguistic survival might depend on how they use the Internet and digital technologies to share and celebrate their rhetoric. I have a strong connection with the Gas through blood, relationships and cultural performances. My father is Ga, and I speak Ga (as well as Asante Twi, which is a dialect of the Akans, and English). The Gas, indigenous to Greater Accra, the capital city of Ghana, have a rich culture similar to the Akans. However, their dwindling population, cycles of poverty, lack of education, and exclusion of their language (Ga) education in the teaching curriculum by successive governments have all contributed to a near-loss of a rich Indigenous cultural heritage. Drawing from interviews with cultural preservationists in Ghana and with family leaders and other Ga members, I examine how the Gas have used and could use the internet to engage in rhetorical acts of survivance.

Finally, I will close by reflecting on the implications of my study for Indigenous technology and cultural studies and for rhetorical theory. My research will, I believe, make important contributions to decolonial and Indigenous rhetoric and to digital technology studies. The African, Indigenous, decolonial rhetorical lens and methodology my dissertation will articulate and then apply to sites of study will help researchers, teachers, and public rhetors consider and create discourses that connect communities across time and space. My research will first articulate principles and practices of African rhetoric, particularly by examining how the Gas are using and could use the Internet to preserve and sustain their cultural and rhetorical traditions. Digital, global technologies are potentially homogenizing, imposing a dominant Western-centric frame on online discourse. However, the use of modern technologies does not completely elide cultural traditions and my study helps illuminate ways Indigenous peoples are using and could use digital technologies to share and reclaim cultural traditions.

Chapter 2 African Rhetorics & Practice

In this chapter I will discuss what constitutes African rhetoric together with some of the characteristics as seen across time and place. These will include community principles or concepts such as spirituality and connectedness to land, importance of community, materiality, and orality. I particularly trace Indigenous African communicative practices from ancestral rhetorics that have become known as the genesis of African Rhetoric in MAAT in ancient Egyptian rhetoric in North Africa to the Akan rhetorical practices in West Africa, particularly in Ghana. These include: spirituality, materiality and community building through ethos. The belief in the supernatural also shapes much of the communication. I point out that the purpose of African rhetoric is to attain unity, harmony and balance in the community unlike the classical Greco-Roman rhetorics that prioritized persuasion. I also introduce material rhetoric in this chapter through a discussion of a piece of clothing, kente, as fashion that is one significant way that Akans--and the global diaspora-- communicate. Such a communication involves the use of marked drawings known as adinkra symbols. In Chapter 3, I will discuss more some local Ghanaian cultural drawings or symbols. Here I focus briefly on kente to emphasize aspects of materiality of African rhetoric
So, what is African rhetoric? The African continent's diverse societies challenge any singular, monolithic definition of African rhetoric. The diverse natures of the peoples, their customs, trade partners, different engagement at different times with different Europeans as a result of colonialism, and trade shape what they do. Secondly, African philosophical and rhetorical traditions are inseparable (Gyekye, 1996). And, thirdly, so many African traditions are undocumented and lost. So, for many reasons there is not a singular definition of African rhetoric. But, as I aim to do here, I thread on cultural lines and voices to weave together and to show some contours of an African Rhetoric, drawing from some touchstone ancestral rhetorics and then focusing more specifically on the region that is the focus of my dissertation, Ghana.

As mentioned, any robust understanding of African philosophical and rhetorical traditions must begin by acknowledging the continent’s diverse societies. So, my discussion here lays no claim to being exhaustive, pursuing a rather more modest ambition touch on some of the prominent traditions of philosophical and rhetorical thought on the continent. I proceed on the assumption that African philosophical and rhetorical thought are inextricably intertwined. This is largely because, unlike the dominant strains of philosophical and theoretical reflection in the North Atlantic world, African intellectual traditions did not draw sharp contrasts between philosophy and rhetoric (Fox,1983; Campbell, 2006). However, this piece addresses the common rhetorical practices that qualify as near complete African rhetoric The classifications in this is to highlight how some characteristics and practices are eminent among certain people for some reasons. I consider them because they help highlight the complexity in defining African rhetoric. African rhetoric defies definition.

Life in African cultural contexts is organized around some religious identifications (Gyekye,1996; Dunbar, 2008; Blake, 2009), particularly in traditional communities but often carrying traces into modern, seemingly secular discourse. There is therefore the

natural inclination towards a belief in the supernatural. There is the belief in an omnipresence who is the source of all knowledge and whose wisdom pervades all of life. This sense of spirituality, expressed in different ways but present, evokes a sense of universality that would serve as commonality among all African practices irrespective of the place, time, societal and cultural differences. This religion is not a revealed religion. It seeks no converts and has no prophets who act on behalf of the supernatural. There are, however, spiritual priests (who doubled as leaders) who help with the social order. The African community is religious because the religion serves as a means to meet the needs of the people and to understand the world around them. Yet, the cultural practices are not religious although it may have vestiges of religion. The religious practices are said to have evolved from the local community's experience of their world and their world view. It might be the reason Crawford (2004) has questioned earlier claims hinting that there is "no substantive rhetorical tradition could be ascribed to Africa" (p. 111) since rhetoric is inextricably linked to all manifestations of life. Although there are diverse African cultural societies, these societies developed their own system including rhetorical practices. What is common among the practices has to do with practices such as myths, legends, poetry, oratory, storytelling, use of proverbs, singing and drumming that affects everyday life. Yet the goal in adopting all of these strategies is one: to regulate society through the cultivation and sustenance of ethical behavior that brings communal or societal harmony. This contributes to the difficulty in defining what African rhetoric is. For some African rhetoric is African philosophical thought and would treat it from the point of philosophy (Gyekye, 1996).

For Africans, as for many people, rhetoric is inseparable from every aspect of daily life. It shares in whatever constitutes society and its interaction with the world. This includes oral tradition, the material, the collective and or communal. Too often in the western rhetorical tradition, rhetoric is framed as being just verbal and written. But rhetoric is for many Indigenous communities not only verbal but material including cultural processes of making. In African communities and for African rhetoric there is more than the verbal or the verbal/written binary. It is enacted in the material, agricultural, gastronomic, artistic, spiritual and more ways of knowing and communicating culturally. Gyekye (1996) asserts that African rhetorics includes African spirituality which conceives of an individual who is divinely and inextricably part of the community, and as such connected like a web to all people in life and beyond the gates of death. As part of the interconnectedness of life, people see themselves connected to the land, to animals, to each other. Campbell (2006) argues that African rhetoric is different from Western rhetoric because African rhetoric does not lend itself to the bifurcation of rhetor and audience. It is enacted with the collective. Any individual that participates, does so, for a collective good. It does not seek to persuade an audience to bend to the whims and ideas of an orator. The speaker, as a representative of the community, speaks on behalf of the community for the communal purposes of binding the community to a common goal. In situations where the speaker had to defend themselves, it is assumed that the victory of the speaker is the victory for truth, justice and moral behavior for the community and not victory for the speaker. A loss similarly describes a consequence to one's family. While African rhetoric is richly material, it is also verbal. The oral tradition carries through strongly today in many African cultures, but also in Africa there were literate societies

like the Nubians (from second century BCE) who borrowed heavily from Egypt's Hieroglyphs to create the Meroitic script. There were the Axumatics of North Ethiopia (from 5th Century BCE) who developed the Ethiopic script and then the Mali Empire whose city of Timbuktu had thousands of literate manuscripts.

African rhetoric is woven into and arises from all aspects of society. Rhetoric as a form of knowledge making and knowledge sharing arose and continues to arise from experience and observation; the spiritual, physical and political lives of the locals underpin the genesis and telos of African rhetorics. The pursuit of knowledge led many African cultures to develop culturally-specific techniques and technologies including certain practices such as food production and craftsmanship, that carry both functional and rhetorical meaning. This corroborates Driskill's (2015) observation that "learning happens through our bodies, through embodied practice, through doing" (p.57). For example, certain societal functions in Ghana led to the styling of cloth for those functions. When a newborn arrives, the family and friends meet on the eighth day to ceremoniously initiate the new child into this world. This is called Outdooring. The costume for such functions is white and sometimes a mix of white and black. Not just for this ceremony, but for many events, cloth makers design and implant various cultural symbols and their meanings into the cloth. Some of them are the clans' cultural symbols such as *Gye Nyame* (Except for God) and Sankofa, which literally translates into "return and get it" and better understood as "learn from the past." This same Sankofa and others are found at the chief's palace, on top of the Asante King Linguist staff. Other societal functions such as funerals and engagements (traditional marriage that precedes the western wedding) plus weddings. The weddings are sometimes attended with costumes woven by the traditional weavers. These woven costumes are known as "kente" and they are woven in different colors and styles to suit the weddings. The local folks attend funerals with a red, white or black cloth depending on the age of the deceased. Older deceased persons are celebrated in white or white and black cloths while those with painful or unexpected death are red, black or a mix of the two although the all-black or red is common or preferred color. With the growth of Christianity in Ghana, Easter, specifically Palm Sunday, is celebrated with palm fronds amidst the chanting of Hosanna along the streets. Palm fronds are harvested and the fronds woven in similar ways traditional baskets are woven. The finished product looks like a face fan and it is then decorated with flowers. Here, we see a transfer of basket weaving skills to palm fronds, a traditional cultural practice woven into a newer cultural practice. The possibilities of integrating cultural practices with new rhetorical situations and contextualizing knowledge to promote a people are endless.

African societies cannot be entirely divided into literate and oral as literate societies blend with aspects of the oral and literacy also shapes the oral traditions. Egyptian literate oratory, for example, is not limited to public transactions but extends to private conversations. This is because the tenets of Egyptian rhetoric embody truthfulness, silence and good timing, fluency-security and stability (Fox, 1983; Blake, 2009). To Blake (2009), African rhetoric is essentially about the ethical principles that entail responsibilities for family leadership, governance, and work roles and these predate Corax (circa 478 BCE) and other classical figures like Plato. African rhetoric has long

traditions that I seek to explore and understand in this list. He goes on to discuss the origins of African rhetoric set in the *Ptahhotep*; and concludes with a call on present African leaders to arm themselves by rediscovering or restoring the *Maatian* principles as ethical basis found in the *Ptahhotep* to serve as a point of departure and for the progress of the continent as this would allow them to effectively negotiate domestically and globally and make better contributions to Africa.

Ancestral Rhetorics

Now let me step back in time to trace a bit of the origins of African rhetoric. Many scholars trace African rhetoric to 3000 years before Corax (Circa 478 BCE); much earlier than Plato-4th century BCE; Isocrates, and Aristotle; Cicero (1st century BCE), and Quintilian-1st century AD (Smith, 1971; Fox, 1983, Blake, 2009; Sweeney, 2004). It is helpful we trace African rhetoric from ancient times because its remnants are spread across and inform all African cultural communicative practices. To Blake (2009) the African rhetorical tradition can be found in the ancient African text, the instruction of *Ptahhotep* (Circa 3100 BCE). As Fox (1983) narrated, the word "Rhetoric" has an ancient Egyptian equivalent that can literally be translated as "the principle of fine speech" (p.12) of which a speech is attributed to *Ptahhotep* extolling it as the main virtue of his wisdom book of instruction. Wisdom instructions of the Middle and New kingdoms dates from around 2200 BC to about 1500 BC and is a good pointer to the rhetorical practices of ancient Egypt. The wisdom book of instructions is written with the belief that eloquence in men is an innate faculty improvable by instructions. Some of the wisdom books recovered almost completely intact are the *Kagemeni*, *Merikare*, *Fürstenspiegel*, *Amenemope*, *Ptahhotep*, and *Any*. The *Kagemeni* contains the teachings of etiquettes as taught or laid out by an unknown vizier to his son while *Merikare* and the *Fürstenspiegel* share some similarities as they focus on how to offer strategic counsels to ruling authorities or kings, paying particular attention to the uses of morals and maxims. *Merikare* illustrates the advice of the ancestor king to his son, *Merikare*. *Any* contains wisdom instructions of less ranked court official within the king's palace to his son, Any, who also doubles as a scribe. *Any* provides instructions on proper behavior, establishing friendships, husband and wife relationships, acceptable discursive practices between a superior and a junior and similar other. *Amenemope*, also known as *Amenope*, *Amenophis*, *Amenopet*, is considered the longest and most in-depth of the instructions. It targets an individual with the goal is to achieve the "… ideal man, the 'Truly Silent Man' who is characterized by humility, quiet demeanor, generosity, honesty and piety" Lichteim II, 146-163 as cited by Fox (p.11, 1983) that would guarantee professional success and personal development. However, Crawford (2004) argues that speech in this era is of twofold: *Medew Nefer* (Good Speech) and *Medew Netjer* (God Speech). *Medew Netjer* (Mdw Ntr) is defined as "sacred speech that is measured, principled and ordered" (Crawford, p.114). *Medew Netjer* (Mdw Ntr) is considered to be the utterances of the gods that are pure and uncontaminated. The goal is then for the people to attain the abilities of such speech. *Medew Nefer (Mdw Nfr)* is the fine but powerful used of language by humans. However, unlike *Medew Netjer*, it can be misleading. The book of instructions is to cultivate the finer use of language.

These books of instructions were used in training young men selected to take communicative positions as scribes and court officials. All together the books appear to espouse principles of "ethics, etiquette and interpersonal relations" (p.10). It was believed that studying these books and abiding by the principles gains one divine or supernatural favor as well as creating opportunities for prosperity in one's career/vocation. Even at that time the Egyptians certainly knew of opportunities that communicative acts could bestow. It contains the speech of vizier Ptahhotep communicating to his successor how to prosper through the right application of high moral standards, of etiquettes and social or communal relations. There are sample texts depicting the importance the Egyptians ascribed to oral communication. In one example, a learned man bemoans the ills of society and desires that a new king will come and restore the land to order. There are writings/speeches called laments one of them called "The Prophecies of Neferti", 20th century B.C. The context is of a king who laments the decadence of moral characters and persons and wishes to see one who is noble enough "so that he may speak to me some fine words, choice phrases at hearing of which my majesty may be entertained (Lichtheim, I, 139-149). Certainly, right communication, use of language served as a necessary means to evaluating and correcting behaviors that were out of kilter. It may also have applications to "current persuasive and negotiation strategies" (Richardson and Jackson, 2004).

MAAT: The Foundation and Underlying Principle of Egyptian Rhetoric

The concept of *Maat* is basic and inextricably tied to the understanding of Egyptian African rhetoric (Blake, 2009; Lipson, 2004; Suso,1996; Fox, 1983). *Maat* characterizes the religious dimensions of rhetoric. The whole society of ancient times is organized around the concept of *Maat* and nothing happens outside *Maat*. Therefore, *Maat* controls the very fabric of ancient Egyptian society. *Maat* is the goddess of Truth and all that is connected to truth namely, integrity. According to Lipson (2004) *Maat* is a goddess of truth represented by a feather. The ancient Egyptians believed in the afterlife. But for one to pass through to the afterlife after death, one has to be judged. The judgments will be done by the symbolized instrument of *Maat*, a feather. A person's heart is weighed on a balanced scale against the feather. If the heart weighs lighter than the feather, the person passes to the afterlife to enjoy and continue existence. However, the heart of sound to be heavier than the feather, the deceased ceases to exist or is destroyed. In a similar story, *Maat* is regarded as the daughter of the Sun God, Ra and the wife of the Goddess of wisdom and truth (Thoth) who invented writing. These depict *Maat* as the center of judgment.

But judgment requires wisdom that will lead to arriving at truth and the service of justice. Therefore, it is befitting to admit that *Maat* represents justice, truth and order. Further, the metaphor of the feather It's worth taking note about. To arrive at judgment, emphasis is placed on the heart instead of the mind. For one to speak and act well in society, one's emotions play a key role in maintaining order and balance on society. Yet, *Maat* goes

beyond emotions. *Maat* is an invitation to all in the community to harmonize their thinking, feelings and actions to create a virtuous society. I find Obenga's (1989) attempt at defining *Maat* as having more practical value as it highlights what it is and what it is not. Obenga (1989) states that,

> *Ma'at* is the primordial principle which give order to all values. *Ma'at* is the substantive ingredient in in the cosmic order, part of Truth and Justice that allowed the pharaoh (for all that he was and symbolized) to protect the country from disorder, from chaos, from famine, from misery, and that all men living in society must conform to Justice and Truth, to Ma'at, the Supreme Virtue, guide and measure of all human activity. (p. 317).

In effect, *Maat* is about living a righteous life, doing good and speaking well. Maat is to ensure that there is order, balance and equilibrium in society. Ultimately *Maat* is a principle of ethical character. If Egyptian rhetoric were to be compared to classical rhetoric, its rhetorical appeals give great emphasis and importance to the appeal of ethos.

Crawford (2004) explains that all things in Egyptian (or Nile Valley as he calls it) rhetoric exist by their complementary forces to achieve balance and reciprocity. All things rise and all things fall. As the ocean ebbs, it also flows to achieve balance. These complementary forces within Egyptian rhetoric are ways that we pay equal attention to creating a just and harmonious society. *Maat*, has its complementary force known as *Isfet. Isfet* acts as counterbalance to Maat as it presents what it means to fall short of *Maat. Isfet* then is the "embodiment of injustice, an amoral ecology of disunion, falsehood and disorder" (p. 114*).*

While the Egyptian rhetoric of fine speech may seem to be less systemic and formulaic, Fox (1983) has argued that there are 5 implicit canons of such rhetoric. They are deduced from religious principles and practical psychology. These five implicit canons are: The value of silence in communication, the art of finding the right moment for Speech (Kairos), art of Self-restraint and control, the canon of Fluency, and finally, the canon of Truthfulness. These five canons are discussed separately. Yet they are neither separable nor function independently. They also do not follow in any particular order. Each implies the other.

Silence here is a rhetorical move tactically employed to improve one's ethos. One cannot communicate effectively without first listening. It is like the argument of reading enough before you write. You need to gather your ideas, give space to deep thinking and then craft your fine speech to be heard. It also mimics the story of the Burkean parlor. It is anticipated that the untruthful opponents may confound themselves with inconsistencies and thereby create an opportunity for the truthful one to respond with more evidence of truth.

This rhetorical silence is not a mere quietness or muteness that is associated with inactivity. It is a very active posture aimed at securing a smooth take off. Students are taught to appreciate silence as it allows them to listen to their superiors and to grasp the

depth of knowledge or argument being made. It allows one to gather composure in the meantime having observed the contexts and then speak with much needed confidence. It puts a moral virtue to your speech and helps attain some ethos. They know that the oral speech once spoken is gone, cannot be redacted or expunged from memory. One cannot go back to the past to even the immediate past to make corrections and may not be able to erase in the audience's ears what lacks finer speech especially those that break the moral code. *Amenope* teaches that “Do not get involved in a quarrel with a hot-mouthed man, nor assail him with words. Go slow before a foe, bend before an adversary, sleep before speaking" (para. 3 as cited Fox, 1983). Silence allows one to take the necessary steps with much precision, calculate one’s opponent's next move and ponder, as represented by “sleep” over actions to be taken before taking them. This canon shares some meaningful relationship with the Burkean’s metaphor of the parlor. Burke (1941) illustrates:

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (pp. 110-111)

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of listening deeply before joining a conversation. It is expected that the brief periods of keeping silence and listening to the conversations or the arguments opponents advance. Silence here could then signal a rhetorical moment that calls on the rhetor to think rhetorically, and join in at the right time. Such a silence would be practical to utilizing Ratcliffe’s (2006) rhetorical listening that could facilitate the listener beating off of communication barriers to new ways of thinking.

Kagemeni teaches that “Make your name go forth while you are silent, and you will be summoned (make much progress)” (11,1). Aside from silence, one has to know when it is the right moment to talk (kairos). On right moment, *Ptahhotep* teaches that if you find yourself in the midst of the council of superiors “(Restrain your mouth) and concentrate your heart on excellence. Your silence is better than chatter. It is only when you have discovered your solution that you should speak. It is only a craftsman who can speak in council, for speech is the most difficult labor" (para. 24, cited in Fox, p.14). It seems to combine elements of silence and kairos. It worth noting that this Kairos is less audience directed as with classical rhetoric. Rather, it is more directed at arriving at truth that will hold the community together. One has to be silent at the same time one has to know when to talk. It's better to say nothing than to say that which may create problems. Fine speech is considered an art (presented as difficult here) that demands careful attention to

expressions, word choice and the effects on the immediate audience and remote community

Good Timing teaches that:

> (Restrain your mouth) and concentrate your heart on excellence.
> Your silence is better than chatter.
> It is only when you have discovered your solution that you should speak.
> It is only a craftsman who can speak in council, for speech is the most difficult labor"(para. 24).

This relates to ethical practices of Humility. Humility calls one to be gentle and kind in authority. The Instructions says:

> If thou be powerful, speak with authority, that is, not as of following injunctions; for he that is humble (when highly placed) falleth into errors. (V. 25. p. 52)
> Repeat no extravagant speech; neither listen thereto. Look for the ground (when one hears such a speech). Speak not regarding it, that he before thee may no wisdom (V.23 p. 51)

Restraint teaches that:

> "Conceal your heart, restrain your
> mouth. Then your counsel will be (heard) among the magistrates"
> (Ptahhotep, para. 44 = 11.618f).
> Be deliberate when you speak, so as to say distinguished things. Then the magistrates who hear will say,
> 'How good is that which comes forth from his mouth' "(ibid., para.
> 44 = 11.624-627). Any, a teacher of the New Kingdom, taught:
> The belly of a man is wider than a royal granary, and it is full of retorts.
> Choose the good one and speak the good, while the bad remains shut
> in your belly" (Any, para. 37 = VII, 9f.)

Restraint is premised on the belief that "all sorts of emotions are contained in the heart, and words of all kinds are held in the belly just waiting to bubble up. The wise man will release only those appropriate to the situation." (Fox, p.14). Restraint recognizes that the opportunity to exercise speech is a call to demonstrate maturity, oral skill and wisdom. The person who speaks well is one that has achieved the balancing of the tumultuous emotions from within. Fine speech is thus devoid of bias and empty words. Also, words are seen as sharp as daggers. Words cut in both ways and can destroy or make a person. A skillful use of speech requires recognizing the potency of words and applying some gentleness. A good speech is one in which the contentious forces within are contained and tamed.

The canon of Fluency instructs that the speaker uses speech to create an "impression of competence and knowledge" (Fox, p.15). It is believed that such a speech would help the

speaker achieve some ethos. Truth is unwavering and when speech is considered to be vacillating, the speaker might have ulterior motives. To this end *Ameneope* instructs that:

> When your witnesses make accusations do not vacillate in your answers (*Amenemope*, para. 19).

Further, the speaker must give a well composed impression. Stammering, or lost in thought renders the speech suspicious of ethical limitations.
Ptahhotep advises that you (speaker) should: "Report your commission without faltering when giving advice in your master's council. If he (for his part) is fluent in his speech, it will not be hard for the envoy to report, nor will he be answered, 'Who is he to know it?' " (*Ptahhotep*, para. 15). Faltering in speech is a sign of insecurity and instability. Truth is spontaneous or comes natural to the speaker.

Finally, Truthfulness as a principle teaches that:

> Do not go to court in the presence of a magistrate, and then pervert your speech. ... Tell the truth before the magistrate, lest he gain power over your body (i.e., punish you)" (*Amenemope*, para. 19).

Telling the truth builds one ethos. False speech is bound to time and may be found out by the magistrate or the society. The magistrates are perceived to have the support of the divine or the supernatural. Such discovery will tarnish the good image and ethos of the speaker. This is similar or same as the ethical principle of Truth which says that:

> Be wary of speech when a learned man hearken into thee; desire to be stabilized for good in the mouth of those that hear thee speaking. (V. 41.p.60).
> Let that speaketh implant true things in the life of thy children. such training pays off eventually, because when people listen to them, they will say, "surely, that man has spoken to a good purpose, and shall do likewise. The children thus strained shall direct the multitude. (V. 41 p. 57)

Obedience and righteousness:

> They will instruct a man how he shall speak, after he hath heated thee; yea, he shall become as one skillful in obeying, excellent in speaking. (*Amenemope*, para. 19).

Here is a recorded but fictional response (known from the *Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*) of a peasant accused of evading the royal tax levies through the misappropriation. The response is to show how training in ancient Egyptian rhetoric helps one to craft fine speech to defend themselves by applying linguistic means of extravagant metaphors, concatenations and constant use of pun learned alongside from the wisdom of instruction, stories, songs, model letters to establish the truth.

> When you go down to the sea of justice
> And sail on it with a fair wind,'
> No squall shall strip away your sail.

Nor will your boat be idle.
No accident will affect your mast.

In this first stanza as above, the speaker begins his speech by appealing to the principle of justice. One who follows the canon of justice would arrive at truth. Justice is achieved by creating ethos with speech. Ethos together with truth will allow one to have harmony with the divine, *Maat*. Thus, the speech above is a performance of Maat; a testimony that the supernatural runs the lives of the people. Once a person seeks the divine through the performance of rhetoric, nothing can harm them.

The speaker continues to blend justice with truth and ethos. He continues:

He who lessens falsehood fosters truth.
He who fosters the good reduces (evil).
But he who cheats diminishes justice!
Rightly filled justice neither falls short nor brims over.

In such societies, inanimate objects are considered animate. The natural environment and natural phenomena are drawn in comparison to truth, justice and completion. This worldview is still found in especially Indigenous communities. Unfortunately, some others distant form such understanding, describe those with such a thinking as pagans. However, in Egyptian rhetoric and in the rhetoric of later communities like the Gas, it helps to achieve harmony between humans and the environment. The Ga people, who I will focus on later hold such a concept. Back to the speech above, we observe the accurate description of the weather and nature and their effect on humans. This is a way to describe the interconnectedness of life (of humans, environment including trees, seas, land, natural occurrences). The speech continues with direct comparison of speech to justice and other canons of rhetoric. Justice is considered everlasting and endures through the times and ages. Justice completes rhetoric.

Speak justice, do justice.
For it is mighty;
It is great, it endures,
Its worth is tried,
It leads one to reveredness.
Does the hand-balance tilt?
Then it is its scales which carry things.
The standard has no fault.
Crime does not attain its goal; he who is helpful reaches land.

The speaker concludes by making references to the ultimate goal of life, balance; that all things would reach balance. At this point the magistrate must judge the peasant on ethos and how the speech relates to truth.

Through its use of stories, its emphasis on social order and uprightness and appeal to ethos, Egyptian rhetoric continues to shape many African cultures.

Akan Rhetoric

The Akan are a tribe that can be found in Southern Ghana and Eastern Ivory Coast. It consists of culturally and linguistically homogeneous groups. Some of them include Asantes, Fantes, Akwapim, Bono, Akyem and others. This tribe has some rhetorical practices. Like any other African rhetorical practices, their rhetoric has some similarities to Egyptian rhetoric, corroborating that African rhetoric is traceable to Egyptian rhetoric and that Egyptian did spread to all other African societies rhetorical practices. The foundations of other African communicative and African practices such as privileging ethical and harmonious communities do share elements of the Egyptian rhetorical practices. Thus, through acts such as storytelling, maxims, proverbial sayings, songs, festivals etc., they echo the importance of silence, seeking collective good of society, and charting the course of truthfulness and integrity in both the Akan and Ga proverbs.

I choose to focus on the Akan rhetorical practices for two reasons; that the Akans in Ghana have held high their cultures despite many obstacles. I also find the Akan practice much closer to other West Africans and as well as many African cultures. By focusing on the Akan rhetoric, I am also speaking to other West and Eastern African language practices.

Below I look briefly at some of the oral rhetorical practices of the Akan and then go in depth at the material, particularly focusing local use of symbolic language. Rhetoric in Akan society has mainly been oral. It takes the form of belief in God, a belief in ancestors, storytelling, use of proverbs, parody, maxims, local evolved games like Oware (Gyekye, 2006). These are not isolated uses of language. They are used with the virtues of the society akin to that of ancient Egyptian society. As such moral values guide every action in the community. For example, the Akans have a firm belief in community over individual rights. There is no formal education. However, one is expected to be wise and knowledgeable. As such most of the teaching comes through proverbs, storytelling and maxims. For instance, the following maxims emphasize the Akans' preference for communal values over individual:

- One finger cannot lift anything
- The left arm wishes the right arm and the right arm washes the left arm
- Solitariness (literally, walking alone) is pitiable

Gyekye (2006) recounts that the maxim, "Solitariness is pitiable" is a sorry expression because it denies the individual the opportunity to receive needed help available in the community. The community helps one to develop and practice interdependence, cooperation and building of solidarity. Everyday life is oral and greeting is mandatory especially from a child to a superior.

Morality like other practices is not taught directly as these are woven into the fabric of faulty activities. One has to observe the elders, listen to stories and the ways in which moral proverbs are used to full application. When I was young, we sat by the fireside (firewood burns while we sit round it or in a horse-shoe). An elder, usually a female

(aunt) then begins a moral story. The storyteller begins with a call and would have to wait for a response from the audience before she could go ahead. When there is no response or the response is in the negative, the story is postponed to another day. Children are always eager to hear the story. Thus, when he narrator calls: “Should I narrate or should I not tell a story”; the audience responds by saying, “Yes, tell us a story”. The affirmative response pushes the engagement along. Most of the stories (fables mostly) are woven around a central character known as Ananse (Trickster). The story does not forbid alterations or manipulations. There is a template whereby depending on what the narrator wants to emphasize, retells the story slightly differently about the same characters. There is a famous one in which Ananse decided greedily to collect all the knowledge in the world into a pot so he alone will have wisdom. He succeeded but wanted to hide on top of a tree. He placed the pot of wisdom in front of stomach and struggled to climb the tree until another animal taught him to hang the pot at his back for easy climbing. Bewildered that he has not collected all the wisdom in the wisdom, the pop drops and the wisdom scattered to the whole world. The narrator often pauses in the middle when some moral lesson has been grasped and uses proverbs or maxims that tell the moral of the story, to start a singing and dancing session and type audience joins as well. The power of singing cannot be underrated. Songs have been used to boycott business, to face oppressive regimes (Deumart, 2019). As with African rhetorical practices, the appeal to reason has far less significance to emotional and ethical appeal. This, the children, internalizes the story with the drumming and singing.

Again, morality is at the center of life in Akan society. Some of the maxims include:

- Good character is a person's guard
- One is not born with a bad head, but one takes it on earth.
- To possess virtues is better than gold

Yankah (2012) points, storytelling and forms speech are guided by certain codes as taboos and gestures. For example, the left is not used in any way in public, oaths are avoided and obscene language shunned. Orality, however, does not constitute the entire rhetorical practice of the Akan. Certain inscriptions, drawings, symbols and even drumming and dancing all serve as rhetorical instruments. It should be noted the society is inclusive and as such the physically sight-impaired, the deaf and the dumb can partake in rhetorical practices usually associated by others through clothing, painting, woodcarving etc. Beyond oral literature, the Akans have evolved idiographic and pictographic writings in their communicative arts through such media as textiles, metals, casting, woodcarving and architecture etc. (Arthur 2001).

The *Adinkra* symbol is one of the ways that the Akans have invented to do strategic communications. Its origins are unknown but it is believed to have been derived from proverbial sayings, myths, natural phenomena, the environment, human relations etc. Arthur (2001) defines adinkra as “a system of visual marks - a system with which they can communicate” (n.p.).

Some of its symbols include body parts such as hands, teeth and tongue, the eye and objects like tools, ax etc. Since much of life is organized along societal interests, these symbols speak to collective efforts at maintaining a community. The teeth and tongue depict a harmonious interrelation where different people in the community together to achieve goals. Hand may symbolize co operations as well. They can have unstable meanings however and their meanings can be revised to meet a fitting situation. The ax (*akuma*) for example is metaphorically used in this maxim:

> *Dua biara nni ha yɛ den sɛ akuma ntumi ntwa, nanso asɛm biara yɛ den a yɛ mfa akuma na atwa na yɛ de yɛ ano na ka ma no twa*
> There is no tree that is so hard it cannot be felled with an ax; however, no matter how intractable a case may be, it must be settled by counseling and negotiations, not with an ax.

An ax therefore may be drawn or symbolized pictorially within the cultural practices to emphasize the importance of communication in difficult situations.

The Akans hold the view that clothing (and other material forms) serves as an inscribing medium as well as a storage and communicative device. Symbols create, change or maintain socially, and politically constructed realities. And many Akans take advantage of symbolic clothing to assert their identity, fight injustice and force certain reactions from people. For instance, a group of family members once did use the Adinkra symbol in their clothes to announce their dissatisfaction on how they have been unfairly treated. The matriarchal family member has thrown them out of their fathers' house after he died intestate. If they had resorted to verbal confrontations, it would have started a family feud especially in a place like Africa where silence of the child is preferred. Because the Adinkra allows one to impregnate with texts which symbolize ideas at several levels of discourse" (Arthur, n.p), they had an Adinkra symbol with the meaning (Death destroys the home) which caught the attention of all funeral attendees). It is not uncommon to find the use of pictographs, ideograms and other symbolic usage within Akan society inscribed through metal casting, woodcarving, architecture and textiles.

Contemporary Ghanaian national symbols have been built on *adinkra* symbols. For example, Ghana's coat of arms identified with the state sword (*akofena*), castle (*aban*) and cocoa tree (*kookoo dua*) are examples of *adinkra* symbols that have been incorporated into the national coat of arms (Arthur, 2001). Such use of symbolism makes the cultural messages to be communicated timeless and adaptive to prevailing situations that need to be addressed. This helps to either contextualize or decontextualize a symbol. Again, we note the use of Akan color scheme to help preserve the environment from further destruction by mining companies. The government utilized the *adinkra* symbol AKOBEN which literally means "war horn" on a 5-color scheme. In times past, horns were blown to assemble warriors. AKOBEN thus symbolizes vigilance and wariness. Companies whose waste management practices are reported to be in the RED signify danger to the environment but yellow or gold signified compliance with safe environmental practices (Sekyi, 2011). Symbolism, in effect had a significant communicative role with the local peoples.

Some Defining Characteristics of African Rhetoric

African rhetoric across African cultures shares some characteristics, including that it:

- ***Recognizes the supernatural.*** Reverence is given to the gods or supernatural. Good speech itself is regarded as bestowed by Maat or the unseen forces. The kings and Jelis or griots often address a supernatural force at the beginning of speech
- ***Emphasizes the influence of the past including ancestors*.** The past including its people is considered a fount of treasure. War songs recall past achievements. Ancestors are revered and knowledge of the past is carried on through speech
- ***Emphasizes community.*** Communication is valued more insofar as the argument is for the collective good of the society. This means the arguments will help establish some kind of social order and equilibrium. In many societies, this is known as ubuntu (I am because we are).
- ***Emphasizes morality.*** African rhetoric exists to build and maintain community through building of good character. As such there is much emphasis on moral behavior, and what constitutes good and not good. Thus, truth and honesty is expected in all communications. Persuasion arising from good behavior is preferred.
- ***Focuses on emotions and synthesis.*** There is some emphasis on emotions especially with speech. Unmoderated speech, and speech set in uncontrolled emotions like anger is unacceptable. To Smith (1971) "rhetoric in African society is an architectonic functioning art continuously fashioning the lives and attitudes of the people" (p.16). Rhetoric is considered in whole rather than in details or specifics. It favors synthesis to analysis as it focuses on achieving unity
- ***Recognizes context.*** Rhetoric is not bound to a particular family, group or clan or community. Each community defines and evolves their rhetoric according to the needs of that community. However, the ultimate goal of that rhetoric would be to create balance, harmony and unity within the community.
- ***Integrates materiality and orality.*** Rhetoric transcends speech. It involves anything that constitutes life. It is thus seen as woven into our very existence where each moment is rhetorical. There is the visual (including the written) and material rhetoric (the inanimate including natural objects and phenomena like sun, rivers, thunderstorm etc), and the rhetoric in speech/oral. It recognizes the agency of inanimate objects as contributing to and shaping communication. This might be a reason silence is considered tactical communication.

These characteristics highlight how African rhetoric is malleable and constitutive, threading general emphasizes and foci through communities, but manifesting in specific ways in specific communities. It plays out differently with different places, at different places at different times. However, when looking at African rhetorics, common thread lines weave through strongly.

The family and to the larger extent society is at the center of African rhetoric. The individual is less important the sphere or frame of practicing African rhetoric. The

arguments and use of language may be flowery, full of wise proverbs. The individual counts more insofar as his/ her argument is for the collective good of the society. This means the arguments will help establish some kind of social order and equilibrium. The brilliance and veracity of argument would have to benefit everyone eventually. For example, an individual use of language to articulate how brilliant, successful and intelligent they are may not constitute African rhetoric as this demonstrates individualism and encourages boasting which is seen as flouting the rule of humility. However, if we can use their language to establish truth in instances that help stop placing others at a disadvantage. That use of language will be considered an African's rhetoric. It may appear that such language may help an individual which in turns helps their families as it lifts the burden of litigations on the entire family. Eventually, with the establishments of truth and justice served, families are reconciled and society is stable. In modern times, I must admit that the line between the individual and the society is very thin. It is not always easy to distinguish between what constitutes an individual and what constitutes a society. Societies May be represented by an individual and an individual may take advantage of a society for their own selfish individualistic gains.

Another characteristic of African rhetoric is the emphasis on the relevance of emotions. Much attention is placed on giving prominence to how one is influenced by their emotions and how the emotions manifest. Once intent and moral stance could be judged based on how one composes themselves in the heat of their emotions. Here, no matter how cogent an argument is, how convincing one's sentences are; no matter how appealing to reason one's arguments are, if they can be judged from having been charged with anger, bitterness and lack of self-control, one may lose their cases this falls short of the tenets of Maat. It is believed in the first place that one cannot even make a sound argument in the fit of uncontrollable arguments.

Material/Visual Rhetorics: Through Storytelling

The Akan's *adinkra* is a material form of storytelling. It constitutes a formidable means through which symbols are sustained and enculturated. There are many countless narrations about the origin of the Ga *samai* (symbols). Most of these accounts are steeped in myths, legends, stories and uncertainties. The visual are expressed in clothing, cloth combinations including colors. For some reason, we see ancient narrations associated with tricks (*metis*) to making, (techne). In the Akan, Ananse the trickster somehow has been attributed to the making of kente. The kente represents adinkra. It constitutes a formidable means (visual writings for fashion, clothing) through which symbols are sustained and enculturated. There are many countless narrations about the origin of kente. Most of these accounts are steeped in myths, legends, stories and uncertainties. Part of this is that although the weaving and the cloth has been with them since through the narration, the name kente, referring to the woven cloth, is a 20th century invention, particularly the second half of that century.

The Ananse trickster share some similarities with the ancient Greek stories of Prometheus. In Greek mythology, Prometheus, with the ability to see into the future

attempts at tricking almighty god Zeus into opting for leftover bones meal. Prometheus wraps it in a beautiful and attractive wrap while hiding the better meals in a non-attractive wrap. Zeus goes for the bones, bypassing the better food folded in ugly hides. On realizing he has been tricked, Zeus becomes furious at Prometheus.

Prometheus comes back with another mischievous plan. He tricks Zeus' virgin daughter Athena into letting him into the forbidden place where fire was kept. Subsequently, Prometheus steals the fire from Zeus' abode, Mount Olympus, and passes the knowledge on to humans. This act of Fire stealing marks the first art given to human beings according to the story. By giving fire to humans, Prometheus gave humans the knowledge of art, the knowledge of crafting and making (techne). Humans are now able to fight against the harshness of nature, cold; cook and survive using the knowledge of making (techne). The art of making has transferred power to humans. The secrets of the gods that help them keep humans in check and survive at their beck and call is no more. In effect, Prometheus, through fire, gave humans the ability to be independent, to make things for themselves without the help of the gods. Beyond its simplistic meanings and entertainment, the story emphasizes the importance that traditional societies attach to invention, or making to the relevance of everyday activity.

The Ananse in the Akan rhetoric do express human qualities that help us think about ways to navigate human survival. While often depicted as a spider, the Ananse spins out wisdom and intelligence as a necessary cultural intervention. Thus, as we think of African rhetoric, we do think of how its principles inform contemporary cultural tensions and the ways act around them.

So, wrapping this up, we see in African rhetoric the following principles and practices as performance of *Maat* that gives rise to all noble virtues such as hospitality and justice, materiality as animate, balance and harmony within the environment and society as the purpose of rhetoric, ethos as the ultimate goal. These will shape my lens of analysis for looking at digital technologies and African rhetoric online, but before turning to that analysis I need to first situate in the next chapter another important lens shaping my work, Indigenous methodologies and methods.

Chapter 3: Digital/Decolonial Networks: Indigenous Methods & Methodologies for Studying African Rhetorics Online

Introduction

To study African rhetoric and culture in digital and material networks, I find that a single research methodological approach is not enough. Thus, I position myself within Indigenous epistemology to adapt and adopt Indigenous methodologies by and for African study. African cultural practices and understanding tilt towards a collective approach in understanding and holding communications, communities and relationships. Differences in communicative practices are accepted so far as they meet ethical lines and are ultimately aimed at restoring society to harmonious order. The differences in the many African families, clans, and festivals cultures define a multiculturalism of unity, singularity within plurality. Gyekye (1996) explains that this situation exists in Akan cultural philosophical thinking among others as Humanity versus Brotherhood; Communal versus individualistic values. Although individuals are held accountable for their actions, extreme individualism is considered destructive to society. Individualism is expected to co-exist with community in a balanced. This is an expression of the complementary forces of *Maat*. The Indigenous community recognizes the limits of the human being while taking into consideration the common good and the wellbeing of the community. African society writ large and specifically the cultures and local folks in Ghana that I study, place emphasis on the values of interdependence, mutual help, reciprocity and collectivity to center the community and its interests. These values are woven into popular sayings, proverbs and maxims to teach and immortalize the values. For instance:

- One finger cannot lift up a thing.
- If one person alone scrapes the bark of a tree for use as medicine, the pieces fall to the ground.
- The left arm washes the right arm and the right arm washes the left arm.
- A person is not a palm tree such that he should be self-complete. (p.37)

These maxims highlight the importance of community and the role that community contributes in shaping the individual. However, the same community that emphasizes communalistic thinking and acts expects the individual to be mindful of their individuality when it is expected of them. In this dissertation, I recognize the importance of localizing and implementing in my research African values such as storying, interdependence, mutuality, reciprocity and collectivity to center the community and its interests within the research. Indigenous research method approach helps to align my research to local communities.

Indigenous Research

One of the Indigenous concepts I found particularly useful to consider for my research is that of Sankofa, a key component of African rhetoric derived from Akan rhetorical practice. Sankofa is a rhetorical symbol of the Akans who are a tribe that can be found in

Southern Ghana and Eastern Ivory Coast consisting of culturally and linguistically homogeneous groups. Some of them include Asantes, Fantes, Akuapim, Bono, Akyem and others. Sankofa is a symbol that concerns a protagonist bird in an oral folktale that is common among the Akan. It depicts a bird arching over its back while flying forward. There are many variations of these and some of them have it as the bird picking an egg from behind it (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 The Sankofa Bird

Sankofa literally translates as "Go back and take it". Opoku-Agyemang (2017) writes:

> The story concerns the Sankofa Bird, who leaves her village without informing anyone (an action that is considered disrespectful of norms) and promptly gets lost in a nearby forest. While wandering through the forest, she meets another bird who insults her. This confrontation births self-doubt in her. She then manages to find her way back to her village where her community helps rebuild her self-confidence after which she returns to the forest again, this time informing the elders of the village. She meets this other bird again, but this time overcomes its antagonism due to a renewed sense self-worth–ostensibly gained from embracing the communal spirit of her village. Her first attempt to leave her village is seen as disregarding communal custom and tradition, and after her exploits in the forest are made public, a statue is carved with her neck turned backward so as to warn others of the dangers of forgetting or abandoning their roots (both in terms of disregarding custom as well as leaving home surreptitiously). (p. 59).

There are many versions of this folktale. However, the meaning remains the same - *Return and take it*. Quarcoo (1972) also explained that this cultural visual communicative symbol:

> Sankofa relates an ability to learn from or build on the past. Pick up the gems of the past. [It is a] constant reminder that the past is not all shameful and that the future may profitably be built on aspects of the past. Indeed, there must be movement with the times but as the forward march proceeds, the gems must be picked up from behind and carried forward on the march. (p. 17)

The concept of *Sankofa* is very critical to easing the tensions surrounding technological issues. For many colonized and or oppressed Indigenous peoples, there remains a gap

between the present and the past. *Sankofa* then calls on us to revisit and pick valuable lessons from the past including Indigenous knowledge and practices as we engage technology which many identify with the present and future. For most Indigenous communities, the immediate past is a struggle as it has been marked with hardships and the pains of colonization. This immediate past blur the treasures of traditional knowledge of the remote past (the past before colonization). To add to the challenging situation, the coming of technology appears to set against the Indigenous knowledge in regarding the Indigenous ways of living "primitive" or belonging to only the past. Indigenous knowledges are not bound to any time and space. Rather, they are tied to survival, progress and the overall cohesion of their communities. The influences of the past have a significant impact on the present. It is important still to reach back to the past like the Sankofa Bird and to reclaim ways of knowing that are decolonized. For these reasons, I apply an Indigenous approach to studying Ga people and culture. To delve deeper into Indigenous thinking in the practice of looking back while thinking forward (Sankofa), I draw also from the visual system of the Gas known as *samai (*symbols*)*. Like many Indigenous visual systems of communication, the Ga *samai* communicate cultural knowledge and expectations. Here are some of the Ga cultural symbols (see Figures 3.2 & 3.3).

Figure 3.2: Adashi Okadii Symbols

Figure 3.3: Samai-Ga Symbols

The visuals are believed to have developed from proverbial sayings or do have some connection with the proverbs associated with the local people. The first is the *samai* that represents the people of the Gas known as the Shwuɔ kɛ adowa (the Elephant and Deer).

Figure 3.4 Ga symbol of Elephant and Deer

This emblem in Figure 3.4 t represents the Gas showing a deer on top of an elephant. We are a strong nation but there are stronger nations. However, no matter how strong or big a nation is, it takes wisdom and knowledge to surpass them all. It takes the wisdom of this deer to be atop the elephant.

Figure 3.5 Ga symbol of Tortoise

The tortoise (shown in Figure 3.5) is said to be a peaceful animal who would not disturb its neighbors. It is associated with a proverbial saying in local folktales that the tortoise says proverbially that, *ke ehe wo ku le, tu egbee ye koo mli.* (Left to the tortoise, there would be no gunshot in the forest).

And it goes with a story that one day the tortoise relocated to a nearby tree. At the top of the tree was a loud-mouthed bird singing all night. The tortoise looked up and said to the bird on the tree that the noise will attract hunters. Not long after, a hunter appears who points gun at the bird, shoots and it falls to the back of the tortoise, in picking the bird, the hunter found and picked the tortoise as well. Later the tortoise manages to escape to a nearby river. The lesson is that know your surroundings and act accordingly.

Figure 3.6 Ga symbol of *Akpakpa* (Papaya)

Akpakpa translates as papaya (shown in Figure 3.6). However, the visual display is more than a fruit. Thus, it has more than one meaning. First, it is understood that the visual also displays two hands lifting an object up which may mean it takes two to tango or it takes a communal effort to arrive at success in a society. It is a call for collaboration, tapping on all the different strengths that others bring. Second, the fruit is highly perishable and so demands extra care. The same way we treat the weak or delicate items in society with care without discrimination.

Figure 3.7 Ga symbol of *Abui* (Needle)

This symbol in Figure 3.7 teaches that when the needle that gets hot, it burns anything in contact. The teaching is that in the heat of anger one destroys everything around them. Self-restraint is one attitude one must have to survive the community.

Figure 3.8 Ga symbol of *Ashino* (Beads)

The proverb says that *ashino tseee ye onukpai ahie ni ekome flon aalaaa je.* In the presence of the elders, not one bead will get lost when all beads are scattered (as represented in Figure 3.8). It takes effort and time to string beads together. When issues get to the elders, expect a meaningful outcome.

The symbols help me think about the directions of this research and the importance of thinking and interpreting social issues though Indigenous symbols representing theses Ga rhetorical concepts. The deer and the elephant, the main tribal symbol that represent Gas, speaks of overcoming overwhelming situations. In reality, Gas are dealing with a declining population, declining language use, loss of land among others to the those who wield power (governments) and the large numbers of others who have settled on their land. To overcome such an "elephant" will demand acting right, strategically. This mainly will involve not relying on physical strength but more of the intellect in such a way that the 'elephant' is not destroyed as expected. Instead, it gives way for cultural balance. As the symbol shows wisdom is the principal tool in arriving at a goal. It is a call for deep reflections and adapting of rhetorical strategies in times of difficulties. This describes the Ga situation: like the deer, the smaller tribe of the Ga working to survive and excel with the much larger Akan tribe.

With the Ga understanding of collaboration, *akpakpa*, I seek also to work in collaboration with others to harness a concerted effort. Through the *akpakpa,* I seek knowledge of the elders so I interview people with extensive leadership and media experience to help build and revive the Ga culture. For as the beads teach, in the presence of the elders, by the support of the leaders we are sure to arrive at a better conclusion. The needle It is translated as stitch time saves nine. It echoes the Maat concept of restraint. However, this appears to be combination of Kairos and restraint. While Gas will have to reflect and act on their strategies, it must be done at the right time, at a rate of more haste and less haste.

Decolonial Approach

I identify with the postcolonial Indigenous research methodologies. Postcolonial research methods and methodologies are decolonial as well. They do not only focus on research but are inherently decolonial (Chilisa, 2020), which I believe would help to practically navigate the problem of the individual knower and researcher collecting information from an informant (Viruru & Cannella, 2006). Such an approach would highlight Indigenous peoples and practices as it is also informed by traditions and cultures of the past. It is important to have a decolonial approach because the country Ghana which is the center of my research is a former British colonial territory. The colonization of Ghana by the British until 1957 when she attained her independence, has left some colonial legacies in that part of the world. European preferences still linger as described above with preferences to European suits in relation to the local kente. Quijano (2000) explains this as the coloniality of power where the Western powers divided the worlds and its cultures (those more indigenous) based on inaccurate biological conceptions of race. Darker complexions were considered more inferior and by extension their cultures. This weak foundation of knowing changed the identity of most blacks. A decolonial method would seek to restore some of these cultures to normalcy.

However, what decolonial or decolonization is has been difficult to define, describe and conclude. Many scholars define it to fit their contexts, colonial experiences, and needs and all conclude always that their definitions and or use of the term are context bound

and never absolute. Sium et al. (2012) describe decolonization and the efforts at defining decolonization as "a messy, dynamic, and a contradictory process" (p. 2). They contest that such definitions including the indigenous are largely unknown or undefinable. The Indigenous outwardly may appear stable yet within instability as it is full of contestations and contradictions; several complexities and intricacies act with it, within and without it. Thus, one important component of decolonization is contestation -- a contestation from the known to the unknown. In this they argue that Indigenous knowledge which is attacked by colonialism should not be limited to the arts and crafts and agriculture because the Indigenous transcends these and it is a sophistication on its own as it leads to the unknown. I am thus taking the decolonial path with the hope of discovering the beauty and significance of a culture and cultural artifact or expression that is yet to be tapped. Decolonization involves a process rediscovering and recovering of one's culture and language that leads to a return to one's roots and the cultivation of learning by doing (Chilisa, p. 44). Thus, while it may be a messy process, it offers invaluable learning. I wish to through the decolonial uncover what has not been known or yet to be explored about cultural survivance and promotion. Sium et al. (2012) overall highlight that the physical or material needs to be centered in decolonization works ahead of the mental. This is not because the physical is more important than the mental but that in Indigenous thought there is no separation between the physical, mental and the spiritual. In this case they stress that decolonization favors more the material (in their case, land) which holds connection with all things and conclude that decolonization is not a mere rejection colonial acts but an Indigenous project; a way to "reimagine and rearticulate power, change, and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. (p. 3).

Therefore, decolonization calls on us to avoid the binary of action and theory. Theory is not separate and independent of action. They exist, informed and engaged in shaping each other. Decolonization is a movement into the future, and it must be given room for questioning, dialogue and dissent. I included Decolonization because I position this research to ensure that it has relevance to the participants and their community. Research focused indigenous communities must have the interest of the community in ways that are empowering and transformative. I was interested in having such research that is centered on people, recognizing their agency and that is of value to the participants. The agency of the participants enables the research to apply not only participatory research but also a localized participation in which in which the local participants voice concerns and suggest ways they can be supported. The research was open to a local perspective or indigenous frame of doing and seeing that is related to their context the research stays with the indigenous by writing in their local language before translating.

In his paper, "Prophets facing sidewise: The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference," Mignolo (2005) argues that western knowledge is an instrument of colonization. Western knowledge, as he argues, relegates every other system of knowledge through its established scientific field and gospel of modernity. Local languages that carry the spirit of the culture all praises of the colonized failed to make it to make as they were not regarded as a worthy instrument of knowledge. Mignolo (2005) reminds us that colonial action from the sixteenth century cast all knowledge worthy of

its substance in modern European languages (Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) and later in the eighteenth-century French, English, and German became the languages for modernity and progress. Thus, through the decolonial approach, this research brings to the fore indigenous worldviews that help us think about alternate forms of knowledge. For the Indigenous, language carries much of their realities. It is thus becoming the destruction of a language, ultimately leading to the death of such: a reason many endangered languages are receiving support. Ngugi (1994) located decolonization within language. To Ngugi (1994) the imposition of foreign language by Europeans on Africans is the problem of colonization. The problem is not within fixed variables like tribe or ethnicity; it is language. And the remedy is to replace the European or English language with the African language. Ngugi (1994) writes,

> We therefore learnt to value words for their meaning and nuances. Language was-not a mere string of words. It had a suggestive power well beyond the immediate and lexical meaning. Our appreciation of the suggestive magical power of language was reinforced by the games we played with words through riddles, proverbs, transpositions of syllables, or through nonsensical but musically arranged words. ...And then I went to school, a colonial school, and this harmony was broken. (p. 11)

The imposition of western languages on Indigenous communities led to the alienations of the Indigenous from their experiences and cultures and when the Indigenous communicate in a different language they lost touch with reality. To restore this deprivation, Ngugi (1994) suggests that affected peoples like Africans should return to writing in their languages first and then consider translating it. This approach of decolonization from a language point of view though different from a material point is significant. What is important is that decolonial scholars agree that Indigenous practices see culture as woven and inseparable in theory and practice. Language may thus be visual and unspoken. However, Ngugi's articulation helps to understand the power of language and verbal expressions to the decolonial process.

The legacy of this destruction of language happens not just from European colonizers, but could also come from among dominant African ethnic group when a larger, more dominant group moves in and outnumbers a smaller group. This has affected my father's people, the Gas, who are native to Accra, the capital of Ghana. Other local dominant cultures outside of the Gas that have settled on Ga land and have directly and indirectly submerged Ga culture with theirs long after the colonial masters have left. Ga traditions receive less attention and appear to have evaporated into thin air overnight. The Akan language, Twi, has taken over the capital, Accra, becoming the dominant language, while the Ga language, which I and my family speak, for instance gradually dies with fewer speakers. By focusing on the Gas, I narrow my research to practice localization. To achieve localization, there is the need to bring together community leaders, and community groups, stakeholders and local users to ascertain the relevance of the product to the local people and to encourage local production. As Agboka (2013) has pointed out, "a successfully localized service or product is one that is developed within the local culture taking into account local, legal, cultural, linguistic, economic, and political

systems" (p. 43). Therefore, a decolonization approach to the Ga community in helping them restore their culture would be to position the research in ways that emphasize their indigeneity form within. I work with the Gas to help resist and revive their local ways of doing and being. The goal is to centralize local Ga practices as it engages the digital.

Again, for decolonial purposes, I turn to indigenous practices in support of my eclectic approach. I employ storytelling, interviews, material rhetoric and visual rhetoric. To consolidate the return to Indigenous knowledge and to preserving Ga language as we look forward, I work to create accessibility by centering Ga voices in the data and then translating them. By this way, I am hoping to participate in the preservation of the Ga language as well.

Moving toward Method: Sankofa

Technology comes with this flashy and sense of arriving and belonging to the new generations, a fad that makes one feels belonging and progressive. The challenge is that we may erroneously do away with all the relevant practices of the past. I am aware that there is the challenge and the problematic transfer of old ways of being and doing to technology. However, in line with what Mbembe's (2016) call on decolonial studies to take advantage of the "fifth freedom" or the free movement of knowledge and practice Denationalization or Transnationalization in the decolonizing process is a call to build intellectual networks with the diaspora—to establish a relationship with scholars of African descent who will help from all over the world instead of practicing decolonization based on centering Africa. Technology here I believe is one means of achieving a global denationalized decolonial practice. In the words of Haas (2012) "technology is not just what does the work, it is the work—and that work relies on an ongoing relationship between bodies and things" (p. 291).

Thus, in an effort to center Indigenous knowledge, I also draw from the Akan rhetorical concept of Sankofa. Sankofa is a tactical approach to navigating the interactions with technology. Sankofa in this sense will mean moving forward while looking up to treasures from the past. My use of Sankofa is to strategically engage the gaps of time as we transition from one era to the other. The present and the yet to come should be an honor to the past struggles and gains. When the past may be associated with painful experiences, we would want to quickly wrap it off and get along without losing its values and lessons. When I was young as I was described earlier, I would create my own kite and fly it across the field. Today, the kite has been reinvented as drones. There is much inspiration for our generation when we lean towards the past and such should be the attitude in navigating the online.

While I do not offer a return to Indigenous ways of the past that never had challenges, I posit that there are Indigenous practices that can help navigate the online. Online users do not necessarily need to enact *sankofa* and other traditional knowledge and practices. However, applying Indigenous knowledge to communication brings dynamism and a renewed sense of belonging to communities on the path of decolonization.

First, the Sankofa Symbol major represents an opportunity to investigate the influence of indigenous practices on the use of digital technology in the lives of Indigenous folks. It also allows Indigenous to investigate the extent to which technology shapes their cultures. This may replace unhealthy discussions online and give way to sustained conversations about how one's own culture and indigenous values shape one's existence.

Second, in the practice of Sankofa, Indigenous folks would be able to assess the extent to which technology restricts their being and then offer the right solutions. For instance, online language constraints would be detected early and the path to solutions such as clamoring for or a re-engineering of an orthographic interface that represents minority Indigenous culture could be started.

Storytelling

Sankofa as a visual embodies storytelling. It allows for sustained discussion on the importance of tradition, customs or culture on technology. As people use technology, they come into contact with their embodied cultural practices such as languaging and other cultural performances. It is in these that we sense tensions when the two fail to have congruent relations. Sankofa travels in time and reconciles the past with the future through the present. By exploring *Sankofa*, we will start conversations that center on indigenous practices relevant to our times. This is the way to go with technology.

To gather the stories and understandings with technology, I connect my thinking to other Indigenous approaches as well, such as the practices of the *Pagtatanong-Tanong* Interview method and the Philosophic Sagacity interview method (Chilisa, 2020). While the former advocates an equal share of power between the researcher and the participants, the latter deals with gathering of knowledge from the wise elders, or community members who have mostly not been schooled in the formal education system but are more knowledgeable in Indigenous ways. Most of the Indigenous knowledge they possess has not been documented. I believe stories, which are traditionally built into indigenous cultures and have become legitimate forms of understanding cultures will help get Indigenous knowledge and cultural peoples visible online. Stories do more than tell a narrative. Stories define a people, their relevance and contributions of knowledge to the global. Legg and Sullivan (2018) have in many ways argued how storytelling is central to understanding indigenous ways of being and how it is central in enacting indigenous practices. Legg and Sullivan (2018) contend that:

> Understanding storytelling as a transferable Indigenous practice encourages researchers aware of the how of storytelling to retool dominant methods within existing colonial structures and illustrates the practices necessary to do the work of knowledge making that more easily includes posthuman practices alongside distinctively human ones (p. 30).

By adopting storytelling, I am enacting Indigenous ways of knowing that allow me to think about local structures of epistemology that privileges Indigenous ways of knowing. In addition, I am exploring the unexplored strategies of storytelling. Kovach (2009) notes that there are two types of stories: those that hold mythical elements and those of personal narratives of places and experiences and passed down orally. Further but more importantly, these stories highlight the interrelationship between story and knowing (p. 95).

The stories as they are transmitted from one generation to another. Through the listening of the stories by the Indigenous Gas, I center their relationships with new generations, ensuring intergenerational transfer of knowledge emphasizes a complete Indigenous knowing or epistemology that honors their rich tradition and ancestry. I adopt a storytelling approach that involves interviewing Indigenous Gas and listening to their stories of survival as they navigate Ga cultural revival. As I know from my own heritage and as discussed in more academic venues (e.g., Chilisa, 2020), talking circles and listening are common to Africans who may sit around the fireside to tell stories, to sing or to play games. Talking in circles signifies a collective spirit and an unbroken community. I believe this makes it easy as well to involve the community in the analysis or interpretation of data gathered from them. However, my participants and I did not gather in the villages, but rather to talk on audio via the communication app, WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a very popular communication tool in Ghana and so when all participants favored its use for the research, we had to go for it. After all, such an app (technology) supports the notion of going forward, looking backward: *Sankofa* enables that when we discuss Indigenous ways, we do so without discarding technology.

By this storytelling and listening approach, the research and participants have become more like co-creators of knowledge, gathering narratives from a community of trusted locals of information that has yet to be documented through storytelling method (see Chilisa, 2020; Legg & Sullivan, 2018; Mukavetz, 2014). I recognize that each Indigenous society approaches storytelling differently and must be understood from their unique context. This way of storytelling from the local people adds the needed credibility and would make the voices of the people reach farther. While the Gas need support and this research strives to support them, the research does not in any way limit nor describe the Ga as agent-less. Instead, I learned more about culture from listening to the participants. The Ga Indigenous people favor interconnectedness and preservation of culture. They were worried about colonial influences on their culture and land. In this research, I organize the stories into themes and I am very mindful of the fact that the research we do have “the power to label, condemn, describe or prescribe solutions to challenges in former colonized, indigenous people and historically oppressed groups (Chilisa, p. 5). Thus, I intend this research to be a provocateur (Mertens, 2010), at transformative healing guided by the 4 Rs--Relationship, Responsibility, Relevance and Reciprocity. I did all this within the understanding and expectation of the worldview of the Indigenous and Indigenous ways. Chilisa (2020) defines the term ‘Indigenous’ as “a cultural group’s ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing and value systems that inform research processes" (p.10). It is interesting to note that the all-embracing and adaptability of Indigenous methodology allows it to intervene in other similar projects that share its

purposes. In this regard, the Indigenous approach allows the research to extend and implement social justice at the same time. Social justice has always concerned itself with decentering dominant paradigms and to place participants at the heart of the research including their realities, knowledge, values and methodologies that give meaning to their experiences.
For years the Gas have felt left out and other local cultures dominate in their land. They need their story out. Not only do Gas need to keep telling their stories, they need to as well keep countering dominant stories of themselves within their own land. My research focuses on the Gas, but my findings, I hope, will ripple outward and hold implications and applications for other Indigenous cultures seeking to both preserve the past while moving into the present.

Counter storytelling is both a method of telling stories that are not often told as well as analyzing and challenging stories of those in power who have arrogated to themselves dominant narratives/discourses that obscure those of the marginalized (Delgado, 1998). Counter storytelling makes visible the obscured practices in ways that project their identity and to restore cultural relevance.

Therefore, in this research I drew closer to Indigenous Gas who are at the forefront of the struggle for the Gas on many social platforms for several years now. In my research I had the honor of speaking with Kwei Mensah Laryea, Naa Shormeh Nortey and Ayikoi Otoo (a lawyer) whom I will introduce in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Engaging the Indigenous Ga Tribe in Ghana: Reclaiming Indigenous Language and Land

Stories connect us to peoples, places and histories as well as knowledges and practices. Stories help us define who we are and our interpretation and relationship with the world. Stories help us transmit knowledge, teach valuable and experiential lessons. In Indigenous and oral traditions, "stories can never be decontextualized from the teller," instead, "they are active agents within a relational world, pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon" (Kovach, 2009). Through stories we shape our understanding of how the world in the past worked, and how meaningful they could be connected to our present situations. By telling stories we are defining our place and relationship with our world including what we think, feel and do. In Onor ji Onor (2023) Nii Nortey (the narrator) accepts the invitation to continue the storytelling and tells a story in Ga. The story goes as this:

> In the past, the monkey and the wife lived happily. One day, the wife reacted to the husband's behavior she found distasteful. She interjected that "bei komɛi ofeɔ onii tamɔ gbɔmɔ ei" (sometimes you behave like a human). On hearing the husband got furious for a long time, chased from branch to branch and from tree to tree to beat her. This made the wife realize the comparison did not go down well with the husband. Later he called for reconciliation and apologized to her for his overreaction. Next, he tells the wife to accompany him somewhere as a result of the human comparison. At night they journeyed through the woods till they reached a destination. At this she he advised the wife to move with the stealth of a cat on prowl and to not even cough. Few moments perched at the top of a tree; both say a torch light approaching. As it approaches, husband to observe closely. They soon realize that the torch is on the forehead of a human who aims at antelope that is now dazed by the blinding light. This human shoots at the antelope, killing it instantly. At this point, the wife almost screams in tears but the husband covers her mouth. This human (killer) cuts the antelope into pieces and into a sack. As these human leaves, the husband asks the wife if this is the human he was compared to. Have you seen me put on my head or seen me shoot a gun? Do you know well what you compared me to? At this point the wife knew what humans could do.

At this point the narrator concludes that by giving the significance of the story-- the monkey resembles humans closely; the monkey lives like humans, caters for their young ones, walks on two legs yet is not happy to be compared with humans. Because human acts and character can be detrimental to others even the monkey does not want to be identified with humans. Thus, the conclusion is that we should change our lifestyles and stay away from evil so that others can happily identify with us, humans.

Stories typically abound in many Indigenous communities as daily life is significantly organized around stories. While these stories are meant to teach societal expectations and behavior for harmonious living, they are not told in vacuum but within the world of the community. Since such communities live with animals like monkeys, it is relevant that

such animals are used as characters in the story to make it relatable. The thoughts and actions of the monkeys are found in human communities as well. Therefore, by telling these stories, it is expected that the audience will focus more on the application of the values beyond the character, metaphors and other representations. For instance, in many Indigenous communities. As with the Akan's Anansesem, Archibald (2008) details that storytelling, while derived from daily activities such as weaving, highlights the complexities of storytelling in the search for and constructions of knowledge. Further, storytelling encompasses performing a complicated activity, a search to arrive at knowledge—that Indigenous storytelling traverses time, emphasizing on the audience's establishment of meaningful connection with the story as it exposes (mostly through humor) human weaknesses. This is to allow the audience the space to interpret and apply the lesson in their lives. Archibald (2008) thus describes storytelling as a gift just as the ever may gift the woven. Thus, in the story above it ends with "*at this point the wife knew what humans could do*," to teach how the story, a gift of knowledge, helped the monkey wife to arrive at a better conclusion.

African societies thus draw from the ancient Maat to engage in knowledge making practices that serve the community. Maat describes the concept of African rhetoric (whose tenets inform the beliefs and practices of all African Indigenous communities in one way or form) as described in Chapter 2. Maat is Story in action. It enacts a relational axiology or ontology geared towards eliciting good character formation from the audience due to its emphasis on the consequences of behavior. This is in line with its goal of restoring a community to order, balance and harmony. The Indigenous peoples of the Ga, whom I belong to, have expressed concerns about the attack, discord, and disharmony regarding their language and culture and identity. The challenge is an impression of a colonial tactic. Therefore, I discuss them here with a view to adding to the support and to decolonizing the colonial element disturbing the Ga people and to help achieve survivance.

Ga Family Connections and Background

I identify as a Ga through patrilineal system of family. My father is a Ga and my mother is an Akan specifically from Senya Beraku in the Central Region of Ghana (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Map of Ghana highlighting Accra and Senya Beraku

My mother herself had an Akan father but a Ga mother who raised her as a Ga although she maintains her Akan identity through naming and Akan family ties. I was born in Accra, grew up, and was schooled in Accra up to my first degree. I studied Ga in school from Primary 4 to Junior Secondary School (JSS) and was examined on Ga as well—it was the only paper I had an excellent distinction in in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). As befitting someone who is both Ga and Akan, I draw in part on Akan visual rhetoric to help me then go deeper into Ga traditions. As I look back to those youthful years of a vibrant Ga community, and the current state of affairs, I realized that indeed the present Ga situation does not even reflect the recent past of a vibrant Ga community and language use. Looking back to the past is a practice of Sankofa (Sankofa concept explained in chapter 3). Sankofa or looking back to the past holds something of value to our present situations.

The Gas are an adaptable, coastal people who have interacted with other communities for centuries, drawing into and making their own cultural stories and elements from the many peoples they met. In this way, the Ga came to engage with and embrace the image and rhetoric of the Sankofa, where they use to reflect back into time past to look for better days ahead in challenging times. When issues of Ga language caught the attention of the post-Independence generation, the Gas in the 1970s decided to use music to address the language issues. The Wulomei singing band that formed bears the mark of "Ga's long history of interaction, influence and absorption" but inspired and "embodied in the philosophy of *Sankofa*" (Webb, pp. 54-55). The *Wulomei*, according to Webb (2006) sought addition to recover dying old Ga-Adangbe (also spelled Ga-Adangme) religious traditions in music and rhythm (p. 60). The evocation of *Sankofa* itself by the Gas originated by the back to roots or Afrocentric movement that was happening in Ghana and other places in the world in the 1970s. It has been reported that the symbol of

Sankofa is prominent during the annual Ga festival celebration to remind community of the need to hold onto tradition in the face of foreign domination (Kwakye-Oppong, 2014).

As described in Chapter 3, *Sankofa* depicts a return to the past to seek its treasures and their implications for the future. It fits an Indigenous narrative as it demonstrates a return to one's roots as expected by tradition. Indigenous knowledge according to Chilisa (2020) are those that involve the "nature of knowledge, reality and values" (pp. 27 & 31) that emanate from Indigenous peoples and communities and their assumptions. In particular, 'Indigenousness' from which we have Indigenous knowledge derives, defined as "traditional norms, social values, and mental constructs that guide, organize and regulate African ways of living in making sense of the world." (Chilisa, p. 90). However, Chilisa (2020) makes the distinction that while Indigenous knowledge can be specific to locations, groups of people, regions etc. it is in terms of post coloniality associated with the colonized and the historically oppressed. *Sankofa* thus now embodies the experiences of the colonized and the oppressed people, in this case the Gas.

We build on the past and with *Sankofa* I seek to help build a strong Ga future that is fed by the wisdom and practices of the Ga past. By this, I believe the Gas will never be forgotten and the valuable customs and traditions will continue to shape not only Ga culture but also be part of the cultures of the world so that Ga unique traditions and ways of knowing and being are not lost to the world. In this way, Gas will contribute to shaping rhetorical practices aimed at preserving cultures.

Accra is located in Ghana, West Africa. It occupies a coastal area (Gulf of Guinea) in the southeastern part of Ghana. It is the capital and largest city of Ghana as well the capital town of the Greater Accra Region. It is bordered by two Akan regions to the north (Eastern Region) and to the west (Central Region). To the east it is bordered by the Volta Region; the region is home to Indigenous Ewe people who share some historical relations with the Gas.

Accra is the homeland of the Gas. Ga society is organized around families through which the Ga state was originally divided into 6 autonomous states. These include La, Teshie, Nungua, Osu, Tema and Ga Mashi (Central Accra). These are further divided into *akutsei* or quarters which are further divided into patrilineal houses or *wei* (Odotei, 1991; Webb, 2006). It is understood that the autonomy of each of the Ga state was broken when the British colonial government established a central Ga paramountcy and invested all Ga political and administrative powers in the paramount chief (Sackeyfio, 2008).

Other ethnic groups find Accra, the capital, very comfortable and a good place to live, and they have also made it their home. As a result of the many people, particularly Akans from rural areas, who have moved to Accra, through rural-urban drift, now Akans dominate Accra. The Gas, who have a very small population (7.4 % by the 2010 Census), are getting swallowed by other populations, and thus now have less political power and fewer opportunities, and are not involved as extensively in government and in governmental decision-making. For example, until 2019, Ghana had 10 Regions of which

some were more predominantly Ga (see Figure 4.2). On December 27, 2018, the government's proposal of carving new regions from selected regions to facilitate accelerated development passed a referendum. As a result, the Western Region divided to Western and Western North; Northern divided into Northern, Savannah & North East; Brong-Ahafo divided into Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions (see Figure 4.3). With the exception of Upper West, Upper East, North East, Northern, Volta, parts of Oti and Greater Accra the remaining regions are all dominated by Indigenous Akans giving them more say within democratic governance—policy making and implementation.

Figure 4.2 Old Regional Map of Ghana

Figure 4.3 New Regional Map of Ghana

As I discuss below, the Gas have a very small population. The 2021 Population and Housing Census of Ghana confirms the continuous increase in migration to Accra. According to the Census, the Greater Accra region recorded a 91.7% increase in population migration, the highest in the country. The region that was close to this was the Ashanti region which recorded a 61.6 % growth in population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The Greater Accra region now has about 17.7 % of the total population (30, 832, 019) size Ghana. Figure 4.4 shows the data on the 2021 Population migration.

Four regions (Greater Accra, 17.7%, Ashanti, 17.6%, Eastern, 9.5% and Central, 9.3%) contain more than half (54%) of the population.

FIGURE 4.2: POPULATION DISTRIBUTION BY REGION

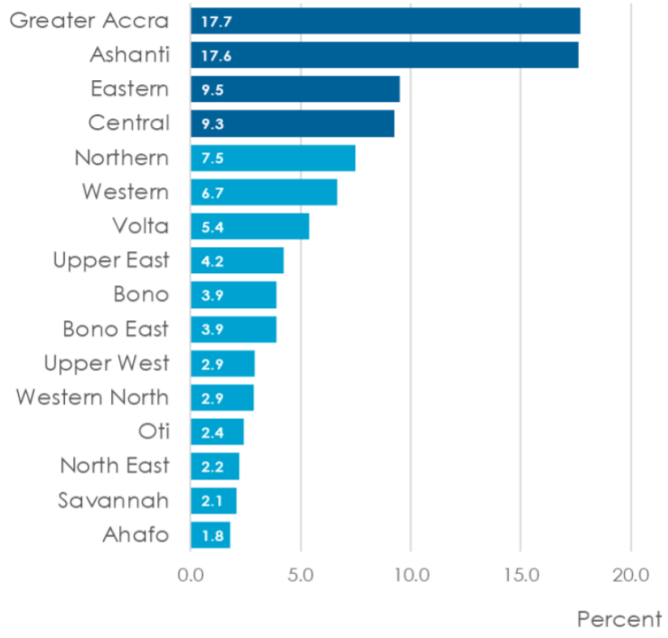

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Figure 4.4 Ghana Regional Population in Percentage --Government of Ghana. (2021). Ghana 2021 Population and Housing Census: Population Distribution by Region. (General Report. Volume 3A). Ghana Statistical Service.

While the 2021 Ethnicity is yet to be published, records from previous census show that the Ga-Adangbe population keeps dwindling. In Table 4.1 is the past statistics from the Ghana Statistical Service on ethnicity.

Table 1.1 Ghanaians by Ethnic Group, 2000 and 2010

Ethnic group	2000	2010
Akan	49.1	47.5
Ga-Dangme	**8.0**	**7.4**
Ewe	12.7	13.9
Guan	4.4	3.7
Gurma	3.9	5.7
Mole-Dagbani	16.5	6.6
Grusi	2.8	2.5
Mande	1.1	1.1
Other	1.5	1.4

Sources: compiled from 2000, 2010 population census reports, GSS

Sharing Stories & Ideas: Methods

As a counter to Western European research paradigm, I chose to conduct interviews with Indigenous Gas to understand issues facing Gas and some Indigenous solutions that can be learned and applied to the Ga situation. I grew up in Accra where Ga was spoken widely around me. Other languages coexisted with Ga in my local neighborhood (and Akan was dominant in the broader city), but these other languages did not become widespread in my neighborhood. Having heard of the many challenges that face my Ga people and community, I decided to embark on research that would look at the issues from ontological and epistemological perspectives. I wish to find out what existence means to the Gas and how they relate with the world as a means to understand our situation. It is to unveil the wisdom that informs that informs Ga cultural practices that may need to be articulated more to the contemporary. I am motivated to find out how they relate with other agencies including communication technologies in their world and ways to adapt them to culture. Knowing that Indigenous peoples have connections with the living and nonliving, I thought it best to think through how such a relationship can help promote Ga Culture. Just as it is with ancestral reverence in *Maat*, African Indigenous practices maintain respect for the elderly to honor the past. Those who have gone ahead, (dead) are considered elderly too and as repositories of cultural knowledge. Epistemologically, these Indigenous practices then have their own understanding and sources of knowledge and this body of knowledge informs their relationship with the worlds and it is through this they derived meaning. Ideologically, this research is meant to provide a platform for the Indigenous peoples to highlight their origins, practices and how valuable these are to their survival.

In relation to rhetoric and communication studies, my study follows the social justice turn in technical and professional communication. Social justice in technical communication engages issues of structural oppressions. Social justice seeks to draw attention to structural oppression that appears accepted and continues to marginalize others. Consequently, social justice works to recognize, confront and illustrate better ways at addressing issues of oppression and inequality. Walton et al. (2019) originally defines social justice as:

> research in technical communication (that) investigates how communication broadly defined can amplify the agency of oppressed people—those who are materially, socially, politically, and/or economically under-resourced. (p. 242)

This definition is applicable to the situation of the Ga who decry their gradual alienation of their lands and the degrading of their language and culture. By social justice, I am seeking to explore how the Ga can use digital technologies and other media and communications to amplify their voices and to showcase their Indigenous culture.

Therefore, in this research I drew closer to Indigenous Gas who are at the forefront of the struggle for the Gas on many social platforms for several years now. In my research I had the honor of speaking with Kwei Mensah Laryea, Naa Shormeh Nortey and Ayikoi Otoo.

Figure 4.5 Kwei Mensah Laryea

Kwei Mensah Laryea started his interest in Ga at a very early age when he was in grade 6. He read lots of Ga books and wrote his first Ga script while in grade 6. During his High School years, he was already performing one of the most important Ga cultural practices, Outdooring also known as the Naming Ceremony for new born babies. Later he actively participated in the local Ga Quiz called Kaa Akaa Akwɛɔ on radio and television, advancing from narrator through score master to actual quiz master.

While Kwei Mensah has moved to the United States, he continues to conduct Ga programs and engage issues in churches across Ghana as well as appearing frequently on local television stations as well as online platforms to discuss Ga projects and progress.

Figure 4.6 Naa Shormeh

Naa Shormeh Nortey is a retired broadcast journalist. She worked at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and was particularly involved in hosting Ga programs on set. Like Kwei Mensah, Naa Shormeh has engaged with Ga cultural traditions from early childhood, reading and writing Ga stories. She was a regular host of the Ga TV program known as *Asenta*, *Oba* and continues to advocate for Ga in both online and offline spaces.

Figure 4.7 Ayikoi Otoo

Ayikoi Otoo (lawyer) is a former Ghana Ambassador to Canada and a strong advocate of Ga cultural revival and survival. During his time as ambassador, he always found opportunities to highlight cultural aspects of the Gas traditional clothing and would not prefer speaking the Ga language aside English. Ayikoi Otoo has had lots of interviews concerning Ga on radio and television. He has recently been elected president of the Ga Dangme Council (a council to deliberate on Ga matters).

One thing that runs through all three of these people is that they all have maintained an online presence and their activism for the preservation of Ga culture is available online. They all do see the relevance of technology in promoting the Ga traditional practices and preserving Indigenous knowledge. Through the engagement and interaction with these Ga Indigenous people, I seek to conduct research on behalf of the entire Ga community in

a way that allows for a deep reflection of the challenges of the Ga community. Each of the Ga whom I had the pleasure of speaking with shared stories about themselves in relation to the Ga struggle and their Indigenous knowledge. Indeed, through this collaborative effort at Indigenous thinking, I am able to emphasize the importance of building relationships and communities.

In this chapter I will retell my research stories of the Gas in support of its survivance while looking for a possible roadmap for achieving survive that makes Ga culture visible and preserved. Drawing from my conversations with my fellow Ga and other secondary research, I trace themes and connections related to Ga survivance and the potential for digital technologies, focusing in particular on the following: language and cultural practices, connections to the land, and, connections to the land, and the effect on educational policies.

Ga Language

Language is one tool that holds a culture together. However, to the Gas, their language -- Ga, has been falling short of this due to external and or political influences. First, all three interviewees indicated that the rural-urban migration to Accra has been one of the major causes of Ga language decline in their town city. As mentioned above, the Gas are about 7% of the total population (32 million). Over time they have been overwhelmed by the large population of other groups of people who come to the capital because this large city holds most government operations and jobs. When they arrive, these people do not learn and speak the Ga language. They speak their Akan language, Twi. Today, they have taken over most of the jobs in the city that require language interactions and become the driving forces in determining language in business transactions. Ayikoi Otoo (68 years) recounts that in his youthful days in Accra this reality was different. Commercial activities used to revolve around the Gas. The trotros (local transportation vehicles usually for traveling short distances), the taxis and buses were all driven by Gas or people who used Ga to interact. But the new trotro drivers from tribal affiliations other than Ga either do not know Ga or simply refuse to use it in their interactions with customers. This is one small example of how the Ga feel their language is being displaced in their native homelands. In order to function in the city, Gas who travel, work, or are in school in the Ashanti region must learn Twi, but Akan speakers of Twi do not have the same need or push to learn Ga.

As Naa Shormeh speculated with me, perhaps, for the Gas their hospitality and receptive character is somehow to blame. They have so much compassion for strangers and easily adopt them; sometimes, to the extent of learning their language to better offer support to those non-Gas. The Gas have a practice preserved in the saying *"Ablekuma aba kuma wo*" which translates as "May foreigners be planted among us." It is not clear what started this tradition or ways of craving and embracing others. However, Webb (2006) argues that the Ga possibly believe that their prayers or wishes may not be answered should they not embrace the Others. This hospitality to visitors and foreigners also has contributed to the language decline and this affects their children very much. Children

pick up language easily and as they hear the Twi language spoken around them, it becomes part of them.

Colonization has also impacted the Ga language negatively. Colonization emphasized the adoption of a foreign culture. Particularly, it imposed a new religion on the natives. The Natives were compelled to convert to the Christian religion. In effect, they absorbed European cultures under the guise of Christianity. Today, about 80% of Ghanaians are Christians. This has led to the continued erosion and loss of Indigenous cultures and customs.

It is worth commending that despite the religious hegemony by the churches, they helped preserve the Ga Language. To prevent children from idleness, the church organized a Sunday School later on Sundays after church. Specifically, the Presbyterian church of Ghana helped people like Naa Shormeh and Kwei Mensah with the reading and writing of Ga as they learned scripture. I had the same experience but with the Methodist Church of Ghana. Sunday School activities gave most Gas a strong foundation in studying Ga language as well as developing the passions in participating in Ga cultural activities where the language use is more applicable. Naa Shormeh and Kwei Mensah, all attest to this experience. Naa Shormeh emphasizes the importance of Sunday School to her learning Ga language:

Ga	***English***
Bei ni mi je nɔ, mifɔɔləi fɛɛ presbyterian. No mli wɔ yaa sunday school kɛ akpa sɔɔmɔ. Ŋmɛji etɛ mli wɔ yaa sunday school. Jɛmɛ atsɔɔ wɔ Ga ni jɛmɛ klɛŋklɛŋ mikase Ga ŋmaa kɛ kanemɔ kɛjɛ. Bi anɛ dɔ lɛ sane kome ji akɛ nakai Sunday skul ebɛ dɔnn. Agbɛnɛ hu mitee Apenkwa Presbyterian school. Wɔ Teacher nyɛɛɛ ekane Ga, hewɔ kɛ eshɛ Ga time mikɛ oblayoo ko atsɔɔ lɛ Ago Laryea ji mɛi enyɔ pɛ nikaneɔ Ga yɛ class.	My parents were baptized Presbyterians. So, we attended Sunday School after church service about 3pm. It was my first point of Ga reading and writing literacy. Nowadays, Sunday School is no longer practiced. I also attended Apenkwa Presbyterian School and used to be the Ga reader alongside a friend as our teacher could not read Ga

Despite the language efforts by missionary churches, the Ga language is under threat. Aside from the churches' Sunday School programs and some selected schools, there is little external recognition of the Ga-adangbe languages. As I listened to the Ga I talked with, it becomes obvious that language is important to Gas. They have concerns the future does not look bright for the survival of the Ga language.

Kwei Mensah Laryea says that he believes

Ga	***English***
Kɛ maa kɛɛ mɛɛ naa lɛ akɛ eeba ba naa gbee, shi bei abɔ ni mikɛ bo mli wie Ga ebaaa	People see our language as coming to its end. However, for the number of times that you and

nagbee. Ga wiemɔ mli hia naa kpa. Shi kɛ wɔ bo te nibii amli veveeve ma nyɛ makɛ bo ake Ga awiemɔ mli bashi. Wɔ yi fioo ko ni wɔn tsu heni ni eka bashi. Ebashi yɛ gbɛi asrɔ toi.

I engage in speaking Ga, it will never come to an end. Ga language is very important (to us). Yet, if we should be very blunt, I can say the Ga language is in decline in various ways.

Kwei Mensah seeks language opportunities or spaces that will keep the Ga language engaged in ways that transcends time and beyond the colonial experience that has affected the Ga language and shares an experience when he was young student. He says,

Ga

Blɔfo wiemɔ ba he shi. Ni wɔ skulls amli eba lɛ akɛ kɛ owie Ga obaa pee kpɛnjwɛ. Kpɛnjwɛ ayee obaa pee one pesewa. Inflation hewɔ wan pesewa baanyɛ ni efee tamɔ 10 sidis (1 dollar - December 2022). No hewɔ gbeyee shemɔ baa no hewɔ mɔfɛɛmɔ mli she gbeyei ni ebaa wie wiemɔ. Aahu kɛ atee shia po awieee. No hewɔ ejɛ wɔ skul amli no he ejɛ no ga ba bɔi shi gbeemɔ.

English

English language has been entrenched/ solidified here. During our schooling days (1960s) it happened that you are punished with fines for speaking your local Ga language in class. You will pay one pesewa (10 cedis -1 dollar - December 2022). As a result, we were always afraid to speak our Ga when at home and outside the walls of school.

Kwei Mensah goes on to further point out acquired attitudes of some Gas towards the speaking of the language.

Ga

Agbɛnɛ hu wɔ suɔmɔ ana wɔ akɛ wɔ wieɔ blɔfo. No hewɔ wɔ suɔmɔɔɔ ni wɔ wie wɔ man wiemɔ. Wɔ naa wɔ man wiemɔ akɛ noko kɛkɛ. Shi wɔ jiɛ kpaa nɔ akɛ wiemɔ Nyɔŋmɔ kɛ ha wɔ. Ni naa gbe nɔ kraa ji wiemɔ ni ji blɔfo wɔ naa akɛ kɛ owieɔ bɛ ole nii fe mɔ fɛɛ mɔ. No hewɔ kɛ kɛ ana akɛ owie Ga bɛ ole noko noko.

Agbɛnɛ nɔni ji etɛ nɔ, wɔ ten mɛi pii kɛ wɔ tee skul pii agbɛnɛ, nibii komɛi ni blema bii fee lɛ, blɔfo kɛɛ wɔ naa lɛ akɛ outmoded. Ebee eho. No hewɔ kɛ efee bɛ wɔ kɛ kpasa shi.

English

Now we want to be associated with speaking English. Thus, we do not like speaking our own language. We see our own language as just anything, a mere language but our language is divine from God. And the final thing is that we are made to think that speaking English elevates one's intellectual status above everyone. As a result, speaking would mean one is not intelligent or less informed.

For some of us, when we get educated through lengthy years of schooling, we begin to see cultural practices as outmoded, belonging to the past so we participate less in our culture.

The English language holds a position among many Gas that it has become a marker of intelligence and importance which in turn contributes to the decline (within educational or intellectual circles) of especially the Ga language. The attitude of the educated further makes this worse. In my experience, as I have earlier shared, the schooling system at the elementary stages punished the speaking of local languages except at the times for the study of a language. In Science, Math and other non-local language classes, class prefects were asked to write down names of not only talkative but those who speak non-English. Culprits are beaten for not engaging in the English language. This might be a legacy of the colonial times following the colonial government takeover of Administration in 1925 headed by governor Gordon Guggisberg (1919-27).

Here I will like to give a brief about the language policy in Ghana that the Gas are so much concerned about. Ansah (2014) recounts that earliest forms of Western education started with the Castle schools by European settlers in the force Christiansburg Castle in Accra (Danish) Elmina Castle (Portuguese then Dutch) Cape Coast Castle by the British to provide education to children and relatives of wealthy African merchants and some Chiefs and mulattos and children by European Castle staff born by African women in the 15th century. Later the Missionaries arrived. The Wesleyan Missionaries used English as a medium of instruction while Basel and Bremen emphasized language as a medium of instruction in informal education (Agbedor 1994). The move to engage the local languages by the missionary schools gave much recognition that encourage the learning and development of the local languages.

On a different view, Ouadraogo (2000) has concluded that the issues of language policy in education in Ghana are influenced by the complexities in dealing with multi-ethnicities and the attendant multi-language situations. Such complexities have led to the an uncheckered history of educational policies in Ghana in regards to language use due to existing circumstances. In precolonial times, Castle and Missionary Schools (1529 to 1925) were at the center of language policies that later influenced (indirectly) language policy in Ghana. Castle Schools according to Ansah (2014) used only English as a medium of instruction. Castle Schools were learning centers directed at teaching children of wealthy African merchants, children of important chiefs and mulatto children of European staff by African women). The Castle Schools was replaced by the Missionary Schools that emphasized more the introduction of local languages as medium of instruction (Agbedor, 1994). Particularly, the Basel and Breman missions engaged the Indigenous languages more than the Wesleyan Missionaries. Such focus on local languages benefitted the development of the Ga language and helped whipped up interest in the study of the Ga language. All 3 Ga people interviewed for this study admitted that they had high interests in issues about Ga due to early childhood Ga reading materials. Moreover, they benefited tremendously from Ga lessons organized for the youth after church service called Sunday School. They could not only read and write Ga but also participate with the culture.

However, as mentioned earlier, when Ghana gained independence in 1957 the medium of instruction became English only lasting till 1966. This could have played a part in the decline of local languages, particularly the Ga language in education. In 1967 the military government implemented a local but first language of a child (L1) as the medium of

instruction in primary 1 (grade one) only. Then from 1970 to 1974 the civilian government implemented the mother tongue, L1, as medium of instructions for the first 3 years of education. However, it made mandatory the learning of a language mandatory in addition to the local language. It also introduced French language as a way of achieving regional integration with Ghana's francophone neighbors (Ivory Coast, West: Burkina Faso, North: and Togo, East). A Ghanaian language according to Owu-Ewie (2006) to be used "is the language of the locality which includes one of the following: Akan (Fante and Twi), Nzema, Ga, Ga-Adangbe, Ewe, Gonja, Kasem, Dagbani, and Dagaare." (p. 77). These were languages that had been developed in written forms. Thus, where it says mother tongue or L1, it referred to local language in the ethnic's geographical location.

We can also associate the decline in Ga language to the introduction of religion. With the introduction of religion, most of the Indigenous Ga customs and traditions were branded as evil or fetish. Due to colonization and also the introduction of foreign religions, the word 'fetish' often came to describe local (including the Gas) religious ceremonies. Such a description was given a negative connotation as it became associated with evil or primitiveness. For the Gas, the *Wulomɛi* has held on to the pouring of libation as a mode of prayer even when some consider it primitive Kwei Mensah recounts that,

Ga

Etsake akɛ efeɔ wɔ teŋ mɛi pii abɔi akɛ blɔfo ba tsɔɔ wɔ Nyɔŋmɔ. Shi wɔ le Nyɔŋmɔ momo shi wɔ naa bɔ ni wɔ ba ja lɛ wɔ ha ni wɔ kɛ na bɔ ni wɔ Nyɔŋmɔ ji kɛ gbɛ nɔ ni wɔ ba tsɔ ni wɔ kɛ ja lɛ. No hewɔ ni blɔfo na akɛ gbɛ yɛ wɔ he, etsɔɔ wɔ nɔ ni wɔ fe yɛ le enɔ he wɔ. Blɔfo ba ha wɔ ŋmalɛ krɔŋkrɔŋ. Amɛ tsɛ lɛ bible.

Shi wɔ teŋ mɛi pii wɔ ya kaneee ni wɔn na akɛ nibii ekomɛi wc feɔ. Ekoji mpai yeli. Nimɛi komɛi ba kɛɛ wɔ akɛ mpai yeli ehii ejaakɛ wɔn tsɛ wɔ jia agbɛi. Shi kɛ obote mli oba na akɛ eyɛ ŋmalɛ krɔŋkrɔŋ mli. Blɔfo mɛi ni amɛ baaba amɛ kɛ bible ba ni amɛ kɛ wɔ ba ye jara. Ni amɛ kɛ wɔ ba Nyɔŋmɔ.

Wɔ kane mli ojogbann no hewɔ efee mi naa kpɛ akɛ blɔfo kɛɛ kɛ okɛ noko baa tee modin kɛ wo wolo mli. Emli tsɔɔmɔ kɛkɛ ji akɛ biblio ni amɛkɛ ha wɔ mpae yeli atsi ta yɛ nyɔŋmai etɛ kɛ enumɔ (35x).

English

Some have the misconception that the white man taught us the concept of God. However, we know God already. We may not have a straightforward or organized way of relating to the divine. So, the white man saw a gap and taught us according to their ways and brought us the bible.

Some of us have not taken the trouble to read to understand our practices. One of such is the pouring libation. So, some others have the confidence to tell us that we are fetish and by libation we are calling on smaller gods instead of the Almighty. Yet, when we investigate further, we see the same libation in the holy bible. The whites came to trade.

The Ga culture receives less respect due to its cultural practice of pouring of libation. This to many against mainstream Christian religion.

Since the Ga language is the medium of cultural performances, those who distance themselves from the Ga culture extend same to the language. For instance, when the Ga language is used in the pouring of libation, then language becomes less desired. Despite the cultural negativity that some non-Gas have attached to Gas and the Ga language most Gas are not ready to let go of their culture and identity. Instead, they are seeking ways to not only clear the misconceptions but also enforce and pass it on to the next generations. Gas speak highly of their cultural practices and customs. When the Wulomei composed their song "Ma La Ma Wie Ga", (I will speak Ga, I will not speak Hausa) they did that also in response to the decline of the language as a way of recovering it. The song is more of registering their protest against the growing presence of other languages in Accra. Since, they are singers they decided to sing. Others too will find it a calling and use their offices or tools to revive the language The song goes like this,

Ga	***English***
Akɛɛ shika tsɛmɛi tawo ablekuma (ee) Ohiafoi tawo ablekuma (ee) Akee ablekuma aba kula maabii Maabii yoo yoo maabii yoo yoo Mala ma wie Ga (ee) Mi wieee Awusa Ŋmɛnɛ mala ma wie Ga (ee) Mi wieee Awusa doŋŋ Mala ma wie Ga (ee) Mi wieee Awusa Gbele ni gbe mi nyɛ awoo (oo) Hela ni mo ntsa ataa Ame ke ablekuma aba kula manbii Mami o yoo yoo	They said rich men are looking for people Poor men are looking for people They said people should come and take care of some people's children People's children yes yes, people's children yes Yes I will sing and speak Ga I will not speak Hausa Today I will sing and speak Ga I will not speak Hausa again I will sing and speak Ga I will not speak Hausa Death that killed my mother My father's illness They said people should come and join us Oh mother (Webb, 2015)

The song is a call to the Ga community to hold fast to the Ga language and be proud of it. That, in a heterogenous bustling city like Accra, Ga should be proud of their language, and mark their presence with it. Other languages such as Hausa and Twi were fast spreading other than the Ga language. Hausa is spoken in most of the northern parts of Ghana. Hausa, in particular, had been gaining lots of speakers due to its attachment to the spread of Islam. Muslims in Ghana use the Hausa to communicate. While the Ga language was not gaining more speakers like the others, the Wulomei performing mostly as a live-band in most parts of Ghana drew them to many language speakers who identified with the rhythm of the Ga songs. Thus, while the Hausa may serve rhyming purposes, it helped deepen the call (even to those in authorities) to return to Ga language or give attention to Ga language.

All 3 Gas I spoke with named various cultures that are sacred and important to them. This includes,

- *Kpojiemɔ* (Naming Ceremony or Outdooring)
- Homowo Festival

- Haajia anii (Twin festival, part of but preceding the Homowo festival)
- Male Circumcision
- Otofoshii (Puberty or Passage Rites)
- Ga woo (marriage ceremony)
- Yara feemɔ (funeral rites)
- Wulomei (Priests and rituals of his office).

To focus this paper, I will center instead the discussions on only 3 of the above — *Kpojiemɔ*, Homowo and Wulomei. The Homowo is the festival of the Gas. It is derived from two Ga words, "homo" and "wo". "Homo" translates as "hunger" and "wo"as "hooting at". The festival therefore marks hooting at hunger. The story goes that the Gas experienced severe drought at a point that led to famine. Through hard work, tilting the land and farming extensively the Gas were able to overcome this famine with a bumper harvest. The festival is thus a celebration of the victory over the famine. The festival starts with *aadu ŋmaa*, planting of corn (in other towns like Teshie and Nungua, it is called Gbɛ mli laa-- locking of the road) followed by *Kpoofeemo*, ban on drumming and dancing or any public noise. This particular tradition has seen a lot of push back from many non-Gas in Accra. This period of silence is to pave way for the chief priest to meditate and engage in reflection in anticipation of the coming year. However, local businesses such as night clubs, entertainment spots and music businesses or dealers had issues with not being allowed to publicly blast their sounds to attract customers (Adamafio, 1962). The churches also refused to observe the silence. Lighthouse Chapel, a popular church supported by the Ghana Pentecostal Council refused to observe and had alterations with the elders in which musical instruments were seized and some members who resisted were beaten (Webb, 2006). The churches claim their religious freedom had been violated by the ban on drumming and noise making. Kwei Mensah confirms this when he says

Ga	***English***
Sɔlemɔ jamɔi kui amɛ naa lɛ tamɔ wɔŋ jamɔ noko. Shi jee nakai ni. Amrɔ nɛɛ oha mli jaa nyɔŋmai kpaanyɔ 80% mii ya sɔɔmɔ. Yɛ sɔɔmɔ tsu lɛ mli akɛɔ amɛ akɛ, wɔ kusuu ni ji kpekpele, Hɔmɔwɔ mi wo yeɔ ehiii. Wɔn ja wɔŋ	The churches are those who despise our festival. They see it as pagan. Most of our population, about 80% are church goers. They preach to them that our festivals are evil and we worship the devil.

Such opposition to Ga cultural practice has created discord, an *Ifset*, within the Ga community. Ga culture is inextricably linked to the spiritual, hence the ban on drumming. The Gas have stood their grounds and till now still enforce the ban on noise-making prior to the Homowo festival. From this happening, the Ga seem to be on course to restore *Maat*, justice, in the struggle for culture preservation and revival.

At the climax of the festival, Ga observes this festival with a special food known as *kpokpoi* or as it is called today, *kpekpele*. *Kpekpele* is prepared with unfermented corn powder and it is eaten with palm nut soup and lots of fish. The elders sprinkle some of the *kpekpele* to their ancestors. On this day of feasting, families gather to celebrate and to share. Ayikoi Otoo says the Homowo celebration has grown recently as it is "celebrated

very widely on all Ga lands and it's taken over now by the diaspora community. Every year all Gas living anywhere in the world all celebrate Homowo".

One other cultural practice of the Gas is the *Otofoshi* (Puberty or passage right). When youth reach puberty, they are secluded from society and camp with older women and men of the community. Women teach the girls and the men teach the boys all about life expectations and how to take care of themselves. At this Naa Shormeh explains that the *otofoshi* (rites of passage) is,

Ga	***English***
Atsɔseɔ bo. Mami onukpa kɛ no baa hi tsumli. Ni aba tsɔ bo ni hɔɔ mɔ, fale fale he hiɛmɔ. Bɔni okɛ owu baa hi shi aha.	The period of training. It is the period of puberty rites isolates you (the initiate) but teaches. It teaches you the effectiveness of speech and how to communicate, how to approach marriage, how to practice hygiene and to do business.

One of the cultural practices that is at the heart of the Gas is the *kpojiemo* (Naming Ceremony or Outdooring). The natives recognize what sets Ga culture apart from other cultures in Ghana. Naa Shormeh mentions that,

Ga	***English***
Gamɛi nɔ titri ni akɛɛ naa wɔ ji Kpojiemɔ. Wɔ ji ku ni the whole ghana, kɛ *akutsei* afɛɛ mli kɛ wiemɔ kuii amli ebɛ mli. No ji kpojiemɔ kɛ gbɛi ni wɔ toɔ naa. Wɔ yɛ akutso aloo weku fɛɛ weku kɛ gbɛi ni awoɔ. Kɛ otee Sempe amɛ yɛ gbɛi kraa ni kɛ adamɔ he fɛɛ he yɛ jenn koji kpawo nɛɛ ni kɛ atsɛ Ga gbɛi adole aloo Adote anaa mɛni Sempe nyo ni ja ekolɛ ama awo lɛ.	For Gas what is remarkable about us is mainly our naming ceremony. We are one tribe in Ghana that has this unique practice. Naming ceremony has its own ways of practicing it. It directs how each family and clan should be named and identified. The Sempes for example have their naming that would identify an Indigene from anywhere in the world, When the names Adote or Adole is mentioned, you would instantly know they are from Sempe.

Ayikoi Otoo adds that it is imperative that a Ga child is outdoored in order to be accepted into the family and community. He further emphasizes on the importance of naming and links Ga ancestry to Jewish. He says (translanguaging),

Ga	***English***
We say we are Jews and therefore we have two systems ni wo fɛɛ wɔ le. Wɔ Ga gbɛi fɛɛ (all of our names) are already settled.	We say we are Jews and therefore we have two systems of naming that we follow. Our Ga names are settled, predetermined in particular order

Kɛ ofɔbi obaa wo opapa gbɛi.	You name your children after your father's
Kɛ opapa fɔ bi lɛ hu eba wo epapa mɛi agbɛi.	Your father is named after his father's
Obii hu baa wɔ amɛ papa mɛi agbɛi. Ga Agbɛi just like the Jew shishi numɔ ko bɛ he	Your children will also name after their father's Ga names just like Jews have no meaning
Min family awoc Ayikwei, Ayite, Ayaa, okai. Ato lɛ line: Ayele, Ayorkor, Ayifo, Ayitso.	My family names are Ayikwei, Ayite, Ayaa, okai in that succession: Ayele, Ayorkor, Ayifo, Ayitso. They (the names) are usually either 5/5 or 4/4 in line and all settled already. This is peculiar to Gas (within the Ghanaian context)

For the Gas, their naming is marker that distinguishes them from others. The fear is that other non-Ga cultural names might adulterate infiltrate this naming sequence. This may lead to loss of cultural identity as new names may have its own cultural implications. It is not clear why Ayikoi Otoo states the names have no meaning. While, there may not be semantical meanings, they names tell birth order. One is able to know the first born from the second born or how many siblings exist in the family. In the past, and even now the names serve as tracking tool for reuniting lost children due to the family names. This naming performance is what must not be lost.

Ga	***English***
Wɔ le nɔni akɛɛ afɔ bo ju atsɔɔ bo kojo, afɔ bo hcc atsɔɔ boi Kwame, afc bo hɔɔgbaa atsɔɔ bo kwesi kɛ nii. No. we have them Ga equivalent and we use them, only kɛ ogbɛi eta. Kɛ mɔn efɔ pii. Ebaa nyɛ e choose. No hewɔ kɛ amɛ kɛɛ Kwasi wɔ kɛɛ kwashi, kojo same Kojo. Akan kɛɛ kobina wɔ tsɔɔ lɛ Kobblah. Yaw wɔ tsɔɔ lɛ Kwaku. Hɔɔ Kwame nɔɔ. Hɔɔgbaa Kwashi.	We do not name according to the day of one's birth (as the Akans do). We do have the equivalent of the Day Names however. It only applies when we have run out of names. The Sunday born Kwesi in Akan becomes the Ga Kwashi, Thursday's Yaw becomes Kwaku. We maintain the Kojo of Monday and their Tuesday's name, Kobina, but we use a different spelling, Cobblah. Kwame is Saturday and Kwashi for Sunday.

It is at the Kpojiemɔ that the Ga child is named. Ga names are pre-established in particular birth order. It runs on a first- and second-generation list depending on the particular family one hails from.

According to Naa Shormeh, there are ways that this naming ceremony is performed. She says,

Ga	***English***
Aateshi mankɛ mlan mankɛ himan ni akɛ bi aatsɔɔ tsotsoobi. Ayɛ bɔni afec lɛ. Bi lɛɛ kɛ	The child is shown to the brightest star early at dawn and then placed on the

shikpɔŋ ŋmɛɛ hu, ayɛ bɔni afeɔ lɛ. Shi taramɔ diɛnstɛ, akontɔ lɛ hu eshishi numɔ yɛ.

Agbɛnɛ hu atao moko, hiɛshikalɔ yɛ weku lɛ mli ni etswala gbekɛɛ naji. Enɛmɛi fɛɛ ji nifeemɔ ko ni ekɛɛ jɔɔmɔ baa weku, kɛ shia kɛ abifao lɛ ni afɔ nɔ. Fɛɛ mli ayɛ jɔɔmɔ wiemɔi ni akɛ shweɔ shi. Kɛ agbe fɛɛ naa aba jɔɔ wiemɔ. Abaa ye mpai. Akɛ nu shweɔ shi aloo daŋ kɛ ŋmɛdan ni akɛ jɔɔ enyɛ Awo, gbekɛ kɛ weku mɛi fɛɛ. Ni nɔni ŋɔɔ mi naa ji abɔɔ abifao yɛ efɔmɔ gbi anɔ ni ena otsi tamɔ bɔni Israel bi foɔ ketia, nakai tsa kpaa eyɛ jɛn.

ground and all these have their deeper meanings. Those invited, (family and friends) are seated in a special horseshoe manner.
Then they give the child a guardian by carefully selecting a person with good moral character or virtue. When all is done, they pour libation using water or wine in prayer invoking blessings for the child, the mother and the entire family as with the Israelites spiritual tradition.

The Gas spiritually believe that each child born is connected to a heavenly body, a star. The child is expected to live and stand out as a star. Thus, the child is shown to the brightest star so the child excels (shines brightest) among people and come out of any challenge just as the stars shine in the darkness.
The child is blessed with words of power (Ajɔɔ lɛ ni abɔɔlɛ kɔkɔ akɛɔ lɛ akɛ na), parts of this include:

Ga	***English***
Ga humi bi lɛ, kɔyɔɔ tswaa da ni ewieɔ Ona onako Onu onuko	As a Ga child, when you hear, you have not heard and when you see you have not seen. The wind blows before you (a Ga child) speak.

At this instance, we see one reason why the Gas are very much concerned about their language and culture. The practice above demonstrates the rhetorical effectiveness of the naming ceremony. Gas believe there is a power behind speech. The child is not to grow up speaking uncontrollably.

Naa Shormeh explains that

Ga	***English***
Ni mitsɔɔ akɛ awieee kɛkɛ. No he wɔ kɛji Ga nyo tee gblaŋ shihilɛ mli ni nɔɔ fɛɛ ni ena ebaa wieɛ abiɔ lɛ akɛ awooo onɔ afata lo? Ni kɛ aaju aha abifao ahoɔ enaabu akɛ ona ona ko onu onu ko. ŋmɛnɛ mibɛ sure akɛ afeɔ. Kusuu nɛɛ fɛɛ eŋmɛɛ wɔ, ni esaa nakai.	Then The child is advised to speak at the right time. So, when a Ga woman goes into marriage, she'll know right moment to communicate and not to engage silence. Today, we are losing this practice.

To survive in the community and with Gas one needs to know when it is appropriate to communicate and when such communications are not desired. It evokes the rhetorical appeal of Kairos, finding the opportune time to effectively communicate. It is a reflection as well as enactment of the rhetoric of silence of the Egyptian rhetoric. The rhetoric of silence demands that one engages in a meaningful conversation through active listening and to find the right time to talk to fulfill the moral obligations expected. A child who lacks communication skills is often asked if they were properly initiated into the world through the naming ceremony "ejaakɛ wiemɔ kɛ sane aloo hiɛgbele baa (because bad speech could bring about troubles or disgrace or even death -- Naa Shormeh). The Ga language thus has performative rhetorical functions. However, external forces keep interfering with such linguistic acts. Naa Shormeh particularly notes that:

Ga	***English***
Amɛ batsa ke. Eko ji wɔ kpojiemɔ nɛɛ kɛ tsɔ kristo ja mɔ nɔ, ŋmalɛ mli he wɔ bia nɛ, mɛi komɛi feɔ lɛ shwane. Ookwɛ ni afɔ Ga fɔmɔbi ni osɔfo ni yɔɔ asafo naa Twi nyo ni aloo Hausa loo ewe nyo ni. Lɛ osɔfo ni baa wo lɛ baa jie lɛ kpo. Ehii nakai ni akɛ lɛ aha Twi nyo.	They (Whiteman, Christians, other local tribes) have come to change our culture. Today, most people do not know the value of showing a baby to the brightest star at dawn. They do it in the afternoon. You just wonder how nowadays a Ga child would be outdoored by a non-Ga priest speaking Twi, or Ewe or Hausa to a Ga child. It is not our way for a foreigner to do so.

Growing concerns about misunderstanding of the Ga practices like the naming ceremony and the attempt to "educate" the Gas to stop these makes Ga people like Naa Shormeh passionate about Ga advocacy. It appears non-Gas do not understand the Ga language and practices and contribute to its decline through the negative attitude to it. This negative attitude to Ga culture has seeped into educational policies and practices of the country.

Educational Policy: Impacts on Language & Culture

As many non-Gas relocated to Accra, the language policy in Accra was changed. The policy used to be that the language of the Region is what is taught in schools. However, this started to change in the early 2000s when the NPP came to power. Alongside the proliferation of Akan radio and television stations in Accra, the language policy was changed to "dominant language" at the elementary or primary level. What this means is that the local language to be taught in schools would be predetermined by the number of speakers in the region regardless of the Indigenous peoples' presence and their language usage. In Accra, unlike other regions, most schools either stopped using the geographical language (Ga in the situation of Accra) Ga as medium of instruction to the children using other local languages such as Ewe, Twi etc. Anyidoho (2018) notes that in 2006 the Ghana Education Service set up a National Literacy Task Force (NLTF) to improve the literacy skills of school children. The task force had later recommended the adoption of the National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) whose goal is to support the Indigenous literacy of children in lower primary (KG1 to Primary 3) and to also transition

from the local languages smoothly to reading and writing in English. Children were expected to be fully bilingual at the Primary 3 (third grade) level (p. 233). The children in Accra did not benefit from this. Most teachers in Accra are not Gas (they are Akans and Ewes). Most of them had petitioned the District Educational director to be allowed to use other than Ga language as medium of instruction and when that was turned down, they abandoned the Ga language for their respective native languages (Anyidoho p. 236). Ga teachers also complained of discrimination on job scholarly opportunities and development. The scholarship secretariat awarded more scholarships to Akan teachers first before considering Ga teachers. One of them complained to Naa Shormeh who told me in a story of how this Ga teacher found it futile to try to receive scholarships and they later had to switch from teaching Ga to teaching Mathematics instead. There are now far fewer teachers of Ga than there were even when I was a child.

Gas are struggling in the area of education. Educational policies seem to be poorly implemented regarding Ga culture. The educational system and the Indigenous language to be used as a medium of instruction have been one that Gas believe affects their language and its survival.

In 1927, the Guggisberg's education committee implemented the local policy which was contested by sections of Ghanaians arguing that it's a way of providing inferior education to Africans (Ansah, p. 6). There was perhaps suspicion that the colonial administration wished to further worsen the plight of the locals through the emphasis of the local languages. Considering that high paying jobs and prestigious government positions and scholarships required some proficiency in English, their suspicion might be justified.

From 1957 to 1960 only English was used as a medium of instruction. From 1967 to 1969 the local language was used at Primary 1 as medium of instruction. From 1970 to 1973/4 learning of additional language to the child's own language. Additionally, in 1972, French was added to education with a view of promoting regional integration with neighboring francophone countries. In 1987 a Ghanaian language subject was made compulsory to be studied up to the secondary school level; previously it was compulsory only up to Primary 6.

What had been missing in these policies and their implementations, particularly in Accra, which now affects the Gas is the blind attention to the place of ethnicities in a city. The implementation perhaps sought to homogenize a multicultural city. Thus, less emphasis was placed in ensuring that the Ga language survives the classrooms especially when unlike others, Ga had to compete for recognition. It is time we the Gas began having more open discussions about language and ethnicity in policy formulation and implementation. This is why the digital becomes even more critical to the Ga course.

The year 2002 saw an English only policy. Teachers were never to use local language in the classroom or in all of primary education. English was taught only as a subject not a medium of instruction as it was realized that most teachers especially those in rural areas never used English as a medium of instruction and this resulted in a drop in the quality of students' oral and written skills in English (Ansah, 2014). In 2007, the policy was changed reverting to the 1974 to 2002 language policy; 3-year mother tongue education

medium instruction in lower primary Ghanaian and English where necessary. English is a medium of instruction for Primary 4.

Implementing these policies and the uncheckered manner it is engaged has become a problem for sustaining a Ga language policy. In a research by Yankah (1999) in Accra (Kwabenya) on the implementation of use of Ga as medium of instruction, it came to light that teachers did not comply. The district education officer had directed teachers in Kwabenya to use Ga as a medium of instruction alongside English from KG 1 to P3 and as Subject in P4. Since the teachers did not speak Ga, they set aside the directive and taught all subjects in English and further petitioned to be allowed to use either Akan or Ewe in which they are more comfortable. This is why the Indigenes complain of the disregard of their language. Naa Shormeh recounts that:

Ga	***English***
Shi kɛ akɛɛ dominant language tamɔ kɛ otee eko tamɔ kwabenya nɛkɛ, ole akɛɛ Gamɛi akrowa shikpɔŋ ni shi bi anɛ etsc man. No hewɔ kɛ ji skull ko yɛ bi ɛnɛ, esaa ni atsɔɔ Ga shi jee Akan aloo Ewe kɛkɛ akɛɛ Ga Titsɛs. Bei ko ni eho akɛɛ anaaa Ga teachers. Lɛɛ lɛ. Anokwale ni. Shi onukpai ekomɛi tamɔ Amaakai Amarteifio mɛ kɛ Adjei Klu mɛ te shi nmi afee kuu kraa ni ayeɔ aboa Ga teachers, mɛi ni tao ayafee aloo atsɔ Ga bɔ ni afee ni amɛ na egbɛ ni amɛ kase Ga. Lɛɛlɛ amɛ tsu nitsumɔ nɛɛ kɛ shɛ eko. Ni mi kai ɔ akɛ oblayoo ko tee ko ni eya na nakai egbɛi. Eya na egbɛi ni eba yɛ Weija nii agbɛ eko. Shi eshɛ eko eba kɛɛ mli akɛ ma, Ga teachers efe tamɔ nɔni abuuu wɔ. Ni akwɛɛɛ wɔ tsiabɔ mli ekpakpa. Kɛ scholarship ko ba ni esani aya kaseni yɛ man sɛɛ loo noko abuuu wɔ. Akwɛc tsɔɔlɔi kokromɛi dani akwɛɔ wɔ. No ebaa kpa. Ekɛɛ mi akɛɛ eekpa shi eeyaa specialize in math. Ni edɔ mi. Mi wie he aahu. Mi bi lɛ akɛ mɛni ji nɔni etao, yeli kɛ nbuamɔ ko ni kɛɛ mihiɛɛ ko mni Ga onukpa ko ni awa lɛ. Ni awieɛ ekplɛɛn. Eshi Ga ni etsɔɔ ni na nɛɛ eetsɔɔ Mathematics. No hewɔ Ga wiemɔ eegbo kɛ oba tsɔsemɔ gbɛ faŋ.	They say dominant language should be taught and used in schools. For instance, a small Ga village like Kwabenya now turned into a city is facing such issues. There was a time they said there is a shortage of Ga teachers. Admittedly, this is true. So, I organized some Ga elders and activists like Amarteifio and Adjei and we addressed by supporting those interested in being trained to teach Ga. One of those ladies later complained to me about challenges teaching Ga that Ga teachers are not respected and discriminated against by authorities. Scholarships abroad and other opportunities are given to only Akan/Twi teachers. She (the Ga teacher) threatened to quit and no matter my plea she eventually left and now specialized in teaching Mathematics. Our Ga language is dying in this area.

To Kwei Mensah situations like this are worrisome because:

Ga	***English***
Ejaakɛ kɛ amɛ kɛ bo kpe, amɛ wieɔ amɛ maŋ wiemɔ ni gbekɛbii yɔɔ nɛ amɛ toi waa.	When they meet you, they speak their language with no attempt to engage in ours. Our children

Hewɔ mi kɛ mɛnɛ kpe eewie enɛ eshsishi ji nɛkɛ, nakai. Nɔ ni wɔ baa nyɛ wɔ fee kɛ mɔ naa ji esaa ni akɛ nane amashi yɛ shi skull lɛ ni aatsɔɔ Ga.

pick languages easily (within the community) and they may be speaking more Twi than Ga. So, we have to be firm with our language policy in schools.

Due to factors such as migration especially within the same country, it will be impractical for Gas to stop the movement of other cultural people entering their land. Some of them had moved in for political or economic opportunities. So, when Kwei Mensah complains that

Ga

Hewɔ anaaa Ga teachers. Students hi ni amɛ tsɔɔ amɛ hu bibioo. Mi le Gbekɛbii komɛi ni amɛ yaa skul. Mo kome yɛ klas 5 ni moko me yɛ klas 3. Mɔ fɛɛ mɔ ni yaa skul yɛ Ga esa ni, enyɛ ewie Ga wiemɔ.

Ni kɛ atsɔɔ Ga agbɛnɛ wɔ baa le. Shi kɛ eka he ni mɛi baa ba tamɔ bɔ ni obi mi kɛ tsɔ hiɛ, wiemɔ ebaanyɛ egbo. Ejaakɛ gmɛnɛ aatsɔɔ Twi, aatsɔɔ Ewe yɛ Ga. Etsɛŋ tsɔ ni ma nu akɛ aatsɔ Dagbani kɛkɛ wɔ gbenaa agbɛnɛ.

English

Some of the classes are dominated by Akans. So, they don't get enough Ga teachers. I know of a class with 5 and another with only 3 Ga children. Other places the whole class is made up of Twi pupils. So, it is another thing which is affecting us because Ga was the only language taught in Accra. Anybody who came to school on Ga land (Accra) should speak Ga.
Our language would die if they keep teaching other indigenous non-Ga languages in Accra like Ewe and Twi. Before we realize they are teaching another language, Dagbani language (from far away northern Ghana). At that point, we will be done/finished.

Since political and other offline solutions seem far-fetched, It then becomes necessary to explore the digital and media options in addressing the Ga challenge. While we (Naa Shormeh and I) agree that the situation is worsening, Naa Shormeh proposes,

Ga

Atsɔɔ Ga wiemɔ. Ejaakɛ kɛ otee Roman bii ashikpɔŋ nɔ, nɔ ni roman bi lɛ feɔ no bo hu ofeɔ. No he wɔ Ga wiemɔ akwɛ ko ni education service Ga onukpai ateshi ko ni wɔ kɛ petition aya ni wɔ kɛ ya aha akɛ nɔ ni yaa nɔ wɔ sumɔɔɔ. Atsɔɔ Ga. Kɛ obi lɛ efa gbɛ kɛjɛ Shwilao nii amli ni eba biɛ yɛ nitsumɔ he wɔ, ni eetsu nii alo eeya skull yɛ bi ɛnɛ, ekase Ga wiemɔ. Mi tee skull yɛ Ashante Mampong fioo. Mi kase Akan wiemɔ yɛ jɛ mɛ. No hewɔ lɛ hu eba ni eba kase wɔ nɔɔ kɛkɛ ebaa hi.

English

They should teach Ga in the schools located in Accra. Because if you got to Rome, you do what Romans do. The Ga elders must wake up and petition that we are not happy about the situation. Anyone who migrates to Accra should encourage their children to study and learn the Ga. If you also came for employment opportunities, learn the language of the people. I schooled in Ashanti Mampong (home to Akans) and I learned the Akan language there, so they should also do the same in Accra.

In view of the Ga language problem, we, as Gas need to find fitting solutions to the language in education struggle. Leaving the solutions to the government has not helped.

Most of those in power are distant from Ga culture and might not appreciate enough. Ansah (2014), makes a call for a collective effort since most of the past policies have been non-implementable due to the policies being set by assumptions that are incongruous to the social realities. The call is in the direction as it demands both insiders and outsiders sit at dialectical table. While it is good that outsiders like the "Ministry of Education (the policy maker), the Ghana Education Service (the policy implementer), the Ghana Statistical Service and the Linguistics Association of Ghana (researchers) (Ansah, 2014), the focus should be more on having enough representation from the Gas since most monolingual communities unlike Accra have no language in education problems. I do agree with Naa Shormeh that those who decide to make a home in Accra should be prepared to learn and allow their children learn the Ga language in Accra. If the Ghana Statistical Service should find out that more Akan natives reside in particular location in Accra, that should not be enough reason to declare that part of Ga land Akan and then implement an Akan language there. Also, we, led by the Ga *mantse* (chief) must negotiate with the government and have clear path to incentivize Ga teachers. Corporate bodies operating on Ga land could contribute in taxes to support the provision of good working conditions for Ga teachers and Ga learning materials. With this, we may solve the problems of Ga teachers quitting for other jobs.

Ga Lands

While the Gas are concerned about their decline they are equally concerned about their land. Land issues seem to have a corresponding relationship with the language to the extent that when one is affected it affects the other. Land issues they believe have contributed to the decline of the language and the culture as a whole. In my conversations with Kwei Mensah Laryea, Ayikoi, and Naa Shormeh, they spoke passionately about their land and how it has and continues to be affected. Kwei Mensah attributes one of the reasons to this situation to the point that,

Ga	***English***
Gamɛi wɔ musuu tsɛɔwɔ. Wɔ suɔmɔɔ gbɔmɔ. No hewɔ mɔ ebaa ni eko po enyɛɛɛ ewie Ga, obaa suɔmɔ ni okase lɛ nɔ ni oha lɛ hetoo; oha lɛ tsa baa yɛ nɔ ni etaao he. Ni no ji naa gba kome. Ofainɛ ole, naa gba kome ni gba Gamɛi anaa ji nɛkɛ urbanization, rural urban drift. Mɛi jɛ akrowai mli kɛ miiba Ga. Ejaakɛ Ga efee cosmopolitan. Ga efee capital akɛ Ghana fɛɛ mantease. Ga ji he ni mɛi jwɛɔ akɛ abaa na nitsumɔi ni amɛ tsu ni hewɔ mɔfɛɛ mɔ ba Ga. nimɛi abɔ ni baa ga amɛ wieɔ Twi. Ni Twi ehe shi. Twi maji ayi fa. Gamɛi wɔ yi faaa. No hewɔ amɛ Twi wiemɔ eba lord over Ga language. Amɛ Twi wiemɔ eba swallo ni eeswallo oloolo. No hewɔ rural	We the Gas are too welcoming and compassionately all embracing. So, we see strangers and even if they cannot speak our language, we strive to understand theirs so we help them with their needs. This is one big problem of ours). Most of them come from the villages in search of economic opportunities since our Accra has become the capital city, a cosmopolitan one. Majority of those coming are Akans and they have the numbers. They refuse to speak our language and their Twi language is widespread. This migration issue is our major problem.

urban drift no ji principal factor. No ji no ko pɔtɛɛ ni gba wɔ na naa kpa. No ni efee tamɔ wiemɔ laaje

The importance of land especially in the decolonization process cannot be overemphasized. It is for this that Tuck and Yan (2012) argue that effective decolonization ultimately is tied to the reclamation of land; therefore, the decolonization process is not open for all projects. It needs to be bracketed and contextualized. They further stressed that when decolonization is described within the contexts of metaphor it confounds the decolonization struggle as it sways into other imperial struggles that may not be land related such as anticolonial works. Anti-colonial work or critique they argue does not undo colonialism but remakes and subverts it. Instead, the practice of decolonization must always be related to land, the repatriation of land to the indigenes. The settlers must have no right to the lands. A metaphorical expression reinforces a symbolic discussion of land. This appears to be the situation of the Ga whose land is claimed by all Ghanaians by virtue of its capital city position making all Ghanaians accept that the capital coyote exhaust to serve their interests and thus have a claim to it. For such reasons, Tuck and Yan (2012) argues for a concrete definition of decolonization tied to land and rejects any symbolic interpretation of decolonization. Decolonial results in the reclaiming of physical land and so even education does not come close to decolonization if it focuses only on the mind/consciousness. Land is central, and it is the basis for wealth and not money. While such a definition of decolonization is important in the struggle for the reclamation of land, I find Driskill (2010), definition of decolonization as the "ongoing, radical resistance against colonialism that includes struggles for land redress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation" (p. 69) more practical to the Ga situation. Since the land is connected with the Ga people, the Ga culture as well as their past, the reclamation of the land should lead to the affirmation of cultural preservation and protection of Ga values that heals and restores the Ga community in survival.

Thus, when people started migrating to Accra, Ga culturally felt compelled to accommodate strangers. However, little did the Ga community know if such accommodation would burst out of bounds especially with political interference. Rapid movement to Accra started when the colonial capital of the Gold Coast was moved to Accra in 1877. Many people began moving from the rural areas to Accra, the urbanized area. With the increasing movement of people to Accra, Gas began to experience spatula marginalization due to massive loss of land alongside land alienation and led to feelings of cultural and linguistic marginalization within the Indigenous Ga people (Webb, 2010). According to Quarcopoome (1992), this led to formation Ga resistant groups who chanted slogans such as Ga *shikpoŋ Gamei anomi* (Ga lands are for Ga people), *Gamei abii nye tee ashi* (People of Ga descent arise) and *Gboi mli gbewo* (We are being despoiled by strangers). The land issue worsened when the colonial government passed the Administrative Ordinance in 1927 to establish the Ga Mantse (Ga King or Chief) paramountcy. Ayikoi Otoo describes the imposed chieftaincy as non-Ga and for that reason we have issues with leadership unlike the Akans who were used to such paramountcy.

Ga	*English*
"No hewɔ Ga abuuu mantsɛmɛi. Ebaa she wulomo gbeyei fe bɔ ni ebaa she mantsɛ gbeyei. Oo ebuuu mantsɛ".	Due to the change in leadership practice of the Gas, most Gas have no respect for the political leadership. They still revere their priest more than they do with the political system bequeathed them. This has led to a leadership crisis.

Ayikoi Otoo seeks to address a worrying situation. That is, that when Gas borrow a tradition that completely negates theirs, or one that replaces theirs or one that is not properly integrated into Ga culture with the purpose of the Gas, it brings about instability. When Gas migrated to the chieftanincy politics, investing greater power in the political heads (mantsɛmɛi) instead of the chief priests (Wulomei).

Ayikoi Otoo continues (translanguaging—at this point speaking in English mostly)

> Wɔ kusuu koŋkroŋ ji wulomei (Our practice (leadership) is that of theocracy led by our priests called *Wulomei*). When we came from Israel, we didn't have chiefs. Our leaders were the *wulɔmei* who are the medium between us and God. *No hewɔ wɔ, wɔfeee mantse* (so we do not do chieftaincy like this, -- as it pertains presently). Colonialism brought about indirect rule. An indirect rule the Europeans decide to work through the chiefs. Indirectly they gave instructions to the local people through their own chiefs who they (locals) respect. They needed to get chiefs ni aba use amɛ (to use them). This is how *wɔ bɔi* chiefs *namɔ* (we adopted this type of chieftaincy). *No hewɔ* (That is why) we have a lot of problems with chieftaincy while Asante and other ethnic groups already have established chieftaincy long ago. Theirs have existed for years but ours was new phenomenon. Before *Nai Wulomo* was the leader followed by *Sakumo Wulomo*. That's why with the Ga Traditional Council (Council of ruling chiefs) both of them *(Wulomei)* are members. Although they are not chiefs, they are members of the Traditional Council. Administrative Ordinance was to facilitate the colonial administration.

The colonial government needed to put government buildings, private residences, commercial buildings as well space for public activities (Quarcoopome,1992). Later and after WWII the colonial government passed the Gold Coast Town and Country Ordinance to further have a firm grip of the lands and to move control of lands from the local Ga chiefs to the colonial administration. This tradition has remained long after the colonial government left after Independence. Material rhetorics, like other Indigenous peoples, the land is very important to the Gas they facing pressures. As the number of urban heterogeneous dwellers rapidly increased in Accra, it led to political linguistics, economic and spatial marginalization. In turn, the Gas experienced immense land alienation (Quarcopoome, 1992) and feelings of linguistic cultural marginalization. According to Webb (2006) this led to the formation of cultural group, *Wulomei*, who composed songs around the theme of Ga cultural revival. One of their songs titled, "Ma La Ma Wie Ga", addresses the issue about Ga land could be traced to colonial administration when the British moved the capital from Cape Coast in the Central Region

to Accra in 1877. As a result, Gas were required to work with the colonial administration to facilitate their administration by giving land for government buildings, commercial activities, private residences and public performances (Quarcoopome, 1992). The situation worsened after WWII as the colonial government passed the Gold Coast Town and Country Ordinance that was enacted to give the colonial government more control over land for developmental purposes rendering the Ga traditional authorities powerless over their land. Until the Law Act II was repealed in 2001, many Gas lost their lands to non-Gas since the protected anyone who had erected a structure to the lintel level regardless of ownership. For the Gas, their land does not reflect their culture as it has among other issues become a site of Ga-less culture and demands that people apply the saying, "*kɛ otee Roman bii ashikpɔŋ nɔ, nɔ ni roman bi lɛ feɔ no bo hu ofeɔ*" (When in Rome, you do as the Romans) to them. The Gas feel they have lost their relationship with the land due to politics and migration.

At the time of independence, a new group called Ga *Shifimo Kpee* (Ga Steadfast Association) arose to express their displeasure. According to Ayikoi Otoo:
Some have suggested that they take the capital to another place as has been done in Nigeria, Abuja. Lagos is in the south near the coast but Abuja is way inside. So, people are suggesting that they should shift the capital away. First, we were thinking of Dodowa which is also part of Accra but a little far away from the city. *Ko ni ame ya* (So that they leave our land).

He also makes mention of other solutions. He also recalls some proposals made by Gas in the past. One of such is to name the Region Ga-Adangme Region just like the Akans did with Ashanti Region. He says *Ko ni mo ko ba ena akɛ indigenes atsɛɔ amɛ Ga*- Adangme (so that entering would recognize a people called Gas) because "you cannot stop rural urban migration. After all, they are Ghanaians".

In addition, the Ga Mantse (Ga Paramount Chief) recently made a request to the presidency of Ghana name change from Accra to Ga-Adangbe so that the land names reflect the local Indigenous people (Frimpong, 2022). The land is very important to the Ga for their survivance and for their connection to both their past and their future. But before looking at how a Sankofa use of technology may help in these endeavors, I turn to another area of concern.

The Place of Internet/Online in Ga Culture

The Indigenous Gas I talked with have hopes for the internet/ digital in helping them preserve, teach and practice their Indigenous culture. Due to the gradual but worsening situation of language and land, they see higher prospects in the digital in saving the situation. They speak of the many help that the internet has been to them. When recently most Gas have discovered that they had some indigenous visuals and rhetorics like the Akans. The Ga chief had started posting these visuals on the walls of its Palace at North Kaneshie, in Accra. This prompted Naa Shormeh to quickly teach them online. Naa Shormeh recounts that:

Ga	*English*
Ga akwasei awiemɔi kɛ nii, ajenui kɛ nii. Mintsɔɔ akɛ esani anyɛ afee noko nakai. Kɛ efee minaa noko tamɔ samai. Wɔ Gamɛi wɔ hu wɔ yɛ samai. Wɔ yɛ simbɔls ni mɛi pii le. Bei ko ni eho lɛ, akɛ eko wo Ga Maŋtsɛ gbogboi ahe ni wɔ ya sha ni wɔ kɛ ba fee program yɛ Asɛnta. Misumɔɔɔ ni mi naa afee gblɛgblɛ. No hewɔ lɛ wɔ fɛɛ wɔ hiɛ dɔ yɛ samai ahe.	There are Ga proverbial sayings and visual communication symbols. Yes, we the Gas have visual symbols. (Just like the Sankofa from the many *adinkra* symbols that teaches about life). We have symbolic visual language yet many do not know. They were not public which is difficult to understand. When we saw this posted on the walls at Ga Mantse (chief's) palace, we quickly took shots and made online programs out of it.

The Gas have recently realized they have a whole system of cultural knowledge and are taking advantage of the online to spread the knowledge among Gas. These symbols appear to have much visual rhetorical significance. The swiftness with which Naa Shormeh embraced it and posted online speaks more about the desire to spread the visual culture and the need to emphasize how Ga language is multimodal.

Naa Shormeh further adds that the internet has become a resource for Ga youth in learning about their culture. For example:

Ga	*English*
Ni yisɛɛ nɛ wɔ fee Naa Ga-Dangbe. Ni miitsɔ akɛ shi ni abi amɛ nɛkɛ samai nɛɛ ko ni amɛ wie he, amɛ wie fãin. Amɛ wie he ojogbaŋŋ. Amɛ kɔlɔ kɛjɛ nɛɛtɛ nɔ. No hewɔ wɔ kɛ pii, mɔɔ awo nɔ. Ebaa ye ebua wɔ waa diɛntsɛ. Ebaa ha ni wɔ yan hiɛ. Nɔ yaa kɛ shweremɔ aba. Nɛkɛ Naa Ga-Dangbe ni afeɔ yɛ TV Africa ni efeɔ mi akɛ hɔɔ ni baa nɛ afee finals. efe mi akɛ kusuu mi komɛi ni ajeɔ lɛ kpo ɛ: wuoyaa, okwaayeli, ni mitsɔɔ akɛ obuade nitsumɔi ni ajiee fɛ̃ɛ̃ kpo. Kontɛstant jiee fɛɛ kpo. Ni ni amɛ feɛ ne fɛɛ, mɔɔdin Tecknɔlɔji nɛɛ hewɔ fɛ̃ɛ̃ ya ɛ̃ɛ̃. Eeya aut. Eeya jeŋ koji kpawo fɛ̃ɛ̃ mli. Mɔ fɛ̃ɛ̃ mɔ miikwɛ.	Recently we attended the Ga-Adangbe Beauty Contest. When participants were asked questions on Ga culture they responded very well. They picked their ideas from Ga programs online. They spoke about our traditional occupation of farming and fishing. These contestants explained them all in detail. Through technology all our cultural practices are being uploaded online. It is helping our culture to everyone in every part of the world.

The youth have already started searching and utilizing the internet to increase their awareness of Indigenous meaningful Ga practices and Knowledge. The chat app, WhatsApp has become popular within the Ga communities. As implied in Chapter 3, even the older generation prefers the use of WhatsApp. It is to this end that all three interviewees opted for WhatsApp when I suggested a Zoom interview. The WhatsApp (works with internet connections/bundle) can be installed on any smartphone and allows

users to exchange instant messages at a cheaper or no cost. Since WhatsApp allows users to invite others, create and maintain groups of communities and post quick-announcements in the form of status updates on one's page, many users like the Gas find it useful. Afful and Akrong (2020) report that Whatsapp is not only a popular social media tool with students but also improves university students' academic performances. While the WhatsApp chat app does not have the Ga orthography built into it, and users are compelled to communicate in English, the app allows for short messaging as well voice/video recording. Thus, users have multimodal forms of communicating instantly. Kwei Mensah talks about the many opportunities the internet has provided him:

Ga	***English***
Ee serve Ga fe nɔni ee destroy Ga. kwɛ bɛ okɛɛ wɔ fee zoom? Afeɔ Ga Meetings kɛ tsɔ zuum nɔ. Mi kɛ mɛi ewie atswa kɛjɛ Belgium, Austria, Australia, Canada kɛ France aahi po mitee france po yɛ Ga Dangme hewɔ fɛɛ kɛtsɔ intanɛt.	The digital is helping build our Ga more than destroying it. We now organize Ga meetings online on Zoom. Through online presence I have had the opportunity to travel around the world to talk about Ga culture. I have traveled to Belgium, Austria, Australia, Canada and even France. I cannot therefore technology has negatively affected Ga culture. Through the internet we are able to defend Ga against those who attack our culture like the recent Diana Asamoah's case. (Diana Asamoah is an Akan gospel music singer who recently spoke against Ga Festival as a festival and was summoned before the Ga Chief. She apologized).
Internet nɔ diɛntsɛ amrɔ nɛɛ ayɛ Ga Keyboard. Manyɛ kɛ mi kɛ bi wie eta ma ŋma Ga ma ha bo. Mii yɛ Ga keyboard yɛ mi phone nɔ. Te ebaa fee tɛŋ ma kɛɛ bo akɛ efite Ga. Eesaa Ga moŋ. Mɛi ni fa nti ashiɔ Ga po ni ŋmɛnɛ akɛɛ agradaa eya wie enɛ, Diana Asamoah eya wie enɛ jee internet nɔ anaa yɛ?	Also, I even have a keyboard installed on my phone and thus can write Ga online.

However, Ayikoi Otoo (now translanguaging) identifies some issues with technology that affects Gas. There is danger to the use of internet among the Gas

> It poses a lot of danger. Most of the leaders of Ghana are Akans and therefore they rather gave a lot of licenses for TV and radio broadcast. That led to proliferation (of Akan stations and programs online). So currently we only have Obonu TV and Radio which are not owned by Gas. It is part of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). The only one owned by Gas is *LATE* NU. It is an acronym for La, Teshie and Nungua (Ga Towns). When put the 3 together they call it *LATENU* FM. That Is why people think only Twi is the language of Accra. Because all the Radio and Television Station speak Twi and the Ga only One (FM station).

This is a new phenomenon around 2000 when the NPP Agyekum Kufuor came to power. Hewɔ technology eba ye wɔ awii waa (So on that aspect technology did it help us).

Wɔ bɛ frequency ko (we do not have any frequency) so that we can go there and speak Ga. So, every Television *ni obaa gbele yɛ Ga* aawie *Twi* (every television focuses on Twi programs).

So that is rather our bane. They have deliberately refused to give us frequencies. Ga mɛi jimiitao ni amɛ fee eko, kɛ otee ahaaa bo frikwensi ɛ (Gas apply for frequencies but are discriminated against). So, we are also using the internet to propagate our language.

Ayikoi Otoo adds:

Ga & English	***English only***
that inaccess is a big problem. Unless the people are educated and have access to the internet who can come and listen (to Ga programs)? If there is a frequency, kɛ ogbele nɔɔ bɛ bo hu okwɛ (then it would be easily accessible). O niidi (You need) access to the internet. But what we are doing now, we need access. Hewɔ mɔni obɛ bɛ eshɛɛɛ onɔ. A lot of them are illiterate. Hewɔ Ga kɛ chorkor kɛ hei komɛi ni they like Ga Obonu nɔɔ amɛ tsɔseɔ. Akɛɛ akɛ etsɔle lɛ. He fɛɛ he ni oba ya no pɛ awieɔ. That's the only TV or radio Station they listen to	(It is easier with a radio or TV station than the internet. If you do not have the means to the internet, you are left out. When you get to a typical Ga town like Chorkor, they only listen to Obonu Fm and TV because that's what is accessible to them).

Here, Ayikoi Otoo is drawing attention to the economic cost to access the internet in Ghana. The Internet is largely Pay As You Go. Users need to buy bundles of data which is very expensive. The cost alone makes we Gas unwilling to use the internet. A Gh¢ 50 cedis (about $10) bundle gives about 6000 MB of data. This makes it difficult for many local peoples to have stable access to the internet on their phones (the main digital tool for internet connection among the youth now). This makes TV and radio appealing as they come with little to no cost. One does not need the internet to watch television. All one needs is a television set. But the local people cannot use television sets beyond their homes unless they tap on their phones. It remains that digital scholarship. Yet they see the prospects of the digital and will like to engage. It will be good to have password- free WIFI spots in certain places of Accra where local people could latch on at certain times to explore the digital culturally.

Naa Shormeh reveals that:

Ga	*English*
Ga program wɔ naaa sponsorship. Kɛ okɛ Akan damɔ shi abaa ŋɔ lɛ ejaakɛ nitsumɔ atsɛ mli susu he akɛ, kɛ he yusu Akan language eeba ya shɔŋŋ. Ejaakɛ mɛi pii nuɔ. Anokwale mli amɛ yi fa fe wɔ. Asusuɔ akɛ Ga wiemɔ eyaŋ shɔŋŋ. Bei komɛi okɛ onaabu kɛ hiɛwaa baa to he dani obaa na sponsorship ejaakɛ kɛ no bɛ mli, oniɛ ni otsuɔ onyɛŋ oba ɛɛ.	Ga programs do not attract sponsorship. Sponsors prefer the Akan programs as it travels and has far outreach. Many can relate with the Twi than the Ga. Indeed, they outnumber us. It's believed that our Ga language reaches only a few. We had to fight our way through to get sponsorship. Other than that, we will never come on air.

Cultural and Technological Alliance for Survivance and Preservation

As we have seen, colonization still does some harm to tradition as it is systematically on-going. One of the participants, Naa Shormeh bemoans how the introduction of cinemas and or Film Shows gradually led to the disappearance of storytelling under moonlight. Storytelling is a tactical move aimed at instilling and preserving Indigenous values in the younger generation and emphasizing the ways of the indigenous people. As she narrates:

Ga	*English*
Amɛ kɛ sini jiemɔ eba. No hewɔ gbɛkɛ shi ni ataraa yɛ lai tsei anaa ni akɛ taa adesa kɛ woɔ ŋaa ebɛ jɛ dɔŋŋ. Nakai taim ni akɛ ba ta adesa kɛ woɔ ŋaa kɛ otee akrowa po onaaa nakai nɔ dɔŋŋ. Ayaa sini aloo aya kwɛ tɛlivishin. Ona (you see).	They have brought us cinemas. As a result, sitting at night by the fireside, teaching and entertaining through telling stories to advise is no more. Sadly, the effect is deep as the time for telling stories and instilling moral values even no more in our villages (or less developed towns). It is now all about going to cinemas or watching television

Indeed, technology is not innocent. As Haas (2012) observes, technologies are not just static things but ongoing relationships between bodies and things informed by culture, histories and places. Naa Shormeh, like many other Gas, do not only miss the less technological cultural dictating days in the past but are aware of the challenges technology (film/cinemas) have brought to the Ga people. Gas are no longer gathering to tell stories with the young as a form of entertainment and education will mean that the traditional means of educating the young Gas is under threat. The bond at night, under the moonlight is lost; the human factor such as listening to the natural voices of storytellers and the feel of proximity that establishes connections with members of the community may seem lost. The separation that cinemas have brought to the Gas calls on us to deliberately embrace technology with our cultural identity. Also, some performances of storytelling including the call and response, for instance, may lose its significance or impact. The narrator will always have to invite the audience and proceed with the positive response of the audience. This instance serves to emphasize communicating, marking personal boundaries and teaching the necessity of responding to communicative

requests within Ga communities. Ga elders will have to deal with the necessary demand to adjust to the influence of technology even as we deal with the influx of other cultural groups migrating to their city, Accra. This will mean not only embracing technological change but adjusting to it culturally. However as pointed out in Chapter 1, technology especially the digital (virtual reality) mediates presence (Argyle and Shields, 1996) and the digital text Ga Indigenous peoples can create lots of opportunities in this regard. Gas could adapt to technological use that will be ideologically and culturally serving to preserve and revive their cultural practices. Technology does hold cultural value that performs a decolonization. Admittedly, the ease of access to television compared to digital text might pose a challenge. This is because the appropriate technology, digital text may not appeal to the majority of the people due to factors like financial cost. Also, as Ayikoi Otoo notes, the Ga communities such as those in Chorkor (with access to television) are limited to Obonu TV and FM as these are easily accessible. Obonu Tv and FM, that focus on Ga issues have limited reach even among Gas.

Drawing from the experience of the indigenous Ga people and their connections to the language and land, building an accessible storehouse of knowledge about Ga language and culture would help the Ga decolonization and reclamation course. I seek to highlight what and how the making of indigenous Ga online presence would benefit the Gas. For these Gas recounted an early encounter with the Ga language that amplified their interest in studying and practicing the Ga culture. There were many opportunities for learning that do not exist anymore. When she was young, Naa Shormeh had benefited from many of these opportunities:

Ga	***English***
No mli wɔ kaneɔ “Adote Shelenn Kome” kɛ wɔji komɛi. Kɛ wɔ kaneɔ klassɛ fɛɛ jɔɔ. Onaa akɛ mɛi suɔmɔɔ stɔriɛ. Bɔni amɛ nyɛɛɛ amɛ kane ni wɔ kaneɔ, eŋɔɔ amɛ naa. Ni enɛ wo wɔ ekaa. Boisɛ na interest yɛ Ga kanemɔ. Ni wɔ yi enyɔ tsɔɔ amɛ Ga kanemɔ. Fee sɛɛ wɔ kɛ Ga ya fee wɔ GCE. No sɛɛ hu mi na interests yɛ Ga mli ni mibɔi script ŋmaa yɛ Ga mli. Nii Nortey Dua of blessed memory wa mi pi. Oquaye Mensah kɛ Oko Dagadu kɛ Onukpai komɛi hu ni amɛ gboi wa. Mi ŋmaa skript mi yaa haa amɛ ni mikɛ amɛ ya feɔ rekɔdins kɛ ni. Hewɔ eha mi kase Ga ni mi yɛ CSIR miitsuni. Mɛi nɛɛ fɛɛ Ga gurus kɛya shi Tetteh Ami Abbey mɛ. Nɔ ni mi kɛ kaseni ji ma sue (copy their style) bo ni nɔ ni bɛ mi nɔɔ mli tamɔ oo vokabs kɛ bcni oo useu lɛ aha. Ma kɔlɔ ma wo miinɔ mli kɛ enritsh mii nɔ. Eyɛ sad akɛ mɛi nɛ po bɛ jeŋ ni kɛ ohiɛ	While in school. We read many Ga books like “Adote Shelenn Kome” and others. When I read Ga in class, they liked it since they did not have that eloquence especially the males. We wrote Ga exams in the General Certificate Exams (GCE). Also, Ga leaders like Nortey Dua, Tetteh Ami Abbey, Oko Dadgadu and others mentored me very well. I use to get feedback from them on my Ga scripts. I copied their style of writing Ga as well as their usage of vocabularies to enrich mine. When I started working at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation GBC at the Ga section, I got engaged deeply with Ga

blodo po okɛɛ baa sla amɛ.
Ni mitee Ga sekshin yɛ GBC hu. Mi kase
ni waa yɛ Ga wiemɔ mli. Mikase Ga wiemɔ
yɛ jɛmɛ waa dientsɛ. Ni mi bɔi nitsumɔ
(GBC Broadcast journalist) lɛ mikase waa

Naa Shormeh here demonstrates the concept of learning through doing. As she begins to read Ga materials, she develops interests in writing Ga. She models her writing ancestrally. That is, she copies the style of those who she has read as well as those elders like Nii Nortey Dua. By doing the writing, she learns her Ga traditions of which she teaches now. For Ayikoi Otoo (68 years) reading Ga books his mother bought for him such as the popular "*Adote Shelen Kome*" Ga Abei (Ga proverbs), the population in Accra then was mainly Gas and Ga was spoken everywhere. Although there is a decline in Ga language and cultural sensitivity, Gas have worked in many ways in preserving and promoting their culture. As Ayiokoi Otoo narrates, they have formed many community groups online especially on the WhatsApp platform. He names some of them including Ga Dangme Council, NPP Ga Dangme, Ga Dangme Nobles and on Facebook, there are Ga platforms including GA TV International, Urban Ga TV, Ga Dangme Homecoming TV, Ga SAJI TV, Ga TV Official, Ga Ekomefeemɔ (Unity) TV.

The Gas have suggested some valuable ways of resisting other cultures, preserving enacting survivance. They for instance suggested that the movement of the capital of Ghana to a different city to allow them have much access to their land with limited political interference. According to Ayikoi Otoo, some have suggested it is moved to Dodowa (see Figure 4.5).

MAP OF GHANA

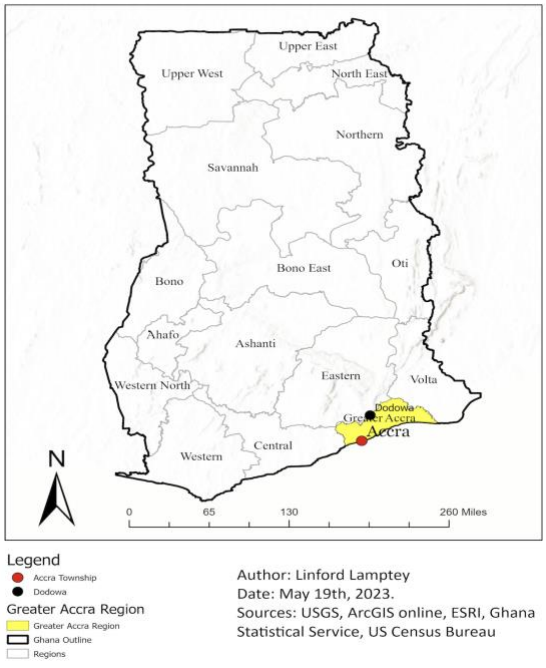

Figure 4.8 Map of Ghana highlighting Accra and Dodowa

People who are non-Gas see the Accra land differently from the Ga peoples. They see it as a cosmopolitan space belonging to governments and for all other Ghanaian and ethnicities. However, these non-Ga ethnicities do have their lands and cultural heritage they cherish also that they do not want to lose. The Gas have an inseparable connection with their land their gradual removal or alienation through political process calls for a resistance because they have a relationship with the land like all peoples with places they connect with. Wildcat makes this clear when he tells that

> We, human beings, in all our rich diversity are intimately connected and related to, in fact dependent on, the other living beings, land, air, and water of the earth's biosphere. Our continued existence as part of the biology of the planet is inextricably bound up with the existence and welfare of the other living beings and places of the earth: beings and places, understood as persons possessing power, not objects (Wildcat, p. 13).

A digital web design site that embodies the stories, cultures and maps of Ga and Ga land would be a fit for cultural preservation. In the interviews, Kwei Mensah sees the application of technology when he commended ABC News for covering Ga cultural show in the US:

Ga	***English***
Mi fee Ga kpojiemɔ, puberty rites, gbla*ŋŋ* mli bote mɔ kɛ tee internet nɔ dan. Mi fee Ga cultural. No mli po mi kɛ Gbekɛbii. Aa hu wɔ ba ABC news. Ni wɔ*ŋ* la Ga. Bɛ ole ABC News. Gbekɛbii kɛjɛ afii ejwɛ kɛ ya shi afii kpaanyc ni mi kɛ amɛ ba internet nɔ ni amɛ la Kosɛi duade ahuu he shi ebc momo. Amɛfee opera ni amɛhiɛ kɔi ni amɛ hu. No hewɔ blɔfo ni agena amɛ bi ni mi explain eha amɛ ye state of Delaware in the city of Wilmington Yɛ YMCA. Jɛmɛ wɔ fee yɛ. Daa afi amɛ tsɔɔ wɔ Black history month yɛ US oflɔ nyɔn nɔ.	I have been forefront propagating Ga culture such as Marriage and Naming ceremony, and passage rites. I did a cultural performance with Ga children from 6 to 8 years which was covered by APC News. They performed an opera singing traditional Ga songs Sings--- *Do not weed around Cassava for it is already ripe in the forest* I had the chance to explain the song and the cultural significance at the YMCA in Delaware in the city of Wilmington. Every February during the Black History month they invite us to perform. Delaware state is a farming community so they really appreciated it

Gas have historically been associated with the occupations of fishing and farming. The song teaches children the ethics of farming, when to plant and when to harvest to protect the soil and the food white teaching their respect for the land. Drawing from such

experiences, a digital presence that highlights Ga practice and association with the land appears practical.

In view of this, I find Arola's (2018) land-based digital rhetoric as a guide in implementing the call for a digital presence by the Gas. I will like to propose a website that will support a Ga cultural digital site and one that could also serve as a resource connecting many of the Ga cultural efforts that are already on the internet.

So before discussing the website, I will first like to review some of the digital sites that Gas individually and or collectively have out there online mainly on Facebook and on YouTube. There is the Facebook channel called I SPEAK GA (see Figure 4.9) that invites everyone to the platform to come and discuss about the Gas and the Ga language. The site engages Gas with proverbs, culturally informative resources daily as a way of creating cultural awareness and giving the audience the opportunity to write and engage the Ga language. This has kept the page very interactive with most of the online responding and writing in Ga even when questions are asked in English.

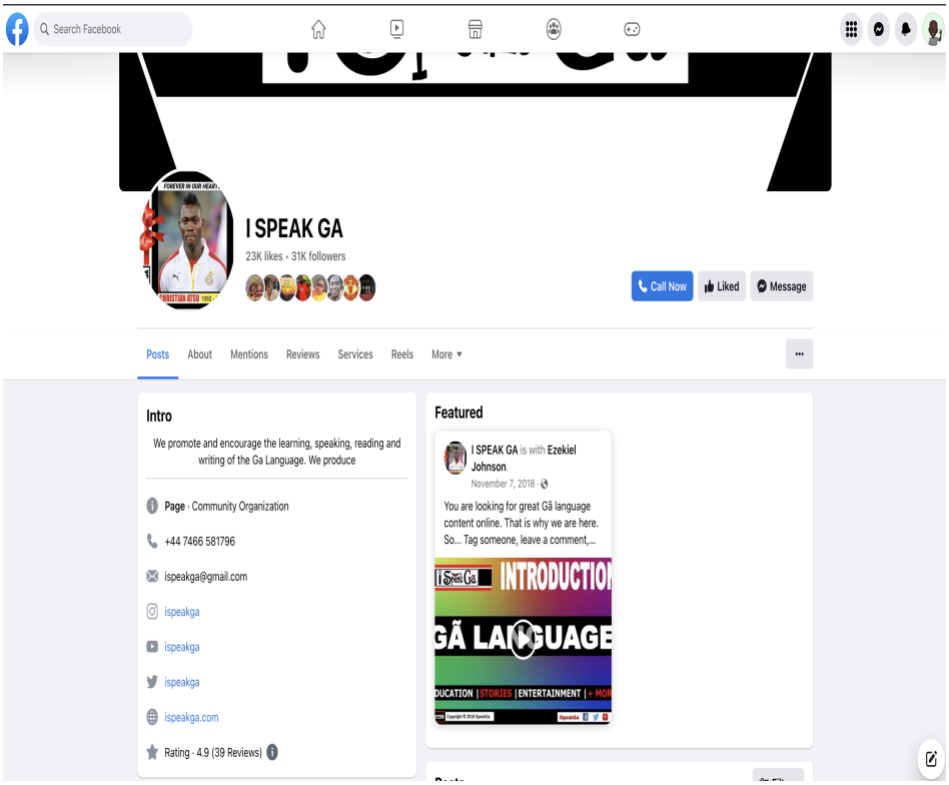

Figure 4.9 I Speak Ga Facebook Page

There is also on Facebook the page Onor Ji Onor (What is yours, belongs to you). The name appeals to Gas to hold on to their culture as no one will do for them if they do no lead the way. The page advertises Ga products, teaches the Ga languages and seeks to project the Ga culture digitally just as the 'I Speak Ga' site does (see Figures 4.10 and 4.11)

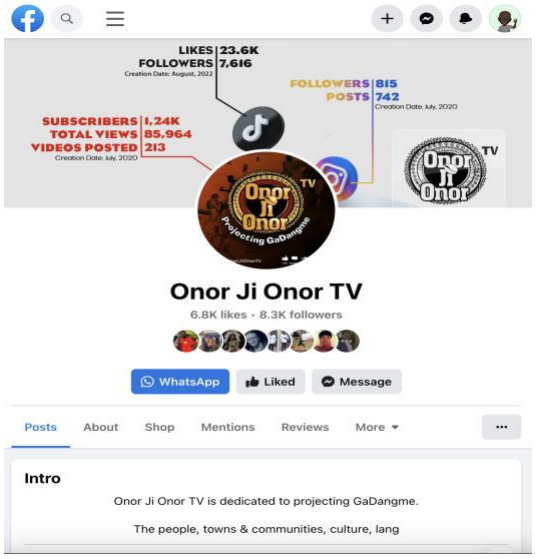

Figure 4.10 Onor Ji Onor Facebook Page Language

Figure 4.11 Onor Ji Onor Ga

There is also the Facebook site called Ablade TV Online (see Figure 4.12). "Ablade" in means "the royals". Thus, the site is set up to remind the Gas about their royal ancestry. Ablade TV Online posts and highlights by focusing more on issues of chieftaincy. Since chieftaincy in the contemporary has become the iconic repository of tradition as well the institution accepted to promote and preserve tradition, an online site that emphasizes is commendable. Ablade TV Online is set to promote the GaDangbe people's cultural heritage though chieftaincy and royalty.

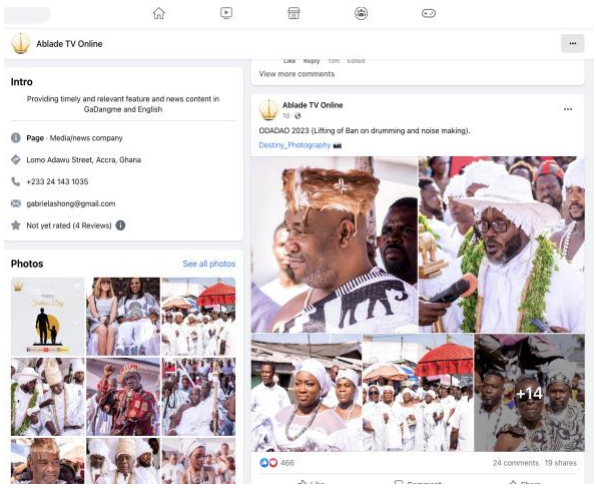

Figure 4.12 Ablade TV Online Page

We also have the site *Blema Saji (Tales of Old) (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14)*. This a Facebook site started by a young Ga named Naa Adjeley Hossana. The page dedicated to Ga storytelling. This online site is mostly concerned about reading to the public educative and entertaining from published Ga storybooks. These stories often are an enactment of

Sankofa as they are set in the remote past but offer morals for the contemporary Gas, especially the young ones.

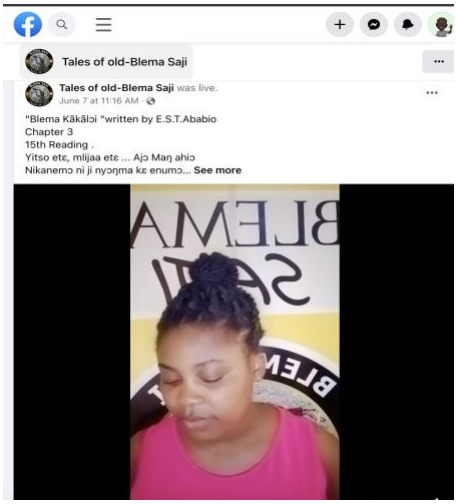

Figure 4.13 Blema Saji Facebook Homepage **Figure 4.14Blema Saji Storying**

There are also YouTube channels by Gas dedicated to promoting and reviving Ga culture. One of such is the EkomeStudios (see Figure 4.14). Ekomestudios strives to tell the stories of the Gas. It often does thus by engaging and quoting from books that give accurate historical accounts of Ga past as well as cultural practices.

Figure 4.14 EkomeStudio YouTube Page

Again, there is YouTube channel of the Facebook page, Onor Ji Onor. It is at this YouTube Channel that Naa Shormeh, whom I had the honor of talking with, widely engages the Ga peoples with Ga teachings on Indigenous practices and their relevance. For example, the channel dedicates space and time in teaching the community about the important dates in the Ga calendar such as dates of festivals and the other rites that leads to its climax. It has programs that explain the importance of the ban on noise-making.

Naa Shormeh has educative teaching on Ga *samai* (cultural symbols). Naa Shormeh also reads and tells stories here at this very digital site as shown below. Here, she tells the story of a husband who refuses the advice of the wife not to travel. The husband travels but runs into trouble, gets falsely accused and imprisoned. The moral of the story is that couples need to listen to each other and learn to take advice. As with the local storytelling, she passes on the mantle to another to continue with the storying, this time online.

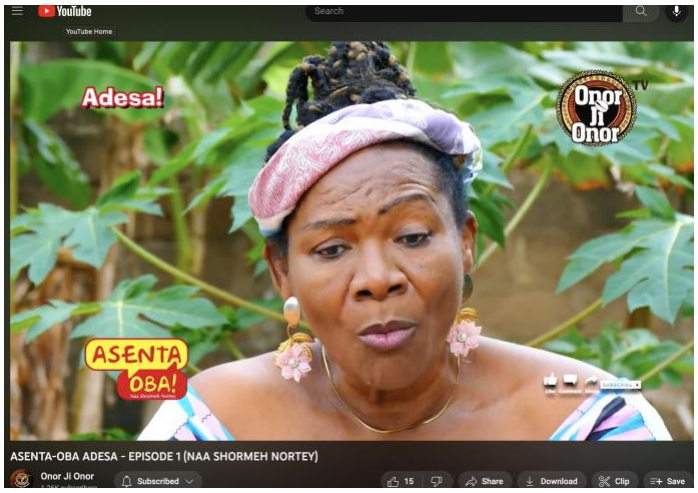

Figure 5.6 Naa Shormeh Telling Stories

Having looked at some of the Ga digital presences, we can now return to building Ga online more. Arola (2018) acknowledges that experiences in the digital space are shaped by our embodied experiences in the world. Thus, we get to understand our experiences in the digital world through associations we have formed with the land connected to us. To Arola, we should think of such a design in three ways: that is establishing and acknowledging that

- Participation with the land informs land-based digital rhetoric design
- Our relation with the elements in the environment better informs land-based digital design
- Our senses and memories also help with land-based digital design

By creating a website that focuses and engages Ga language and Ga lands, we would be enacting

> acts of survivance (that) are tangible, embodied, and material acts that continue life ways as indigenous peoples. (and we would be at the same working decolonial process as) Decolonization is learned through embodied practices that restore cultural memories to our bodies and communities (Driskill, p.57).

What this means is that Gas would find a home in the principles of decolonization through decolonial skillshares. Decolonial skillshares refers to

> indigenous practices and pedagogies, and radical practices that ask us to continue our rhetorical (visual, material, performative, linguistic, etc) traditions as indigenous people, to transform cultural memories for both indigenous and non-indigenous people and to create spaces for all of us to learn and teach embodied rhetorical practices as a tactic of decolonization. (Driskill, p. 58) …
> Skillshare is a concept that seeks to disrupt hegemonic influences through "sharing specific do-it-m yourself skills that aid in building cooperative, egalitarian economic and social structures. It creates a space for Native people to both learn and teach specific embodied practices as a specific tactic in processes of decolonization. (Driskill, pp. 61 & 63)

In line with the Arola's (2018) suggestion that more local and relatable content should be put online despite issues with access and resources, the website would help the Ga Indigenous peoples retell their stories in ways that represent them. Representation is important as there would be more public discourse that would not only center Gas but sensitize the Ga population to get involved in the struggle.

The website can be modeled to perform what other indigenous peoples have done. Haas (2012) proposes some models based on the concept of digital rhetorical sovereignty: These are to preserve language, culture, history and identity, to combat stereotypes and to foster community and provide contact zones. In a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual situation that the Gas find themselves in they cannot afford to remain invisible. Gas, especially on their land, must be visible culturally as well. However, visibility means that they have the position to control the discourse and narrative concerning Ga cultural practices. With control of the digital, achieving such sovereignty as controlling the narrative will mean controlling the meanings and interpretations of Ga culture which will help preserve the language and history.

This Ga online will seek to mainly emphasize and empathize Ga cultural practices in ways that sustains a continuous. Therefore, it will continuously be positioned as a storytelling space. In view of this, the online site including the technology and activity becomes a cultural space. This Ga online cultural site follows the User-Centered approach. Johnson (1998) defines the User-centered view as an engagement with technology that is "customized to the context of use… (p. 130). User-centered approach thus will allow for the online site to be situated, first to the Ga culture as a collective and then to individuals who may participate. The goal is to make individuals active participants whose continuous interaction with the site will contribute to the (re)designing, and developing of the site to a cultural performance. The site is to welcome individuals not only as practitioners but also producers of knowledge while reviving active participation. Unlike many other sites, this Ga-centered cultural site will welcome online citizenry who are not mere users (seeking information) and receptacles of knowledge. Instead, they will be users far from those who need knowledge to be dumped on them; users who will also contribute with the cultural knowledges and experiences they have. Earlier in this chapter, Naa Shormeh tells of how online the online became critically to participants of Ga-Adangme Beauty pageants. These contestants looked for Ga Indigenous knowledge they had no idea of. They learned through the internet. Also, in

the stories of the Ananse, the trickster as recounted earlier, Ananse strives to improvise to survive. Ananse acts quickly to adapt to the situation or immediate contexts. For example, Ananse (as told earlier in Chapter 1) had to find deceptive ways to harvest a hornet, and to trap and tie both python leopard on different occasion. Thus, the site becomes a storytelling space where we tell stories that help the Indigenous peoples to achieve survivance. Ananse stories does not become a window only to the past but a way to find means of survival in the contemporary. User can then contribute to shaping and maintaining the site. For example, the beauty contestants, through the website, could be collaborative participants who could narrate their means of learning online, navigating different sites and applying the cultural knowledge. By this, they will be contributing to redesigning the site even as they interact with it but also learning though doing. Above all, users will be enacting reciprocity as they give back to their sources of knowing. As a result, the site continues to grow and becomes a living space just as the stories we tell.

Preserving Language, Culture, History and Identity & Combating Stereotypes

The website would serve as a repository of Ga Indigenous knowledge and practices, and it would clearly describe these practices for successful handover to the next generation. It would be a space where the Ga youth would go to learn about their culture and be able to explain to nom Gas who may not appreciate the values of the Gas and may brand it fetish or pagan. Such an open web space may be a site of research for non-Gas too. Ayikoi Otoo calls for publication of Ga Cultural materials. This website could have a space for accessing such academic publications about Ga and Ga culture. While we do this one course that must be pursued is the fu representation of the people of Ga. The site would thus serve as a rhetorical space to challenge, unsettle or subvert any representation by any grouper persons about Ga language. Representation is crucial to the survival and preservation of any cultural group outside its domains. bell hooks, highlights this when she argues that "That the field of representation remains a place of struggle is most evident when we critically examine contemporary representations of blackness and black people" (p. 3). Representation demands rhetorical application of images and other cultural artifacts natural to the indigenous. Many Gas may learn how to read and write in Ga as the site would provide readings in both interfaces of Ga and English. Ga *samai* (symbols) that until recently was less popular and unknown even by contemporary Gas could be posted here at the site. One of such popular *samai* is that image which represents the Ga people **(see Figure 4.6)**

Figure 5.7 Ga tribal symbol

The teaching of the cultural *samai* (symbols) is critical to understanding the meanings especially to the young ones within a community. An image relies on connotations more than denotations to survive its meaning. When an image has less resemblance to its reference, it demands that it relies "heavily on explanatory context" (Barthes, p.143). Such heavy reliance on explanations to preserve and transfer meaning across time and space makes the online a necessity for the Ga community in the context of cultural-determination.

We could publish or make accessible Ga newspapers and provide links to Ga online channels. We may publish Ga children's cultural performances online. One of such projects may eventually lead to Ga Hollywood where Ga movies may be produced to influence the public. While the introduction of technology has brought about an increase in cinemas and a decrease in storytelling times at night by the firewood under the moonlight, same technology could be used to produce movies, and podcasts for example that would be posted on the website that may serve similar purpose as storytelling as the Gas have absorbed technology. At this site, there would be presences of prominent Ga advocates, scholars and achievers whose presence would add credibility to the indigenous stories and practices. Also, the site would be a place of education not only Ga cultural practices such Homowo festival, *Kpojiemo* (naming ceremony or outdooring) but about political policies from the government about Ga people, Ga land and Ga language and it would be a source of mobilizing Gas against non-beneficiary policies from the central government. I believe such a digital approach may serve as bottom-up approach as it would pave the way for bridging the digital divide by arousing the interest of the locals digital activity and helping in realizing the needed resources for digital access.

Fostering Community and Providing Contact Zones

As many migrate to the Ga lands, fostering connections and maintaining a homogeneous cultural identity might be a struggle. This may affect how Culture is preserved and the efforts at eradicating marginalization of Gas in their own land. A sense of community is thus needed. The online is best suited for such a community many Gas may not live close to each other. Gas have spread to various parts of the world including the diaspora. A unified accessible to all would help bring Gas all over the world to interact with each other and engage with Ga customs and traditions. Various families can interact with each other and seek the welfare of others while supporting the needy. The *ashino sama* (cultural symbol of beads) speaks of uniting back even when scattered. As Gas spread across the globe, the online becomes a tool that echoes the message of the *ashino* (beads) to string their resources for a common course. The website would be a form of advertisement so those who need help could advertise such help or those willing to help could about such a space with their donations. All these would be done with the hope of getting as many youths as possible educated so they can hold political positions and represent Gas with good policies.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this closing chapter, I will consider implications of my research for (1) Ga culture and survivance, (2) African Rhetoric: Connecting the language and culture to technology, (3): Centering Indigenous People & Cultures in Studies of Technology, (4) for directions for studying & teaching technical and professional communication and then for storying our past & our future. Although my findings are drawn from my research on African rhetoric of the Gas, I think there are implications that can be tailored and adapted to a wide variety of contexts.

Ga Culture & Survivance

Colonial legacies continue to affect Ga cultural practices. Naa Shormeh recounts that:

Ga	***English***
Amɛ ba tsa ke. Eko ji wɔ kpojiemɔ nɛɛ kɛ tsɔ kristo jamɔ nɔ, *ŋ*malɛ mli hewɔ bia nɛɛ mɛi komɛi feɔ lɛ shwane. Ookwɛ no Ga fɔmɔ bi ni osɔfo ni yɔɔ asafo naa, Twi nyo ni loo hausa loo ɛwɛ nyo. Lɛ osɔfo ni baa wo lɛ, baa jie lɛ kpo. Ehiii nakai ni akɛ lɛ aha Twi nyo.	The Europeans have tempered with our culture. For example, our naming ceremony gets distorted because morning rites are performed late noon now. Through foreign religion, a priest will attempt to outdoor Ga babies. Unfortunately, the priests are also not Gas. They may be Akans, Hausas or others. It should not be that foreigners perform our rites

Through such interferences, the Ga begin to lose grip on the many important cultural practices that give them identity and the ability to run their own course. It is such interferences as described somewhere above that has led to gas losing control of their lands to the government and "foreigners" (other local migrating peoples). While the colonial legacies have been ingrained into the Ga culture such that there is no pure African practices, the Gas can work with what they have now. One way to make amends is the decolonial pathway. Yet since there is no prescribed form of decolonization (Tuck and Yan, 2012; Agboka, 2014) but by considerations such as experiences, exigencies and expectations of a people (Smith, 1999), a Ga return to fully embracing the principles of African rhetoric is urgent. Through this, we must enact *Sankofa*, a return to the past, to pick those principles of African rhetoric. Ga practices must be shaped by the histories and visions of the Ga people. A return to African rhetorical practices is to deliberately put the silence into rhetorical practice to begin to materialize the tenets of Africa rhetoric including restoring harmony on Ga land. For a very long time, the Gas have enacted silence, however, in an unfortunate way. Silence as Fox (1983) is an implicit canon of Egyptian rhetoric that is communicative strategy, a rhetorical tactic, deliberately aimed at sizing up opponents and identifying faults in their acts and arguments. It is time the Gas

use their silence as a form of rhetorical argument. That will mean working behind the scenes especially through the digital and making technology speak for them. As Fox (1983) points out silence and the other implicit canons (silence, fluency, kairos, restrain, truthfulness etc.) are not independent of each other. Silence works best with finding the right moment to act (kairos), not to persuade others but to create that community and now is a better time as the youth and community have become interested in the digital and investing more time and resources into smart phone and the use of WhatsApp. Kwei Mensah endorses the digital as a strategic and potent tool to help the Gas attend to cultural issues.

Ga	***English***
Eeservi Ga fe nɔni ee destroy Ga. kwɛ bɛ okɛɛ wc fee zoom? Afec Ga Meetings kɛ tsɔ zuum nɔ. Mi kɛ mɛi wieɔ kɛjɛɔ Belgium, Austria, Australia, Canada kɛ France aahi po mitee france po yɛ Ga Dangme hewɔ fɛɛ kɛtsɔ intanɛt.	The digital has benefitted the Gas than it destroyed it. Even a while ago you were suggesting we use zoom. Through the internet, connect to others in Belgium, Austria, Australia, Canada and France all in the service of the Ga-adangme people.

Through the digital website there is a world of opportunity to tell our stories and to weave stories that will survive generations. Through stories, we could as a collective be able to counter negatives stories about the Gas. Stories shared, as Legg (2014) notes, sits at the intersections of cultural marginalization, language neglect and educational discrimination and erasure (p. 68). If we the Gas do not tell our stories, we stand to experience recolonization. We tell stories to heal and to understand relationships around us (Mukavetz, 2014). To handle the effect of colonization, domination and government is to return to the past where we teach the young ones about the culture in a storytelling approach and where we would revise and re-contextualize the histories and the achievements of the Gas. This could be another way of confronting the issues of Ga language neglect even by many established Ga people. It feels awkward when Kwei Mensah says that

Ga	***English***
Agbɛnɛ hu wɔ suɔmɔ ana wɔ akɛ wɔ wieɔ blɔfo. No hewɔ wɔ sumɔɔɔ ni wɔ wie wɔ maŋ wiemɔ. Wɔ naa wɔ man wiemɔ akɛ noko kɛkɛ. Shi wɔ jiɛ kpaa nɔ akɛ wiemɔ Nyɔŋmɔ kɛ ha wɔ. Ni naa gbe nɔ kraa ji wiemɔ ni ji blɔfo wɔ naa akɛ kɛ owieɔ bɛ ole nii fe mɔ fɛɛ mɔ. No hewɔ kɛ ana akɛ owie Ga bɛ ole noko noko.	… we the Gas like to be seen and heard speaking English. As such we do not like speaking our own language. Our language is god-given. Finally, we attach prestige to speaking English and many of us do not wish to be heard indulging in our own language.

When we return to speaking and acting our culture as Gas, it will open the way for us to not only teach the younger generations about the language and culture, that will make them proud of their ancestry but to also theorize about culture and in particular, the Ga culture. Theorizing about culture, as Mukavetz (2014) enables us to properly do cultural rhetoric but more so move away from only acknowledging the community and the intellectuality of its people. Mukavetz (2014) rather than the mere recognition of cultural rhetoric "focuses on *how* a specific community makes meaning and negotiates systems of communication to disseminate knowledge." (p. 110). This allows the community to engage in meaningful studies as even researchers will be more concerned with understanding or making meaning in the study of a community. We, the Gas, stand to engage in such meaningful interactions and study when we return to finding meaning in our language and culture.

African Rhetoric: Connecting the Language and Culture to Technology

In today's rapidly changing globalized and technological world, preserving and affirming the local cultures of Indigenous peoples is more important than ever. The internet and digital technologies have the potential to play a crucial role in preserving and affirming the culture of Indigenous people around the world. It is also critical to shaping how we teach writing including technical and professional communication. Access to information, education, and communication are key factors in preserving Indigenous cultures such as the Ga's, and the digital provides a groundbreaking path of access to all of these. Indigenous Ga communities connected to the internet can have access to a wealth of information and knowledge that was previously unavailable to them or that promote and sustain the spirit of the community. In my discussion of this, I will focus on the Ga, but the approaches of the Ga are adaptable for thinking of other Indigenous communities.

Technology has the means to revive and enact cultural aspirations of the Ga people. If television and radio could bring people together, then the digital has more potential to support people and help create a community that promotes identity through cultural practices. If we can consider contributing to building and sustaining a digital presence Gas.

So far, the Gas continue to develop keen interests in utilizing the digital to support their cultural practices. This makes it easier to think and plan and with the Gas about the opportunities that culture has to benefit from the digital. As I continue to work with the Gas on promoting and sustaining important Ga cultural practices like the naming ceremony and the Homowo festival among others. Gas can learn more about their cultures and traditions, and then connect and share their own experiences and perspectives with people from around the world. This access can help to preserve traditional knowledge and practices, while also empowering Indigenous people to share their stories and perspectives with the world. In the interview, Naa Shormeh shares how the young Ga ladies participating in the Ga beauty pageant utilized the internet to learn

more about the Ga culture. They learned about the history of their Ga ancestry and important cultural practices. Through this, the Gas can project their identity even as globalization and technology continue to define the complexities of our societies. I will continue to work with the Gas in thinking of ways that we can put digital technologies to use to create and share Ga Indigenous language materials, including building or improving existing websites that will give access to Ga e-books, audio recordings, and video content teaching the Ga peoples and the rest of the world about the local Ga practices. Also, we can use the digital to document and preserve cultural heritage, such as traditional art, music, and dance (*Kpalongo* - a popular form of Ga dance) and these will provide a window for the Gas to evolve the tradition to suit current times. Through this we can help to highlight some of the Indigenous practices that are being drowned by other languages on Ga land and promote language preservation efforts.

I am equally aware that the digital divide remains a significant challenge for many Indigenous communities, including the Ga. As Ayikoi Otoo has expressed, the digital divide has political and economic complications- Gas are not among the rich to own television stations to broadcast to the masses or to reach a greater part of the population with educational materials. Naa Shormeh as well do recount that most of the big companies will not like to sponsor Ga programs as they believe they will not reach a wider audience with a Ga language or a Ga program. Also, it is very expensive in Ghana to access the internet. Sasu (2023) reports on average, "the cost for one gigabyte (GB) of mobile internet in Ghana stood at 0.0066 U.S. dollars in 2021. While the cheapest price an individual could pay to obtain 1GB of mobile data in the country was 0.17 U.S. dollars" making it difficult for some people to fully participate in the digital age. Despite these challenges, it is clear that the benefits of digital technologies for indigenous people far outweigh the risks. The internet and digital technologies provide a powerful platform for indigenous people to connect with each other, share their experiences, and assert their cultural identities in the face of globalization and modernization. This will create some form of unity between the Gas around the world to work concerted effort at achieving cultural survivance. This can be particularly beneficial for isolated communities that may not have access to traditional forms of communication. As such, my work with the Ga begins the important conversations of access and ways to create within the Ga community and ensure that all Ga peoples have access to the resources they need to preserve and affirm their culture in the digital age. This is recognized by Naa Shormeh when she observed that technology is giving the Ga much more visibility and stability. Naa Shormeh recounts that:

Ga	***English***
Tsuutsu ko ofɔɔ Gamɛi programs namɔ yɛ internet nɔ tamɔ facebook nibii. Tsuutsu ko wɔ jwɛŋ mɔ eya ko nɔ. Shi bi anɛ kɛ okwɛɛ, mɛi baa nɔ ni aba feɔ nibii srɔtoi srɔtoi srɔtoi.	In the past we never saw Ga programs on online platforms like Facebook. We never dreamed of it. However, we now see such happening with many different programs about Ga (people and culture).

Such observation gives hope to the Ga community about the future of technology and culture. More and more Gas are beginning to take advantage of the online and to put it to good use. We could educate the community about the affordances that online offers and support ethical use of it to promote Ga culture so that it does not spin towards unfortunate usage. Nonetheless, as we pursue the online, the local radio and televisions stations are good use of technology too. Ayikoi Otoo has continuously engaged the local radio and television stations.

Figure 5.8 Ayikoi Otoo on JoyNews

Figure 5.9 Ayikoi Otoo on CitiTube

Since some Gas still do have little to no access to the online, keeping the local television and radio stations might help reach out to many more Gas. Some of the television stations like JoyNews do post local contents on YouTube as well.

Directions for Future Research: Centering Indigenous People & Cultures in Studies of Technology

When I first decided to conduct this research, I was more concerned about how to adapt the research to the local people. This means that this research is conceived with the purpose of "giving" much agency to the people/participants involved while helping to center their views and interests. I opted for the combination of two indigenous approaches, namely the Pagtatanong-Tanong Interview method and the Philosophic Sagacity interview method (Chilisa, 2020). As shared earlier, these Indigenous approaches have principles that support Indigenous worldviews. For example, the Pagtatanong-Tanong Interview method concerns itself with paying attention to balanced use of power in the interactions with the research participants. By adopting this method, I am in many ways demonstrating to people (who have a colonial past) the need for responsible use of power. Although I'm part of that culture, I needed to reaffirm my commitments to my community and to also show my belief in the culture while asking for their trust. What this means is that as we continue to engage Indigenous communities in our research, we should be focused on working as a collective rather than from hierarchical positions. By taking this approach the research participants have become a small community I continuously engage with. Beyond the scope of the research interactions, we get to engage current issues affecting and sharing impromptu ideas on how to support the Ga community. Most of the discussions from Ga issues on their WhatsApp status that are visible to me. For those who go to TV programs, I get updated early enough and get to follow the issues. The bonding with Indigenous communities when power is shared can be lasting. Similarly, I have come to appreciate what the Philosophic Sagacity interview method offers. This method considers gathering information from elders of a community, and community members--particularly, those who have not been formally schooled. Perhaps, it is to give access to a pure form of Indigenous thinking especially those that are yet to be documented or made visible. Although, the indigenous research participants in this study are well educated, yet, they remain committed to the local course as they are deeply rooted in their Indigenous traditions and are able to steer the course of this research in that direction.

As we look forward to further research in this area, it is imperative we center the Indigenous. There seem to be more Indigenous knowledge and practices that are dying off in the Ga Indigenous communities. These need to be highlighted and taught to the younger generations. This will shape the reality to value Indigenous knowledges and practices most of which promote social harmony and unity. While all participants spoke the dying language, Naa Shormeh noted that other aspects of the culture such as typical Ga food and cooking styles, and dressing are almost lost. Also, she notes that certain practices get corrupted. For example, during the Homowo festival, families who have returned home for the celebrations are hugged in a special way called *aashika*. However, the youth have corrupted this warm, long embracing hug, harshly hurting recipients of the hugs. In addition, they have lost the knowledge of the significance of the hug, which is to express deep love and to strengthen the collective love. Thus, future research should point also to those little practices that have the potential to create harmony in the Ga community.

To do this future research a useful lens is the concept of *sankofa*. *Sankofa* as demonstrated in chapter 3 helps to center Indigenous knowledge. Moreso, *sankofa* enacts a change and transformation that is central to the community. By adopting a *sankofa* orientation, a Ga researcher and participants will draw from the Indigenous knowledge bank of forgotten or less visible progressive Ga practices of the past and help promote it or use research to improve its practices. Naa Shormeh recounts how Gas have neglected their herbal healing system of western one and will wish for a return. She says that,

Ga	***English***
Ni amɛ baa ba, wɔŋ fee obɔade tsofa omo. Ni wɔ ba kpa ni wɔ ŋɔ amɛ nɔɔ. Shi amɛ nɔ ekɛ said ifɛt nyiɛ. Ni wɔ kɛɛ wɔ nɔ wɔ leee epotɛnsi kɛni kɛni.	Before they arrived, we had our natural healing techniques. Then we stopped ours. Ours had less side effect from yet we do not know.

Through *sankofa*, Gas can revive traditional Ga healing methods that could contribute an alternative to even western science. By *sankofa*, we will be exploring this old way of healing that has minimal side effects and relates to the local or genetic makeup of the Ga people. One good thing embedded in *sankofa* is that it goes with storytelling. Stories have a wider reach in the Ga communities and they should form an integral part of any Ga research.

To focus the importance of storytelling, Chilisa (2020) lists some critical functions storytelling:

- Stories are tools of data collection, analysis and interpretation that give another side of the story to deficit theorizing about the Other and allow the Other, formerly colonized and historically oppressed, to frame and tell their past and present life experiences from their perspectives.
- Stories enable researchers to triangulate postcolonial indigenous values, belief systems, and community and family histories with other sources of knowledge.
- They provide data from which to debate postcolonial indigenous perspectives on a variety of issues, for example, perspectives on gender relations.
- Storytelling allows the researched to speak freely about their relationships including the role spirituality in their life
- Stories can serve as vignettes that bring alive and make memorable the experience of the people.
- Stories and storytelling allow both listener and teller to gain understanding, to do self-analysis, and to make new decisions that enable people-owned research-driven interventions and development programs (p. 194)

Messages expressed through storytelling survive many generations. It is for this reason that most Ga songs within the community come in the form of storytelling. The local people are attuned to listening to stories and the researcher is able to connect with them without any sense of danger (power sharing). Wilson (2008) notes that when researchers get involved with the Indigenous research framework, they do not only help with the

comprehensive transfer of knowledge but they also become storytellers themselves and thus establish a relationship with the audience. This is especially applicable to the Ga situation as they seek to reach out to the many clans, houses or quarters that form the entire Ga community.

With story also, we do have the opportunity to tell counter stories to restore and revive blemished Ga cultural practices. Counter stories serve as means that we the Gas can constructively challenge our practices such as the *kpojiemo* (naming ceremony) that many other non-Ga groups tend to belittle. We could do this by providing storying contexts that educate people to understand our practices and possibly help them transform their limited views about Ga culture and to as well teach the Gas that the stories are not end in themselves and that we can plan and construct the new world/ reality we seek in much richer way (Delgado, 1998) than the stories we tell.

Again, Sankofa as a tactical approach is useful in navigating the place of technology with culture. Drawing from Haas's (2012) (as explained in chapter 3) point that technology is inseparable from the work and that technology forms part of the work itself. As we revisit the past, it becomes beneficial if such a practice is not left in the historical but brought to contemporary realities. Thus, with technology we can merge or unite the past with the present. We can use Facebook for instance, to teach the past Ga knowledge and practices and by doing so help promote it. During the annual Homowo festival, we can tell the history of the Gas, the reasons for the celebrations and importance of it such as healing and uniting families for the coming year.

With technology we can achieve Mbembe's (2016) decolonial practice of denationalization of trans-nationalization where we can connect and build relationships with Gas in the diaspora and establish connections with scholars with a Ga interest.

Directions for Studying & Teaching Technical and Professional Communication

This study has implications to the studying and teaching of Technical and Professional Communication (TPC). Students of TPC might find their classes more engaging as they use their study to address social issues of marginalization, resource allocation and representation in the effort to paying attention to cultural sensibilities of the processes, peoples and communities whose lives their studies apply. This calls on the need to introduce students in TPC to the cultural rhetoric.

As Mukavetz (2014) explains, cultural rhetorics is an "orientation to enact a set of respectful and responsible practices to form and sustain relationships with cultural communities and their shared beliefs and practices including texts, materials, and ideas" (p. 109). This cultural rhetoric finds meaning within the relationships and communities we build with research.

By implication, in TPC students need opportunities to reflect on their own language and cultures and learning. Until this research work with my Ga community, I did not ever have the opportunity to study my own culture deeply and in meaningful ways. However, when I engaged my Ga people, it opened up to me a world of deep linguistic but culturally specific instantiation of the Ga language in usage, in addition to connections, and opportunity to speak from more confidence and belonging. I learned about the meaningful ways that the language can be put to storying and how words are used to evoke images that while telling stories seek to educate the community about the importance of unity. For instance, I learned about the Ga Papaya symbol. This as explained in chapter 4 symbolizes community. The papaya also known in Ga as *akpakpa* with an image depicting two hands together emphasizes Ga moral teachings about community but more importantly it demonstrates the importance of collaboration-- that the many divisions and differences within the community can be harnessed as collective effort in promoting the community.

In TPC classes, it is important we offer that same opportunity to students, from all populations, but particularly for students from underrepresented communities. For example, in a documentation assignment, such as writing directions about health safety, students could work on documentation for a particular community that they have studied and are familiar with, they can have the documentation be in media and formats appropriate for the community, and they can then user-test this. The purpose is to get them to have them, cultivate sensitivity to technical documents such that they become aware of political elements and work out best ethical practices. Further, we can apply this by teaching students that we learn together in class, in the university and in their communities; this could be translated as faculty collaborating together to build programs, to share knowledge, it means students and faculty collaboration and it means students collaborating and it means collaborating with communities. These can be ways that students and teachers and researchers can in their own ways arrive at ethical acts.

What this also means is that language choices are significant to teaching TPC. As students work documents, they come to realize that language choices that isolate a group of cultural people on their land in favor of Other dominant groups can stir conflicts. Language choices can disempower others. As with the Gas, the government failure to firmly implement the policy of teaching Ga language in schools that run on Ga language has led to a significant decline in speakers of Ga language even in Accra. To highlight this significance of language, Mignolo (2011) compares the intricacies of language. Mignolo (2011) argues that "I am not persuaded that Andean people will be interested in adopting Gaia instead of Pachamama. Within each name are subjectivities, memories, ways of life, vocabularies, concepts, and, in brief, cosmologies" (p. 310). The Ga like language any other language embodies the lived experiences and the many contexts including how the local Ga people relate to cosmology and spirituality, that are far removed from non-speakers. Thus, in our TPC classes, students can work on issues of accessibility and social justice by investigating how policies become or fail to achieve representation of the people it affects. Walton et al (2019) recounts such a similar incidence in history known as the *requerimiento* where Spanish conquerors read aloud a formal statement to Indigenous peoples and took their lands. The statement was

deliberately read in a language that is foreign to the natives who could relate the terms it spelled out. The natives had no idea that the technical documents required them to relinquish their lands and immediately swear fealty to the Spanish king and that failure to do so, the technical documents rationalized their loss of land and subsequent colonization. In this instance, TPC students can be supported to explore some ethical questions such as:

- What interest does a document serve?
- Who benefits from such a document?
- What best practices inform dissemination of information?
- Does the document address issues of power relations, inequalities and injustices?
- How does the document create space for the voices and knowledge systems of the Other

By doing so, we will be supporting TPC students to recognize and validate the knowledge and stories of the communities as important. To arrive at fair representation, students may consider ways to surface underrepresented voices, voices on the margins or, as in the case with the Ga people, voices who are in danger of being overwhelmed and silenced by larger social groups. In TPC classes, students will then engage in User-experience research to ask for and to listen for stories from users. As Smith (2012) recounts, "they (researchers) have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgements, and often downright misunderstandings (p. 176). Thus, asking for and listening to the stories of users of a document or product eliminates the tendency to misrepresent Others. Instead, it puts us in place of accountability to be responsible to the people we work with and for. This is because the bodies and experiences of the Other cannot be scripted by those who have no first-hand experience of it. Such narratives have resulted in distortions of their narratives by early researchers (Smith, 2012). For research to be implicated in Other knowledge systems researchers need to be sensitive. Students are to be supported to know that involving locals in the research about themselves, developed ways of research bereft of colonial legacy and accept research that has value to Indigenous people in Indigenous research. Our pedagogy benefits more when it is focused on supporting students in identifying the imbalances or disharmony around us and working to restore them balance. The goal is to get students to recognize injustice in processes and actions we encounter. Above all, the community's values should be central to the research. Students should be taught to think and act with the community. The *ubuntu's* principle of "I am, because we are" should not be abstracted from our learning spaces but centralized to affirm the balance and reciprocity we seek to achieve. As we look forward to more collective and comprehensive approaches in in TPC, focusing on communities, "then, provides a foundation for expanding TPC audiences" (Jones et al, p. 217). This may help in bringing many different audiences from many different communities such as medical, digital and even minority communities to working and collaborating together. Further, Ayikoi Otoo speaks about many Ga books and articles including students' dissertations that are yet to be published. Some of these have been lost and cannot be recovered. It is not enough then to teach students about the struggles of

Indigenous communities. Students can interrogate the politics of publishing in hopes of finding ways around it.

The other implication of this work is how important global, digital networks are--we the Ga are spread around the world, but we still communicate and connect. When teaching, we have to be sure students have opportunities to consider local, national, and global networks. The world is global now, TPC is global, considerations for communication across cultures. As we think community engagement is particularly important, developing or hosting a global digital rhetoric class where perhaps students could partner with communities to create online resources as a way of contributing to cultural survivance. This supports what Wemigwans (2018) has emphasized that, "having Indigenous Knowledge projects online validated by the community creates rich learning environments that are intercultural," (p. 57). Thus, a community engaged class creates a learning experience for both students and partners in understanding cultural issues.

Storying Our Past & Our Future

I want to close this dissertation with a personal reflection. Researching and writing this dissertation has connected me with my culture and my community in ways that, like Sankofa, reach to the past and to the future. As I look at the challenges facing Indigenous communities around the world, I also see tremendous opportunities for (re)telling our stories, for (re)claiming our culture and our land and our ways of knowing, opportunities made possible, in part, through the use of digital technologies. Here I am in Oxford, Ohio, but am able to visit the murals on the Ga Mantse King's palace at North Kaneshie in Accra, I am able to hear the Ga language, and I am able to remember my childhood flying kites and re-designing technologies for our local needs and ways of knowing and I am able to connect cultural wisdom from distant lands. Stories unite and stories help us collaborate with each other. Stories help us to see connections and the relationships that exist. I yearn to listen to stories of old, to learn from these stories and to tell stories that will inform and shape our world as we navigate the tensions and the possibilities of Indigenous traditions and technologies.

As a researcher and educator, I seek to bring stories to our learning and research spaces; to practice my craft daily to give real contexts to communicative practices. I hope to bring the learnings and or knowledges whose 'doing' are attentive to the social order and consequences to maintain balance. I wish above all, to emphasize the need for responsible reciprocity that accounts for both the past and the future. Reciprocity enables communication lines that maintain relationships and communities. We grow in communities and with supportive communities, we overcome and achieve more. With a strong community, we nurture the future. I invite my students and colleagues into the exploration of our many communities' and our ways of knowing so that we may merge theory with practice; and all fly out while always looking backward and returning, never forgetting the people and communities we call home.

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