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The Aesthetic and Philosophical Values of Asante Linguist Staff Symbols in Textile Design

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Abstract:

The study explores the aesthetic and philosophical significance of Ghanaian traditional symbols with special reference to Asante linguist staff symbols in creating surface textile designs to widen the scope of their application. It critically examines the names of the symbols, their intrinsic and extrinsic values as well as mythological perspective of selected linguist staff symbols to ascertain their viability for the generation of textile designs as a means of making people understand and appreciate the significance of these symbols. Purposive sampling technique was used to gather data from linguists and traditional wood carvers in Ashanti region. Sourced images of the symbols were used to create a number of textile designs of high aesthetic values and named in accordance with the names of the staff symbols to bring out their philosophical and social significance. The study revealed that, Asante linguist staff finials provide a collection of motifs, each with its own unique form that can broaden aesthetic values of textile designs. It also came to light that the linguist staff symbols have unique surface textures engraved on them which provide special texturing effects for textile design. Aside expanding and promoting the knowledge on Asante traditional symbolism for better application, the study concluded that linguist staff finials provide an array of motifs for designing textiles which can be exploited by textile designers. It is recommended therefore that designers expose these cultural artifacts through creation of commercial viable textile designs for promotion and appreciation of the symbols and for socio-cultural and artistic development of Ghana.

Keywords: Linguists staff, traditional symbols, textile design, aesthetic, philosophical

1. Introduction

Textile design is an arrangement of form or colours, or both, to be implemented as ornamentation in or various textile materials (Totoro and Merkel, 2005). Designs or patterns may be woven or knitted into the structure of the fabric; may form a surface decoration; or a blend of colours may brighten or improve the design or pattern.

Designing of textiles is an important component of textile manufacture; it helps in the long run, in the production of a good design that is more appealing and therefore marketable. To execute a good design, the designer ought to consider all the various ingredients that come together to achieve the purpose. The arrangement of the motifs, textures and colour are exquisitely done when the principles and elements of design are effectively made use of. Design themes or motifs can be chosen from various sources, whether natural or man-made. Design motifs can be sourced from various shapes, like geometric and abstract. There are also colourful flowers which nature provides with a rich palette from which inspiration can be drawn for floral motifs (Wisbrun, 2011). Conversational or figurative motifs refer to designs that have recognizable objects (other than flowers, as they have their category) in the motif. These designs can feature any object – from a pencil to a rocket ship to a chair – and anything can be used as the basis for a design. Novelty and juvenile prints are part of this motif, which one can be having fun when designing these patterns. Furthermore, there are patterns drawn from a specific culture and are known as ethnic motifs.

Wisbrun, (2011) observes further that, worldwide, there are countless styles of ethnic designs and tribal art, each one is unique in its own way. Traditionally, these designs were often made for a particular culture due to their cultural significance or symbolism and

celebrate some aspect of the culture's history. Overtime, these designs with specific reference to colour, patterns or subject matter continued to appear and have become part of the textile design heritage.

Within the Asante traditional chieftaincy system in Ghana, there are various cultural symbolic artifacts or forms of various shapes and sizes having proverbial and abstract meanings, which are used for specific cultural activities. As multi-functional in nature, Agbo (1999) asserts that symbols are appreciated for both aesthetic and communicative values. A symbol is a communication element intended to simply represent or stand for a complex person, object, group or idea (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010). Odotei and Awedoba (2006) establish that symbols play very active roles in the socio-cultural and political life of Ghana adding that Asante traditional symbols carry messages that ought to be understood readily, but one can understand them when the meanings explained by the custodians. Some of the symbols like "*Sankofa, Gye Nyame, Akofena*" and other symbols are popular but many others are less popular in application and for that matter are less appreciated in the society.

Among the Akan traditional symbols, linguist staff top symbols are highly regarded and considered very remarkable due to the fact that they show clan identity in terms of lineage or ancestry, ethnography, believes, values, philosophies among others, which is the focus for this paper.

The linguist staff acts as symbol of office for the linguist holding it, which allows him to perform specific duties in the chief's palace, which is very key in the traditional administration. These finials or symbolic forms carved on the linguist staff proverbial meanings and possess unique shapes or interesting forms that could be used to create perfect textile designs. The naming and carving of linguist staff in Ghana is historical because some carvers of these artifacts opine that the profession were handed to them by their great grandfathers. The idea of producing textile designs from these linguist staff symbols, would help people know and understand their meanings, especially when the names of the symbols are used for the textile designs. This is due to the fact, textiles and for that matter clothing is one of the basic necessity of man.

The main objectives of the study are to identify and examine suitable Asante linguist staff symbols that could be exploited to generate commercially viable textile designs and to generate textile designs from the selected Asante linguist staff symbols to be appreciated philosophically and aesthetically by wider populace for socio-cultural and artistic development of Ghana.

2. Methodology

As an empirical artistic study, the qualitative research design was employed to identify and assess the effectiveness of Asante linguist staff symbols for textile design. Borg and Gall (1989), states that qualitative research is a field research in which the researchers make an effort to study all elements in the setting in order to understand the reality of the situation. The result therefore calls for detailed investigations aimed at understanding the social, cultural and historical setting as the case is for this study which focuses on Asante traditional symbolism with reference to linguist staff symbols. Adobe Photoshop computer software for photo editing and graphic was use as the main design tool.

2.1. Population for the Study

The target population for the study comprises Asante linguist staff symbols, chief custodians of the symbols, linguists, carvers and clan heads, textile design students, and natives of Kumasi. The study area was the Asante region of Ghana, but due to the vastness of the region, the area of study was limited to Kumasi, the capital of the region, which is also the seat of the Asante traditional council.

2.2. Sampling

The importance of sampling in this study was to select appropriate kinds of Asante linguist staff symbols and this was done purposefully using the purposive sampling technique. The justification for using this sampling technique was based on the fact that linguists and carvers have in-depth knowledge and more conversant with linguist staff symbols, and therefore the researchers relied on purposive sampling method to select convenient sample size from the population for the study. This helped the researchers to select appropriate linguist staff symbols for the study. Sixteen (16) Asante linguist staff symbols were selected for the study. Information was sourced from five (5) traditional woodcarvers, five (5) linguists, twenty (20) textile students from Takoradi Polytechnic, and twenty (20) natives of Kumasi. A total of sixty-six (66) sample size was used.

2.3. Data Collection

Interview and observation were the data collecting instruments used in this research in line with the qualitative design. These instruments were used to collect data concerning the history, philosophy and artistic inclination of Asante linguist staff symbols to serve as the basis for the generation of the textile designs. The verbal data gathered through interviews showed clearly what linguists in their own words said about their experience with the handling of Asante linguist staff symbols. For example, experience of being a linguist or a spokesman for a chief. Careful examination of various linguist staff symbols with respect to artistic nature and meanings were carried out through observation. Different linguist staffs were observed by the researchers both at carving centres and chief's palaces and still photographs taken with permission. The researchers got access to physically examine some of the linguist staffs, which helped in analytical observation and appreciation of the artistic values of the symbols. Data obtained both primary and secondary were analysed and presented in the form of images with description. The images of the linguist staff symbols were transformed into motifs for the designs using Adobe Photoshop as design tool, while the descriptions of the symbols and their meanings were presented in figures.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Aesthetic and Philosophical Significance of Selected Asante Linguist Staff Symbols

Empirical evidence revealed that, there are many linguist staffs and each is carved with distinctive figures or symbols pertaining to a particular clan or chief. The figures are those of human figures symbolically carved undertaking some activity, while others are in the form of animals to represent a proverb, a social event, or to give an advice. Interviews with the custodians of the linguist staff symbols revealed that several proverbs are known and used by the Asante people since time immemorial and most of these can be seen represented on top of each linguist staff. Again, the meanings of the symbols are very important aspect of the Asante culture because improper usage of these symbols in the presence of elders means disrespect. Their historical and cultural importance to traditional rule enables them send silent proverbial and philosophical messages because of the respect they have commanded till today (Personal Communication, March 2012). The meanings to the symbols can be read from finials crafted by experienced traditional carvers, in the form of animals, human figures and a combination of both. Some images collected attest to this (Fig. 1 to 16). Source: Beckwith & Fisher



Figure 1: 'Osansa kɔ abu a ɔde n'akyi gya Akroma'

- Depiction: A bird standing over another which is sitting on its eggs. The message carried by this symbol talks about inheritance.
- Proverbial or literal translation: 'When the Kite is away, the Hawk takes responsibility'.
- Philosophical meaning: When a chief or anyone takes leave, his kinsman becomes heir, or a vacant stool can only be occupied by a next of kin.

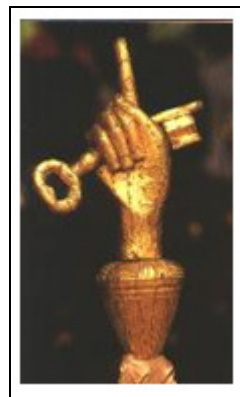


Figure 2: 'Ahennie te se safoa, woanso mu yiye a efiri wo nsa'

- Depiction: A human hand holding a key with the fore finger pointed upwards. This symbol is in connected with chieftaincy, and conveys a message to those elected into authority.
- Proverbial or literal translation: 'Being in authority can be likened to a key in one's hand which if not held properly can lead to lost position.
- Philosophical meaning: Whiles in authority one has to be cautious.



Figure 3: 'Wo foro duapa a na ye pea wo'

- Depiction: A man giving a bush to another who is climbing a tree.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: The one who climbs a good tree gets support.
- Philosophical meaning: Support or help is given to the one who works for a good course.



Figure 4: 'Ono na wiase safoa kura no'

- Depiction: A crowing cock.
- Proverbial or Literal meaning: It holds the key to the world.
- Philosophical meaning: The crow of the cock opens up a new day.



Figure 5: 'Ti koro nkɔ agyina'

- Depiction: Four clustered human heads on a pedestal.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: One head does not make a council.
- Philosophical meaning: Three heads are better than one. It warns against dictatorship rule.



Figure 6: 'Apeɛ ye kɛse a ɔye ma dufɔkyee'

- Depiction: A hedgehog standing beside a piece of log.
- Proverbial meaning: When the porcupine grows fat it ends up in dead log.
- Philosophical meaning: It is wise to care for one's family in order to reap good fortunes in future. It calls for people to be responsible.



Figure 7: 'Nea adeɛ wɔ no na odie, enye nea ɔkom de no'

- Depiction: This symbol depicts two men seated at a table with one typically reaching for food, while the other looks on.
- Proverbial or literal translation 'Food is for the one who owns it and not for the one who is hungry.
- Philosophical meaning: The symbol is designed to discourage illegitimate people from desiring to become chiefs, thereby averting the numerous chieftaincy disputes.

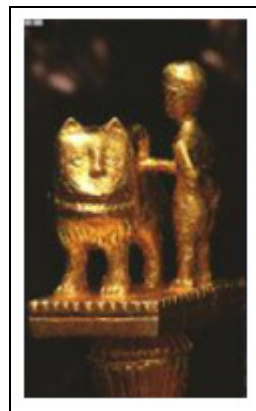


Figure 8: 'Kwabea nnim gyata'

- Depiction: A child touching a lion.
- Proverbial or literal translation: 'A child does not know the lion'.
- Philosophical: It means that to be ignorant is dangerous. This suggests that naivety is dangerous, therefore, to be knowledgeable about a subject enhances one's horizon, or one has to be always enlightened.



Figure 9: 'Kontonkrowi eda amansan kɔn mu'

- Depiction: Three men with a ring around their necks.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: Death is like ring that encircles everyone
- Philosophical meaning: Death is inevitable.



Figure 10: 'Obaako were aduro a egu'

- Depiction: A man scraping tree bark with a knife and supports the receptacle with one leg.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: If one man alone scrapes tree bark, it falls.
- Philosophical meaning: Cooperation leads to success.



Figure 11: 'Osono akyi aboa biara nni ho'

- Depiction: The symbol shows an elephant.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: In the animal kingdom the elephant is the greatest.
- Philosophical meaning: The Asantehene is the greatest in the Asante kingdom.

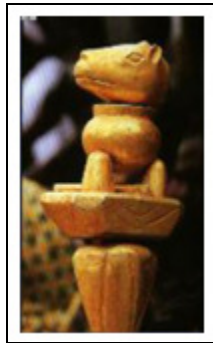


Figure 12: 'Aboa no ti nyera nkwan mu'

- Depiction: A big head of an animal placed on top of earthenware or pot on cooking fire.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: The animal's head is never lost in a soup.
- Philosophical meaning: No important personality is ever overlooked in a society.

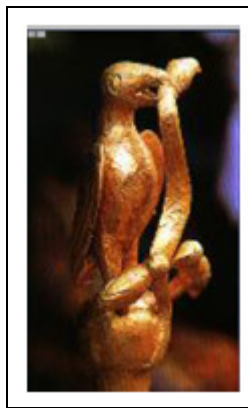


Figure 13: 'Wo so ɔwɔ ti a nea aka no ye ahoma'

- Depiction: A bird that has caught a snake by the head.
- Proverbial or literal meaning: When caught by the head, the rest of the snake is nothing but rope.
- Philosophical meaning: Ultimate power rests in the chief.



Figure 14: 'Prekese nyaa na du'

- Depiction: The symbol shows a matured pineapple with three young suckers.
- Proverbial or literal translation: The peculiar scent and flavour of 'Prekese' or Galbanum plant (*Tetrapleura tetraplera*) is likened to that of the pineapple.
- Philosophical meaning: Shows how influential some people are in the society.



Figure 15: 'Adwene ho ye den sen koraa a onto Aponkyerene'

- Depiction: The symbol shows a mud fish lying beside a frog.
- Proverbial or literal translation: The strength of the mud fish cannot match that of the frog. This is because while the mud fish only survive in water; the frog can survive both in water and on land due to its amphibious nature.



Figure 16: 'W'ani anhu a w'aso ante'

- Depiction: The symbol has three figures seated beside each other in a roll. With the hands, the first has covered his eyes; the second has covered both ears, while the third has his mouth covered.
- Proverbial or literal translation: Hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil.
- Philosophical meaning: It is not anything that is worth commenting on.

3.2. Suitability of the Asante Linguist Staff Symbols for Textile Design

Physical and visual assessment of the Asante linguist staff symbols revealed that, they are carved in different shapes and forms to bring about variety. Furthermore, textures deliberately carved on the symbols have interesting effects on the final designs. For easy identification of the symbols, the images of the symbols are not distorted. This enables the symbols to be easily seen in the designs which serve as an educational tool to help people to learn from our traditional philosophies. With concerted efforts, critical thinking and creative manipulative skills, the symbols were transformed into highly aesthetic textile designs viable for commercial purpose. The results of the designs are presented in Figures 17 to 34.

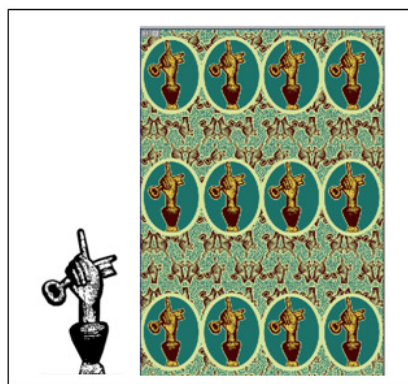


Figure 17: Ahennie te se safoa

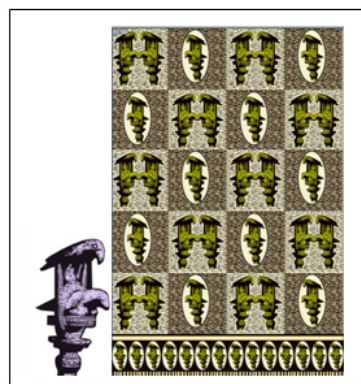


Figure 18: Osansa ko abu a dede n'akyi gya akromma

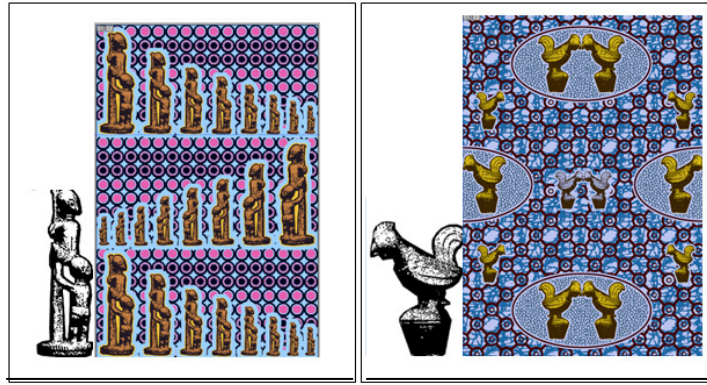


Figure 19: *Wo foro duapa a na ye pea wo* Figure 20: *Ono na wiase safoa kura no*

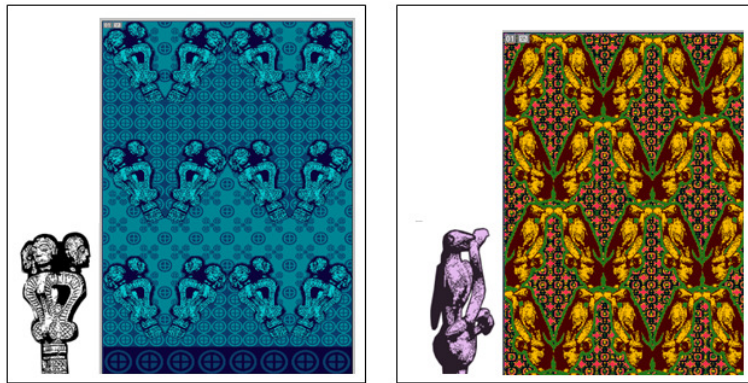


Figure 21: *Ti koro nko agyina* Figure 22: *Wo so owo ti a nea aka ye dhoma*

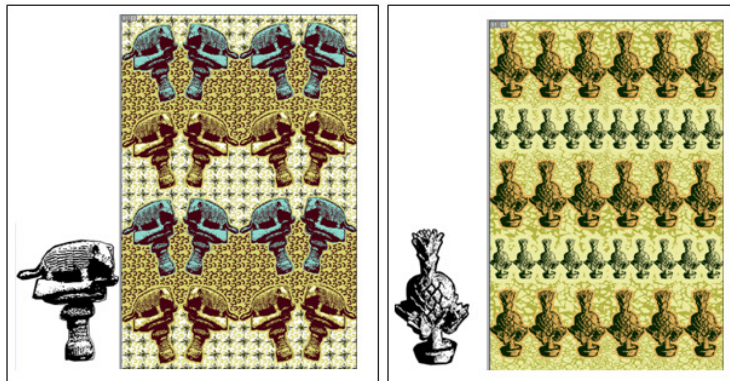


Figure 23: *Apese ye kese a oye ma dufokyeε* Figure 24: *Prekese nyaa nadu*

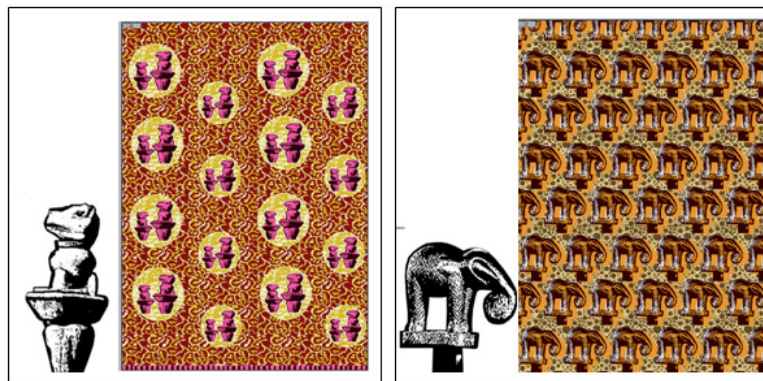


Figure 25: *Aboa no ti nyera nkwan mu* Figure 26: *Osono akyi aboa biara nni ho*



Figure 27: Kontonkrowi da amansan kɔn mu Figure 28: 'Nea adeɛ wɔ no na odie

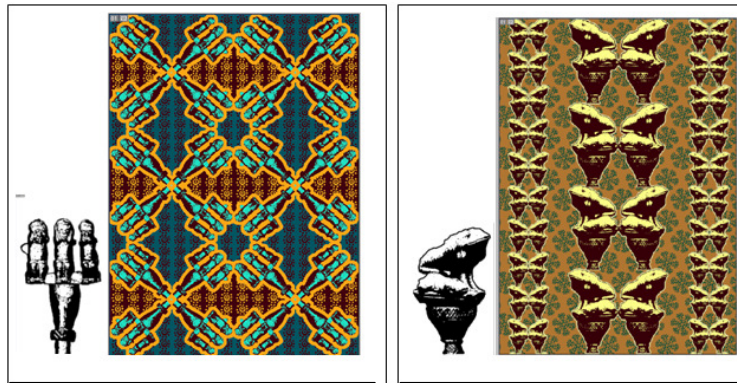


Figure 29: W'ani anhu na w'aso ante Figure 30: Adwene ho ye den sɛn a ento aponkyerene

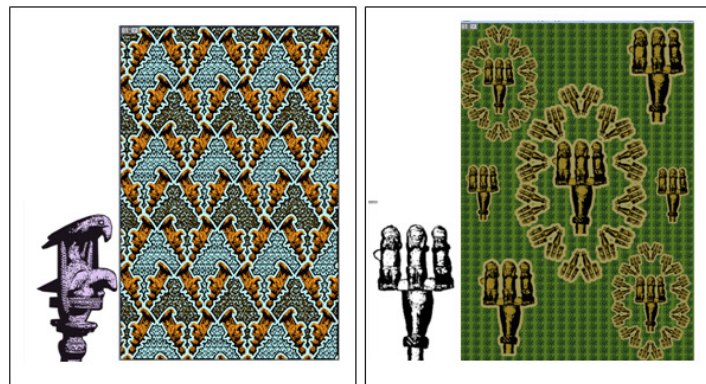


Figure 31: Osansa kɔ abu a ɔde n'akyi gya akroma Figure 32: W'ani anhu na w'aso ante

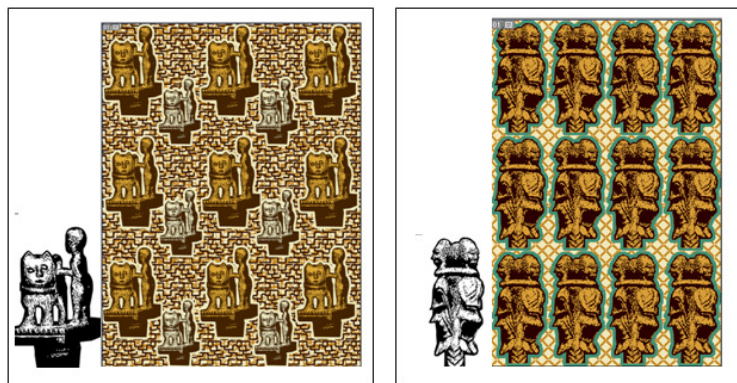


Figure 33: Kwabea nnim gyata Figure 34: Kontonkrowi da amansan kɔn mu

3.3. Socio-Cultural and Artistic Significance of the Designs

The design in Figure 17 is named after the linguist staff symbol coined from the proverb; 'Ahennie te se safoa, se w'anso mu yiye efiri wo nsa' which literally means, Power is like a key, it will slip through the fingers if not held properly. Philosophically, it is a caution to chiefs and those in authority to desist from acts that can make them loose their authority. Socially, it is a call which suggests that no condition is permanent, so everyone should be upright.

The motifs are arranged horizontally within blue circular shapes. The textures are made up of reduced sizes of the motif or symbol. Three of the symbols are used in a unit repeat for the textures. One of the motifs was flipped to have a mirror image of the other, while the base of the third is made to meet the other two. This arrangement is alternated with two hands up and one down for the first repeat, while the next has one hand up and two hands down in a horizontal repeat, with a background of patchy blue effect.

This design can be suitable for those in authority or anyone in some position like chiefs, heads of clan etc., to remind them of what can befall them should they abuse their position.

Figure 18 has the design titled, 'Osansa ko abu a ode n'akyi gya akroma', meaning in the king's absence the throne is always guarded by his next of kin. Socially, the design talks about inheritance, which indicates heirs to thrones. This is a system that brings about peace in traditional rule, and to discourage other people from vying for positions they do not have the right to contest for. The design arrangement is in counter change layout with border design. It shows veins and effect of real wax prints. It has green, dark brown and black which signify vitality, fertility, prosperity, fruitfulness, abundant health and spiritual rejuvenation. This suggests that a younger kinsman is always required to replace the king or chief. The design can be used as mammy cloth, royal cloth and dress material for young people.

The design in Figure 19 is titled 'Wo foro duapa a na yepa wo'. The symbol depicts someone getting a push for climbing a tree. Literally, it states that the one who climbs a good tree gets support. In other words, it suggests getting assistance for undertaking a profitable venture. Philosophically, the proverb indicates that one who works for a good cause gets support or help. Socially, the design calls for collaborative support for initiatives like community projects, clean up exercises etc., and also those who have the means to make contributions or give assistance to those who are vulnerable in the society.

The motif was arranged in ascending and descending order and alternatively. By reducing the sizes of each successive motif in linear arrangement, a diminishing effect was created. The different motif sizes suggest that support knows no boundaries and as such anyone can be offered help provided the venture is profitable, be it a man or woman, young or old. Textures were made from dots and circles and arranged in rolls in the background of the design. Colours used are ultramarine, pink and black for the dots and circles which stand for perfect ventures. The brown and black were used for the figures in symbols. The blue stands for good fortune and harmony. The design can be useful as curtains, men and women's cloth.

Figure 20 has the design titled 'Ono na wiase safoa kura no'. This is translated that cock's crowing at dawn alerts every one of the dawn of a new day, and therefore holds the keys to a new day. The cock's duty of providing accurate information makes it very reliable. The symbol also stands for loyalty when one looks at it from another translation which says that, no one buys a cock to let it crow in another man's town. The design depicts two cocks facing each other signifying unity and togetherness. The design has a diagonal arrangement of motifs, with connected circles as texture and a wax effect. Colours in the design are black, light blue and yellow. The design can be suitable for shirting, men and women's cloth.

'Ti koro nko agyina' is the title of the design shown in Figure 21. Literally, the proverb suggests that one head does not constitute a council. Philosophically, as stated by Akrofi (1962), discussion by many is more fruitful than the ideas of one man. Considering its social significance, the symbol suggests teamwork or collaboration when taking decisions for the family, town or nation as a whole. One-man decision or dictatorship should therefore be discouraged.

The symbols are arranged in horizontal order with each one facing another in a diagonal manner and portray a border design at the selvedge. The design depicts shades of blue; ultramarine, sea blue and deep blue colours. The textures are made up of circles. The colours used coupled with the pattern arrangement make the design suitable for use as curtain, funeral cloth and for church and everyday wear.

The design in Figure 22 is titled 'Wo so owo ti a nea aka no ye ahoma'. It depicts a bird that has captured the head of a snake to render it powerless. Literally, it means that, the snake is a mere rope when the head is seized. The philosophical meaning of this is that power rests in the chief or king in traditional rule. Socially, the proverb suggests that all leaders are mere humans; it is the power they hold, that makes them different and powerful.

The design depicts a diamond base pattern layout of the main motifs and having a chain of spiked small geometric shapes as textures. The colours used are brown, golden yellow and green for the motif, and dark green and violet for the background. The design may be suitable for women's or men's cloth and may find application in curtains.

Figure 23 showcases the design titled 'Ape se ye kese a oye ma dufokye'. When the hedgehog grows fat, it eventually ends up in the dead log, is the translation of the proverb. The proverb suggests that whatever social status a woman attains, she will end up eventually becoming somebody's wife. It is an advice for women to learn to be submissive. The design has two motifs arranged to face each other and the pair used as the main motif have been arranged in full-drop pattern. The textures are from curved and straight lines arranged alternately between the motifs across the design. Colours used are light and dark brown, and blue. It can be useful as women's cloth, shirting, curtain and dress wear.

Design in Figure 24 is titled 'Prekese nyaa na du'. Literally, pineapple is likened to 'Prekese'. Both are plants whose fruits are edible and have strong flavour. When one eats any of the fruits, the aroma of the fruit remains on the person till he washes his mouth or body. One cannot hide the scent or aroma of any of these fruits immediately after eating it. Anything that behaves like 'Prekese' is

said to be 'Prəkese nyaa nadu' or in other words likened to 'Prəkese', or said to be influential. The phrase is an appellation for the plant known as 'Prəkese'.

'Prəkese' is the Akan language name for a plant called Galbanum(Tetrapleura tetraplera). The fruit is low in sodium, rich in potassium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamin C. The dried fruit which is available in Ghana is used in cooking. Dried 'Prəkese' fruit has many uses. It can be used to cure several ailments, and also used as flavour for stews and soups. When eaten in soups, it is capable of ridding the body of several diseases. Pineapple, like 'Prəkese' is a fruit that has got strong scent just like and therefore has been likened to it. It is said that pineapple has its unique flavour or scent just like 'Prəkese' which cannot be suppressed and so wherever pineapple is eaten its scent can be felt. The proverb therefore describes influential people who contribute substantially to society's progress.

In the design the motif was resized to obtain two different sizes. Each motif size was separately and alternately arranged horizontally in the design. Wax effect was used as textures with cool and dull colours of green and brown to harmonise. The design can be suitable for table cover, curtain and dress material due to its linear pattern layout that makes it fit for a wider application.

Design in Figure 25 is titled 'Aboa ti nyera nkwan mu'. The head of an animal is always conspicuously seen in the soup. It suggests that the elderly or prominent persons are given the necessary recognition and attention in a gathering or in decision making. The head of the animal looks prominent in the symbol because the head is the store house of wisdom. Philosophically, the design calls on all and sundry to give regards to wisdom.

The design has two different sizes of motifs, small and big, arranged in half drop pattern layout with border design at the selvedge. Wax effect textures were used within the circles, while the main background textures were made from twigs. Colours used are brown, yellow and violet. Violet colour is associated with the female essence of life. It is viewed as mild and gentle, and therefore associated with tenderness, calmness, pleasantness, and sweetness.

In Asante social thought, these attributes are generally considered as essential aspects of the female essence. The yellow stands for royalty. This colour way can therefore be suitable for lady's evening wear, men's shirting and women's costumes. This design can be used, ideally, by heads of clan, family heads and those who play leadership role in the society due to its association with wisdom.

The design labelled Figure 26 is titled 'Ɔsono akyi aboa biara nni hɔ', which literally means there is no animal bigger than the elephant. The elephant in this context is seen as a monumental animal whose structure is not surpassed by any animal. The Asantehene in this case is the monumental figure among the Asantes and therefore should be accorded the necessary respect. Socially every elderly person deserves respect. The colours used for the designs from shades of brown and textures create a patchy bubble effect. The colours stand for royalty. Motif arrangement is in horizontal order. The design can be useful, first and foremost, to high ranked royal personalities like the Asantehene or the paramount chiefs due to their position.

The design in Figure 27 is titled 'Kontokrowi da amansan kɔn mu' (the ultimate goal). The symbol suggests that, whether rich or poor, young or old, king or subject, each one of us is bound to die one day. It suggests that all men shall be judged by the same natural laws. The motifs run diagonally on green textured stripes in the design. A unit repeat of two boxes with arrangements of circles and lines are filled in the background as textures of the design. The motifs and textures are in gold and black, to recommend the design as a funeral cloth. It can also be used as mammy cloth and for curtains because of the border design.

The design labelled Figure 28 is titled 'Odiadeni'. It is another design from the symbol, 'Nea adee wo no na odie'. The yellow ochre background and the green textures harmonise to give a serene appeal. It can be used by those in the royal family during traditional gatherings and also as mammy cloth and shirting material.

The design in Figure 29 is another design from the linguist staff symbol titled 'W'ani anhu na w'aso ante'. The motif from the symbol has been arranged in such a way that two of the motifs in a slanting or diagonal pattern are flipped to obtain four in a unit repeat which are arranged horizontally to create a diamond base layout. This is a fancy design with gold, light blue and dark brown colours. The design can be used by men, women, and youth alike for all occasions. The gold colour shows the rich culture of the people and the blues and browns suggest how calm Asante people can be by being patient on all issues and not rush to make comments.

Figure 30 has the design titled 'Adwene ho ye den sen koraa ento aponkyerene', which literally translates as 'whatever the strength of the mud fish, it cannot surpass that of the frog'. This means that the frog has better survival strength than the mud fish because of its amphibious nature. Both large and small sizes of motifs were arranged vertically, with the smaller motifs. Socially, it suggests how powerful the chief is in society due to his position. Colours used are dark brown and gold for the motifs, light brown for the background, and green for the textures, that gives it a royal appeal. The design can be suitable for men's and women's cloth and for curtains because of the linear arrangement of the motifs.

The design shown in Figure 31 is also titled 'Ɔsansa kɔ abu a ɔde n'akyi gya akroma'. It is another design made from the staff symbol having the same name. The motif was slanted at an angle and transformed by flipping horizontally to create the main motif for the design. This motif was arranged horizontally across the working area. Textures were made from reduced sizes of circles and lines. The design can be suitable for chiefs and those in the royal family as well as women's and men's wear. The light brown colour in the motifs makes the design rich and suitable as royal cloth.

'W'ani anhu a w'aso ante' is the title of the design in Figure 32. The symbol is a reminder for people to be weary of issues that they comment on. Socially, it reminds people to refrain from making comments on issues that do not concern them. Philosophically, it suggests that, the elder does not take action on information indirectly received. The blue, brown, golden yellow and black colours make the design look calm which therefore suggest to the user to be calm and avoid intrusion. It can be used as men's and women's wear but can also be suitable for the elderly in society.

The design in Figure 33 is titled 'Kwabia nnim gyata' and the literal translation suggests that the child does not know how dangerous the lion is. Philosophically, it translates to mean that naivety is dangerous. It means that ignorance of the child makes him play with the lion which is a dangerous animal. Socially, it gives credence to knowledge and how important it is for one to get enlightened. The motifs are arranged diagonally and textured with lines of jigsaw pattern to suggest that life is not a straight route; there are a lot that one has to learn to get to the top. Colours used are golden brown and dark brown for the motifs which are linked with chieftaincy. The design can be suitable for men's cloth and women's wear.

'Kontonkrowi eda amansan kɔn mu' which means death is inevitable, is the title for the design in Figure 34. The symbol shows a ring stuck around the necks of three human figures. The social significance of the symbol is to remind everyone in society about death which is inevitable.

Lattice line arrangements were used as textures. Colours used are black, light brown and dark brown signifying sadness. The design can be useful for funerals and other solemn moments because of the symbolism attached to it.

These designs generated from the linguist staff symbols can go a long way to educate the public on traditional philosophies that are not understood by many. This can even trigger a move to make people eager to learn about symbols from other traditional areas of Ghana.

4. Conclusion

The study revealed that, Asante linguist staff finials provide a collection of motifs, each with its own unique form that can broaden aesthetic values of textile designs. It also came to light that the linguist staff symbols have unique surface textures engraved on them which provide special texturing effects for textile design. Textile designers can turn attention to the use less popular traditional symbols in creating designs and give them names that reflect the symbols to educate the society to know and understand the philosophical, proverbial, informative and historical significance of these symbols which are found in all traditional cultural environments. Aside expanding and promoting the knowledge on Asante traditional symbolism for better application, the study concludes that linguist staff finials provide an array of motifs for designing textiles which can be exploited by textile designers. It is recommended therefore that designers expose these cultural artifacts through creation of commercial viable textile designs for promotion and appreciation of the symbols and for socio-cultural and artistic development of Ghana.

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