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The Socio-Cultural Significance of Akan Totems in Textile Designs: A Means for Preservation of Wildlife in Ghana

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Abstract:

Throughout history, the clothing industry has gone through many developmental changes due to dynamism in fashion coupled with an unending variety of clothes. The international competitiveness of foreign industries has become a major concern to the Ghanaian government and to the business and labour communities because of low domestic export growth and rising imports. Manufacturing system in design is becoming increasingly complex due to new manufacturing processes, greater product variety, higher product quality standards, and shorter product life cycles which have contributed to high demand for more creative designs. This descriptive observational study investigates the socio-cultural significance of Akan totems and discusses the feasibilities of using totems as motifs in textile designs to create more innovative designs not only to meet the demand of the fashion industry but for preservation of wildlife and Ghanaian culture. The study revealed that totems have been important objects with human societies since time immemorial serving as identification emblems for families and clans. They also serve as commemorative objects of ancestry and for that matter observed as a taboo to kill or eat totemic animals. Evidence of the study indicates that, totemic animals are disappearing from the society owing to inappropriate human practices such as bush fires and hunting with little or no pragmatic measures instituted to check their abuse. The use of totems in print designs is therefore recommended to create awareness of the socio-cultural significance of totems to societal members in order to foster clan or family identity and prestige, preservation of culture and wildlife as well as expansion of the scope of design concept of local prints.

Keywords: Totems; Socio-cultural; Wildlife; Textile design

1. Introduction

Freud (2004) asserts that the word ‘totem’ was first introduced in 1791 as ‘totam’ from the North American Indians by an Englishman J. Long and since then the subject has gradually attracted great scientific interest and has produced an abundant literature. Alun (2005) and Freud (2004) agreed that totem is an animal whether edible, harmless or dangerous and feared. They are more rarely a plant or a natural phenomenon such as rain or water which stands in a peculiar relation to the whole clan. In the first place, the totem is the common ancestor of the clan; at the same time, it is their guardian spirit and helper. Conversely, the clansmen are under a sacred obligation not to kill, eat or destroy their totem. Alun further explains similar view that, a totem is a guardian spirit of a particular unit of kinship or social organization such as a clan or tribe. A totem can be an animal, a plant or any other natural object believed to be ancestrally related to a tribe, clan, or family group as a tutelary spirit. The totem system served and still serves to identify different geographic and dialectic identities by associating each group with a natural species, usually an animal.

The totemic relationship is widespread and has been observed in several nations, Asia and Africa including Ghana. It is even stronger among some Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians. Among these societies, the totem is often regarded as a companion and helper with supernatural powers and so accorded much respect. With the exception of some totemic rituals, killing, or eating the totem is strictly prohibited among all societies. Studies have revealed that the Bakwena tribe of Botswana in South Africa is named after “Kwena”, the crocodile, whilst the Batlounge also in Botswana are named after “Tlou”, the elephant. In order to honour the totemic animal, it is forbidden that anyone from the tribe, clan or group should hunt or harm it. As the Bakwena protected the crocodile, they also do not hunt the species of antelope for food. They feared offending their totem animal by depriving it of its favourite food (Streiger, 2008).

The Batloun, protected the rhinoceros and the hippopotamus which were traditionally regarded as the elephant's cousins. In return, it was believed that none of these potentially dangerous creatures would harm members of the Batloun clan. It has been noted that the conservation of many plants and animals in their jungles is part of the culture of the Warlis tribe in India. The protection of these totems is embedded in and perpetuated by customs and religious beliefs. Research has shown that the sacred groves of the Adivasis and Hindus have turned out to be the few remaining areas in India with climax forests and wide species diversity, since no animal or plant could be harmed in them (Streiger, 2008). Steven and Salm (2006) posit that practical examples of the practice of totemism in Ghana can be found among the indigenes of Buabeng Fiaman in the Brong Ahafo Region, whose reverence for monkeys has brought about the famous monkey sanctuary. Moreover, the people of Old Ningo who consider turtles as gods and have made their area a safe haven for the marine creatures.

One needs only to be particularly observant of umbrellas or staffs of chiefs' linguists and other cultural paraphernalia at any traditional gathering to notice that almost every traditional ruler, chief or king has a totem in Ghana. Additionally, members of almost every clan or tribe in Ghana have a totem. Each of the eight clans of the Akan tribe of Ghana has a totem called "Atweneboa," which means an animal leaned on or relied upon for spiritual inspiration. In some places when a totem dies or is sold, members of the tribe it represents would show respect by mourning and burying it as in the case of a human being (Streiger, 2008).

According to Steven and Salm (2006), in some of the communities, totems are conspicuously displayed at the entrance or inside the chief's palace. When the chief sits in state, the linguist holds the chief's staff with the totem at the top of it. At a function or meeting with chiefs, there are as many staffs and totems as the number of chiefs present. Most of the chiefs use the skin of their totems as footrest when they are seated. Some of the official chairs of chiefs are carved in the shape of the totem. Our ancestors selected various animals' species as the central feature of their traditional state emblems. The origin of some of these state emblems (Freud, 2004) is lost in antiquity; however, they helped to distinguish the various tribes, clans, communities and their characteristics. The emblems served as symbols of unity and influenced the actions of the people on festive and other ceremonial occasions.

Alun, (2005) opine that totems are significant in the social, political and spiritual realms of the society. At the international level, many countries use totems for various purposes. Ghana uses the Tawny eagle as a totem and emblem in her Coat of Arms. Cote d'Ivoire uses an elephant, Gabon uses a bird whilst the United States make use of an eagle. In the same way, many political parties in the world particularly in Africa have totems and use them as symbols for their campaigns during elections. Similar to the Republican Party of the United States of America, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) of Ghana has the elephant as its totem. Totems are used widely by other social groups and organisations in Africa. Certain animals are used to symbolise the strength of football teams. In Cameroon, the national football team is called "Indomitable Lions" whilst the Nigerian national male football team is known as the "Green Eagles" and their female counterparts, the "Falcons". In Senegal, the national soccer team is named after the "Lions". Britain also calls its national soccer team "Three Lions", while Algeria names its national soccer team, "Desert Foxes" with that of Togo known as "The Sparrows". At the club level, many football clubs similarly use animals as symbolic totem. The Asante Kotoko Football Club of Ghana has "Kotoko" (the porcupine) as its totem. The use of elephant as a totem is very common throughout the world. In Africa, the elephant is commonly used as a symbol of a King or great power and strength. The Zulus in South Africa are known to address their king as "Great Elephant" or "Powerful Elephant". In Asia, the Buddhists consider the elephant to be an appropriate symbol of their founder or spiritual leader, "Guatama Buddha". It is known that the totem system protected the totem species, and those associated with them and is very effective form of conservation of wildlife. However, many people today, deliberately distance themselves from their past because they believe that traditional culture is backward or retrogressive (Streiger, 2008).

Singlair, et al(2006) opine that totemism is part of the socio-cultural life of Africa. It is seen in homes, clans, villages, tribes, chieftaincy systems, social clubs, political parties and the nation at large. Every member of the totemistic group has a common bond and aspiration with colleagues and shares a common appellation. Totemism can thus be exploited as a tool to galvanise or bring about solidarity in the human societies particularly, in Africa for biodiversity conservation. It is like sounding a war cry to awaken the cultural instinct for the protection and defence of the animals or totems, which are held in high esteem, but are in danger of extinction. Societal cultures should ensure that man and animal live harmoniously with nature. To win the war against the destruction of our totems, there must be the establishment of ecotourism using totems as the focus; the review of wildlife laws to enable traditional authorities to manage wildlife and the introduction of an annual wildlife farmer award. Traditional norms, sanctions and customs sustaining wildlife needs to be carried out; traditional norms, sanctions developing into byelaws must be codified by District Assemblies (Claude, 1991 and Nukunya, 2004).

The Ghanaian artist uses several motifs, each associated with particular meaning derived from proverbs, historical events, human attitudes, animal behaviour, plant life, and objects. The symbols present both visual and verbal messages. Textile art is seen in everyday and ceremonial life. Although totems are popular spiritual symbols throughout the global society, their use in textile design is not so pervasive particularly in Ghana (Steven and Salm, 2006; Studd, 2002 and Von Stamm, 2003).

Freud (2002) points out that the greatest horror comes from our fear of incest which emanated from totem bond. The most fascinating characteristic in Ghanaian indigenous culture is the "totem bond." The totem bond suggests that people of the same totem are clansmen. He further indicated that there is an important law in totemic tradition which encourages the practice of exogamy in totemism, making sexual intercourse impossible for a man with any of the women of his own clan including those descended from the same totem.

Prohibition of sexual intercourse between members of the same clan appears to have been the appropriate means for preventing group incest. Thus, the practice of exogamy as a totem bond is mainly to prevent incest. In some societies, lawful penalty of violating exogamy is execution. One may ask why exogamy is so important in the totem bond. Psycho-analysts assume that a

boy's earliest choice of objects for his love is incestuous and those objects that are forbidden. That is, the desire of incest is so natural in human nature that if there is no rule to prevent it, incest will often happen.

Freud (2002) and Alun (2005) mention that the clan totem is revered by people who believe themselves to be of one blood, descendants of a common ancestor, and are bound together by common obligations to each other by a common faith. Hence, the totem animal was used to maintain two useful prohibitions; one against killing the totem animal (patricide) and the other against having sexual relations between members of the same totem or clan (incest).

It is evidence from the foregoing theoretical and empirical data that, totems hold strong cultural, social, economic and philosophical significance among African natives and for that matter their preservation is of paramount interest to the development of wildlife and tourism in Africa. The purpose of this study therefore is to investigate into how clan totems are revered by Ghanaians, their positive impacts on the society and possible means for preservation of wildlife through textile design or art.

2. Methodology

The study made use of qualitative and quantitative research methods in mixed approach. To obtain first hand and in-depth information, the study focused mainly on qualitative research design. Qualitative study follows a process called the "inductive logic of research" to collect, organize, and analyse data (Kvale 1996; Creswell 2003; Strauss & Corbin 1990 and Merriam 1998). This was adopted in this study to analyse data collected to draw conclusions and recommendations made toward preservation of wildlife in Ghana. Interview, observation and questionnaire were the main data collection instruments. Prior to data collection, interview guide, questionnaire and observational check lists were prepared and pretested based on the following research questions:

- How do Ghanaians value totems as the strength of their clans?
- To what extent do Ghanaian textile artists regard Clan totems as symbol of strength?
- To what extent are totems protected?
- What is the level of awareness of the symbolic values of totem?
- Are the values of totems reflected in the textile arts of Ghana?

With the interview, the research team was able to have close contacts and face-to-face discussion with the respondents to obtain instant primary data for the study. The questionnaire issued to the respondents had both close and open ended questions which were devoid of ambiguity for easy management of data.

2.1. Population and Sampling

Geographically, the study is limited to Ashanti and Eastern Regions. The target population comprised clan heads of the Kumasi metropolis and Kwahu East District, staff of Wesley College of Education - Kumasi, lecturers and students of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, lecturers and students of Kumasi Polytechnic, retailers and textile artists of Kumasi Metropolis. Eighty (80) respondents were purposefully sampled out from the accessible population for the study. The respondents were contacted for appointments for the interview and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Copies of the questionnaire were given to two senior lecturers of Kumasi Polytechnic for validation after which they were trial tested on ten people chosen outside the respondents to ensure reliability. Data collected through questionnaire were discussed quantitatively in tabular form with figures whereas those obtained through interview and observation were descriptively presented and analysed. Table 1 shows administration and retrieval of questionnaire.

RESPONDENTS	NO. ISSUED	NO. RECEIVED
Centre for National Culture	9	5
Clan Heads	8	7
Lecturers	10	5
Students	13	12
Textile Retailers	20	15
Textile Artists	20	10
TOTAL	80	54

Table 1: Administration and Retrieval of the Questionnaires

Table 1 indicates that eighty (80) respondents were engaged; however, fifty-four (54) of the items were retrieved which represents eighty-three per cent (83%) of the respondents who were given the questionnaire.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Cultural Values of Totems

Table 2 presents respondents' views on cultural values of totems.

Variable	Question	Responses			
		Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)	Total (%)
1	Do the clan totems possess strong cultural values?	90.5	7.1	2.4	100
2	Do you agree that totems are not used by clans for identification purposes?	4.8	95.2	0	100
3	Are the clan totems recognised in the textile arts of Ghanaians?	21.8	55.8	23.8	100

Table 2: Multiple responses on cultural values of totems

In variable 1, respondents were asked whether clan totems possess strong cultural values. Evidence from Table 1 show that ninety point five percent (90.5%) of the respondents gave an affirmative response as against seven point one percent (7.1%) who answered “no”. Two point four percent (2.4%) were not sure of the answer. This therefore suggest that totems possess significant cultural values which affirms the assertion that totem is an object that serves as the emblem of a family or clan and often as a reminder of its ancestry. For that reason, there is a belief of intimate relationship between the totemic animals and their respective tribes (Conservation International Ghana, 2005).

Variable 2 requested respondents’ views on the assertion that totems are not used by clans for identification purposes. In response, ninety-five point two percent (95.2%) of the respondents were not in agreement with only four point eight percent (4.8%) agreeing that totems are not used by clans for identification purposes. This is a clear indication that people appreciate the spiritual and psychological contribution of totems in the society with regard to clan identity. This supports the assertion by Streiger (2008) that totems have strong psychological effects on an individual and for that matter anyone who breaks the taboos and is unable to fulfil the purification rites can contract mental or physical illnesses.

In variable 3, the research team wanted to find out whether textile print designs can be an effective medium for portraying the cultural values of totems. Responding to this question, twenty-one point four percent (21.4%) of the respondents indicated that totems are recognised in the textile arts of Ghana, twenty-three point eight percent (23.8%) were not sure of what to say while fifty-five point eight percent (55.8%) were of the view that totems are not recognised in the textile arts of Ghanaians. It could be deduced from this data that most people believe that clan totems are not portrayed in the Ghanaian textile arts. Probably, Akans are conservatives and would not want to change from the use of traditional kente and Adinkra cloth to any other cloth for their occasion. It could also mean that textile designers have not thought of the viability of exploring and adapting motifs from totems for textile designs. The attitude of the public from observation confirms the assertion made by Steven and Salm (2006) that although totems are popular spiritual symbols throughout West African society, their use in textile design is not so pervasive in Africa in general and in Ghana in particular.

3.2. Protection of totemic animals in Ghana

In order to establish the extent to which totemic animals are protected in Ghana, respondents’ gave varied views as presented in Table 3.

Variable	Question	Responses			
		Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)	Total
4	Are totems or animals given required protection?	32	60	8	100
5	Do you accept that something must be done to check abuse of totems?	70	10	20	100

Table 3: Care of the Totems

Variable 4 tries to find out whether totems and animals in general are given required protection in Ghana. Sixty percent (60%) of the respondents were of the view that animals or totems are not protected adequately. Thirty-two percent (32%) think that totems are protected adequately whereas eight percent (8%) not sure of whether or not totemic animals are protected. It could therefore be inferred from the data that totems are not properly cared for. Perhaps, majority of the respondents have this impression due to the negative attitude of most people toward wildlife such as bushfire, illegal hunting activities, and sanitary condition of domestic animals, among others. This attitude of Ghanaians towards totems is contrary to what actually happens in some other places such as Botswana where the Bakwena tribe of Botswana is named after “Kwena”, the crocodile. As the Bakwena protected the crocodile, they also did not hunt the species of antelope it preferred for food (Claude, 1991).

Variable 5 expected respondents to give their opinions on the need to check abuse of totems in Ghana. Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents are of the opinion that some measures must be put in place to reduce abuse of wildlife some of which constitutes totems. In the data, ten percent (10%) think that there is no need to protect totems and twenty percent (20%) are not sure of the situation. This situation is in line with what the Country Director for Conservation International, Okyeame Ampadu-Agyei asserts that wild life must be given the same protection as human beings (Conservation International Ghana, 2005).

3.3. Level of Awareness of Totems among Respondents

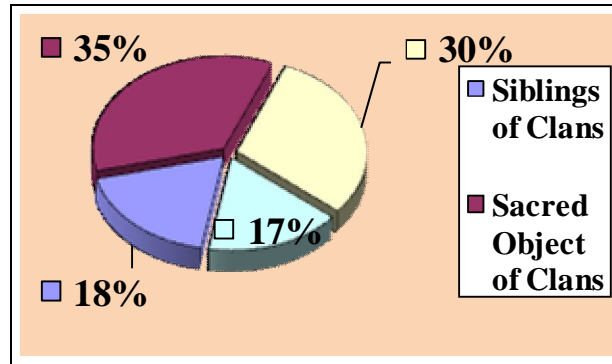


Figure 1: Pie Chart Showing Level of Awareness of the Symbolic Values of Totems

To ascertain the respondents’ level of awareness of totems, fifty respondents (50) were asked to provide answers to what they know about totems. As presented in Figure1, thirty five percent (35%) of the respondents asserted that, totems are sacred objects of clans. Thirty percent (30%) of the respondents however believe that totems are emblems of societal groups whereas eighteen percent (18%) of the respondents indicated that totems are siblings of clans with seventeen percent 17% having the impression that totems are used as religious icons. These therefore suggest that the awareness level of totems among respondents is high as most people confirm the significant roles totems play among human societies.

3.4. Uses of Totems

Due to the high level of awareness of totems in the Ghanaian communities, totems find application as national, clan, party and club symbols. In this study, the opinions of Fifty-five (55) respondents were solicited on how people or groups of people use totems in Ghana. Varied opinions were given by the respondents as exhibited in Fig. 1.

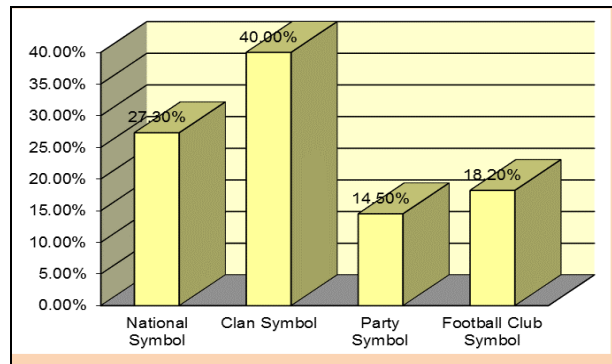


Figure 2: Respondents view on the use of totems in Ghana

Inferring from Fig.2, it is evident that 27.3% of the respondents hold the view that totems are used as national symbols, 40% of the respondents have the impression that totems are mostly used as clan symbols. Moreover, 14.5% asserted that totems are used by political parties as their party symbols, while 18.2% believe that totems are often used as symbols of football clubs. It could be established from these responses that though majority of the respondents recognize totems as significant among clans, others appreciate their use by group of people with common interest and aspiration as symbols. The kind of totemic animal a clan, club, party or any other organisation chooses epitomize the nature and belief of that particular group.

3.5. Akan Totems and their Symbolism

The Akan people believe that the human being is made up of soul (okra), spirit (sunsum), blood (mogya) and family (abusua). The blood that comes from the mother determines the “abusua” or family group. In the matrilineal Akan Society, a child is what his/her mother is. Therefore a person can be Asante or Kwahu only by virtue of the fact that his/her mother is Asante or Kwahu. There are eight Akan abusua; Aduana, Agona, Asakyiri, Asenie, Asona, Bretuo, Ekuona and Oyoko. It is generally said that, more people belong to the Asona abusua than to any of the other family group. Asakyiri is the smallest of the abusua (Nukunya, 2004).

Abusua does not mean the same as clan. Whereas abusua is a group or groups of people descended from one great grandmother on the maternal side, clan is a federation of four or five different groups of abusua or families with one recognised head. Therefore, those members of the same clan cannot, as members of an abusua, trace their ancestry (or descent) through the same common ancestress. Marriage between members of a clan is, therefore, permissible (Akan Abusua, 2009). Every member of the Akan tribe is a member of one of the above abusua or family groups and can trace their descent only through the female line to the same female ancestress who would invariably be the founder of the abusua.

The first effect of this relationship is clearly that members of one abusua are considered to have the same blood, and marriage between them is therefore forbidden (Nukunya, 2003). The eight clans and their totems among the Asantes are presented and discussed in the following section.

- **Aduana**



*Fig. 3: Dog, the Totem of Aduana Clan
Source: Field Research (2013)*

The symbol of the Aduana is a dog. Most Aduana people believe that at the time of creation, their ancestors descended from the skies on a golden chain. Others also believe that they originally came from a town called Asumanya and they were led by a duiker with a flame in its mouth and gold in its cheeks. They proceeded to Dormaa where it is believed the flame is still kept alight. Most people believe that from Asumanya a section of the Aduana headed for Akwamu.

Some of the principal towns of the Aduana are Dormaa and Akwamu. In Asante the principal towns for the Aduana are Kumawu, Asumanya, Bompata, Kwaso, Akyease, Takyiman, Nsuatre, Drobo, Kwaman, Boaman, Agogo, Apromaase, Tikurom, Kaase, Apagya, Manso-Mmem, Manso-Abodom, and Nyinahen.

- **Agona**



*Fig. 4: Parrot, the Totem of Agona Clan
Source: Field Research (2013)*

Agona clan is represented by a parrot (akoo). People of the Agona are predominantly Denkyira and in Asante (Nkawie) descents. Some other towns of the Agona are Tafo, Bodwesango, Fomesua, Asienimpon, Trede Ahwaa, Ampabame. When greeted, the reply is "Yaa Ago nana" meaning the descendant of Ago.

- **Asakyiri**



*Fig. 5: Vulture, the Totem of Asakyiri Clan
Source: Field Research (2013)*

Asakyiri clan is represented by the vulture (kokosaki). Asakyiri claim that they were the first to be created by God. They are found in the Adanse area and their main towns are Akorokyere (Akrokere), Ayaase and Asokore. Other towns of the Asakyiri are Abofuo, Abrenkese, Asakyiri, and Apeadu.

- **Asene**



*Fig. 6a: Bat the Totem of Asene Clan
Source: Field Research (2013)*



*Fig. 6b: Whale the totem of Asene Clan
Source: Field Research (2013)*

Asene clan is represented by a whale (bonsu) or the bat (apane). The main towns of Asene are Kumasi Amakom and Dompoase. Other towns of the Asenie are Antoa, Agona, Nkoranza, Wenchi, Atwoma, Kofiase, and Denyase. When greeted, the reply is “Yaa Adu nana” meaning the descendant of Adu.

- **Asona**



*Fig. 7: Crow, the Totem of Asona clan
Source: Field research (2013)*

Asona (Odum, Odum-na, Dwum or Dwumina) clan is represented by a crow or wild boar (kwaakwaadabi or akonkron). It is said that more people generally belong to the Asona than to any other abusua. The principal towns are Edweso and Offinso. Other towns of the Asona are Ejura, Feyiase, Manso-Nkwanta, Bonwire, Atwima-Agogo, Abrakaso, Taabuom, Beposo, Toase, and Odumase. When greeted, the reply is “Yaa Ofori nana” meaning the descendant of Ofori.

- **Bretuo**



Fig. 8: Leopard, the Totem of Bretuo Clan
Source: Field research (2013)

Bretuo/Etena (Twidan) clan is represented by a leopard (etwie or osebo). Bretuo are found mainly in Mampong, Amofo, and Afigyaase/Effiduase. Other towns of the Bretuo are Jamase, Apaa, Domeabra, Agogo-Hwidiem, Adankranya, and Abuotem. It is worth noting that the commander of the Asante army against Denkyira was the Mamponhene and in the past, generally, matters relating to war in Asante were in the domain of the Mamponhene. When greeted, the reply is “Yaa Etwie nana” meaning the descendant of Etwie.

- **Ekuona**



Fig. 9: Buffalo, the Totem of Ekuona Clan
Source: Field research (2010)

Ekuona (Asokore, Kona or Adonten) clan is represented by a buffalo (ekoo). Ekuona are not found in great numbers in Asante. They are mainly found among the Fantes. In Asante, their main town is Adanse Fomena. Other towns of the family are Banko, Kona, Asokore-Mampong, Brekum, Kokofu-Abuoso, Adumasa, Heman, Abenkyem, and Duayaw-Nkwanta. When greeted, the reply is “Yaa Doku nana” meaning the descendant of Doku.

- **Oyoko**



Fig. 10: Hawk, the Totem of Oyoko Clan
Source: Field Research (2010)

Oyoko (Daku, Yogo, Yoko, Oweko or Anona) clan is represented by a falcon (asansaa) or hawk (akroma). Oyoko is also the family from which the Asantehene comes. Its main towns are Kumasi, Dwaben and Nsuta. Other towns are Kokofu, Bekwae, Mamponenten, Bogyae, Dadieso, Obogu, Asaaman Adubiase, Pampaso, Kontanase, Kenyase, and Ntonso. When greeted, the reply is “Yaa Obiri nana” meaning the descendant of Obiri.

These days because of modernisation and dynamism, it is nearly impossible to tell which abusua a person belongs to unless you know what town he comes from. Even coming from a particular town does not necessarily mean that the person belongs to abusua in the town. For example, although Saltpond is considered a Fante town, their ancestors are likely to be Akyem. Therefore, to find the abusua of someone from Saltpond, one might have to head in the direction of Oda (Gyekye, 2003, Osei-Kuffour, 2009, Bodley, 1994). Among the Kwahu the eight clans and their totems are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| i. Aduana (Dog) | v. Asona (Crow) |
| ii. Agona (Parrot) | vi. Bretuo (Leopard) |
| iii. Asakyiri (Vulture) | vii. Ekuona (Bull) |
| iv. Asene (Bat) | viii. Oyoko (Hawk) |

3.6. Textile Designs as a means for Preservation of Wildlife in Ghana

Observable findings of the study revealed that, traditional leaders have no paraphernalia of totems for their states. The only means by which the traditional leaders display their totemic wealth is by the use of their umbrella tops, linguist staffs and the pictures of totems found inside and at the entrance of the palaces. It was also evident that the clans do not have particular colours chosen for a particular purpose. This presupposes that the clan members use only colours found in their totems. The study identified that no traditional leader within the study area uses cloth that has his/her clan totem as the main symbol. What they normally use is cloth with Adinkra symbols and the kente cloth. However, per the theoretical and empirical findings on significance of totems among African natives and for that matter Ghana, it is very paramount to incorporate totems in cloths of chiefs, clan and family heads, and member for festive occasions. This will enhance the aesthetic appearance of such important personalities, foster distinctive clan or family identity, create more awareness on the significance of totem for preservation and development of wildlife and tourism in Ghana, and promote locally-made textiles for economic development. This stems from the fact that clothing is indispensable in human life and forms an integral part of Ghanaian culture; hence, using it as a tool to sensitize clan and family members on the significance of totems will be very effective considering the prestige and values that Ghanaians attach to clothing.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of this study was to express the cultural significance of Akan clan totems in textile designs. The findings indicate that there are virtually no textile designs in any form that aims at giving recognition to clan totems. It further revealed that wildlife plays a crucial role in the socio-cultural development of Africa, particularly in Ghana, where it features prominently in festivals, the arts, drama and folklore. Apart from wildlife, serving as totemic symbols for several clans and providing animal protein in the diets of many peoples, it also provide great potential for future development of eco-tourism. The study, however, found that these animals are woefully abused to the extent of becoming extinct.

In spite of the significant roles that totems play in the Ghanaian society, both culturally and economically, there has not been any considerable effort to consciously appreciate their value in textile designs. The study therefore urges Ghanaians to embrace the fact that totems are used by most societies in Africa as sacred objects and so they must be given the right recognition. As textiles remain one of the basic necessities of man, it can be used to serve as a medium of acknowledging the philosophical and economic ideals of totems in Ghana. With this approach, it is expected that bushfires and illegal hunting activities that endanger or destroy most of these totems will be minimized. Beside, Centres for National Culture are entreated to promote production of textile designs that sensitize the public on the significant role totems play in the socio-cultural and economic development of Ghana. Moreover, the National House of Chiefs and National Commission on Culture should organize programmes to encourage the conservation of sacred groves, totems and wildlife using textile designs that have images of cultural values as ceremonial cloth. Aside the aforementioned recommendations, it is envisaged that if clan heads adopt textile designs of such nature as ceremonial cloths for their members rather than the use of only kente and Adinkra cloths, the cultural values of the totems would eventually be unveiled. People would then give totems the maximum respect for socio-cultural and economic development of Ghana as the wildlife is protected and eco-tourism enhanced.

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