

THE ROLE OF PERFORMING ARTS IN ASANTE CULTURE

BY

KNUST
NANA AMA POKUAA ARTHUR

B.A ART (HONS)

A Dissertation submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University
of Science and Technology, Kumasi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(African Art and Culture)

Faculty of Art, College of Art and Social Sciences

© 2009, Department of General Art Studies

June, 2009

THE ROLE OF PERFORMING ARTS IN ASANTE CULTURE

KNUST



BY

ARTHUR NANA AMA POKUAA

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology,

Kumasi - Ghana

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy in African Art and Culture and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains neither material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

NANA AMA POKUAA ARTHUR (20034875)

(Student Name & ID)

Signature

Date

Certified by:

DR. O. OSEI AGYEMAN

(Supervisor)

Signature

Date

Certified by:

DR. JOE ADU-AGYEM

(Head of Department)

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving husband Mr. Frederick Arthur and my parents: Mr. and Mrs. Osei -Boakye.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My special thanks go to God Almighty who gave me life, strength, knowledge and wisdom for the successful completion of this thesis. Secondly, this study has been supported in diverse ways over a long period of time by mentors, colleagues, lecturers, my family and friends. I therefore express my sincere gratitude to my principal supervisor, Dr. O. Osei Agyeman whose objective criticisms and good directions has made the study a compendium.

I am also indebted to my second supervisor, Dr. B. K. Dogbe for his unflinching assistance. I am also grateful to Dr. Mireku and Miss Winnifred Amo all of the Department of Music, University of Education, Winneba for their encouragement, assistance, interest, commitment and dedication to this work.

In addition, I am obliged to acknowledge with thanks to Ms Bertha Adom, former librarian at the International Centre for African Music and Dance; Solomon Ampadu Frimpong – Library Assistant, Institute of African Studies Library all of University of Ghana, Legon for providing pertinent literature for the writing of the study.

I am further grateful to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, (The King of Asante) for accommodating me at the *Manhyia* Palace for the collection of some data. I am also indebted to, Nana Asumanin (*Adum Ankobeahene*), Nana Abrafi (The Queen mother of Atomsu) and Nana Anarfi (The Spokesman of Asafo King), I highly appreciate their effort, generosity, assistance offered to me in diverse ways in making this thesis a success.

My thanks also go to Nana Amankwah, a staff of Manhyia Palace who introduced me to the chiefs, sub-chiefs and elders who are custodians of the various arts in Asante culture. Mr Yaw Saahene (Secretary to Nana Afia Kobi Serwaa Ampem – Queen mother of Asante) led me to some important personalities in the *Asantehene's* palace; Mr Osei Kwadwo, (a historian and a curator at Manhyia Palace Museum) offered valuable insight into Asante culture and also provided some books which were of tremendous help to the study. Heartfelt thanks also go to Nana Gyinaye (shrine priestess of Yaw Nkrumah village) and Nana Kwaku Amoako (shrine priest of Yaw Nkrumah village), Nana Akua Afra (shrine priestess of Onwe), elders and all the shrine priest and priestess of the various towns and villages visited during the research period. I also appreciate all those who helped in one way or the other in answering my questionnaire.

My sincere thanks also go to my family particularly my lovely husband for his love, understanding and financial support, my son who suffered a great deal through travelling, that is, being transported to the various research fields all the time; my parents especially my father for doing most of the typesetting and all my entire family members for their love, and advice which contributed to the success of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENT

	Page
DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF PLATES	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
ABSTRACT.....	xiii

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study.....	1
1.1 Statement of purpose	2
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	2
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.4 Reasons for Writing	3
1.5 Research Questions.....	3
1.6 Importance of the Study.....	4
1.7 Assumption	4
1.8 Limitation.....	4
1.9 Delimitations.....	5
1.10 Organization of Thesis.....	5
1.11 Methodology	6
1.12 Facilities Available	6
1.13 Ethnographic Account	6
1.14 Definition of Terms	11
1.15 Abbreviations.....	18

CHAPTER TWO	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
2.0 Rationale for writing	21
2.1 Music in the life of the African.....	22
2.2 Dance in the life of Africans.....	23
2.3 Drama in African traditional Culture.....	25
2.4 The involvement of music, dance, drama, and drumming in Asante's Political system	27
2.5 The significance of drumming in the Political System of the Asante	31
2.6 Music, dance, drama and drumming in the Social System of the Asante.....	34
2.7 Performing Arts and the Economic System of the Asante	37
2.8 Performing Arts and Asante Traditional Religion.....	39
2.9 Performing Arts and the belief of the People of Asante	42
2.10 Summary of Discussion.....	43

CHAPTER THREE	
METHODOLOGY	
3.0 Overview.....	46
3.1 Research Design	46
3.2 Library Research.....	47
3.3 Population for the Study and Sampling	47
3.4 Survey Instruments	51
3.5 Questionnaire Design and Validation	51
3.6 Questionnaire Administration.....	52
3.7 Interviews Conducted	52
3.8 Observation.....	53
3.9 Data Analysis Plan.....	54
3.10 Summary of Discussion.....	55

CHAPTER FOUR	
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS	
4.0 Overview.....	56
4.1 Performing Arts and the political system	56
4.1.1 Performing Arts and the tripartite responsibilities of the Kings in Asante.....	65
4.1.2 Performing Arts and the death of a king.....	76
4.1.3 The Drum Orchestra	84
4.1.4 Other Performing Arts of Interest.....	92
4.2 The Social System and the Performing Arts.....	94
4.2.1 Birth	94
4.2.2 Puberty rite for girls.....	98
4.2.3 Puberty rites for boys.....	101
4.2.4 Marriage rites and Performing Arts	101
4.2.5 Death rites and Performing Arts	103
4.2.6 Festivals	112
4.2.7 Recreational activities and Performing Arts	116
4.3 Performing Arts and Economic aspect of Asante Culture.....	123
4.4 Religion and Performing Arts.....	127
4.5 Medical System and Performing Arts.....	131
4.6 Belief and Performing Arts.....	138
4.7 Summary of Discussion.....	140
CHAPTER FIVE	
DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS	
5.0 Overview.....	144
5.1 The role of Performing Arts in the Political System of the Asante	144
5.2 The role of Performing Arts in the Social System of the Asante	150
5.3 The role of Performing Arts in the Economic system of the Asante	156
5.4 The role of Performing Arts in Religion, Medical and the Belief of the people .	158
5.5 The importance of Performing Arts in Asante Culture.....	161
5.6 The significance attached to the Performing Arts performed within the cultural components	176

5.6.1 The significance of music in the political systems	176
5.6.2 The significance of dance in the cultural systems	178
5.6.3 The significance of dramatic rites performed within the cultural Systems	183
5.7 Modification that has taken place in the Performing Arts of the Asante.....	188
5.8 Summary of Discussion	199

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Summary	202
6.1 Literature review compared with field research	206
6.2 Conclusions.....	210
6.3 Research findings – A contribution to knowledge.....	211
6.4 Recommendations.....	213
REFERENCES	218
GLOSSARY	222
APPENDIXES	229

LIST OF PLATES

Plate	Page
Plate 1: Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II swearing the great oath	60
Plate 2: <i>Mamponghene</i> swearing to Otumfoɔ on his enstoolment night	64
Plate 3: Horn blowers performing at <i>adeekese</i> durbar at Manhyia palace	65
Plate 4: <i>Fontomfrom</i> drums being played.....	67
Plate 5: Shield bearers tossing and spinning the shield to the tune of drums	68
Plate 6: <i>Sumankwahene</i> and the other spiritual physicians dancing	70
Plate 7: Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II guarding the golden stool.....	71
Plate 8: Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II dancing to <i>fontomfrom</i> drums	73
Plate 9: The firing of musketry by the king Osei Tutu II and chiefs	82
Plate 10: Otumfoɔ's <i>kete</i> ensemble drumming at a royal funeral at Manhyia	85
Plate 11: A royal dancing to the tune of <i>fontonfrom</i> at an <i>Adεεkesee</i> festival	86
Plate 12: Otumfoɔ's <i>mpintin</i> orchestra leading a procession from sankroasi	88
Plate 13: Otumfoɔ 's <i>sikyi</i> orchestra displaying at a royal funeral at <i>Manhyia</i>	89
Plate 14: <i>Nkrawiri</i> and mpebi drummers on their way to <i>Akwasidεε</i> durbar.....	91
Plate 15: A baby being giving water at a naming ceremony at Atwima Apampatia.	95
Plate 16: <i>Nwonkro</i> group performing at a funeral	110
Plate 17: <i>Kete</i> ensemble being played	110
Plate 18: Onlooker drumming to the drum tune	116
Plate 19: Priest performing at <i>Akwasidae</i> at Manhyia palace.....	116
Plate 20: A witch priest believed to be possessed by a snake deity.....	136
Plate 21: A witch priest possessed by a fire deity.....	137
Plate 22: A King dancing to the tune of <i>fontomfrom</i>	229
Plate 23: Otumfoɔ in batakari kesee dancing with sword and gun.....	229
Plate 24: Nana Akua Afra 3 rd from right in a dramatic procession	230
Plate 25: A priestess displaying her deities' powers by standing and sitting without the stool falling off her buttocks	230
Plate 26: A priest presenting his conjured parcel to Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II.....	231
Plate 27: Devotees pounding on the back of their priest	231

Plate 28: The king and his stool wives dancing to the tune of <i>fɔntɔmfrom</i>	232
Plate 29: Otumfoo's Grandchildren singing during procession	232
Plate 30: Priestess perfomig <i>ntwimuu</i> (stretching) dance	233
Plate 31: Priest performing <i>ahuriahurie</i> (jumping) dance	233
Plate 32: A priest perfomig <i>akotoakoto</i> (squarting) dance	234



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
3.1 Categorisation of population and number.....	49
3.2 Schematic overview of stratified random sampling	50
3.3 Percentage of sample	51
3.4 Number of Questionnaire returned from respondents	52



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The map of Ashanti.....	19
2. The map of Ghana.....	19
3. The map of Asante in the 19th century.....	20
4. The map of Kumasi.....	20



ABSTRACT

The study which is based on a qualitative research approach touched on the Asante Performing Arts and its role, importance, and meaning in the people's culture. The study aimed at educating readers on the "real McCoy" of one of Asante's most significant cultural arts since Asante youth appears to pick on incomplete knowledge from unreliable sources, such as the tradition of oral resources resulting in the modification of Asante Performing Arts. Again, due to the influx of foreign religious bodies and technological advances, the Performing Arts seem to be gradually losing their indigenous roles and significances. Due to the dissimilarities of elements or individuals in the population, the stratified random sampling was adopted and the population was divided into various strata. 30% of each group was taken meaning each stratum was represented in the total data sample. Observation, interview and questionnaire were the main data collection instruments. Results showed that, the various Performing Arts form a preparatory experience of the curative process at the various shrines and permeates the life of every Asante from life to death. The indigenous songs performed at marriage and funerals rites have been replaced by gospel and secular songs, and dances performed during these rites have also been merged with the foreign ones. In sum, music and dance syllabus for primary and junior high schools should be reviewed again with special attention given to the traditional music and dance starting from the child's immediate local culture.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Performing Arts play a predominant role in the culture of the Asantes. Although all the various forms of art are actively seen in their culture, it is the Performing Arts that really make the culture very significant and vibrant, in that, it is through these arts that the spirits of the deities are believed to be drawn to their respective mediums. Throughout the study and reflecting the well-known agreement, Performing Art is defined as the various forms of art that are executed for entertainment, correction and for the pleasure of the onlooker.

Performing Arts play a significant role in Asante culture and permeate every aspect of the cultural life of Asantes. Performing Arts, in this sense, grant people the opportunity to share their ingenious dexterity and also use them as an avenue for the expression of one's sentiments in Asante. In view of this, they have attracted literary attention, but not all the arts performed are documented in our books, journals, papers, etc. This is due to the fact that, they are perpetuated by oral tradition causing the new generation to take up whatever modification it finds convenient in performing the arts. No doubt, it has repercussions on the mode of performance of these arts, thus causing it to experience some changes.

The spotlight of the study is placed on the Performing Arts identified within Asante in relation to their culture. In this respect, the researcher investigates the role, importance and significance of Performing Arts in the cultural components of Asante, namely:

political, social, economic, religious, medical and belief systems of the people. Invariably, every activity performed within the cultural components involves a great deal of music, dance, drama and drumming among others.

This chapter examines the statement of purpose and statement of the problem, outlines the objectives of the study, states the reasons for writing, spells out the research questions and the assumption, the delimitation and limitations, gives an ethnographical account of the Asante, and the organization of the thesis.

1.1 Statement of Purpose

This thesis is to draw the attention of scholars, students, art historians, tourists, sociologist, ethnographers, anthropologists and anyone who is interested in culture about the role, importance, and significance of Performing Arts in Asante culture. Moreover, the thesis shall lay bare some modifications of the Performing Arts in the culture.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Asantes are believed to be people with a very rich culture. The arts of the people are actively displayed in their various activities. The Performing Arts which entail intensely the objective and subjective aspects of drumming, dancing, singing, as well as other dramatic orientation are seen manifesting themselves in the people's culture. The Performing Arts to the present researcher do not only serve as an entertaining tool but play a motivational, communicative and a healing role which is significant in the people's culture. More so, it appears that researchers have not paid special attention to the significance, roles and the importance of the arts in the culture. Again, due to the influx of foreign religious bodies and technological advances, the Performing Arts have been

inadvertently modified and gradually losing their indigenous roles and significances in the people's culture. As the days go by, each generation takes up whatever modification it finds convenient to perform the arts, thereby changing the style and performance, and somehow ignoring the actual indigenous roles of the arts. This, in the view of the present researcher, does not help the people to be conversant with the indigenous roles, importance and significance of these arts in the Asante culture. It is in this view that the present researcher undertakes the research in order to unearth the roles and values of the arts and to find out whether the Performing Arts have really been modified.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To study Asante culture, with the view to discussing and highlighting the role, importance and significance of Performing Arts in the Asante Kingdom.
2. To bring to light the areas in the cultural components that have been modified.

1.4 Reasons for writing

Since there is not enough literature about the indigenous role, importance and the meaning of Performing Arts in the Asante culture, the current researcher has investigated and written to fill the academic vacuum created by insufficient information on the indigenous role of Asante Performing Arts in Asante Culture and also bring to light those arts that have been modified and finally create the awareness that Performing Arts play a major role, and is quite significant in Asante culture.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Do the Asante involve Performing Arts in their cultural systems?
2. What roles do the Performing Arts play in Asante Culture?

3. Of what importance are the Performing Arts to the culture of the people of Asante?
4. What are the significance of the Performing Arts in the Asante culture?
5. Has there really been modification in the Performing Arts of Asante?

1.6 Importance of the study

This thesis will enlighten Ghanaians and for that matter tourists about the rich Performing Arts of Asante. The thesis may in this respect attract more foreigners and tourists to study Asante's culture. As a result of that, the study will bring into focus cross-cultural ramifications which will have positive impact on the development of Ghana.

The thesis again would be an inspirational guide to the Cultural Centers and the Ghana Tourist Board. It will furthermore, fuel other research and serve as a reference material to other researchers, anthropologists, art historians, ethnographers, Performing Arts students, etc.

1.7 Assumption

It is assumed that this thesis has brought into wide focus and awareness the role, importance, and significance of the Performing Arts in Asante culture.

1.8 Limitations

Pictures of some Performing Arts displayed within Asante Culture were culled from video clips which obviously made the pictures blurred.

1.9 Delimitation

The study is restricted to the Asante Region and the cultural components of Asante will be discussed. It will in this respect, examine the role, importance and significance of music, dance, drama and drumming within the various segments of the culture of the people of Asante, from the inception of Asante Kingdom to the present.

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

The central idea of this thesis is that, Performing Arts play an indispensable role in Asante culture. This is made evident in the various activities performed within the culture. The thesis is presented in six chapters. The first chapter embodies the main introduction of the research, which comprises statement of the problem, objectives of the study, reasons for writing, importance of the study, the hypothesis, the assumption, delimitations and limitations, the research methodology, organization of the thesis and the ethnographic account.

Chapter two on the other hand discusses the review of related literature. This is done to determine the academic vacuum that needs to be filled and also to guide the researcher to elicit new information in contributing to the role and importance of Performing Arts in Asante culture. The third chapter also gives an account of how the entire research was conducted and also brings to light how the research problem was tackled.

The fourth chapter is presentation of findings. However, the fifth chapter is devoted to discussion and interpretations of the findings. The sixth chapter recapitulates the salient points raised in the entire thesis and makes beneficial recommendations.

1.11 Methodology

The findings of the study are based on a qualitative research approach. The study employed the descriptive research method in describing the various performances that are portrayed in the culture of the Asante. Interview, observation and questionnaire were the instruments used in divulging information from the respondents.

The data collected were analysed into patterns and themes, interpreted and conclusions drawn. Literature reviewed to ascertain that the study is not “reinventing the wheel” and also to buttress the study’s submissions.

1.12 Facilities Available

The following libraries were helpful to the researcher, the Balme Library, International Centre for African Library and the Institute of African Studies Library, all of the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, and also the British Council Library, also in Accra. Furthermore, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and College of Arts and Social Sciences Libraries, Kumasi, the library of the University of Education, Winneba, University of Cape Coast library, and the Cultural centre library in Kumasi were also indispensable to the research. Also, the various palaces of the chiefs and shrines of the priests and priestesses were not left out.

1.13 Ethnographic Account

Asante is the largest group among the Akan ethnic groups that have inhabited the southern and the forest areas about one hundred and eighty miles from the coast. Since, the vast territory they occupy in this position is mostly forested and the richness of the forest lands in soil, mineral and vegetable products consequently makes them good farmers. They are one of the most powerful ethnic groups in the West African sub-region.

The kingdom of Asante was founded in the seventeenth century by the union of separate, independent states of the same cultural identity and ethnic origin, under the leadership of King Osei Tutu I and his friend Okomfo Anokye (a shrine priest). Before the union, the states were under the lordship of the Denkyira state which was then wealthy and powerful. The paramount chief of Denkyira, (according to oral information collected from the field) being a dictator, denied the Asante people access to trade with the Europeans at the Guinea Coast and this did not only infuriate them, but also caused them to unite to get rid of Denkyira's rule. During the unification ceremony, Okomfo Anokye allegedly conjured a golden stool from the sky to settle on the lap of Osei-Tutu who was consequently crowned as the first king of Asante.

Traditional account goes on to narrate that, the kingdom became so powerful that, they constantly warred against their neighbours in the north and south to safeguard their commercial and other economic interest. The king and his subjects were so wise that, they put measures in place to strengthen the union. These measures include the military formation comprising the *adonten* (vanguard), the *nifa* (right) wing, *benkum* (left) wing, the *kyidom* (rearguard), *Manwere* (guard) *Ankɔbea* (guard) and festivals which include *Odwira* (purification) and *Adεε* (resting place) ceremonies during which all the chiefs assemble at Kumasi, (The capital city of Ashanti Region - see figure 4) to affirm their allegiance to the golden stool. As Busia (1968:91) reporting from a durbar held in 1935 writes:

Sentiments of loyalty and solidarity were kept alive by periodic ritual Odwira ceremonies which were held in Kumasi. The durbar held in 1935 at the restoration of the union under the name of the Asante confederacy, demonstrated how effective these ceremonies must have been in rousing the sentiment of solidarity and patriotism of Ashanti. The ceremonies were marked by deep feelings of exaltation and expressions of loyalty to the Golden stool.

The main occupations of Asantes are farming, carving, weaving, pottery making, metal smithing (gold) and trading among others. When Asante defeated the Denkyira state, it became a powerful kingdom and this created an avenue for them to establish contact with the Dutch and the Danes at the Guinea Coast in the eighteenth century. After Osei Tutu I laid the foundation of the union, his successor Opoku Ware I extended the boundaries of the kingdom northwards and southwards and the other successive kings also continued the good works of their predecessors. In view of this, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, Asante was extended to include practically a greater portion of the Gold Coast. (See fig. 3). According to Adu Boahen (1967:122), the expansion was, however, halted by a clash with Great Britain and the southern states (Akyem, Wassaw, Sefwi, Denkyira, Assin, etc) and as a result of conflict of interest, Asante fought with the British force in 1824 and beheaded the leader of the force Sir Charles McCarthy, and carried his head as a trophy to Kumasi. The unfortunate incident happened in 1826 when the British assisted the southern states of the Gold Coast at the battle of Akantamasu and captured Kumasi and took some of their magnificent regalia to the British museum in Great Britain.

Webster *et al.*, (1967:135–136), were of the view that in 1896 the Asantehene, Nana Agyeman Prempeh I together with his mother, father, uncles, a number of *Amanhene* (paramount chiefs) and Kumasi divisional chiefs were arrested, detained first in Elmina Castle and subsequently exiled to Sierra Leone and Seychelles Island in January 1897 and August 1900 respectively. The Golden Stool, which is believed to be the soul of Asante nation was requested by Governor Hodgson (the then governor of the Gold Coast) but in protest, Yaa Asantewaa (the queen mother of Edweso), together with the chiefs of Asante fought against the British to protect the Stool. This named stool as described by Boahen (1964:74) in writing about Asante Empire, states “Golden Stool which...

embodied [Asantes] soul, strength, vitality, unity and their survival, and which should therefore be guarded at all costs.” This explains why Yaa Asantewaa (the queen mother of Edweso) led the Asante force to fight the British in 1900. Though they were defeated, the Asantes think they were victorious, because the purpose of the war was to protect and preserve the Stool (which was achieved).

This defeat rendered Asante powerless and as a result of that, the British incorporated the Asante kingdom into their colony called the Gold Coast in 1901. The defeat, though adulterated their culture, including their performing arts, could not take away the rich aspect of it. Today, as in the past, Asante remains one of the largest single community among the traditional communities that possess a very rich culture. This is made manifest in all their traditional institutions namely, political, social, economic, medical, and religious establishments as well as in their belief.

These institutions involve performing arts in every activity organized within them and they have contributed significantly to the Asante nation. The Performing Arts that are employed in a particular cultural component depend on the occasion in question: whether enstoolment, marriage, puberty, birth, death etc. Politically, Performing Arts play a dominant role in the Asante political system, in that, from the time a king is enstooled through to his death, Performing Arts are not left out. In the enstoolment rite of a king, certain types of music, dance and drama are performed to grace the occasion. Moreover, in his duties as a religious leader, head of the judiciary and commander-in-chief, music, dance and drama play an indispensable role in them. Socially, the events of life, such as birth, puberty, marriage, death ceremonies and festivals among others, are marked with

music, dance and drama. Special forms of Performing Arts are performed at naming ceremonies, puberty initiation, marriage, funeral ceremonies and recreational activities

Asantes, like any other African ethnic group, are trained to be very hard working. In their economic activities, they sing and dance to inspire themselves to work and also to while away boredom. There is a great feast when a hunter kills an elephant and a ritual ceremony is organized when a ‘sacred animal’ or an animal believed to have evil spirit is killed (Bongo, elephant, antelope, etc.) Rattray (1927:183). Rattray in discussing funerals of animals and trees in Asante writes that when a hunter kills a bongo, he organizes a funeral just like that of a human being to honour it to prevent any calamity from befalling the hunter (death, obesity, sleeping sickness, etc). These ceremonies are marked with music, dance and drama. In buttressing this information, Rattray again discloses that, “The dance in this case, is an addition to the customary firing of guns and drumming and funeral songs, consisting in a mock elephant hunt conducted with great realism” (Rattray, 1927:184).

There is copious use of music, dance and drama in Asante religion. Through these arts the people are able to praise their divinities and ancestors and also show their appreciation to them for their protection. The deities are believed to be actors and actresses by instinct, dancers and music loving gods. In view of this, when a shrine priest or priestess is possessed by a deity, he or she will dance or act like the deity. Furthermore, the ancestors are also called upon during any celebrations through the pouring of libation. The pouring of libation is not really a Performing Art but the act of pouring has a dramatic orientation. In the medical system, music dance and drama are widely used in the healing processes. Music is used to invoke the healing spirit while the

dance as well as drama is used to portray the powers and the capabilities of the gods to heal and protect.

Asantes believe in the existence of God, ancestors, divinities and lesser spirits. Music, dance and drama were some of the early ways through which they communicated with their benevolent spirits. Dederling (1994:1) shares this view concerning belief and dance. She writes that one of the ways early man expressed his belief in his gods was through dance, with which he is able to convince the great forces of nature to protect his family and give them food. The belief that there is existence of God and other spirits encourage them to sing to praise and appreciate them for their protection, good health, shelter, and children among others. Today, as in the past, Asante remains one of the largest single ethnic groups among the traditional communities that possess a very rich culture. They have really exerted considerable influence on the cultural and economic life and development of this part of West Africa.

1.14 Definition of Terms

The following words and their definitions on the right column if really understood by the reader would help in the understanding of the entire thesis:

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| Adjudication | - | The act of deciding who is right in a misunderstanding
and find means of solving it |
| Allegiance | - | One's loyalty to a leader, country or belief |
| Analysis | - | A cautious investigation of something in order to
comprehend it better |
| Analytical | - | Deliberating on something in detailed and acute way so
as to enable you examine and comprehend better |

Arbitration	-	The process of judging how an argument or quarrel should be settled
Artiste	-	Professionals within the Performing Arts that is, musicians, dancers, actors, drummers, etc
Aspects	-	A part of a situation, an activity or an idea that has Many parts, for example, social aspect which comprises birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc
Belief	-	The sense of feeling there is existence of a supreme being
Birth	-	The act of producing children
Birth rite	-	Ceremony performed in honour of a mother and child (usually include the naming of the child)
Burial items	-	The items given to a dead person by his or her spouse, children, friends, maternal and paternal family members on his or her way to spirit world
Categorization	-	The act of putting people or things of the same culture into groupings
Ceremonies	-	Political, social, economic, religious and medical, etc events that are performed in a formal way
Commander-in-chief	-	Someone in control of all military organizations, e.g., Asante king is the high rank official who is in charge of commanding Asante force
Confinement	-	The act of putting someone indoors for sometime to enable him to learn something. For instance, the Asante king is confined for forty days before his enthronement ceremony
Coronation	-	The ceremony at which a royal person is enthroned

in Asante

Cultural components	-	The various aspects or facets of culture. For instance, Asante cultural components comprise political social, economic, religious aspects, etc.
Culture	-	The way of life, art, customs that are exhibited in a group of people with the same belief
Dance	-	The act of moving the body, feet and hands to a rhythm the style and speed of music
Death	-	The end of one's life
Descriptive	-	Giving details of something in the form of writing
Dirges	-	Sad song that are slow and usually performed at funerals
Disputes	-	Disagreement or argument between people
Drama	-	An exciting event or a play that is for the appreciation of onlookers
Dramatic rite	-	A ritual that involves the enactment of the activities within a ceremony
Dramatist	-	A person who writes plays
Drums	-	Types of musical instrument made of stretched animal skin
Drumming	-	The act of hitting the surface of something repeatedly with a hand or stick. It could be a drum or any surface
Durbar	-	A gathering of kings and chiefs
Economic	-	Things that are related to trade, industry and management of money
Eligible	-	To have the qualities to fit into a position
Ensemble	-	A group of people (usually musicians, actors, dancers,

	drummers, etc) who often perform together
Enstoolment	- The final rite performed for a king to ascend a throne
Festivals	- They are occasions where group of people with a common belief and custom, come together to remind their ancestors and also renew old rites
Flank	- The side of an army official in a battle; whether left, right, rear, etc
Funeral	- A type of rite performed for dead people
Golden Stool	- A stool believed to possess the soul or spirit of Asantes
Healing deity	- A deity believed to treat illness using spiritual powers
Importance	- The quality of being influential on people's lives or events
Informant	- A person who reports event or give information about something
Installation	- The ceremony of putting somebody on an important position. In Asante, installation rite precede enstoolment rites
Interpretive	- Explaining something for easy understanding
Interviewee	- The person who answers an interview questions or questions in an interview
Justification	- A good reason for doing something
Kingdom	- A nation ruled by a king and queen
Marriage	- The relationship between two people especially man and woman who live and do things together

Material	-	The things that are used for making something, for example gold is used for ornaments, clay for pottery
Maternal	-	Things relating to one's mother's side
Mausoleum	-	A building made mainly to house the dead bodies of Asante kings
Medical	-	Relating to diagnosing, healing and protection of the people in Asante
Methodology	-	The set of principles that the researcher adopted in conducting the research
Military flank	-	The side of the army in battle. For instance, left flank, rear, etc
Modification	-	The act of making a small change on something to improve its state to make it more suitable.
Mourners	-	Someone who is bereaved or who attends a funeral to sympathize with bereaved persons
Music	-	A series of sounds made by one's voice or by instruments
Musical ensemble	-	A group of musicians who perform together e.g. <i>nwomkorɔ</i> group
Narrative	-	A description of event or story
Oath	-	The pledge of allegiance
Observation	-	The act of watching something critically for sometime
Onlookers	-	Someone who watches something without being part
Opinion	-	One's idea or beliefs about something
Orientation	-	The basic attitude or belief towards the organization of an activity, programme or a rite

Palanquin	- Relating to royalty, it is used to carry kings and queens
Paramount	- Used to describe chiefs of Asante states e.g. paramount chiefs
Paternal	- Things relating to one's father's side
People	- A group of individuals with the same customs and traditions (an ethnic group)
Performing Art	- It refers to the type of art that are executed for entertainment, correction and for the appreciation of onlookers. It consists of music, dance, drama, and drumming
Politics	- Governmental system in Asante (relating to how they rule their nation)
Political system	- Refers to how Asante make and maintain law and order, how they enstool, destool, etc
Population	- The group of chosen for the administration of the questionnaire
Porcupine	- A type of animal chosen as a totem for Asantes (It has long quills)
Porcupine bed	- A type of bed on which Asante dead kings are laid on (it is designed like the porcupine)
Questionnaire	- A type of written question which is given to people to solicit information from them.
Recreational	- An activity that one or a group of people does or do for pleasure
Relatives	- It refers to members of maternal family of Asantes

Religious	-	The Asantes “belief” in more than one god
Religious system	-	It refers to the Asantes “belief” in more than one god
Research	-	A thorough study of something, in order to ascertain new ideas of facts
Respondents	-	It refers to the people who answered the research questions
Rite	-	A ceremony that is performed to mark an occasion or for a religious purpose
Ritual	-	A ceremony that is organized to mark important religious, political, economic, social and medical function
Role	-	The way something is involved in an activity and the influence (that activity) has on it
Sacred animals	-	It is referred to consecrated animals in Asante
Sampling	-	The act of choosing a small group of people from a large group (of people) to answer questions
Significance	-	The meanings attached to the Performing Arts
Social	-	Things relating to (Asante) society, the people and their lives
Social system	-	Transitional and recreational activities in Asante which comprise birth, puberty, marriage, death, festival, recreation, etc
Sub-chiefs	-	The lower rank of chiefs in Asante
Sympathisers	-	They are people who support mourners at funerals or in times of funerals

Transitional	-	Changing from one state in life to another state
Warriors	-	Soldiers who are brave and experienced fighters
Worshippers	-	A group of people who pray, sing and dance in a religious ground to show respect for their god

1.15 Abbreviation

CD	-	Compact disc
Etc.	-	<i>et cetera</i> ‘and so forth’
FM	-	Frequency Modulation
KATH	-	Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

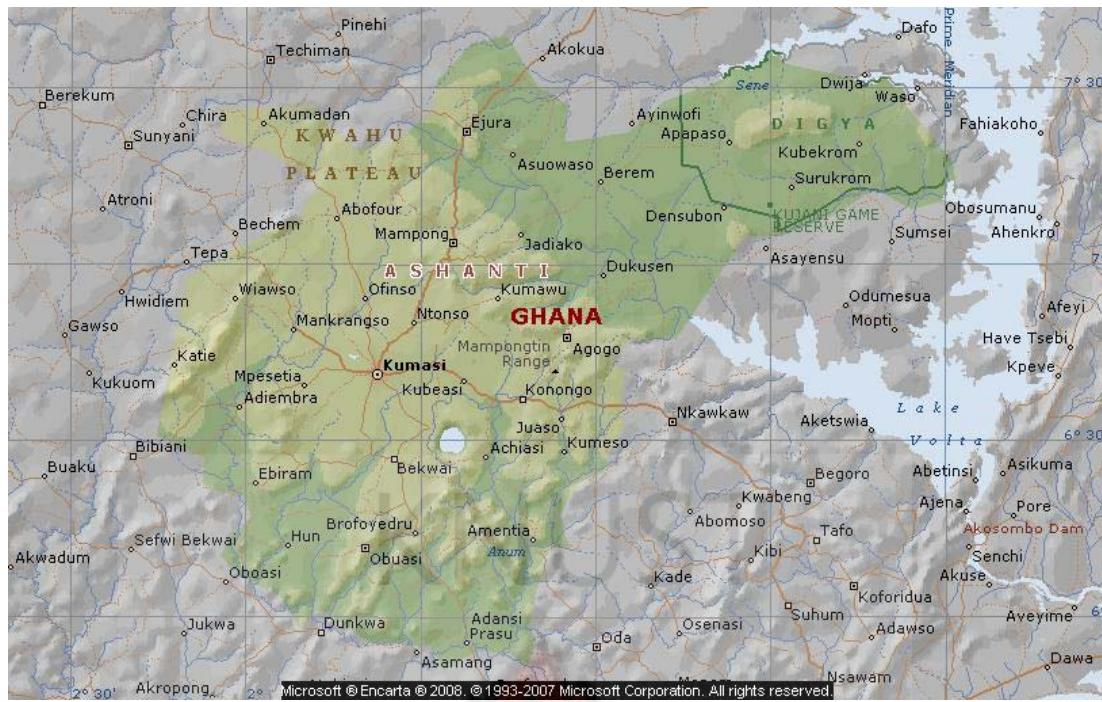


Fig. 1: The yellow and green shades shows the geographical location of the Asante
Source: Culled from Encarta 2008



Fig. 2: Showing Ghana and neighbouring countries
Source: Culled from Encarta 2008

The Asante empire

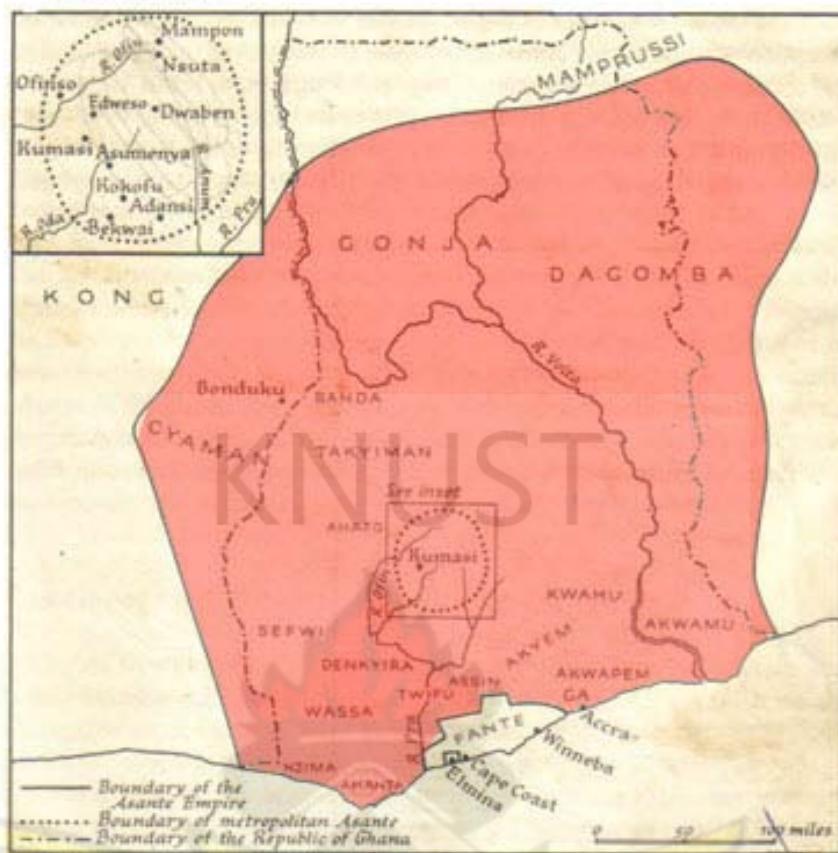


Fig. 3: The map of Asante Empire in the nineteenth century (the area marked ruby red).

Source: Adu-Boahene, A. (1968)

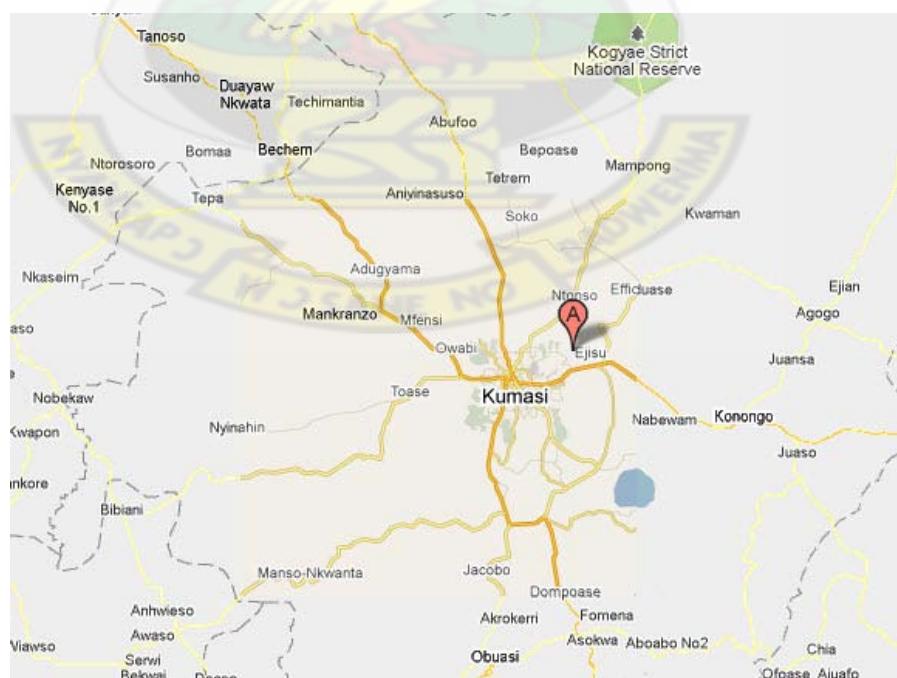


Fig. 4: Showing Kumasi and neighbouring towns.

Source: Culled from Google Maps 2008.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Rationale for writing

The review of related literature is very important to the research as it ensures that the research is not “reinventing the wheel”. It furthermore gives the researcher the opportunity to give credit to those who have laid the groundwork for the research. The review of related literature demonstrates the knowledge of the research problem. It also affords the researcher the opportunity to critically evaluate relevant literature information and indicates the ability to integrate and synthesize the existing literature. Finally, the review will convince my readers that the proposed research will make a significant and substantial contribution to the literature that is filling the gap in literature.

Hopefully, this review will challenge some of the questionable assertions about Asante music, dance, drama, and also create the awareness of the various research methods used.

To facilitate this review, the chapter would be sub-divided as follows:

- Music in the life of the African
- Dance in the life of Africans
- Drama in African traditional culture
- The involvement of music, dance, drama and drumming in Asante’s political system
- The significance of drumming in the political system of the Asante.
- Music, dance ,drama and drumming in the social system of the Asante
- Performing Arts and the economic system of the Asante.
- Performing Arts and the Asantes’ traditional religion.

- Performing Arts and the belief of the people of Asante.

2.1 Music in the life of the African

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, music plays a dominant role in the lives of African peoples. Their political, social, economic, religious and medical systems cannot do without music, for it permeates all the activities of these systems. As a result of this indispensable role, Nketia (1964: 151) points out, that music is believed to be necessary in the sustenance of a community's life, and the writer also likened it to 'the cry of a new born baby', which gives solid proof that it is alive. The first thing that is striking in Nketia's observation is the expression of music as a 'being'. It is obvious that his observation on African music might have revealed that music is "life" rather than a phenomenon that pervades all the activities of African people.

Music starts its work from the very day one is born through to the time one dies. In view of this, Agordoh (1994: 28), asserts, "In the field of social organization, functions of music for *rites de passage* – birth, puberty, marriage and death are apparent". In the same way, Hickens is quoted in Nketia (1994: 28) , "The African is born, named, initiated into manhood, warriored, armed, housed, betrothed, wedded and buried to music." Both assertions do not deviate from the fact that music is indispensable in the culture of African people. We would have only wished that they included the profession of the people- what they were born to do- so as to crown the whole walk of life.

The impetus of African music is so great that, Mbiti (1969: 67), shares the view that, "Music, singing and dancing reach deep into the innermost part of Africans, and many things come to the surface under musical inspiration which otherwise may not be readily revealed" This view of Mbiti makes it easy for one to deduce that the intensity factor in

African music is very powerful and can even be likened to alcohol which intoxicates the people who drink it. About the intensity factor in African music, Nketia regards it as the depth of feeling stimulated and transformed by the music. No wonder music is used as an avenue for expressing people's sentiments. Asantes, like any other African ethnic group, attach importance to their arts. For this reason, Opoku (1987:192) and Agordoh, (1994:37), share the view that, the warriors of Asante collect music and other Performing Arts as war booty and display them with the captives during victory parades. For warriors to choose a particular booty from war means that, the item is of importance to the victors. In Asante one cannot talk of one's political, social, economic, medical and religious systems without mentioning music. Asantes sing when a king is being enthroned, destooled, when there is an adjudication of disputes, when they reach puberty, and many other facets of life.

2.2 Dance in the life of Africans

To the African, dance is an important element in life that can never be avoided. He sees dance as a communicative instrument and life itself. Opoku (1965), shares this view about dance:

To us life, with its rhythms and cycles is dance. The dance as life expressed in dramatic terms. The most important event in the community have special dance to enhance their meaning and significance. To us the dance is language, a mode of expression which addresses itself to the mind through the heart, using related, relevant and significant movements which their basic counterparts in our everyday activities, to express special and poetic stimuli (p. 18).

Opoku's view indeed, is real, he is not far from the truth, for the African can portray every aspect of his life in a dance and not only that, he can dance to communicate how he feels, intrinsically and extrinsically. Bame, (1991:7) sounding no different from this, states "the dance is one such aesthetic mode in which the African forcefully and

unambiguously expresses his mood, his joy and sorrow, his love and hatred, in short, his responses to his total life experience”.

Bame’s choice of words is explicit but the word that has raised some amount of concern is “forcefully”. The researcher wonders if the message is “forcefully” portrayed. Well, it is not the researcher’s concern to debate this here except to prefer words like gracefully, nicely, elegantly. Let us retrospectively tackle how the African sees dance once again. Dendinger (1974), states:

KNUST

One of the ways early man expressed his belief in his gods was through dance. Dance was considered an element of sympathetic magic; by which he could influence the great forces of nature, man, and the supernatural, thereby receiving help to secure the survival of the tribe, to provide food and to give protection (p.1)

Dedinger looked at dance as an element of sympathetic magic to the African, for she sees dance as a magical instrument with which Africans influence the forces of nature to attend to their needs. There is no doubt that Greeks consider dance as a deity, for it possesses great power. In this regard, Lawyer (1925:105) points out that, the dances of the deities Apollo and Artemis were so important that, the deities were often referred to as the dances themselves. This shows how powerful the dances are.

Bame also sees dance in the life of the African as “life itself”, he explains that dance embodies every important facet of his life cycle which includes birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc. Bame is right in saying, “dance is life” for every activity that makes life worth living can be portrayed in African dances and the efficacy of these dances depend on the performers who want to communicate to the onlookers. The most interesting aspect of African dance is that, the onlookers even form part of the performers, for they are taught how to dance at an early stage in life. “They expose the young, throughout infancy and

adolescence, to rhythm in many forms and graded complexities” all in the words of Opoku (1965:19)

2.3 Drama in African traditional culture

One may be tempted to think that drama exists only in the western culture, but it will interest one to know that it exists in African culture including that of Asantes. Some scholars in Africa, who had the opportunity of studying and observing African drama, have written about drama in African traditional culture and have come out with some interesting aspects of drama in the continent’s culture, which were overlooked by many scholars of the arts, in the past. By definition, drama is an acting of real life situations which end up convicting, praising, teaching, and rebuking, people. It is usually done to depict all the important facets of life. It might be of great interest to know that, *Encyclopedia Britannica* indicates that the etymology of the word is derived from the Greek word meaning “a thing done”. We can deduce from the above that enactment of anything relating to life is a form of drama. So there is no doubt about the fact that, there is drama in African traditional culture.

The following shows how Ottenberg (1971:69 -77) sees African traditional drama. In his Analysis of an African play, he discusses the drama of Afikpo, which is one of the small confederations of villages in Ibo land in Nigeria. He calls it Okumkpa community theatre, because it is directly tied to the village life of the people. The performers are mainly men numbering about a hundred and the audience numbering well over a thousand. According to Ottenberg the drama is mixed with music and dance. These skits, dances and songs concern the actual peoples involved and the events that transpired within the community over the period. His description of the drama reveals that, it is performed to criticize

those who do the wrong things in the community. From the foregoing observation by Ottenberg, there is no doubt in the fact that, there is drama in African traditional culture.

On the same issue, Doke (1926, 466-469), describes how the Khomani Bushmen of southern African tribe act out how they trap and kill Gemsbok, a large goat-like animal once abundant in South Africa. Balm (1991) as cited in Shore in a news letter asserts, “The people of Africa enacted the most important aspects of their lives”. This assertion reveals that, the daily aspects of their (Africans) lives have a dramatic orientation, and, therefore, can be acted whenever the need arises. It also seems to suggest that there is abundance of dramatic elements in their social, political, economic, religious, and medical aspects, and even in the belief of the people.

Nketia (1974, 218 -219) indicates when drama is portrayed in the traditional African societies. He states “The celebration of the funerals of distinctive people often incorporates enactments of episodes or dramatizations of their social relation, belief, or social values”. He said this to denote that, there is an element of drama in African traditional culture. These episodes are done on special occasions such as festivals, funerals among others. Nketia (1974, 219) as cited in Nketia, describes some of the episodes:

Dramatic scenes may be presented of hunters on small game expedition or in serious hunting tracking animals taking quick short steps, slow steps, holding stooping, squatting, finding the direction of the wind avoiding the wind, aiming, firing, misfiring, getting into difficulties and extricating themselves.

Who said there is no element of drama in African traditional culture? Dramatic elements permeate every aspect of their social and ceremonial activities of Africans. These doubts

arise, only when the perceiver sees African traditional drama from the western point of view.

2.4 The involvement of Music, Dance, Drama, and Drumming in Asantes' Political System

Since the preceding pages have dealt with music, dance and drama in the African societies, it is now expedient to advance with the political system and the Performing Arts. Asantes traditional politics, that is, the governmental system involves how they make and maintain law and order, their security systems, their election of chiefs, their court systems and many others. In the political system, the chiefs, queen mothers and elders form the government. Busia (1968:21) writes, “The chief was subject to checks from the elders, but they were jointly responsible for the administration of the Division. They formed the Government”. Busia left the queen mother out, but in reality Asantes administration will never be complete without the queen mother. It is important to examine the role music, dance, drama and the drum play in Asante’s political system (in that, they are portrayed in almost all the activities within the political system: the enstoolment, duties, death and burial of a chief).

In the enstoolment rite of a king, the would be king is quarantined for sometime, to enable him learn some of the dances and songs of his culture, Bame (1991:7) states that “there is an extended period of tutorship in dancing as in other items of behaving expected of a chief” This tutorial is done to make the king competent in all the dances of his ethnic group, so as to enable him dance gracefully whenever the need arises. Once the would be king is through with the learning of the dances, the enstoolment rite proceeds. In this section, an element of drama is portrayed. The *Kontihene* holds the right hand of

the king, the *ɔkyeame panyin* (chief spokesman) his left and the queen mother his waist.

They lower him three times gently on the stool and raise him again (Busia).

Invariably, this enstoolment rite is done to show the people's support to the king in his new position. After this ceremony the people perform *kete* dance to welcome him to the stool and also sing *ose* (Jubilant) song. In appreciation, the king dances to the tune of *fontomfrom* which is supposedly performed to portray his authority. This is how Bame (1991: 25) describes the gestures a king uses to portray his authority. The king points to the sky, the ground and to his chest to signify that except God and mother earth, there is nobody like him in authority.

Administratively, in the king's role as a warrior, certain music and drama are performed to portray his strength, victory and power over his enemies. Buttressing this, Opoku (1965) as cited in Bame (1991:25) states four functions the *fontomfrom* suite is performed to serve:

In fact, the suite is performed to serve one of or all four-fold functions. It is performed as (1) a warrioir's dance of harassment; (2) the chiefs dance of achievement as a valiant military leader; (3) the queen mother's dance of peace, stability and motherliness, which she expects the men to fight to preserve. The chief accepts this charge on behalf of his warrior; and (4) victory dance of narration in which a warrior asserts valor, prowess and supremacy in the service of his chief, queen mother and people.

This dance is usually performed after winning a battle or when the king is preparing for war. It is also performed as a ceremonial dance during festivals. This dance informs us of the past struggles and achievements in battle and also reminds us of the king's role as a military leader (Opoku, 1987:196). The *fontomfrom* dance could also be performed by ordinary people, but the etiquettes governing it should be well noted.

Owing to the above is the war song that is sung along the drums to set the pace for the dancers. The repertoire of such music is very interesting. Some trials at the court of the kings are conducted with music. Owens (1991:21) discussing the Pende people of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) comments, “In Zaire, the Pende people virtually sing their way through life, even conducting council meetings and criminal trials in songs”. Owens comment fits Asante’s tribunal courts: in these courts, the accused when found guilty is punished. The punishment depends on the crime the person committed. If for instance the person was involved in theft, he is marched through the principal street with the stolen item in his or her hand, followed by music and a special dance (Nketia, 1966:219).

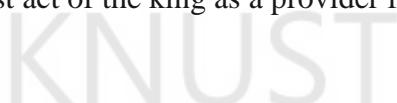
Another area in the political system where music, dance and drama play a significant role is the death and burial of a chief. The death of a chief is sometimes spread with music, for it is not acceptable to say the king is dead in Asante. Busia, when describing how seventy seven priests in Asante were asked to prescribe various remedies for a sick king, though in reality, the king was already dead, this was done to expose the false priest in Asante as of that time. Seventy six priests failed the test, while the seventy seventh priest who was the priest of the god Asuhya Tano found great honour upon passing the test, and began to sing as follows:

*Me re kom, ogwan funu ti
Nipa a me kom, ne tiri asa*

Translated as

I am possessed of the dead sheep; it is the head of the sheep
This man for whom I call the spirit (of my god),
His head is finished

With this kind of song, any elder in Asante will be able to determine what has happened. Invariably, dance and drama play an indispensable role in the burial and funeral rites of kings and royals. The swearing ceremony by the sub-chiefs looks exactly like drama. During these rites, the sub-chiefs communicate to the dead king as if he is alive. Odotei (2001:17) describing royal funeral states that, the dead king's traditional cooks known as *soddo* in Asante, cooks for the *Gyaase* and Otumfoo's attendants to eat near the corpse. This is believed to be the last act of the king as a provider for his people.



Moreover, the *sora da* ceremony (the washing of the soul which is done on the fortieth day) as described by Rattray (1927:119), also reveals some elements of drama. The chief's cooks prepare the best of meals and most importantly, the best meal of the king. The people believe that, the spirit of the departed king will come and eat. At the ceremonial ground, the family members of the late king will shave their hair and gather them into a pot. The heap of the hair will inform people as to whether the dead king has a large family or not. Aside these rites by the family members, the dead king's wives also perform their rites every *sora da* (purification day). These wives are chosen from other families to serve the dead king permanently, by visiting the ghost husband with food. Each week, on the day of *sora da*, these women will shave their hair and wear white clothing and sit beside the ghost husband with their chewing sticks in hands (Rattray, 1927:119). The cooking of the best meal of the departed king, the shaving of hairs and the wives that are chosen to serve the dead king creates a scene in the minds of the observer. To the present researcher this is "drama in the belief of the people" All these rites are very dramatic and Rattray is very precise about his description.

Meanwhile, the funeral ceremony itself also embodies these Performing Arts. Dances at royal funerals are gracefully and elegantly portrayed by the bereaved and mourners in general. The people who dance at royal funerals perform the dances to portray their pain and also to praise the dead king. The most outstanding performance among the dances is the queen mother's dance. As he rightly puts it

A queen mother or any other woman who has lost a relation as a result of death may express her irreparable loss, her grief and her hope; with her right finger pointed at her eyelid, she says to observers "see what has happened to me.

She may also either place both palms against her stomach with her torso tilted forward or support her tilted head with both palms or place the two palms on top of her head, all to signify grief and dejection.

2.5 The significance of drumming in the political system of the Asante

"Royal drums are reported from all over Africa, and are regarded as sacred so that they are played only on certain occasions or to announce important messages, and are kept in houses" (Mbiti 1969: 180). The writer's statement goes a long way to back the claim the fact that drums play a very significant role in African traditional culture. The inclusion of the word "sacred" denotes the fact that, it is considered holy and important.

In spite of this fact, he points out that when the drums are played, he limits himself to 'certain occasions'. Perhaps, his observation on African royal drums might have revealed so. Obviously, royal drums in Asante play important and significant role in their culture. Their drumming exults the king, sends emergency messages such as fire outbreaks, organises search parties, and rallies the people in building bridges, community centers, just to mention a few.

Nketia, buttressing the above information, states in his book ‘Drumming in Akan communities’ that “*nkrawiri* and *mpebi* drums are played on state occasions and are then interpreted as signaling the approach of the chief or his presence. Played together at any other time, they are interpreted as an alarm-call to the elders of the state to be present at a court on account of some emergency”.

The first part of Nketia’s statement ‘and are then interpret as...’ could raise some concern to readers. They may think, “the drums are not for signaling the approach of the chief” but rather they are interpreted as such. Instead of including interpreted as in the statement, he could have gone straight to write, ‘*Nkrawiri* and *mpebi* drums are played on state occasions to signal the approach of the chief’. In the same way, the phrase ‘interpreted as’ stated in the second sentence could have been omitted, thereby making the sentence “played together at any other time could mean an alarm-call.” Realistically, nobody interprets the drums, but it is the drums that speak for itself. So if one says “it has been interpreted as” one may be tempted to think that the sound of the drums is different from the interpretation given. It should be stated as ‘it means’ instead of “interpreted as”.

Agordoh (1994:38) and Nketia (1996:18) all agree to the fact that one can deduce an occasion from a particular drum sound. For instance, execution of civil and war criminals were marked by special drum sounds. Likewise, thieves were punished by marching them through the streets with the item stolen in hands, followed by the music of special drums set aside for such purpose. When people hear these kinds of drums they can easily deduce the presence of the above crimes. So, Performing Arts also help in correcting indiscipline and missdemeanours in the culture.

Another area where the function of the drum is made manifest are festivals and funeral ceremonies. On the former, Rattray (1927:143) describing how drum messages are used to dispatch people for sacrifices to the ancestors during Odwira ceremonies, said the king after visiting the Bantama mausoleum for the sacrifices, returns home to be entertained by *kete* drum music. The player (*kete*) usually recounts the exploits and the heroic deeds of the past king and this causes him to weep. He at this stage will order the divine drummer to signal the executioners to kill the first captive waiting to be dispatched. Rattray description of how the drums are used to send a message of death, goes a long way to show that drum have some roles to play in the political system.

Still on festivals, a day before the *Adεε* is *Dapaa*, and this day is for tidying up the entire community and the palace. [Usually on that day] at sundown, when all the preparations are complete, the drummers assemble at the chief's house and drum till late in the night (Opoku, 1970:8). On the same issue, Busia (1968:28) has this to say “preparations are made on the previous day. The stools are cleaned and the necessary money, drink, sheep, and other things collected together. In the evening, the drums announce the approach of the *Adεε* celebration.” (1968:28). Both observations by the two writers bring to light pivotal role of the drum and the drummers in *Adεε* ceremony. On the day of *adεε*, the divine drummer will beat the awakening call to inform the king of the programme of the day. Below is an example of an awakening call stated by Opoku (1976:10)

Cheng, cheng, cheng, cheng, Mighty and valiant Ofori When the creator created things, what did he create? He created the court crier, He created the drummer Mighty one, I salute you. I bid you good *adae* dawn Great *Nyakomago* will with the divine drummer Great *Nyankomago* came in the company of the divine drummer. He has bestirred himself at dawn. This early morning. The hooked stick that bends and pulls. The thicket and thorny climbers, won't [sic] you come and join with me in play? King that captures kings, Go fetch me rum that I may drink.

Opoku made it clear that, an hour after the awakening call, the drummer again drums to invite the chief to the stool house..

2.6 Music, dance, drama and drumming in the Social System of the Asante

The social aspect in culture also employs Performing Arts in all its activities namely, birth, puberty, marriage, death, festivals and recreational activities. In Asante, as soon as one gets married, the next stage of interest to the family and the society is the birth of a new being in the new home. As Ottenberg rightly puts it and quoted by Lynne “To have children is a magic of success with the spirits of health and the continuing of life”. This explains why Asantes’ believe that children are gifts from God, and that any marriage without children is a calamity.

Finally, when a couple is blessed with a child, an outdooring takes place on the eighth day. The elderly woman of the house would come in for the baby, place it in her arms and make way to a refuse dump. She would continuously repeat the following words on the way. “*Akokoa yi ni ne ne se a mowɔ asamando, εnne akokoa yi ne mo too nkwanta a moapae, enti mommfrε no mo ba bio*”. (The baby’s father and mother at the land of the dead, your child has today departed from you). All these are evident in Osei (2002:33).

To the observer or the dramatist, the woman, the child, the people present and even the ghost parents are the characters in the drama. After this act, Osei again states that, the woman will enter the house to show the new baby all the apartment within the house followed by the main rite (naming) where the woman (who is in charge of the rite) after presenting the name of the child to the gathering, proceeds to dip her hand in water and drop it on the baby’s tongue saying “*wo to nsuo a frε no nsuo*” meaning “if you take

water, call it water.” She then follows with drink saying “*woto nsa a, frē no nsa* (If you taste wine say it is wine). These dramatic rites imply that, the baby should always speak the truth (Osei, 2002).

Lullaby is a song that is employed by mothers, nannies and caretakers to entertain and put babies to sleep. Aside these two roles, it is also used as a vehicle for expressing one’s sentiment especially mothers or nannies. In his book, Nketia wrote that a man who favoured one of his wives more than the other would give her salt and meat which was a sign of affluence. When both women gave birth, and the one who was favoured gave birth to a lean child and the other (who lived on vegetables) a bouncing baby. As a result of that, the one with the big child (unfavoured wife) nursed her child with the following song.

Child of cocoyam leaves: plump and robust
Child of cocoyam leaves: plump and robust
Child of meat and salt is weak and lean.

Meanwhile, when a pregnant woman dies, there is a rite that is performed to prevent such occurrences. In this rite, when the dead person is laid in state, all pregnant women in that community will cut plantain leaves “and entering the compound where the body is lying, point the[sic]shoot at the corpse, saying: Poom!, *fa wo musuo kɔ wantumi anwo, wantumi anko, wo aka atɔ*. Bang! (imitating a gun), be gone with your evil, you have been unable to bring forth, you have been unable to fight, you have fought only to die”. (1927:58). Rattray’s description of the rite has a dramatic orientation. As the pregnant women go out busily performing their rite with all vigour, it is evident that, there is drama even in the belief of the people of Asante. For if one could believe that one’s safety lies in the performance of the above act, there is no doubt drama exists in the people’s belief.

One other area in the social system where Performing Arts play a pivotal role is the death rites. In this rite, when a person is dying a blood relative, pours a little water through the patient's throat. Bame as cited in Busia (1994:121) gives an account of such sayings and therefore writes:

Receive this and drink, it is your grandmother who is giving this drink, your blood relatives are giving you this drink: your mother and father are giving you this drink; if you are dying your destined death, then when you go sleep peacefully, but if there is someone who has cut your life in this world, enable us to find him out.

This description in Bame's book by Busia also confirms the existence of drama in the belief of the people of Asante. The giver of the water sees the dying soul as journeying to the spirit world where he or she becomes an ancestor. The next stage of the rite, as described by Bame (1991:121) again is the bath rite. He writes:

The maternal relatives bathe the right side and the paternal relatives bathing the the left side. They talk to the deceased in the process saying. We are your relatives bathing you; take all your illness away; bring us good health and send us children.

This dramatic rite described by Bame is cited in Busia (1968) as well. Meanwhile, a vigil is kept overnight. During this time, the firing of musketry, music, dance and drumming are very prominent. As Rattray puts it, "A wake is now kept up, night and day, until the body is buried. The whole time is spent in firing guns, drumming, dancing and singing" (1927:151). During the burial period members of the family and the sympathizers wail and sing dirges. Some aspects of Ghanaian culture writes: The moment of burial is one of the most dramatic and critical in the community. There is wailing, shouting and singing. The word "dramatic" used by Sarpong (1974:29) denotes the fact that, the burial ceremony cannot do without the Performing Arts.

Furthermore, the funeral rite is also characterized by the Performing Arts. As Bame (1991:127) again writes “with everyone back from the graveyard, the maternal relatives give them drinks, and the mourning activities, comprising mainly wailing, singing, drumming and dancing continue until sundown”.

Meanwhile on the day of the final funeral rite, certain rites are performed to cleanse the entire family. Ameyaw-Benneh (1991:127) writing about body arts in funeral ceremonies in Asante, describes how the rites are performed. He says the relatives of the deceased person shave their heads and put them in a bowl known as “*abusua kuruwa*” family pot). The pot is then painted by stripes of red, black and white. A food is later prepared and together with the pot are sent to the part of the cemetery where those pots were always buried. From that moment, family members were free to discard their mourning clothes with the exception of the widow or widower. This description by Ameyaw-Benneh is an evidence of the presence of drama in the culture of Asante.

2.7 Performing Arts and the Economic System of the Asante

Economic activities within the culture of Asante also employ Performing Arts in them. Interestingly, a carver who wants to cut a tree for drums, stools, dolls and other wood products, would propitiate the spirit of the tree before in the process of cutting and after carving the object. He may present an egg saying:

ɔsese, gye kosua yi di, mma dadie ntwa me!

Translated as:

ɔsese (funtumia sp) tree, receive this egg and eat
do not permit the knife to cut me

He again breaks another egg upon the tree and recites the following:

*Mere betwa wo m'asen wo
Gye kosua yi di... mma dadie ntwame
Mma me nyare*

I am coming to cut you down and carve you
Receive this egg and eat
Do not let the iron cut me,
Do not let me suffer in health (Rattray, 1927:9).

This observation by Rattray shows the involvement of the Performing Arts in the economic activity (carving). The drama involves two main characters – the carver and the tree (*funtumia* sp) The carver beholds the spirit of the tree as the owner of the tree, therefore he needs to propitiate him to avoid any calamity.

Another economic activity whose operation has dramatic orientation is hunting. A hunter, who wants to catch an animal, may follow it and make some actions to attract it to kill. Regarding this, Nketia (1974:219) in discussing hunters funeral states that, these celebrations incorporates scenes in which the experiences of hunters are mimed with weapons, animal skulls, horns, etc. The expression “incorporates scenes in which the experiences of hunters are mimed” connotes that hunters really act on hunting expeditions. This acting does not end there, when he kills an animal believed to have powerful *sasa*, a big funeral is organized. The funeral involves the enactment of hunting scenes which also involves the Performing Arts. As he puts it “The dance in this case, in addition to the customary firing of guns and drumming and funeral songs, consisted in a mock elephant hunt conducted with great realism”. Rattray (1927:184). Rattray’s description, embodies all the Performing Arts namely music, dance, drama and drumming among others. Pragmatically, anyone present at such funerals would be entertained by such performances. The reverse could also be true of relatives (who have lost a dear one).

2.8 Performing Arts and Asantes' Traditional Religion

Asantes, like any other African tribe, are trained to be religious, for religion pervades every aspect of their lives (when mourning, feasting, installing a new king or going for war, etc). As a matter of fact, Performing Arts play an indispensable role in the religion of Asantes. “If there is any activity which is a prerequisite to African traditional religion, it is the broad activity of the dance – drumming, singing and dancing”. Bame (1991:18). Bame’s assertion is very true, because religious activities cannot do without music, dance, drama and drumming. The only problem with his assertion is the omission of ‘drama’. Perhaps, he believes in the fact that every aspect of the activities within the religion has dramatic orientation. Notwithstanding this, he could have included it to make his assertion more complete.

Apparently, music plays a pivotal role in Asante religion. According to Agordoh (1994:38), “no one who has visited a scene of public worship in Africa, can be in doubt that one of the attributes of the gods is that they are music loving gods”. In consonance, Nketia, (1988:54) cited an interview which occurred between ‘Opoku and Ampong-Darkwa’ and ‘a priest’. He made reference to what the priest said concerning music and religion. “He stressed that the music was important because the gods are sensitive to it and sometimes ask for certain songs to be sung for them. The writers view affirms the fact that the gods love music, and that, it can influence the deities to perform. “The most common situation in which (the deities) manifest themselves is the musical situation in which music which affect them is played” (Agordoh, 1994:4). This could be realized if the deity request for certain songs of his choice as stated by Nketia early on.

Agordoh (1994:24) again discloses that: “[Not only does the music influence the deities to manifest themselves but also it] provides accompaniment to movement and action. It also helps to hold worshippers together through the text in which they praise and recount the achievements of the gods, as well as renew their faith in him”. One other Performing Art which is used as a vehicle of communication with God and the deities is dance. Opoku as cited in Bame (1991:19) writes:

The priest when dancing acknowledges God. Who is the spirit of the earth, the source of physical strength and material well-being. He also acknowledges the “four winds” which carry to him the words of God.

It is not easy to guess how the priest acknowledges God and the ‘four minds’ unless one observes such dance at a worship service. Therefore if Opoku had gone an extra mile to add the gestures being interpreted in the above quotation, it would have made it simpler for readers to appreciate it the more. Meanwhile the interpretation given has also helped to look further to find the gestures involved.

Braffi (1990:19) writing about, The African Traditional priest and his work, also discloses what the priest does in his possession dance and therefore writes “He continues throwing white clay into the sky, and on the earth asking for permission from *Onyankopɔn Tweaduampɔn* (The only Great God) and Mother Earth (*Asaase Yaa*) to display”. This information by Braffi also confirms the fact that the priest acknowledges God when dancing. Moreover, the importance of dance is eminent at the ordination of a new shrine priest. He is requested to dance all night to the tune of music and drums (Rattray, 1927:44).

The above information extracted from Rattray’s observation, buttresses the view that, dance is important in religion. The deities appreciate dance to the extent that the absence

of good performance can destroy a ritual ceremony. In consonance, Amlor (2001:29) states: “improper execution of dance pattern is considered abnormal and can ruin the effectiveness of the ritual performance”. This explains why a priest is taught how to dance throughout his or her entire training period. As Rattray (1927) again states, “All this time [the trainee shrine priest] is being instructed in dancing”. Moreover, as a result of the manifest role those dance plays in religion, the ankle of the priest “to be” is strengthened to enable him dance well. Rattray again mentions *asoia* (*Cariospermum Grandiflore*) leaves as the main medicine used for strengthening.

The researcher from this stage wants to advance in the review on religion by looking at the drama of worship. In worship, the central act is possession; the priest usually acts out the personality of his deity. As Kwakwa (1974:32) rightly puts it, “In possession, a priest takes on a completely different personality; that of a particular god. So much is his own personality suppressed that whatever he does is identified with the gods.” The expression “whatever he does is identified with the gods” shows that he (the priest) plays the role of the gods and that makes him an actor. This assertion directly finds expression in the statement by Agordoh again, pointing out the fact that:

They (the deities) descend to the (shrine priest) through their human mediums and participate in the drama of worship. Acting through the mediums, they are known to object to the singing of particular songs or to show displeasure when performance is lacking in animation or vigour.

Agordoh’s statement went further to include the word “acting” which of course denotes the presence of drama. There is no doubt that the dramatist can discern some dramatic elements in the role played by the shrine priest.

2.9 Performing Arts and the belief of the people of Asante

Asantes believe that, the deities have the power to heal, so they adhere to them for elucidation or annotation of their health problems. They also believe that they draw all their powers from God. As stated in Beecham (1968:198) “As the fetishes derive all their powers and wisdom from God, why forsake them? The statement came about as a result of interaction between one William de Graft and the shrine priests concerning their operation. This quotation in Beecham’s book reflects the Asantes belief in the deities.

Meanwhile, the word “fetishes” chosen by Beecham (1968) instead of “deities” is quite offensive, because Asantes believe that, the deities are mediators between man and God. Furthermore, the Collins English dictionary and Thesaurus defines fetish as “objects believed to have magical powers”. The Asante believe that, the deities have great powers and so under no circumstances should they be described as objects for they are far beyond a mere object (they are spirits).

Pragmatically, music, dance, drama and drumming are employed in the healing processes. Osei Agyemang (1991), writing about art and mystical medicine in Kwahu culture affirmed the above statement and therefore writes “music and dancing form the inaugural phenomena of the healing preamble and the entire therapeutic activities”. Osei (1968) sees music and dancing as the main Performing Arts displayed here. On the same issue, Beecham also describes the healing process as follows. When a sick person (or a principal chief – in his words) is brought to a shrine priest, the drums belonging to the temple or shrine are brought forth for the drummers to play. When all is set for performance, he (the priest) selects the song of the deity and begins tossing for the people present to continue. The priests then dance with all their strength. At this stage, the priests are excited into a state of frenzy and gets fully possessed. Beecham (1968:198 and199)

writes that “In this state... the devotees believe he actually cures people of their ailments and conveys messages from his god to the community of worshippers”.

2.10 Summary of Discussion

Having gone through the various topics discussed under this chapter, it is expedient for us to go through some of the salient points mentioned in it. The first sub-topic reviewed (music in the life of the African) brought to light how Nketia likened music to the cry of a new born baby, which gives proof that it is alive. Agordoh (1994) in his book “*Studies in African Music*” and Nketia, as cited in Hickens agreed on the fact that music plays a dominant role in the life of the African. In his book “*African Religion and Philosophy*”, Mbiti also laid bare the impetus of music, by sharing the view that music and the other Performing Arts can cause people to behave in a manner which they may not have done if not under musical inspiration. Meanwhile Agordoh and Opoku took cognizance of the fact that, due to the importance attached to music in Asante, it is collected as war booty.

In the second sub-topic, Opoku and Bame find expressions that dance is a communicative instrument with which the dancer could express his feelings. Furthermore, Dendinger also considered dance as an element of sympathetic magic with which Africans influence the forces of nature to attend to their needs. It was uncovered that, Bame and Lawyer described dance as life and deities respectively. Opoku intimated the fact that Africans expose their young ones to rhythm in many forms.

In discussing the third sub-topic, (drama in Africa culture), the researcher uncovered the fact that drama really exist in African culture. Ottenberg, Doke and Nketia described the

traditional drama by the *Afikpo* (Ibo – Nigeria), the Khomani Bushmen, and the African society respectively.

On the fourth topic (the involvement of music, dance and drumming in Asante's political system), writers like Busia, Bame, Rattray, Opoku, Nketia, Mbiti, Agordoh, Owens also unveil the fact that music, dance, drama and drumming are employed in the activities within the political system of Asante..



Moreover, the fifth topic (Performing Arts displayed in the social system) also laid bare the involvement of Performing Arts in the social system. Osei Agyeman brought to light the dramatic rites attached to naming ceremonies in Asante, while Nketia also disclosed the sway of lullaby. Rattray, another writer, also describes the rites performed by pregnant women when a pregnant woman dies. Meanwhile, Bame, Sarpong and Ameyaw-Benneh discussed the involvement of Performing Arts in all the death rites.

In the economic system and the Performing Arts, Rattray and Nketia describe some rites performed under this system which has dramatic orientation. Under the pivotal role of Performing Arts in the religion of Asante, the researcher unveil the facts that, dance, drumming, singing and dancing are prerequisite to African traditional culture. Agordoh and Nketia agreed on the fact that the gods are music loving Gods. Meanwhile, Rattray established the facts that dance is important in religion. On drama, Kwakwa (1974) and Agordoh (1994) acknowledged that, the deities act through the shrine priest and priestess.

Lastly, concerning the medical system and the Performing Arts, Osei and Beecham unveil the fact that music and dance are employed in the entire therapeutic activities.

Having gone through this review exercise, it could be said that at least Performing Arts permeate every activity organised within Asante's culture. This review exercise has broadened the researcher's knowledge in Asantes' Performing Arts and will therefore wish to research to find out some unanswered questions that went through the researchers mind. Meanwhile, some descriptions that raised concern such as that of Busia's description of entoolment of kings will be looked into for clarification.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter is devoted to the methods used in collecting the necessary data in writing this thesis. It deals with the data collection instruments and the research design. It also delineates the population for the study and the sample that the study sought the information from.

3.1 Research Design

The study principally focused on the description of the observances of the Performing Arts rudiments in the Asante cultural heritage. In this vein, the research problem was best answered by a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a systematic process of describing, analysing and interpreting insights discovered in everyday life (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This research design allowed the researcher to meet the purpose of the research. Thus, the research design refers to the overall plan employed by the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions and for testing the hypotheses formulated (Agyedu, *et al.*, 2007).

The various techniques employed in gathering the necessary data were questionnaire, interview, observation and field notes of the various performances in the culture of the people. Since the various Performing Arts have been with the people's culture for a long period it resulted in the use of the descriptive and interpretative methods of research in writing this thesis. Relevant questionnaire were distributed to respondents to divulge data pertinent to the study.

To validate the data collected, the method of participatory observations of the Performing Arts was done and this obviously made the researcher give better interpretations to the observances.

3.2 Library Research

The following libraries were helpful to the researcher, the Balme Library, International Centre for African Library and the Institute of African Studies Library, all of the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, the British Council Library, also in Accra. Furthermore, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology main and College of Art and Social Science Libraries, Kumasi, the library of the University of Education, Winneba, University of Cape Coast library, and the Cultural centre library in Kumasi were also indispensable to the research.

Various books and articles on Asante culture were read with focus and, keen interest on the Performing Arts such as the music, dance, drama and drumming. The journals consist of magazines, newspapers and newsletters. In addition, unpublished theses from undergraduate and graduate students were read from the various libraries mentioned earlier. The bulk of the literature was found at the African Studies and Balme libraries of the University of Ghana, Legon, the University College of Education library, Winneba and the University of Cape Coast library, Cape Coast.

3.3 Population for the Study and Sampling

In considering the population for the study, the researcher first of all determined the parameters and the elements involved in the setting. The term population refers to the

complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested. According to Busha and Harter (1980:60), the concept of population is the basis to narrative, analytic and interpretive research. According to Fox (1969:94) the population, the universe, the accepted sample and the data-producing sample are the stages or the elements in the sampling process. Universe stands for all possible respondents or measures of a certain kind. It was based upon the information gathered and the number of respondents from the categories (A, B, C and D) of the population, coupled with research time constraints that prompted the researcher to take thirty percent of the randomly selected sample. This therefore became the targeted and accessible population.

The significance of the categorization is that it has helped to substantiate the adequacy of the existing literature and unearthed new information relating to the role of the Performing Arts in Asante culture. It furthermore afforded the interviewees an ample opportunity to give their sincere view about the Performing Arts and how effectively and efficiently the present researcher can analyse the data in projecting the cultural heritage of Asantes.

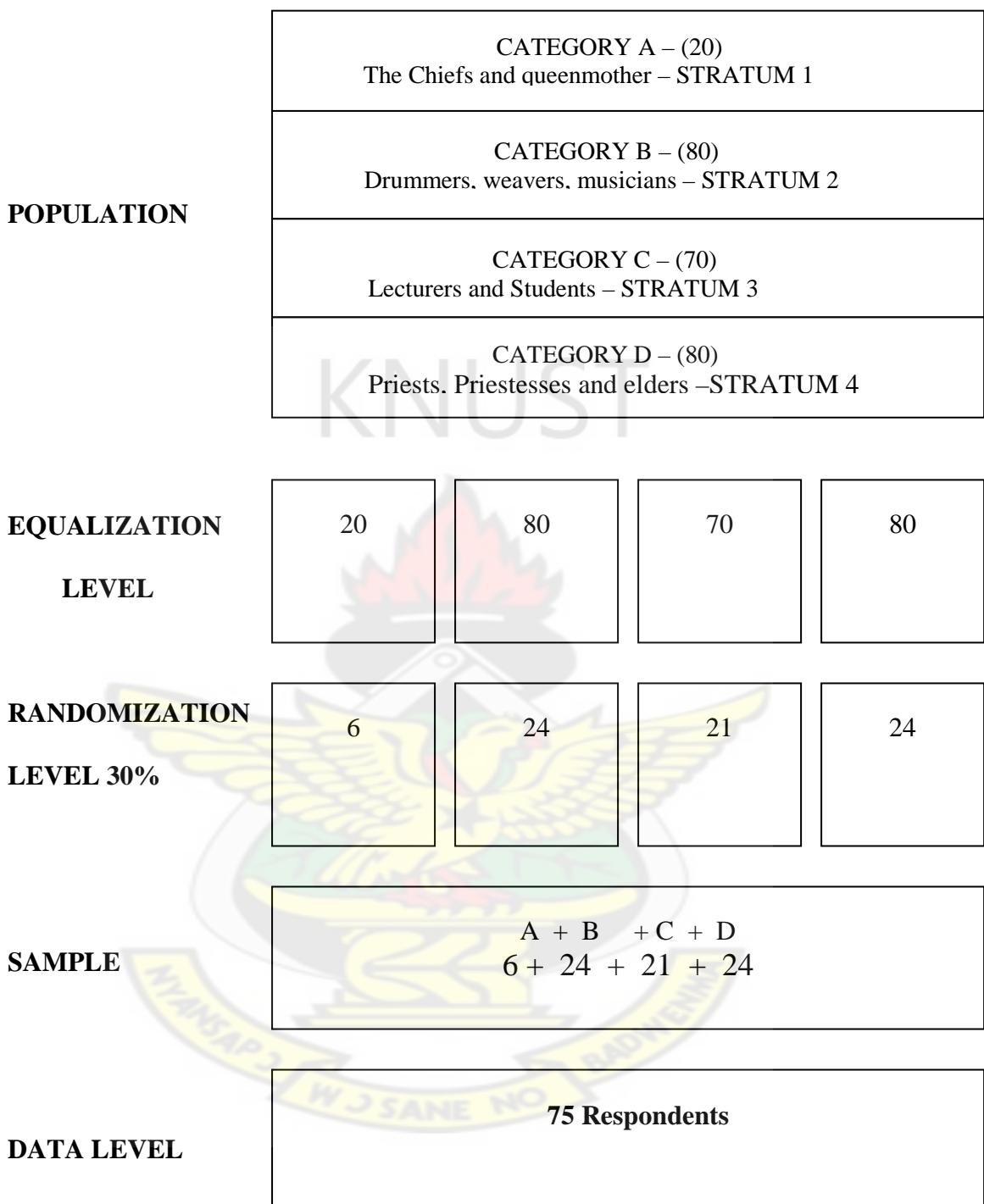
The population of the study is important as it gives a vivid and fair account on how the research was conducted. The theory of population is basic to descriptive, analytic and interpretive research. The table below shows the population this research studied, and for this reason it became relevant to study the characteristics of the population. The criteria for the selection of the category of population are that Category A comprises the chiefs and queen mothers in the Asante kingdom. They were all put into one category since they are especially in the know of the rich culture of the Asante.

Category B comprises carvers, farmers, weavers, hunters, drummers, dancers, and singers who perform during ceremonial activities in Asante. Category C involves members of learning institutions such as lecturers, research fellows, teachers, teaching assistants, demonstrators, undergraduate and graduate students. They were all grouped together because they study and analyse the findings of various researches in order to enrich their knowledge. Category D consists of the elders of the various palaces, priest and priestesses of the various shrines in the traditional area. The table below shows the number of population of the categorization.

Table 3.1: Categorization of population and number

Category	Population	Number of Population
A	The chiefs and queen mothers	20
B	Drummers, singers, weavers' dancers, farmers, carvers, and hunters.	80
C	Lecturers and students	70
D	Priests and priestesses and elders of palaces	80
Total		250

Table 3.2: Schematic Overview of Stratified Random Sampling Design



Busha and Harter (1980) write that for a quality research, thirty percent of the total respondents are accepted. Each stratum is homogenous and the total sample was shared

among the four strata of the total population. The table shows the percentage of the respondents in each stratum.

Table 3.3: Percentage of sample

Status	No. of Sample	Percentage (%)
The Chiefs and Queen mother	6	8
Drummers, Singers and Dancers etc	24	32
Lecturers and Students	21	28
Priests and priestesses	24	32

The formular:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of Sample}}{\text{Total Number}} \times 100\%$$

3.4 Survey Instruments

The survey instruments used for this research were questionnaires, interviews (structured, semi and unstructured interviews) and on-sight observation of the various ceremonies to elicit data from the informants with regards to the role of Performing Arts in the Asante culture.

3.5 Questionnaire Design and Validation

The questionnaire was structured under the various cultural components namely: political, social, economic, medical, religious and the belief aspects of the people of Asante. Most of the questions were the open type of answering in which the respondents have the opportunity to express themselves. For this reason, enough space was provided to allow them pen down their opinions. The questionnaire was validated by the supervisor and some colleagues in the department. A sample of the questionnaire could be found in Appendix B.

3.6 Questionnaire Administration

Exactly seventy five copies of the questionnaire designed to solicit for answers were self administered to the various categories of the population sample. A few of the questionnaire were posted to prospective respondents due to far distance. The respondents were allowed ample time (two weeks) to complete the questionnaire. About eighty five percent worked within time frame given. 94.6% respondents returned their completed questionnaire, and with the various answers, views of the various categories were known.

Table 3.4: Number of questionnaire returned from respondents

Sample	Prospective Respondents	Returned
Category A	6	5
Category B	24	22
Category C	21	21
Category D	24	23
Total	75	71

On the whole, 94.6% respondents returned the questionnaire.

3.7 Interviews Conducted

The researcher employed the structured and semi-structured interview guide to help her solicit information from her interviewees. Regarding structured interviews Assimeng (1989:34) in discussion how to conduct research on religious systems proposes that, structured interviews on lines of carefully prepared survey designs should be employed in such research works. The researcher took into consideration Assimeng's proposal and

worked along that path. Interviews conducted were mostly in Twi language especially with the Chiefs, queen mothers, the musicians and the priests and priestesses. Even the lecturers and research fellows interviewed were more expressive in the local language than the English Language. The interviewees sometimes shifted from the questions being asked and for this reason were directed by the researcher to discuss the relevant issues pertaining to the research problem. This was made possible because of the structured interview tool that the researcher adopted.



Research interview could be defined as face-to-face meeting between the interviewer and interviewee, or an oral presentation of an opinion or attitude scale.

The researcher noticed that during these research periods, the interviews were more rewarding than any of the survey instruments. This could be from the fact that the respondents were more willing to talk in order to express themselves than to write as they get more opportunity to elaborate on their opinions when they talk. This assertion by the researcher is also confirmed by Manford (1995:35) that interviews are suitable for some category of people, especially the semi-literate who prefer talking to writing.

3.8 Observation

The central form of the research was based on observation of the various activities in Asante culture. Nisbet (1977:15) has emphasized that observation is not a ‘natural gift’ but a highly skilled activity for which an extensive background knowledge and understanding are required and also the capacity for original thinking and the ability to spot significant events.

Without observatory participation, the researcher would not be able to ascertain the authenticity of the data gathered from the respondents and the interviewees. It furthermore gave the researcher the opportunity to gain affinity with the various performers such as the skilful dancers, traditional singing groups, known as the divine drummers and the various musical instruments that serve as the source of the music that is provided.

The researcher also came into contact with the act of pouring libation and the saying of poetic prayers which are forms of Performing Arts in Asante culture. Most of the observations took place at the ceremonial grounds such as Manhyia palace of the king of Asante in Kumasi, the various palaces of the chiefs in Asante (Dwaben, Edweso, Bekwai, Asafo, Adum etc) and the shrines of the various priests and priestesses (Nana Akua Afra of Onwe, Nana Amoako of Yaw Nkrumah, Komfooc Adasi of Akyinakrom) in the traditional area.

A digital camera was used to take photographs to visually illustrate and throw more light on the text. In all these, not all the ceremonies were observed by the researcher since some of the rites were performed indoors (*werempe* rites- blackening of the death king's stool, consecration of stools, feeding of the ancestors, etc.) Because of the researcher's frequent visits to the various palaces of the chiefs, the shrines of the priests and priestesses and the ceremonial grounds, she gained rapport with the various officials.

3.9 Data Analysis Plan

The data collected from the field work were assembled according the patterns and themes. It was also coded and edited, analysed and interpreted, conclusions drawn and recommendations made.

3.10 Summary of Discussion

A practical approach has been employed by the researcher in writing this thesis. The chapter has made it clear that all the survey instruments were rewarding but the interviews were more rewarding than any of the data gathering devices. Relevant fields of the study have been observed and important information of the role of the Performing Arts in their culture have been revealed to the researcher from dependable sources. Among the informants are the chiefs, queen mothers shrine priest and priestesses, elders of the various palaces just to mention a few. They were of immense help as they provided in-depth information to the researcher.

The next chapter of this thesis critically looks at Asante Performing Arts in the other cultural components and outlines their involvement in the cultural components namely: political, social, economic, religious, medical and the belief system of the people.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

In Asante, one cannot talk of the people's cultural components without making reference to music, drama, dance and drumming. Asante's Performing Arts permeate all the activities of Asante's cultural components namely: political, social, economic, religious and medical aspects, as well as the people's belief. Performing Arts in this study are that type of art that are executed for entertainment, correction, and for the appreciation of the onlooker. The type of music, dance, or drama that is performed in a particular cultural component depends on the event in question. For instance, the enthronement in the political system is marked with certain types of music, dance, and drama, as discussed later in this chapter.

This chapter re-counts the events in the cultural components that are graced with the Performing Arts. For the purpose of the chapter to be accomplished, the researcher narrated the activities within the cultural components (that involve Performing Arts) and pinpointed the Performing Arts as and when they appeared in the narration.

4.1 Performing Arts and the political system

Performing Arts are used enormously in the political system in that; almost every activity organized within it involves these arts (from enthronement of a king through to his death). The enthronement, duties, and death ceremonies of the Asante kings have similar orientation with that of the paramount chiefs, chiefs and sub-chiefs. In view of this, the

researcher has chosen to write on the Performing Arts involved in the activities of the *Asantehene* (the king of all Asantes).

In Asante, when a king dies or is destooled, the next headache of the elders and queen mother is the choice of a successor. Upon the death of the 15th monarch, (Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II), those who qualified to ascend the throne and were interested, made their intentions known to the queen mother (Nana Afua Kobi Ampem II) through the process of “*dwantoa*” (using an intermediary to present one’s intentions to the queenmother) in similar idiomatic expressions, Odotei (2001:19) in explaining the twi word *dwantoa* writes, “appealing to an intermediary to present one’s wishes to the queenmother” The queen mother by tradition is the person, who in consultation with the royal family nominates a king. One of the people who goes through the process of “*dwantoa*” is selected by the queen mother based on certain criteria (whether the person is a true royal, has been brought up very well, has good character, has occupied responsible positions before, has not been convicted of any crime, has no trace of deformity, has not in any way misconducted himself or is addicted to alcohol).

Having satisfied herself of the eligibility of the candidate, she waits for the *Gyaase* (The general supervisor of the duties of king’s palace) to come and ask of the name of the chosen one. She discloses him to them and he (the king elect) pays an *aseda sika* (thank you fee) through his spokesman. This whole process (the paying of the *aseda*) is dramatized by the spokesman. The spokesman of *Gyaase* also accepts the money on behalf of them. The king- elect proceeds to thank them for accepting his money. This is usually coupled with singing and jubilation from the people gathered outside the palace. In the case of the sixteenth (16th) monarch of Asante, Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II, (previously

known as Barima Kwaku Duah), the people who were outside the palace sang “*Ose*” (jubilation song). One could hear short songs like the following:

Aba mu awie 2x
Onyame bɔhyɛ no, aba mu awie

Translated as

It has come to pass
God’s promise has come to pass.

Asanteman onie
ɔhene dada kɔ oo!
ɔhene foforo aba oo!
Mo nhya no oo!”

Translated as

Asante nation here is he.
The old king is gone ooh!
A new king has come
Go and meet him ooh!

The nominated king is subsequently presented to the *Gyaase*, the paramount chiefs and the Kumasi Traditional Council. (In the case of chiefs and sub-chiefs, they are presented to their elders and superior chief respectively). What usually follows the presentation is the swearing-in ceremony. The queen mother on her way to the swearing-in ceremony is accompanied by *fɔntɔmfrom* drum players and horn blowers, all performing behind her in procession.

One dramatic element during the swearing in of Nana Osei Tutu II is the art of bargaining. Observation revealed that the nominated king was asked to pay an acceptance fee by the various chiefs of Asante. This was fourteen million cedis (₵14,000,000.00) and twelve cartons of “schnapps”. Upon these demands, the nominated king’s spokesman humbly pleaded with them for a reduction of the fees. After persistent bargaining, the

people consented to reduce the fee to ten million cedis (¢10,000,000.00) and ten cartons of “schnapp”. The bargaining process to the onlooker and the chiefs themselves may look like an organized form of drama. In the second act, the Chiefs and the *Gyaase* asked for the stool name of the nominated king and he responded Osei Tutu II (Ababio). He then went for the *Mponponsuo* sword; (from the Mponponsuhene on payment of a fee); with it in his hands, he addressed the chiefs by pointing the sword to each direction and then proceeds to take his oath. In his oath he pronounced that Osei Poku, Nana Bonsu, Nana Agyeman and Nana Kwame Kyeretwie were all his uncles and then said Opoku Ware II was his elder brother and that if his brother had “gone to the village” and he had been asked to succeed him, he needed to rule well to protect his people just like his forefathers. He ended by saying, “lest I violate the oath”.

Another dramatic element and even to the onlooker, is the way Otumfo Osei Tutu II held the sword to point at each direction and proceed to address the chiefs would be appreciated as an aspect of drama by him (the dramatist). Plate 1 shows of Otumfo Osei Tutu II with a raised sword (in his hands) swearing. Immediately the nominated king brings his oath swearing to an end, there is a great jubilation coupled with drumming and dancing.

He (the nominated king) proceeds to sit in state at *Pramakesieso* (a place at Manhyia Palace) with all his sword bearers in front of him. He then receives various oath swearings from chiefs, (*Kontire, Akwamu, Nifa, Benkum, Adonten, Oyoko, Kyidom, Gyaase, Ankɔbea* and *Nkɔsuo*), sword bearers and other palace attendant heads .

What usually follows this event is thanksgiving. Here the king sits in state and receives congratulatory message from chiefs and dignitaries. He then gives a thanksgiving speech to all the chiefs, elders and even the entire community. The Performing Art that features here is music by the *kwadwomfo*. They perform before and after he gives his thanksgiving speech.



Plate 1: Otumfuo Osei Tutu II swearing the great oath of Asantes on his swearing ceremony at Manhyia Palace in April 1999.

Source: From the album of Kwabena Poku (Ashanti New-town).

The king afterwards is confined in the palace and made to carefully study the culture of his people. This period is very important as the king learns how to dance gracefully, eat, sit, talk and everything that pertains to majestic ruling. This statement finds expression in Bame (1991: 7) that “the extended period of tutorship in dancing as in other items of

behaviour expected of a chief.” Bame’s portion of the story suggests that, the dances and other royal etiquettes are very important to the Asantes. The King is confined to learn the dances, the music, the drums, proverbs, traditional laws (for settlement or arbitration), and all the things relating to his culture (Personal interview, Nana Kwame Ofori, curator at the half-buried Okomfo Anokye sword, KATH, August, 2006). Odotei (2001:17) gives a similar account “ under Asante tradition the Asantehene elect was confined for a period of forty days during which he was given tuition on Asante culture, traditional laws, governance, body movements and traditional dances” On the same issue , Kyeremateng (n.d:20) and Osei (2009:17) reports the same phenomena.

The final installation rites follow immediately after the confinement. Research through interviews revealed that these rites are performed at Pampaso (Adum – Kumasi) and that it is closed to the public. It was disclosed again that, among the rites is an enactment of historical events that took place during the installation rite of Otumfo Opoku Ware I. Oral history has it that, Opoku Ware I was staying with Pampaso *Hemaa* (queen mother) before he was called to ascend the stool. The then queen mother carried Opoku Ware I on her back and refused to release him to *Gyasehene*(general supervisor of the kings palace) *Akyeamehene* (the chief of the spokesmen) and *Nseniehene* (chief of *Nsenie* town) who were sent by *Mamponghene* (the chief of mampong)on three occasions and finally accepted to release him upon receiving a fee. This dramatic act, claimed by one of the researchers informants, has since been re-enacted by the queen mother of *Pampaso* (a suburb of Kumasi) as part of the rites. In the case of Otumfo Osei Tutu II, the researcher was told she received *predwan nsia* (an amount of ₦24,000 in the old currency and two cedis, forty pesewas in the new currency) before she changed her mind.

One interesting dramatic act of the king that precedes the above act is the *piesie* (first born) spear act. In this act, upon arrival at the *Pampaso*, the king goes straight to where *piesie* (first born) spear is planted and leans with his back on it three times. Meaning, he will forever depend on it. Three in Asante means “it will never end”.

Another dramatic rite that Nana Nkrumah (one of the spokesperson of Akwamuhene) and some of my interviewees disclosed is the handing over of the *Busumuru* sword (Principal sword of the state believed to be a sign of empowerment) and the wearing of *Denkyemkye* (crocodile hat) to the nominated king. My informants further said, *Wadie Adwumakasehene* (the chief of Wadie Adumakase- one of the towns in Asante) who is a custodian of the *Busumuru* sword is invited at this time to Pampaso (suburb of Kumasi). On his arrival, he goes straight to Pampaso *fie* (house) without greeting to connote the seriousness of his mission. He then presents the sword to the king saying:

I present to you your authority
Your grandsire Nana Osei Tutu
Used this sword in war
I hand it over to you

This saying is repeated three times of which the King responds ‘I accept it’ (three times). He (*Wadie Adwumakesehene*) places the *Denkyemkye* (crocodile hat) three times on the installed king and finally leaves it on his head. The three times connotes: may the king live forever. This *Denkyemkye*, according to oral tradition, was worn by Osei Tutu I when he was asked to return from Denkyira to succeed his uncle Obiri Yeboah (the then chief of Kwamang, now Kumasi). This hat has since been recognized as the crown for Asante’s kings on coronation days. Immediately after this act, the king then swears an oath and then dances to the tune of *Apredē* drums. Having gone through this, he returns to the assembly of chiefs and dances to *fɔntɔmfrɔm* drums..

Having finished, the installed Asantehene but not yet enstooled has to go through firing of musketry ceremony which is customarily observed at the palace durbar ground. According to Nana Poku (tour guard at Manhyia Palace museum) this is to prove to Asante nation that he is capable of commanding the Asante army and to assure his people that he is ready to defend Asante nation. However, in the case of Otumfo Osei Tutu II, Kumasi Sports Stadium (now called Baba Yara Stadium) was the ceremonial ground for the firing of the musketry, because of the large crowd. The king dressed in *batakari keseε* (grand military tunic or a war dress), sat in palanquin (for the first time) and proceeded (in a procession) to the stadium (see Plate23 in Appendix A). He was followed by *fɔntɔnfɔm* music, and at one point in time he danced to the tune of the drums. Upon reaching the ceremonial grounds, the king shows his skills in musketery to the military groups who also respond whilst the king takes the opportunity to greet dignitaries gathered. The rites were crowned with drumming, singing and dancing. This ceremony was very short. This rite has been documented before by Kyeremateng (n.d: p25) when discussing Otumfo Osei Agyemang Prempeh II installation rite. He writes:

The king- elect in his palanquin arrives at Banpanase to demonstrate that he would be capable of commanding the Ashanti forces on the battlefield... On alighting from his palanquin the King-elect walks to the Queenmother of Ashanti, the Oyoko Amanhene (headed by the Juaben-hene), Konti and Akwamu Chiefs, Right Wing Chiefs (headed by the Mamponhene), Left Wing chiefs (headed by the Assumengyahene (Adonten Chiefs, Kyidom and Gyase Chiefs (the Kyidom ne mema Gyase) and the Linguists (Akyeame). When he gets to each of these groups the King-elect starts firing and it is responded to by the chiefs and followers of each group simultaneously.”

Banpenase as stated by Kyeremateng is a place of drippings known in Asante as *asonyieso*. It is this place that Asante dead Kings body are laid for the liquid in the flesh to come out before they are later join with Gold. This place is located in Adum (a suburb of Kumasi).

Meanwhile the climax of the whole installation rite takes place on the evening of the same day at the palace. Here the king elect is lowered three times onto the Golden Stool by Mampong chief and the *Adɔnten* chiefs holding his right, *Essumegya* chief and all the *Benkum*(left) chiefs take care of his left hand. The *Krontire* and *Akwamu*(military flanks) chiefs take hold of his right foot while the *Gyaase*, *Ankɔbea*, *Manwere* and *Nkosuo* chiefs take hold of his left foot. His waist is handled by *Akyempenhene* and *Kyidom* chiefs. Meanwhile, the *Kwadwomfo* (the court mistrels) recounts the braveness of the past king and spells out the task ahead of the king, and the horn blowers' display alongside. The various Asante kings pledge their allegiance to him and the golden stool by swearing in turns. Plate 2 is a picture of Mampong chief swearing.



Plate 2: *Mamponghene* swearing to Otumfоo on his enstoolment night
Source: Culled from “The Making of a King” video clip from the Manhyia Palace Museum.

The next day is marked as a Thanksgiving Day. The king meets his elders, paramount chiefs and the queen mother to extend his appreciation to them. The Performing Arts that

feature gracefully at this gathering is drumming, singing and horn blowing. The king on his way to the meeting is followed by *Kwadwomfoɔ* (praise singers) and horn blowers. They perform before and after the king's thanksgiving speech, by taking turns in performing. See Plate 3 for horn blowers performing at an *adɛɛ* festival.



Plate 3: Horn blowers performing at *adɛɛ* durbar held at Manhyia palace
Source: Photographed by the researcher.

In the foregoing discussion, the researcher has disclosed how Performing Arts feature prominently in the nomination, installation, enstoolment and the thanksgiving of a king. She shall however proceed to discuss the involvement of the Performing Arts in the duties of the kings in Asante.

4.1.1 Performing Arts and the tripartite responsibility of the Kings in Asante

Administratively, in Asante, the assumption of a political office is also marked with Performing Arts. Immediately an Asante king ascends the stool, he is confronted with the threefold responsibility namely priesthood (religious head), adjudication of disputes (judiciary) and commander-in-chief (military head). Agordoh (1994:35) also shares the

same view as the researcher, and he writes: “in African societies, as soon as a traditional chief/king is installed, his responsibility becomes tripartite. He assumes the cultural role as religious head, judicial head and military or political head.” The performing arts are displayed in all the administrative roles of the king mentioned by the researcher and Agordoh

Firstly, Asante kings perform their priesthood activities mainly during festivals. These festivals are “*adεε*” (resting place) and *odwira* (purification). There are small *adεε* and big *adεε* but the Performing Arts within the big *adεε* would be discussed. However the small *adεε* would be later discuss under the social system. For the benefit of the topic, the researcher will not give a detailed account of the *adεε* festival but will only look at where and when Performing Arts are displayed and pinpoint those areas. The big *adεε* is celebrated in two weeks starting from the Saturday of the first week through to the second Sunday. The first Saturday (*Memenda dapaa*) is a day for tidying up the community (*ahosiesieda*) and remembering the ancestors.

The *kuntunkunidεε* (Sunday after *Memenda dapaa*) is a day of remembrance (a day for remembering the royal ancestors.) The king in the morning moves from *Sankroase* (some part of palace) to climb the palanquin to the durbar grounds (*dwaberem*). Before he does so, the singers sing:

*Osei aa na yesuro no
Osei Tutu boafuo aka aka aka
Osei aa na yesuro no.*

Translated as:

Osei ah! Is the only one, we are afraid of.
Osei Tutu who likes fighting and fighting
Osei ah! Is the only one, we are afraid of

Ntahara hyenfo (horn blowers - refer Plate 3), *akyeremadefo* (drummers) follow the king in procession (to the durbar grounds) performing, while the *Kyemsoafo* (shield bearers) spin their shields to the drum music. See plates 4 and 5 which show drummers and shield bearers performing in the King's procession respectively. In palanquin, the king dances to the tune of the *Fontomfrom* drums holding a gun and a sword



Plate 4: *Fontomfrom* drums being played behind Otumfo Osei Tutu II in 2004
adεεkesεε on his way to Manyia Dwabrem(durbar ground)

Source: Photographed by the researcher.



Plate 5: Shield bearers tossing and spinning their shield to the tune of *Fontomfrom* drum known as *akyem*.

Source: Culled from *adεεkesee* 2004 video clip.

After dancing, the king proceeds to sit in state while the *kwadwomfoɔ* (court minstrels) sing to recount the exploits of their ancestors. They recall how their illustrious kings broke the yoke from Denkyira and built up the Asante kingdom. The queen mother follows immediately the king takes his seat. *Bɔdwoafɔɔ* (her maidservants) precede her in the procession and move to the rhythm of the drums whiles the queenmother dances to the tune of the drums. Meanwhile the musical ensembles and horn blowers perform at the background. The *kwadwomfoɔ* sing afterwards while the horn blowers and *fɔntɔnfrɔm* drummers perform in that order. This is repeated in that order for some few minutes then the king starts to give the reasons for the durbar, (remembering the royal ancestors who laid down their lives for Asante land) and gives the details for the programme line up the for *Adεεkesee*.

The next day is a visit to Lake Bosomtwe. The whole ritual at the lake is dramatized by the person the king assigns to do so. Libation is performed at the lake, calling on the

spirit of the lake to come and drink wine and also asking it to continue to supply them with fish. This presentation to the observer may look like drama; for the way the performer speaks to the lake makes it easy for one to think that, it is a human being. To the dramatist, the lake and the performer are the main characters in the story. In 2004 *Adεεkeseeε*, watched by the researcher on a video clip (acquired from the Manhyia Palace museum), fowl and cow were used in addition to the wine for the sacrificial ceremony. In the process of sacrificing, the priest strangled and tore the head of the fowl and threw it into the Lake. It is believed that when the Lake accepts the sacrifice (offered him), the fowl will lie on its back signifying acceptance by the Lake. The cow is also slaughtered and dragged into the Lake. The same belief attached to the fowl is also attached to the cow.

The Tuesday preceding *Adεεkeseeε* is the *Atanosu* rites. The various priests of River Tano come to perform to portray their powers. These rites the researcher was told is performed to show the king that he is protected. In this rite, drumming, singing, dancing and dramatic performances by the various priest and priestesses usually take the most part of it. See Plate 25, 26, 27 in Appendix A for some of these dramatic performances. The king on his way to this rite (the durbar grounds at the Manhyia Palace), is accompanied by drum music and when he sits in state, the *kwadwomfoɔ* (court minstrels) as usual sing to exalt him.

The next day which is a Wednesday (*Awukudεε*) is the day set aside for the king to visit his royal ancestors and also offer them food. That is, he enters the room where blackened stools, serving as the shrines of his royal ancestors are kept. The king in the morning visits the mausoleums to serve the ancestors with food. Afterwards, he comes to sit in

state. The king is again accompanied by drummers and vocal musicians who play music in his honour. Each subordinate chief greets him in turn, while the horn blowers and *kwadwomfoɔ* on the other hand perform along at each greeting (of the chiefs). The former performers are the last group to perform at the gathering.

On the Thursday, *nsumankwafoɔ* (the king's traditional physicians) gather at the palace to perform *sumangroɔ* (Traditional physicians dance). It is worthy to note that this dance was performed in war times to offer protection to the warriors but in recent times it is a ceremonial dance performed as part of *Adεεkeseε* festival. Otumfoɔ who features in the dance, however, graces the occasion at the end of the ceremony. See Plate 6 below for the *sumankwaahene* (Traditional Physicians king) and his people.



Plate 6: *Sumankwaahene*, Baffour Domfeh Gyeabour (the one wearing a hat) and the other spiritual physicians dancing at the Manhyia palace as part of *adεεkeseε* festival in 2004

Source: Culled from 2004 *adεεkeseε* clip.

The dance went on for sometime before it came to an end. This is the song text the researcher learnt from 2004 *Adεεkeseε*:

*Yen ani aye kɔkɔɔ dada, Yen nsuro hwee
Ye ani aye kɔkɔɔ dada, Yen ani nsuro hwee*

Translated as:

Our eyes are red, our eyes does not fear anything

This was followed with a visit to Breman mausoleum by the king and his entourage. The researcher observed that the king on reaching mausoleum was welcomed by the horn blowers before he got down from his car, *kwadwomfoɔ* together with the king and the people present at the mausoleum sang songs of praise and historical songs. Remarkable events that took place throughout the rite were music and dance.

The Breman rite is usually followed by the consecration of stools of the past kings. One dramatic scene that the researcher saw on a video clip was how *Otumfoɔ* Osei-Tutu guarded the golden stool. He held a gun behind the stool when it came to the turn of the golden stool to be brought from the stool room (See Plate7).



Plate 7: Otumfo Osei Tutu II guarding the golden stool with a musket as part of *Adεεkeseε* in 2004.

Source: Culled from *Adεεkeseε* video clip from Manhyia Palace Museum.

The next day (Thursday preceding *Adεεkeseε*), a durbar is held to announce the coming event (*Adεεkeseε*). Usually, the king on his way to the durbar grounds is followed by *fɔntɔm* from drum music, horn music and vocal music (by the court minstrels). In the 2004 *Adεεkeseε* event, Otumfo Osei Tutu II on reaching the durbar grounds (Centre for National Culture, Kumasi,) was welcomed with a song by Nana Afua Kobi Ampem II and the past kings' wives. Let's observe the text of the song.

ɔhene bra oo!
Osei Ampem sei bra
Asantehene ye ɔdeefoɔ
ɔye ɔdeefoɔbebree
Asantehene ye barima
Oye obarima bebree”

Translated as

King, come ooh!
Osei Ampem come
The Asante king is a great one
He is too great

Other performing arts that featured at this stage were the dances of the queen mother, the past kings' wives, the presnt king's wife and the king himself. They all danced to the tune of *fɔntɔnfro* (an example of such group dance is displayed on Plate 28 in Appendix A).

On the day of *Adεεkeseε*, the chief drummer plays a drum which is believed to awake the ancestors and the gods and also to inform the community of the event of the day. Later in the day the king sits in state for the climax of the *Adεεkeseε*. In this event, the king on his way to the gathering is followed by royal drummers who beat *fɔntɔnfro* drums behind him (refer to Plate 5). In the case of the 2004, *Adεεkeseε*, Otumfo Osei Tutu II chose to organize the event at the Kumasi Sports Stadium (Baba Yara Stadium). On reaching there, he danced to the tune of *fɔntɔnfro* before he sat in state. The

various musical ensembles were at their best performing to grace the occasion. The various dignitaries came to greet him (the king). He then gave his speech, followed by the President's speech. The programme was very short and concise. The king on his way home again danced to the tune of *fɔntɔmfɔm* in his palanquin. Plate 8 gives a clearer picture of what has been described here.

Secondly, arbitration (or the exercise of judiciary functions) is one notable administrative duty of the kings in Asante. On-site observation revealed that, before the Asante king sits on his judgment seat (*hwedom*), the *kwadwomfoɔ* (praise singers) sing to praise the king about his wise way of settling disputes and in the middle of adjudication when the king goes for a brief rest, they may come in to display. At the end of the proceedings, these performers perform before the king finally retires for home.



Plate 8: Otumfo Osei Tutu II dancing to *fɔntɔmfɔm* drum music in Palanquin in April 2007 Akwasidae

Source: Photographed by the researcher

Thirdly, the king, as a commander-in-chief of the Asante army, is always needed to defend his people in times of war or injustice shown to them. The researcher realised through interviews that, Asantes are a peace loving people, but they are always ready to fight to defend themselves. For this reason, they are likened to a porcupine. The war cries of the Asante is “*Asante Kɔkɔ, wokum apem a, apem beba*” translated as “We are porcupine warriors, slay a thousand and a thousand more will come”

The researcher was told that, when the king and his people are going for war, their preparation involves Performing Arts. They sing inspirational songs whose text are as follows:

Song text one

*ɔyaa yeeh!
Osei aa! na yesuro no”
Osei kokudurufoɔ no no.
Osei aa! Na yesuro no*

Translated as

We are only afraid of Osei
Osei, the brave one
We are only afraid of Osei

Song text two

Who can turn the mighty warriors down?
No one but God. They are brave and strong
Slave a thousand and a thousand more will surface

The researcher discovered that this song was sung during the time of Osei Tutu I (the founder of Asante nation) and was subsequently sung by other Asante kings upon victory. One of the informants of the researcher disclosed that the king and his team of warriors usually act out their power of bravery and strength in a dance. This is in consonance with

what is recorded in the literature review of this thesis. (Opoku as cited in Bame 1991:25) concerning the four functions the *fɔntɔnfrom* suite is destined to serve.

The researcher's informant further stressed that, the dance is performed to challenge the priest (shrine) and the entire community to intensify their prayers so as to enable them to be victors of an impending war. Elaborating more on this, Nana Assumanin (Adum *Ankɔbeahene*) said, the dance is for royal people only, but in times of war, other people are invited to be part of the army through *fɔntɔnfrom* dance, and in acceptance the person chosen to join in the dance portray the fact that he has accepted the challenge. The women left behind also performed certain rites such the cursing of the enemy country. In this rite the queen mother and the women in the community sing along the streets inviting the deities to come and curse the enemy country. They also strip themselves naked at night and invoke curses on their enemies.

Upon victory, the queen mother, together with the women in the community, sings victory or jubilation songs to meet the warriors. They sing songs such as:

Who is coming? Nana Osei Tutu and his men. They've won the battle. Thanks be to the gods. No one can fight the mighty porcupine warriors for they are brave and strong. Slay a thousand and a thousand more will come.

This is similar to what the women in the Bible did when David killed Goliath (1 Samuel 18:6 & 7). They sang that Saul had slain a thousand but David ten thousand. Nana Asumaning further compared Asante wars and the warriors to those of the Israelites (how they fought selflessly for their nation and their dedication towards Asante nation). To this end, it may be said that traditional people are proud of their tribe and their culture, and

they are willing to say good things about it. Invariably, one may not be surprised about Nana Asumaning's comparison.

After a victorious war, Asantes will organize a durbar and fire musket to celebrate their victory. The purpose of the durbar is to express their gratitude to the warriors and community members (for selfless dedication towards the war), share booty and also to assign duties to the defeated chiefs (for they were not treated as slaves). Usually at this durbar, music, dance and drumming feature prominently (Personal interview, Osei Kwadwo, curator at Manhyia Palace Museum, October, 2006).

4.1.2 Performing Arts and the Death of a King

The death of a king or a chief in Asante brings mourning to the entire community or town. The whole town or community usually mourns the passing away of a noble king. Performing Arts pervade all the mourning process, (from the announcement of his death, through to the final funeral rite).

News of a dead king is spread by music. The researcher learnt this is done because, Asantes want to differentiate the death of the ordinary man from that of a king. They want to attach importance and style to the spreading of the news about the king's death. Recalling from the literature review, a priest upon realizing that a king was dead sings a song to inform people of the situation at hand. In Asante, news of a dead king could also be spread through proverbs or idioms such "*Odupon atutu*" (A mighty tree has fallen), "*胙 ne nsamankyire*" (He has joined the ancestors), "*Wada ne nsa benkum so*" (He has lain on his left side) and many others.

The short horn blowers known as *mmentiafo* (in Asante) soon resume their work after the message has been disseminated. The court minstrel or praise singers (*kwadwomfo*) sing their mournful doets, the poets (*Adumfo*) and *drugya* (flute) blowers all perform.

One dramatic act that precedes the spreading of news is the water ritual. In this act, one of the researchers informants disclosed that the queen mother of the deceased king, together with the son of the late king gives water (from a golden jug) to the dying king saying:

King, when death claims something no human being can resist it. If the sacrifice of human life, money and fame could redeem a life, we would have offered it. What we desire most, death desires too. We know you are on your way to meet the Ancestors. Please plead on our behalf. Don't let anybody die again. We will perform a grand funeral to honour you. We plead with you prevent any conflicts that could arise during your funeral. May we obtain money to repay all our debts? May favour from the ancestors be our portion?

The researcher was informed that, before the body of the king is laid in state, he is bathed by *Gyaase* after performing a ritual. The body is then placed on a special bed for dead kings. In the case of the *Asantehene* (Asante king), the body is laid in a special bed called porcupine (*kɔkɔ*) bed. The *Mmentiafo* (short horn blowers) provide music at intervals in praise of the deceased king and also remind people in the community of what has happened. A shrine priest is asked to pray for the deceased king, and later in the evening, the royal members and sympathizers keep wake at the bedside with drumming and singing in performance.

The next day marks the paying of respect by paramount chiefs, sub-chiefs and the people in general. The researcher was told the appearance and the mode of arrival of these royals (paramount and sub-chiefs) at this stage is very interesting. The sub-chiefs have very few people following them, but the paramount and the principal chiefs have very large

numbers of people following them (displaying their skills through singing and drumming). In the funeral rite of *Otumfoɔ* Opoku Ware II (the fifteenth monarch of Asante), the researcher observed that stool carriers, executioners, sword bearers, spokesman of a chief, arm bearers and praise singers precede every chief to announce his presence.

Royal drum carriers followed them with drum beats. This reminds readers of what was disclosed in the literature review concerning the fact that every Asante chief has drums kept and regarded as part of stool regalia. All the chiefs that came, with the exception of the sub-chiefs, were followed by drum music. The sub- chiefs were not followed by drums because they don't qualify to do so. The *Akyempemhene* with some of the royals, had grass in their mouths; an act of which was to prevent them from talking. In addition to the *koben* and *kuntunkuni* mourning cloth), their foreheads, shoulders and neck were besmeared with *ntwima* (ochre coloured clay), wreath of *esuan* (a climber), *nyanya* (grass) and *mrekenson* (palm leaves) were placed around their necks all to symbolize grief and pain. Throughout the paying of respect, traditional singers, dancers and drummers were not left out.

The singers sang songs of praises to the deceased king, reminding the sympathizers of the great tree that has fallen, the achievements of the king and past kings and the atrocious nature of death. One type of drum that featured prominently was the *aprede* drums. It is usually played to announce the king's presence and also at state mournings. Throughout the wake keeping and the paying of respect, singing, drumming and dancing were conspicuous. Three dramatic things precede the burial of dead kings in Asante. They are the swearing of oath by the various chiefs, presentation of *adesiedie* (burial items) and

food prepared by the traditional cooks. In the oath swearing, the researcher discovered through the various interviews that the chiefs take turns to swear to the corpse; on reaching where the deceased king is laid in state, the various chiefs were given the state sword to swear. Each of them points to the corpse saying:

I am chief so and so who occupies stool so and so. I am a rear guard, man has no power to resist death. If I had gone to war and there, you had fallen at the instance of the enemy if I had not then overtaken you to take the head of him and bury you with it I swear by the great oath

Concerning the *adesiedie* (burial items) the children, in-laws and other relatives and sympathizers (who were obligated to do so) dramatically present their burial items before the corpse of the king as if alive and could hear them, bring into focus dramatic orientation. The belief that he is not dead but journeying to the other world encourages the people to present their burial items. The third dramatic act, which is the last act before the deceased king, is the cooking of the best meal for the corpse. This connotes another dramatic scene. The traditional cooks prepare a meal to be eaten near the corpse by the *Gyaase* and the king's attendants. This takes the researchers mind back to Odotei's (2001:17) observation at Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II funeral, with which she reports, "The final act before Otumfoɔ was put in the casket was the meal cooked by the *sodoo* (that is his traditional cooks) to be eaten near the corpses by the *Gyaase* and Otumfoɔ's attendance. It is the last act of the king as a provider for his people." After this act, prayer is said over the corpse and conveyed for burial. The researcher discovered that, the kings of the Golden Stool, were not buried, but rather carried to Bampenase for the flesh to come off and the bones to be joined together with molten gold.

Nana Nkrumah (one of the sub- chiefs under the Akwamu chief of Asafo in Kumasi) and Nana Asumanin (the *Ankɔbeahene* of Adum) disclosed that in Asante the final funeral

rites are performed after a new king has been enstooled. This is done to ensure that the dead king's funeral is performed well and also to give a proof that, his successor has the ability to organize things well. Odotei (2001:33) intimated that "The organization of such a funeral involves a lot of planning and money, and the successful execution of the task is a further proof of the new chief's organizational ability and resourcefulness". This rite is usually done within a period of two weeks, according to Nana Nkrumah. At this stage, the porcupine bed (which the dead king was laid on) is dressed and guarded as if the king still lies on it.



In the case of Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II, the first Sunday of the days allotted for the funeral rite was *kuntunkunidεε* (a day for remembrance of all the royal ancestors). Nana Nkrumah also confirmed that, the final funeral rite is referred to as *Ayikεsee* (grand funeral) because it is performed for all the past kings of Asanteman(Asante Kingdom). On this day, the *Asantehene* (Asante King) and *Asantehemaa* (Asante Queen) sit in state at *dwaberem*. The researcher was informed that this period was declared a fasting period during the final funeral rites of Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II. Music, dance and drumming formed an integral part of this gathering. Priests and priestesses at the gathering portray their powers through dancing. Some conjured gifts from the sky and the ground and gave it to Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II (See Plate 26 in Appendix A for such a performance).

In the evening of the *kuntunkunidεε* (the day for remembering the royal ancestors), the king and his people keep wake. Again, drumming and singing and horn blowing are not left out. In Asante, the major events that are organised within the Asante king's funeral and that of paramount chiefs and sub-chiefs have similar orientation.

The researcher was told on the dawn of the Monday after the *kuntunkunidεε* that the queen mother (Nana Afua Kobi Ampem II) together with the children of the late king, the past kings' wives and the other royal women walked through the principal streets of Manhyia to Adum singing dirges and wailing.

After some few hours, the king together with Kumasi chiefs put on their traditional war dresses and began to fire musket as evident on Plate 9. This act was continued by other chiefs from Tuesday to Thursday, 21st to 23rd March, 2000, Odotei (2001:34). This is act is symbolic of greiving.



Plate 9: Firing of musket by the king of Asante and Chiefs.
Source: Culled from Otumfuo Opoku Oware II funeral video clip.

After this act the king sat in state later in the afternoon to receive sympathisers. Music, dance and drumming were at their best portrayed at this gathering. The various *nwomkorɔ* groups, *kete* and *kwadwomfoɔ* orchestra sung songs of praise to the king; the

drummers were also at their best playing to provoke the dancers to perform. This rightly finds assertion by Opoku's (1965:19) that "The drums act as prompters but sometimes engage in a dialogue with the dancer." Meanwhile the grandchildren go through the principal street to sing. See Plate 29 in Appendix A for, grandchildren (of Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II) singing along the principal street of Kumasi as part of the final funeral rite of Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II. Below are the lyrics of the song:

Nana awuo oo! yɛmmua nna oo!
Nana awuo oo! yɛmmua nna oo!

Translated as:

Grandfather is dead, we do not fast oh!
Grandfather is dead, we do not fast oh!

Invariably, children are not suppose to fast in Asante funeral, this explains why they are mostly exempted from the main rites. In view of this, if somebody who is advance in years dies, his or her grandchildren will have to perform this rite to tell the community that the deceased had grandchildren and therefore has achieve a lot. Again, Asantes like most African tribes, believe in procratation and so during funeral times grandchildren are used by some communities to measure how important a deceased was when alive. His wealth could also be measure by the size of his family, of which his grandchildren are not left out. (Personal interviews, Obaapanin Abena Mansa, Opanin Kwadwo Poku and others, Atwima Bebu, November 2005) Since Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II is an important personality his funeral rite would not have been complete without this rite.

After the gathering, the next day 24th March, 2000, was the day for breaking the fast which was started on the 19th of March, 2000. Later in the night, the "werepe" (consecration of stool) rite was performed by *Werempe* chief, *Bantamahene*, *Denyasehene*, *Anatahene* and *Dadeesoabahene* (All chiefs in Asante). This ceremony is a

close door activity; it is the time for blackening the stool of the late king with slaughtered sheep's blood. Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II stool was consecrated and the spirit of the dead king is at this time invoked to come and dwell in the stool. This act of invocation buttresses the fact that Asantes believe in their ancestors.

The following morning Saturday, 25th March, 2000 marked the *soarada* (purification) rite. The rite was commenced with drumming and dancing by the performing groups invited to the funeral. They included *fɔntɔnfrɔm* and *kete* orchestra. The video clip revealed some young men and women displaying their dancing skills. They displayed their grief through the dance by tilting their heads and supporting them with both palms, pointing their right fingers at their eyelids, placing both palms against the stomach, placing both hands on their heads and a lot more, signifying grief and pain.

Meanwhile a two apartment shed known in Asante as *soarapata* (purification shed) is erected in front of the queen mother's palace. The sculptural image of Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II is kept in one apartment and the sora food is also prepared in the other. The family members and all the royals of the golden stool then shaved their heads and cut their nails and placed them all in "Abusua kruwa" (family pot or chalice) place in the "surapata". The food is given to the ghost and the *abusua kruwa* is later carried to Breman. The researcher was told that the royals were free to wear any cloth from that day onwards, for the purification rite is officially freeing them from wearing the mourning cloth. Later that day, Otumfoɔ sat in state to welcome the late king's consecrated stool, from the "werempe." The *kwadwomfoɔ* (praise singers) were presenting, as usual, singing to recount the exploits of the past kings and also to announce the present situation (welcoming of the werempeh stool). The drummers were not left out. The stool was

matched to Otumfoɔ by Bantamahene, Denyasehene, the traditional guards and other people of the royal family. Otumfoɔ then joined the procession to the stool house. The stool was left in the stool house.

In the evening of that day, Otumfoɔ went to Breman accompanied by the “*abusua kruwa*”. The researcher was informed that what usually precedes this event is the clearing of path by the sons and grandsons of the golden stool. This path is believed to be a path of death. It was destroyed early the next day by the same people who cleared it. After the Breman rituals, the king spent the rest of the days to express his gratitude to his subordinate chiefs. It is evident from the foregoing narration that, the death and funeral rite of Asante chiefs employ Performing Arts throughout the ceremony.

4.1.3 The Drum Orchestra

Throughout the interviews conducted on the involvement of Performing Arts in Asante culture, it came to light that, their political system employs drumming a lot in its activities. As a result of this, the researcher painstakingly conducted an interview to reveal the various drums and their orchestorial groups.

Kete Orchestra

It is said to be one of Otumfoɔ's biggest musical ensemble and therefore bears the name “Otumfoɔ *agorɔ*” (Otumfoɔ's orchestra). As a result of this sole ownership by Otumfoɔ, any sub-chief in Asante who wants to owe one (*kete* orchestra) seeks permission from him before he (the chief) is allowed to have one. The *kete* orchestra is made up of the following drums: *kwadum*, *apentemma*, *donno*, *aburukua or adenemma*, *dawuro* (gong)

ntrowa and *petia*. With the exception of *donno* which is usually two, all the other drums under this orchestra that are played, come in singles. Plate 10 is Otumfo's *Kete* orchestra



Plate 10: Otumfo's kete orchestra drumming at a royal funeral at Manhyia palace

Source: Photograph by the researcher.

This orchestra is played in state of royal mourning (when a royal dies) and during festivals. It is only the king who can dance with his cloths and sandals together with handkerchiefs. Any other person who wants to dance to its tune must observe the etiquettes governing it by removing his sandals, tying his cloth around his chest and dance without handkerchief. The absence of such observance by the ordinary person, will lead to his or her punishment. It was also disclosed that *kete* drums are not allowed to be played anywhere, for if it happens, it will reduce the dignity of it. Agordoh (1994:36) in affirming the latter writes, "If the king's musical instrument is misused, it is believed the dignity of the dances and language associated with it are lowered."

Fontonfrom Orchestra

This orchestra is also owned by Otumfo and its original name is *fentenfrem*. *Fontonfrom* is just the corruption of the word *fentemfrem*. It comprises two *bomma* (big cylindrical drums with only the top covered with leather). The researcher discovered that, when two *bomma* comes together, it is referred to as *fontonfrom*. Every paramount chief in Asante has *bomma* orchestra. The work of this orchestra begins when the king is in state of mourning, when he is in a palanquin, when he is being enstooled, when he is celebrating a festival or any form of durbar and when he is going to war. The orchestra consists of *bomaa*, *ntumpan*, *dawuro*, *nnonno* (all these have two sets each). *Adukragya*, *apentemma* (*pasoo*), *berenkuo* (the last four also come in singles). All these drums combine to bring the *fontonfrom* tune. Unlike *adowa*, which is accompanied by music, *fontonfrom* is not. Samples of *fontonfrom* drums are evident in Plate 11.



Plate 11: A royal dancing to the tune of *fontonfrom* at an *Adεεkesee* festival
Source: Photographed by the researcher.

***Mpintim* Orchestra**

This orchestra originated from Dagombaland. This information directly finds assertion in Opoku's statement. "The *mpintim* drum ensemble of large round gourd which provides music for royal procession, show Asante link with Gonjas, Dagombas and the northern ethnics" Opoku (1987:191). His statement has made mentioning of when these drums are played, but the researcher wants to go extra mile to give details about what they usually do in royal procession. Pragmatically, the work of the *mpintim* orchestra is to praise the king and also urge him to walk well so as not to stumbling (when he is not in palanquin). Below is an example of *Mpintin* tune played when the king is in palanquin:

Palanquin *Nnonkɔ bebu*
 Nkoo bedɔɔso wokwan so

Walking *Nante brebre*
 To wobo ase
 Na hwe yie na wonan ampim boo
 Pegya wo nan

Translated as:

Walk slowly, slowly be patient
Nana be careful, so that you don't stumble

The kings in Asante are thought to have more knowledge into the meaning of the drums. They are able to understand and interpret the sounds that emanate from the beating of the the drum. For example, they are able to interpret a sound of the drum as "take care, so that you don't stumble". In response, the king will look down and walk cautiously so that he does not stumble. Plate 12 is Otumfoɔ's *mpintin* orchestra



Plate 12: Otumfo's *mpintin* orchestra leading a procession from sankroasi (A place at Manhyia palace) to *adεε* durber held at Manhyia Palace

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

Akwadum

The researcher discovered through her interviews that, Akwadum is one of the oldest orchestra which Asantes see as very interesting and it is used in entertaining the kings in Asante. The drums consist of the following musical instruments: *atumpan* (talking drum), *akwadum*, *apentemma*, *petia* and *dawuro*.

Adowa orchestra

Adowa, unlike *kete*, is owned by every community. It is played during funerals and other social functions. It plays both political and social roles. The orchestra involves: *ntumpan* (talking drums), *petia*, *apentemma* drum, *nnonno*, metal gong (*dawuro*) and *ntrowa* with the accompaniment of songs usually led by a vocalist. This is one orchestra with which people can express their sentiments such as grief, pain, and joy.

Sikyi Orchestra

This orchestra is accompanied by singing like the *adowa* orchestra. The orchestra combines the tune of *sikyi* drum (also known as *gyamadudu*), *apentemma*, *adenemmma*, *donno*, square tambourine drum, *dawuro* (small metal gong), *frikyiwa* (castanet) and bamboo sticks. Plate 13 below is an example of *sikyi* orchestra at a royal funeral



Plate 13: *Otumfo Osei Tutu's sikyi orchestra displaying at a royal funeral in 2006 at Manhyia Palace.*

Source: Photographed by the researcher.

Penpensiwa

This orchestra is employed to praise people and also to express people's sentiments like the *Adowa* orchestra. *Penpensiwa* drum, *nnawuta* (double gong), *nnawuro* and *frikyiwa* (castanets) Aside these orchestral drums, there are single drums that are used enormously in Asantes' political system and at their work. These drums do not necessarily form their own orchestra but rather join other drums to form an orchestra. The researcher has decided to discuss these drums because of the role they play in Asante culture. The drums are listed here after, with a brief explanation of their duties in Asante culture.

Ntumpan drums

The *ntumpan* drums are used for announcements usually, when there is fire outbreak, when somebody gets lost (search party), when there is declaration of war and many others. It is these drums that are used to convey messages to the community members. It is also used to direct soldiers in battle. For instance, if a soldier gets lost after a battle, and he hears the sound of the *ntumpan* drums of his king, he will carefully follow or trace sound of the drum. Again, it is used to sound appellations to Asante kings. Below is an example of such a stanza of appellation recorded by the researcher in her interview with one of Otumfoɔ's drummers

*Yento woɔ hene kwa
ɔhene kwa
ɔhene fata yen wura
Yenwura ɔkɔdi nkunim
Yen wura ɔnim nyansa na ɔwɔ nimdee.
Yento wo hene kwa*

Translated as

*It is not for naught do we call you chief
It is not for naught chief
Kingship suits our king
Our lord who is victor in war
Our lord who is wise and knowledgeable
It is not for naught do we call you chief.*

Ntumpan drums are very important in Asante because of the supportive role they play in most of the orchestral groups and even Asante traditional religion. Its sound is believed to attract the deities to perform.

Etwie drums (snarl of a leopard)

These drums imitate the snarl of a leopard, when played. It reminds Asante people of the fierceness of *Asantehene* (Asante King) in judgment and other appropriate occasions. (Personal interview, Osei Kwadwo, a historian and curator at Manhyia palace museum, January, 2007)

Kwantempomnta Drums

They are two sets of drums which usually announce that, the *Asantehene* walks on broad ways and not narrow ways or small paths (Personal interview Kwadwo Bonso, Otumfoo's drummer, February, 2007).

Prempeh Drum

It is a single drum that usually leads the procession of *Asantehene* (Kwadwo Bonso, Otumfoo's drummer, and other traditional drummers, February, 2007).

Mpebi drum

Research through interviews revealed that, its tune is used (together with *nkrawire* drum) to silence a congregation before the king speaks. See Plate 14 for *mpebi* and *nkrawiri* drums (Personal interview, Osei Kwadwo, a historian and curator at the Manhyia palace museum and Kwaku Asuo, drummer Kumasi center for national culture, January, 2007)



Plate 14: *Nkrawiri* and *mpebi* drummers on their way to Akwasidεε dubar

Source: Photograph by the researcher at manhyia palace in Dec 2007 *akwasidεε*

4.1.4 Other Performing Arts of interest

Throughout the researcher's field observation in the ceremonial activities within the political system, it was evidently seen that horn blowing, umbrella whirling and shield spinning are very interesting performances that add beauty and richness to Asante culture. In view of this discovery, the researcher has chosen to give a brief account of what these aspects of Performing Arts do in Asantes' political system.

Horn blowing



Horn blowing plays an indispensable role in Asante's political system. The horn blowers are just like the court minstrels (*kwadwomfoɔ*). They accompany the king in a procession to a gathering and when the king is seated; they play before, in the middle of his speech and after his speech. On occasion of festivals and death rites, they are there to perform. They perform alongside with the court minstrels, when the king sits in state to perform his administrative roles.

The sound of the horns (made of elephant task) usually brings out the solemnity of the occasion where they are performed. The researcher's observations at the various political programmes held by the *asantehene* revealed that, these horn blowers performed at any time when the king was performing a ritual or sitting in state. It was discovered also during Otumfoɔ Opoku Ware II's funeral that these horn blowers played throughout the rites, conscientising the people of the sad event. The horns role could never be substituted for any instrument, since it is cheerless in manner, and always draws the people's attention to solemn situations.

These horns come in different types, they are *kɔkwangya* or *nkofe* (it is never left behind) *ntahara* (elephant task) *mentia* (short horns), *asɔkɔben* (long horn), *tawea* (a horn whose

sound represents that of dog's bark), *amoakwa* (the Queen mothers horn) etc. *Kɔkwangya* (it is never left behind) is played when the king sits in state.it is normally played after *kwadwomfoɔ* have performed. *Ntahara* is also a type of horn that is played to herald the approach of Asantehene's symbolic regalia. *Mentia* (short horns) are played at state mourning. *Asokɔben* is played to recount the braveness of royal ancestors. *Tawea* is also played to announce the execution of criminals and enemies of Asantes to surrender them (Asantes) the last horn *amoakwa* is a horn for the queenmother, it is usually played on durdar grounds when the Queenmother is greeting the king.

Umbrella whirling

The observation at the various Asante festival, political and funeral durbars, reveal umbrella bearers whirling their umbrellas to the tune of the drums (in the procession of Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II). These umbrella bearers do so with much vigour and excitement. Some of the umbrellas that are used in this performance are *nyankonton* (rainbow), *akokɔbaatan* (the hen with its chicks) *Oyokoman* (one of the clans in Asante) etc.

Shield spinning

Shield spinning is one of the most interesting performances the researcher saw during Asante durbar. The shield bearers torso their shield in the air and spin it to the tune of *fɔntɔmfrɔm* drum piece known as *akyem* (shields) This piece of information is acknowledged by Agordoh (1994:115) when discussing *fɔntɔmfrɔm* orchestra, he states “Akyem: this is played for the display of shields by shield – bearers who form part of the entourage of great chiefs.” The word “*Akyem*” (shields) is a type of *fɔntɔmfrɔm* drum piece which is played during the procession of a king for his shield bearers to display.

4.2 The Social System and the Performing Arts

The social system which involves the rites of passage and festivals among others also feature Performing Arts in each of its activities. The rites of passage are performed when an individual or group of people is or are being ushered from one stage of life to another stage of life or it could even be from one status to another status. These rites could be referred to as transitional rites and they consist of birth, puberty, marriage and death.

4.2.1 Birth

A newborn child is given a name on the eighth day. On the morning of the eighth day, the two families of the child gather for the ceremony. The items for the naming ceremony are presented by the father of the child. The spokesman (*ɔkyeame*) who leads such programmes usually lifts the child and presents him or her to the sun and says “*Hwe awia*” literally meaning “look at the sun”.

He then mentions the child’s given name. This is followed by shouts of joy and music. The linguist then proceeds to dip his or her hands into water and drops it into the mouth of the child saying “*Nsuo a Nsuo*” translated as when you say water, let it be water. He follows this act by dipping his hands into a drink saying” *Nsa a Nsa*” also translated as “When you say drink, say it is drink” To the on-lookers, this seems like an organized form of drama, because it is an enactment of real life situation. This is in confirmation to what the literature review revealed concerning this rite. The only difference lies in the words. Whereas the literature review states “*woto nsuo a, frε no nsuo, and woto nsaa, frε no nsa*. The field research reveals” *nsuo a nsuo, nsa a nsa.*” Plate 15 gives a clearer picture of the rite that has just been.



Plate 15: A baby being given water at a naming ceremony at Atwima Apampatia

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher

The various interviews revealed that songs which outline the pride of motherhood, responsibilities of the parenthood and the society's role are sung immediately after the latter. Furthermore; lullaby is believed to be one of the songs that are very good for early childhood development. As a result of this, the Asante mother, like any other African woman, adapt the singing of lullaby in bringing up their child.

They sing it when the child is crying, the child wants to sleep, the child is eating, the child is restless, the child is happy, when the mother wants to criticize somebody (especially mothers who happens to have rivals or irresponsible husbands) or when the wife wants to praise her husband. An example of lullaby that is used to praise hubands is as follows:

*Hwan na ne ba nie, Agya Poku ba nie
ɔyε ɔkεseεε ne ho yε fε, fεε fεε fε
Agya Poku bɔ mmɔden bɔ mmɔden, bɔ mmɔden.*

Translated as

Whose son is this? Mr Poku's son.
He's is a big boy, handsome boy
handsome boy, Mr Opoku is a hard working
hard working, hardworking.

This kind of lullabies can cause a husband to feel more important and appreciated by his wife and this can influence him to be more responsible at home. Hammering on the potency of lullaby and the impetus it possesses, one of the researcher's informant remarked with pain saying “*wei nyinaa ayera, enam sua tra nti ne abεεfo suahunu*” translated as, all this is lost as a result blind copying and technological advancement.

Another interesting thing that Nana Gynaye (a traditional priestess) of Yaw Nkrumah village near Asante Juaben disclosed to the researcher was the protection given to pregnant women of old. She disclosed that her grandmother used to make pregnant women sing certain songs when they took seed and when they were almost due. She said this was to offer protection to the pregnant women against evil forces. She recalled that these songs were sung with faith. She further continued that faith is the key thing in their protection for without faith, it is impossible to please the deities. By this the researcher's mind is drawn to what the Bible says in Hebrews 11:6 that “without faith it is impossible to please God”. Nana Saa believed that faith can do the impossibilities .When asked if these songs were still used by her, she confessed she uses them too because she is a fertility priestess.this is an example of the protective song recorded at her shrine

Nana eei! Nana ee! Nana wo nana afa aforo

*Me hia wo bambo. Wɔn a wɔn mpε me yie no
na opε me ɔwuo no, twa Wɔn twene, na ema me ase
nnore se εpo ano anwia.*

Translated as

Nana eeh! Nana eeh! Nana, your grandchild has taken seed. I need your protection. Anyone who does not wish me well, And wish that I die should be cast. And let my generations be like the sand at seashore.”

Surprisingly, when the researcher interviewed the women who had gone through this kind of protection, they attested to the fact that, the gods and ancestors are music loving gods and that they believe they hear them best, when they are communicated to, in songs.

With this they affirmed the potency of the therapy.

Interestingly, one of the priestess disclosed that a woman whose child died at birth (or before the seventh day after birth) and has conceived again is made to dance before the child first day of birth, week and continues subsequently till the child reaches age seven. She further disclosed that, it is the dance of the mother that prevents the ghost mother from coming for the child.

However the rites that are performed when a pregnant woman dies during labour and when a child dies after delivery, have a dramatic orientation. Regarding the former, when the dead pregnant woman is laid in state, all pregnant women within the locality cut a plantain leaf and on entering the compound of the deceased hoot and shoot at the corpse and follow it with dirges, singing:

*“Oh! Asimasi, wo antumu a nko, Aden na wo yε saa?,
Hoo! Hoo! Poom, fa wo musuo kɔ,yε dee yεbε ko ate”.*

Translated as

Oh! so and so, you couldn't fight Why did you do that. As for us, we will Fight till the end.

After singing, the women repeat the same words for some time before they return to their various homes. Concerning this, Rattray in the literature review revealed that pregnant women on the same issue shout at the body saying “*Poom, fa wo musuo kɔ, wantumi anwo, wantumi anko, wo ako ato Bang!*” Translated as “Poom, be gone with your evil, you have been unable to bring forth, you have been unable to fight, you have fought only to die bang!” Rattray’s observation only revealed the verbal part of the drama while the field interviews revealed the musical aspect in addition.



On a more serious note, there is a rite for a child that dies before the seventh day after birth. In this rite, the child is whipped and given some incisions on the face and buttocks during the rite. This is believed to deter the baby from coming again. Quite a number of the interviewees gave a similar attestation with very few slightly differing from the above rite.

4.2.2 Puberty rite for girls

Another interesting area of the foregoing discussion is puberty rites for girls. In Asante, as soon as a girl sees her first menstruation, she reports it to the mother and the mother upon hearing the news presents her to the queen mother for examination (check if she is not pregnant). If she is not pregnant, the queen mother with the parents set a day for the rites. On the day of the rites, the mother rises up very early in the morning to beat an old hoe with a knife or stone to announce the event of the day. The old women in the town upon hearing the news, move out of their houses to sing puberty songs like the one stated below:

The beautiful girl is of age. She has kept herself for her husband alone. Her life is worthy of emulation young girls come and see young girls come and hear queen mother, your grandchild is of age. Tell the gods for us.

According to my informant, these songs are spontaneous and do not require any rehearsals. Afterwards, libation is poured and the stool ceremony (*atenasie*) follows. The researcher discovered that this rite is performed by an old woman who has children. This is done as a result of the belief that, if the rite is performed by a fertile woman, the girl would be fertile too. In this act, the old woman places the girl on the stool three times, but remains seated on the stool the third time. A concoction of *adwira ahaban* (a type of leaf), egg and a dry okro fruit in brass basin is sprinkled on the girl (to prevent evil spirit from making her barren and also offer protection for her). She is presented with gifts from friends and relatives.

Her hair is then shaved and taken to the riverside for a ritual bath. Nana Akua Serwaa of Bekwai narrating how “*bragoro*” (puberty rites for females) was performed in their town said, “The ritual bath is not done at the riverside alone. In places where there are no rivers, a brass bowl full of water could serve the same purpose. At the river side, she said, the girl is undressed and dipped into the water three times to announce their presence and purpose to the water god. All the things that are used in bathing are thrown into the water. In some communities, she is made to sit on a stool after the immersion for proper bathing which involves the use of sponge, soap and lime juice. Others also burn finger nails, toe nails and hair at the river side they believe this will prevent her ghost mother (underworld mother) from taking her soul after the puberty rite.

Another dramatic element that is portrayed after the ritual bathing is the ‘*Anoka*’ (eating). In this ceremony, the old women prepare various types of food, but in some situations, only ‘*etɔ*’ (mashed boiled yam) with an egg is prepared. To proceed with the former, where various types of foods are prepared. Each food tasted by the girl is followed by

prayer (libation) and later presented with egg to swallow. In this act, she is forbidden to chew the egg, for it is believed that when one chews the egg, she is chewing her children and that she will be barren. The old women at this time will shout ‘*emmo mu oh!*’ (do not chew oh!) till she swallows it. The children in the community are then commanded to scramble for the rest of the food while the initiate whose eye is now covered is asked to catch two of the children’s hand. It is believed that when she catches the hands of both sexes, she will give birth to both sexes. In some communities, she is asked to catch just one child’s hand, so if she catches a male, her first born will be a male and vice versa.

After this stage, the girl invites her friends and family members for merrymaking. What actually feature prominently at this stage are music, dance and drumming. The music that is performed at this stage is spontaneous and usually spells out the duties of womanhood and entreats the girl to be hardworking and respectful. Nana Akua Serwaa points out that, some of the songs are biblically based or inclined. She recalled one particular song that talks about an ideal woman.

The beautiful girl is of age, she is the pride of her family. Her life is worthy of emulation, she listened to the advise of her parents. Now is the time to prove again to the world that you are indeed a good girl. Do not entertain laziness for it can ruin you! It can ruin you! It can ruin you!

There are however some dances that portray people in love and also declare the state of a Young man or woman (whether bachelor or spinster). When the ceremony is over, the girl is confined for six days for her peers to serve her. The activities within these six days period of confinement are for training purposes. The girl is taught how to dress, dance, cook, serve others (errands and hospitality), what is involved in motherhood and family life in general. After the confinement, she is dressed in the best of *kente* cloth and

accompanied by her friends and goes through the town, and thanks the people for their gift and presents.

On the contrary, when a girl gets pregnant without the puberty rites, ‘*kyiribra*’ ceremony is performed. Nana Kwame Kyei of Asante Dwaben narrating ‘*kyiribra*’ ceremony said that this rite is performed in order to drive the curses that will come to the family away and also tell the up and coming ones to desist from sexual immorality. The Performing Arts that are portrayed in this ceremony are drumming and singing. The drummers follow the procession to the end of the town where the girl and the boy are ritually banished from the town.

4.2.3 Puberty rites for boys

On the contrary, in Asante, puberty rites for boys do not involve a great deal of Performing Art. The only Performing Art that is employed is drama, and this is evident in the presentation of the item for trading to the boy by the father. Frankly speaking, all the people the researcher interviewed disclosed that this rite is not publicly performed like that of the girls. They revealed that the boy’s father will present an item for trading or occupation (cutlass, gun or any means of exchange) to him saying” take this and work with it till you become successful. May God, the ancestors and the gods protect and bless your hands. It is the way the father presents the item of trade to the son that has dramatic orientation.

4.2.4 Marriage rites and Performing Arts

In Asante, a woman without a husband is not really recognized as such. Marriage is seen as very important in Asante just like any other African community. Asante’s marriage is

one of the areas where performing arts do not feature prominently. However, the researcher shall proceed the discussion by pointing out where Performing Arts are displayed prominently. On the day of the ceremony, the presentation of the girl to the groom's family is dramatized; the bride's family members demand money from the groom's family before she (the girl) is presented to them. This act of bargaining between the two families creates a captivating environment for the ceremony. When all is done she goes to the husband's house, and her husband provides her with ingredients to prepare a special meal for his relatives, friends and himself. This meal is usually known in Asante as "*Aduane kεseε*" (great meal or marriage feast). It is mostly around this time that music, dance and drumming feature prominently to entertain celebrants.

Another area that Performing Arts feature is infidelity. If a married man or woman is suspected to have sexual intercourse with another person, he or she is made to swear an oath at the shrine or in the gathering of family elders. Opanin Kwame Nyamekye of Asante Dwaben narrating this said, “The person who is suspected to be unfaithful usually swears the oath first followed by the other saying: *nananom mo ntie, medie me nim me tirim pefee sε me mfiri me kunu anaa me yere akyi, sε ma fa no akyi a, kumi preko pε.*” Translated as: My ancestors or deity, I know perfectly well that, I have not committed adultery, if it is, then kill me once and for all. He said this event was usually opened to the general public to witness and to the onlookers, it looked like they were just playing. Inferring from his narration, the researcher saw an element of drama in it (The way the suspected person chooses his or her words for the swearing of the oath has dramatic orientation that is why the researcher decided to include it in her foregoing discussion).

4.2.5 Death Rites and Performing Arts

In Asante, death and funeral rites are recognized and treated as very indispensable. The belief that when a family member dies he or she is making a journey to the other world where he or she will live as an ancestor motivates or scares them to perform the parting rites (funeral). Furthermore, there are funerals that are organized for trees and certain animals (believed to be powerful or possess evil spirit or a deity). But for the benefit of this thesis, the researcher would want to centre around the funeral rite of human beings. This is done in a very remarkable way. Funerals are done according to the deceased's status in life. For instance, the funeral of a king or a royal is different from the ordinary person's funeral. Well, the researcher proposes to narrate the funerals of ordinary persons and describe the Performing Arts as and when they appear in the narration. Meanwhile, the king's or royal person's funeral has already been taken care of under the political system.

In an ordinary person's funeral in some Asante communities, from the day a person dies through to the day he or she is buried, music, dance and drama play a major role. (They feature in the one week observation, fortieth day celebration, the actual day for the funeral and anniversary celebration.) One dramatic event that takes place at the bed of a dying person is the water rites. Usually it is the close relative who performs this rite. The person gives water to the dying person to drink. It is believed that when given water, the deceased is able to climb the hill of the other world without getting thirsty, for when thirsty, the spirit will hang around the "living world" for some time. They usually give the deceased person the water saying

Gye nsuo yi nom, ye dee ye pεε sε Enka yεde sika begye wo nkwa Na enso Owuo kura adeε a Obi ntumi ngye, efiri sε ɔyε ɔhoɔdenfɔɔ nom sε dee εbεyε a, wo betumi aforo bepo no, Ensane wakyi dabiera ara da".

Translated as:

Take this water and drink. We would have wished to save your life with money, but nobody can take what death has gotten hold of, for he is stronger drink for it to enable you to climb the hill, never turn back.

This water rite is similar to what Rattray disclosed in the literature review. The researcher realized through the fieldwork that the sayings recorded by Rattray were different from the findings in the field. But upon enquiry, the researcher noticed that the performance differs because each family is entitled to say what they wish to say. Rattray's (1927) example in the literature review goes like this:

*Asumasi begye nsu yi nom, Wo kore[sic] yi, emma asem
Biara mma ha, ma mmaa ewo efie ha nyina nwo mma*

Translated as

So-and-so and so-snd-so, receive this water and drink. Do not permit any evil thing to come whence you are setting out, and permit all the women of this household to bear children.

The only area of departure in the two description are the sayings of the person who offer the drink, but aside this first reason, the researcher thinks this has come as a result of the fact that each community has taken up whatever modification it finds convenient for their rite.

Narrating the water rites, Obaapanin Yaa Poa of Asante Mampong, (a ninety six year old woman who resides in Asante New Town) said because of the water rites, she does not want to be left alone in the house, for she does not know when death will come. Most of the interviewees at various towns and villages affirmed Obaa Yaa Poa's views.

All these while, the people present are not allowed to cry (since it is believed that crying and wailing will deafen the ears of the dead person's ghost and it will cause him not to hear when he is later addressed or consulted for help as an ancestor) till the body is laid in

state. Immediately the body is laid in state, the drums begin to inform the people of the community of what has happened. Meanwhile, singing of dirges, crying, and wailing and in some situations firing of musket are present at this stage, refer to Plate 9 for firing of musket rite.

Two dramatic events are portrayed at this stage. They are the preparation of the favourite dishes of the deceased and the shaving rite. With the former, the favourite dishes of the deceased are cooked and laid beside the corpse (who has already been laid) on the left side to eat. How can a dead person who cannot talk nor walk eat? But belief answers it all. To the researcher this is “drama in the belief of the people” (the people are made to psychologically believe that the dead person actually eats the food).

The second rite which involves the shaving of hair has a dramatic orientation. The relatives of the dead person shave their hair and place them at the forecourt of the house. To the dramatist, the act of shaving is enactment of real life situation and he sees it as drama. The way they gather themselves to shave their hairs without any hesitation talks a great deal about the peoples belief. Usually the size of the hair determines the honour bestowed on the dead person. The larger the size of the heap, the greater the honour bestowed on the deceased and his family. The second rite has just been discussed is usually performed for old men and women who have grandchildren. After this act, the grandchildren of the deceased go round the town with pestle singing:

*Nana ee! Nana ee! Nana ee!
Nana awu oo! Yenmua nna oo!
Nana awu oo! Yenmua nna oo
Nana adi nkyini awie!*

This is literally translated as:

Grandparent eh! Grandparent eh! Grandparent eh!
Grandparent is dead, no fasting
Grandparent is dead, no fasting

Grandparent has finished eating salt.

The last line “*Nana adi ne nkyini awie*” translated “Nana has finished taking his salt”, (see Plate 29 in Appendix A) means that; Nana has achieved a lot and that he has accomplished his mission on earth, so why should grandchildren fast. The body is laid in state overnight and in some communities two days. In the night, drummers, dancers and singers take the most part of the funeral programme.

These dirges are sung according to the kind of person laid in state, for instance, a man, woman boy or a girl. These are some of the dirges selected from the researcher’s interviews.

General dirge

- A. *Owuo tiri mu yε den
Owuo nsem muyε den
Wo kura adeε mu obi ntumi
Nngye da biara da.
Enti mo mma yεn mmɔ yεn bra yie
Sε dee εbεyε a yεbεgya edin papa
Otirimoodenfoɔ, otirimoodenfoo.”*

Translated as

Death is wicked
Death hands are strong
No one can take anything from his hands
So let us lead exemplary life
So that we can leave a good name behind
The wicked one, the wicked one.

- B. *Hmmm!, Asaase eredi adeε Hwan na ɔrekɔ yi oo!?
ɔbarima Akwasi, na ɔrekɔ yi ɔbarima a ne tirim yε
ɔwɔ ɔdɔ, abodwokyere, tema. Aaa! Owuo sei adeε.”*

Translated as

Hmmm! Things are really buried in the land.
Aah! Who is on his way? Akwasi is the one
The kind, loving, patient and sympathetic man
Aa! Death is a destroyer.

Dirge for Deceased Women

*Obaatanpa wada a nyane! Wo mma εrefε wo
εkɔm de wɔn, sore ee! Obatanpa εna onim
dee ne mma bɛdie*

Translated as

Good woman you have slept for long, wake up
Your children are calling you. They are Hungry
wake up eeh!A mother knows what her children likes.

Dirges for deceased youth

*Owuo tiri mu yε den Owuo nnim akwaadaa
Ahahan mono se yi na wo atwa atwene yi
Wo de wo nsa nwunu nwunu no
Aka no. Aah! Owuo wo seε adeε.*

Translated as

Death is wicked He does not know children
He has destroyed such a fresh leaf.
You have laid your icy hands on him.

All these dirges have one thing in common. They portray the hatred man as for death. Not only do they portray hatred, but they also express the kind of person the deceased was, when alive. Some of these dirges are sung during the wake or vigil keeping.

During this time friends of the deceased usually come to perform what he or she liked doing while alive (this could be his or her trade, sayings, occupation, etc). A typical example was what the researcher witnessed at Atwima Heman in the Ashanti Region, where a woman who liked chewing tobacco leaves (*monto*) had her friends acting how she usually roast, and chew tobacco leaves. The researcher could not capture that event because her camera freezed, but it looked like an organized form of drama and the people present were really entertained to the extent that some even laughed. But to others, it was very sad, as it reminded them of their past relative.

The burial ceremony involves some rituals which are very dramatic. Family members and sympathizers present burial items known in Asante as “*adesiedeε*”. The person presenting such items says “take these items and use some on your way to the other world and some over there as well”. Our observation at Atonsu Dompoasi (a suburb of Kumasi) revealed that, the people really believe that the dead person has ears and eyes to hear and see what the people are presenting.

On the way to the cemetery, if the dead person has left a widow behind, she is asked to carry a pot (*kuna kukuo*) containing three stones. On the way to the cemetery, the widow turns around for the pot to drop and she runs home without turning back, or in some situations, he or she is asked to throw the three stones and run home without looking back. Moreover, before the body is buried, the head of the family steps out to pour libation. The way he calls God, the land *Asaase Yaa*, and the ancestors (to inform them of the departed soul who is about to join them in the other world) the gesture he employs (the way he moves his hands up and down coupled with facial expressions) is not far from an organized form of drama.

What follows the pouring of libation is a dramatic enactment of the deceased person's profession or occupation by friends or workmates. Nketia (1974:218) also attest to this fact and therefore states, the funeral celebertyion of distinctive people often incorporates enactment of episodes or dramatization of their social relations, beliefs, or social values. The time for this act usually differs from place to place. Some perform it during the wake-keeping; others do it in the morning after the wake and at the cemetery.

Another dramatic event that takes place in Asante funeral happens on the “*sora da*” (a day of purification). It is done after the final funeral rite. In this rite, the family members of the deceased cook food and also shave their hair and keep the hair in “*Abusua kruwa*” (family pot). The food and the shaved hair are later deposited at “*asensiee*” (place for burying pots) for the dead person who is now considered as an ancestor to protect them (they believe that, since the family pot contains the hair of the family members, it contains their soul as well). This rite climaxes the funeral rites. This time the family members with the exception of the widow or the widower discard the funeral attire. Another event that Performing Arts are performed is the one week observation. At the one week celebration, the women of the deceased family wake up at dawn to wail and sing dirges, till late morning where the family will gather for the celebration. Throughout the observation, traditional singing groups (*nwomkro*) and dancers sing and dance to portray the solemnity of the occasion. These songs and dances usually win the admiration of all, and this usually causes family members and the sympathizers to cry.

The one week celebration is done mainly to set a day for the final funeral rites. On the day of the final funeral rites, the Performing Arts are displayed from morning till daylight eludes. On the dawn of the funeral, some of the family members wake up to sing funeral dirges and others also cry. This is usually done to draw attention to the community of the event of the day. Then around 10.00am, the elders in the family go to the cemetery to pray on the dead person’s supposed place of burial. This is usually followed by the funeral gathering in the afternoon (where sympathizers are served with palm wine). Usually around this time, sympathizers who brought any gift are allowed to present it to the family members. The various performing groups (*kete*, *adowa* and *nwomkorɔ* ensemble) at this stage take turns in displaying their arts (see plate 16 and 17 for such performances).



Plate 16: *Nnwomkro* (musical ensemble) group performing at a funeral.

Source: Photographed by the researcher.



Plate 17: *Kete* ensemble performing at a funeral in Fante New Town
(a suburb of Kumasi)

Source: Photograph taken by the researcher.

One of the most interesting performance by artistes is that of the *nwomkro* group. They sing various kinds of songs to criticise people, outline the mystery surrounding the death, praise the dead and a lot more. The researcher reports the following phenomena which she observed at Ahenema Kokoben (near Brofoyedru on the Kumasi–Obuasi road):

Oboa oo! Onna ye oo! Wakɔ pε baabi atena
Oboa oo! Onna ye oo! Wakɔ pε baabi atena
Yεde boredeε kohye fom aa! na asaase ayi no aba
Yε de bankye kohye fom aa na asaase ayi no aba
Ye de nnipa kohye fom a na asaase afa no koraa.

Translated as

He is not asleep, liar, he is hiding himself somewhere
He is not asleep, liar he is hiding himself somewhere
When we plant plantain, the land brings it out
When we plant cassava, the land brings it out
But when we bury human beings, the land takes them eternally.

The researcher realized throughout her observations and interviews that these songs are powerful tools for criticising and praising. With the above song, the purpose was to draw people's attention to the mystery surrounding death. Below are examples of some songs text that are full of criticisms and praises.

Critic songs

Abusua dɔfunu, abusua dɔfunu.
ɔyare da hɔ yi no, ɔmfa no nyε hwee, Eda
ɔbεwuo no abusua asesa ne noɔma rebre no oo!
Onipa dasani deε, sara oo onipa dasani deε
sara oo! Ampa Abusua dɔfunu.

Translated as:

Family likes corpse, family likes corpse
When he was sick No one paid attention to him.
But when he died, so many things have been used
to adorn him ooh! That is how human beings are ooh!
Indeed family likes corpse.

Praises

ɔdoyefoɔ oni oo! Agya ɔye ɔdoyefoɔ oni oo!
Agyɔye a okura kuro nnipa oo! Oo!
Agya ɔye mmɔbrɔhunufoɔ oni oo!
mpene no εε!

Translated as:

He is hardworking oh! Agya Poku who is hard working
Agya who knows how to pamper people
Agya who is sympathetic, here is he oh!

Farewell! Farewell!

All these songs could be composed for the deceased or family members or sympathizers.

Perhaps the absence of *nwomkɔrɔ* songs at funeral will debase the performance of the drummers, since they set the pace for them to perform well. Not only that, it will also debase the liveliness at the gathering, and in one way or the other affects the dances as well as the people at the gathering.



4.2.6 Festivals

Festivals are very indispensable in Asante culture, in that it is a time for remembering the dead, for feasting, to renew old ties and to draw inspiration for the future. Festivals could be political functions as well as social functions.

There are two main festivals of the Asante, namely *Adεε* (resting place) and *Odwira* (purification rite). The latter is usually combined with the great *Adεε*. There are other festivals like *Moaninkɔ* celebrated by the people of Offinso, *Nkyidwoɔ* by Esumegya, *Papa* by Kumawu, *Awukudεε*, *Akwasidεε* by all Asantes and many others. All these festivals have political, social, economic and religious orientations. In view of this, the researcher has chosen to discuss the *Adεε* festival in relationship with Performing Arts, for it is celebrated by all the people across the Asante kingdom.

There are two types of *Adεε* festival celebrated by the Asante: They are *Adεε kesee* and *Adεε ketewa* (big and small *Adεε*). The small *Adεε* is celebrated every forty second day and it is celebrated nine times within a year. The day for the big *Adεε* is chosen by the king; he decides on which of the *Akwasidεε* he wishes to celebrate in a grand style. For

readers to get a clear view of how Asante's arrive at the *Adεε* festival, it is expedient for the researcher through the interviews conducted to explain how the calculation is done.

According to Mr Osei Kwadwo, (a curator at the manhyia palace museum and a historian) the Asantes have six holy names (*din kronkron nsia*). They are *kuru*, *kwa*, *mono*, *fo*, *ngona*, *nkyi*. They use these names to calculate their days, by multiplying it over the days of the week (6x7). Below are the meanings Nana Ginyaye (of Yaw Nkrumah) gave in explaining the six holy days.

Kuru - exalted or holy

Fo - good

Kwa - open or free

Ngona - shield

Mono - fresh

Nkyi - destructive

It is the *Kuru* Wednesday and the *Kuru* Sunday that are regarded as *Adεε*. Asantes determine *Akwasidεε* by using the six holy days and seven days to get the *Akwasidεε* and the *Adaduanan*.

<i>Kuru</i> - Sunday(Akwasidεε)	<i>Kuru</i> - Saturday	<i>Kuru</i> - Friday
<i>Kwa</i> - Monday	<i>Kwa</i> - Sunday	<i>Kwa</i> - Saturday
<i>Mono</i> - Tuesday	<i>Mono</i> - Monday	<i>Mono</i> - Sunday
<i>Fo</i> - Wednesday	<i>Fo</i> - Tuesday	<i>Fo</i> - Monday
<i>Ngona</i> - Thursday	<i>Ngona</i> - Wednesday	<i>Ngona</i> - Tuesday
<i>Nkyi</i> - Friday	<i>Nkyi</i> - Thursday	<i>Nkyi</i> - Wednesday
<i>Kuru</i> - Thursday	<i>Kuru</i> - Wednesday	<i>Kuru</i> - Tuesday
<i>Kwa</i> - Friday	<i>Kwa</i> - Thursday	<i>Kwa</i> - Wednesday
<i>Mono</i> - Saturday	<i>Mono</i> - Friday	<i>Mono</i> - Thursday
<i>Fo</i> - Sunday	<i>Fo</i> - Saturday	<i>Fo</i> - Friday

<i>Ngona</i> - Monday	<i>Ngona</i> - Sunday	<i>Ngona</i> - Saturday
<i>Nkyi</i> - Tuesday	<i>Nkyi</i> - Monday	<i>Nkyi</i> - Sunday
<i>Kuru</i> - Monday	<i>Kuru</i> - Sunday (Akwasidɛɛ)	
<i>Kwa</i> - Tuesday	<i>Kwa</i> - Monday	
<i>Mono</i> - Wednesday	<i>Mono</i> - Tuesday	
<i>Fo</i> - Thursday	<i>Fo</i> - Wednesday	
<i>Ngona</i> - Friday	<i>Ngona</i> - Thursday	
<i>Nkyi</i> - Saturday	<i>Nkyi</i> - Friday	

The forty second day is the *Akwasidɛɛ* which Asantes refer to as *Adaduanan*. The small *Adɛɛ* is celebrated individually by each Asante paramountcy (localized) but the big *Adɛɛ* is celebrated by all the Asante states together (at the beginning of the year or at its end). The day preceding the *Akwasidɛɛ* which is celebrated on Sunday is Saturday *Dapaa*, a day for preparation (*Ahosiesieda*).

In the morning of the Saturday, the paramount chief with his elders gather the things that are needed for the celebration. Meanwhile the people of the town gather themselves to clear the path leading to the royal mausoleum, and clean the surroundings of the village. During this communal labour, the people sing songs to while away boredom. Below is an example of the songs

*ɔkwadwofoɔɔ kɔntatia nkyɛn na hunu nyansa
 Adwuma yɛ ade kesee oh! Adwuma yɛ de ahotɔba oh!
 Wo dɔwo man a, yɛ adwuma, yɛ adwuma, yɛ adwuma
 yɛ adwuma oh! Yɛ adwuma oh!*

Towards the evening of the Saturday, historical and memorial songs are performed by palace singers at the palace. State drums and horns are beaten and blown respectively to herald the celebration of the *Akwasidee*. At an early hour of the *Akwasidee*, the queen mother together with the wing chiefs and elders go to the palace to salute the chief. The king then provides them with drinks and around 10.00am, they proceed to the mausoleum of the past kings to perform the rituals. Inside the mausoleum, libation and sacrifices are poured and made respectively. The blood of sheep is smeared on the stools to darken it. After this, a prayer is said to solicit help, guidance, knowledge and wisdom from the dead kings. This dramatic event is usually brief and concise.

The next event that follows is a grand durbar. The entire community members are made to join in the celebration. Various drummers, singers and dancers are not left out in this durbar. The performers take turns in performing at the gathering. The drummers, showing their dexterity in drumming, usually entice the dancers to perform to the tune of their drum music. On this occasion, onlookers and participants join the dance party as well as sing if they are familiar with the songs. (See Plate 18 for a participant dancing to the tune of *fontomfrom* drums).

Another dramatic event that takes place at this stage is the dance of the shrine's priests and priestesses. They usually take turns in displaying their powers through dance art. An example of such a performance is on Plate 19. This is usually the last event of the day, so it is done till the day light eludes.



Plate 18: A participant dancing to the tune of *fontomfrom* drums.

Source: Photographed by the researcher



Plate 19: *Komfo* (shrine priest) Kwaku Bonsam Performing at

Akwasidεε at Manhyia Palace Museum

Source: Photographed by the researcher.

4.2.7 Recreational Activities and Performing Arts

Recreational activities in Asante are not left out in the discussion of the social system, for Performing Arts in the form of songs pervade storytelling, *ampe*, and *asɔ*, among others.

Drama is imperative in story telling, for it helps their audience to envisage the characters in the story being told, and also to focus on it

Story Telling

Interestingly, storytelling in Asante is a great act; the teller and the hearer are all actors and actresses. In consonance, Nana Abena Nkrumah of Asante Juaben, narrating how storytelling is told in Asante, said storytelling and acting are siblings, for without each other the story will lose its impact on the hearers. At this stage, she tried to explain the meaning of the name *Anansesem* (Ananse story). She disclosed that there is a myth surrounding the name *Anansesem* (the title of Asante's traditional story) and that the name came about as a result of the fact that most of the stories were centred on the craftiness of Kwaku Ananse, hence the name. Nana Abena Nkrumah further recalled that Spider (Ananse) stories are lessons in life of which their forefathers in their wisdom arranged as a recreation for generations to come, and it serves as an example to the hearers.

The study revealed that people of the past usually acted Ananse stories and at times in the absence of drama, items related to such stories were presented to listeners. Usually the narrators and listeners of Ananse stories raise songs in the midst of the stories and are continued immediately after the songs. These songs are called *mmoguo* (interlude). An example of this phenomenon occurred in an interview with Nana Yaw Mensah of Ejisu Onwe about Ananse stories. He made frequent references to music (*mmoguo*) and sang several examples as he recounted stages in some of the stories. Here is an example of *mmoguo*:

*Kwaku Ananse ee! Ekɔm beku wo
Kwaku a wo mpε adwuma Kwaku ee! Ekɔm beku wo”*

This is literally translated as:

Kwaku spider eh! You will starve to death
Lazy Kwaku, you will starve to death.

One of the interesting aspects of storytelling is when a narrator deviates from a story known to the listeners. They clap or beat drums and sing a song which connotes the fact that he or she is telling a lie. An example of such song is stated below:

*Anansesem asisie to ne yie. Anansesem asisie
to ne yie,, Wabu ne kom mu gyen hwan na eto
kyere wo Wabu ne kom mu gyen*

Translated as:

False narrator, narrate the correct story,
you have deviated, who taught you how
to narrate it? You have deviated from
the true story

Such songs will draw the attention of the narrator to tell the correct story or hand it over to somebody who can narrate it better.

Ampe

Ampe is a traditional game for young girls in Asante. It is usually played between two or more girls who clap, jump and sing at the same time. In the process of jumping, they cleverly move one leg forward to outwit the opponent.

Ampe song

One, two, three, there you are
Four, five, six, you can't win
Seven, eight, nine, I'm a winner"

There are other games like *nsembô* (clapping), *asiesie* or *atetetate* (hide and seek), *antokyire* (placing things behind) which is the corruption of the word *anhwe woakyire* (do not look behind you). All these games involve music.

nsembo (clapping)

This is a type of game in Asante where two or more people can play. It is a game played with palms. Usually the players face each other and with their outstretched hands, they sing and clap. This is repeated over and over till the players decide to stop. In similar situation, when the players are more than three, they form a circle and place each others hands on top of each other. When this is set, they will sing and clap their hands. This process is repeated over and over again till they decide to retire. This is an example of one of the words of the songs the researcher recorded:

Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one, it was left with three days for him to go abroad, a foolish man who was jealous, picked a broken bottle and stabbed him, so I will go and tell Osei Kofi. The next day, Robert Mensah's wife gave birth to a baby boy. The boy's name is Kofi Anto. He did not meet his father.”

Asɔ(singing, clapping and jumping)

Asɔ is also another interesting game for girls in Asante. Two or more girls play this type of game. One or two girls usually stand inside a circle formed by the girls. All the girls begin the game by singing and clapping when the mood is set, the two in the middle jump and fall backward repeatedly on those who have formed the circle and are raised high while they land on the ground on their feet. The two, after going through this, join the circle for other two to come and go through the same process until every girl gets her turn. The process is repeated several times till they become tired.

Asɔ song

If he dwells in the hut, I will go with him
Sweetheart, if he dwells in a hut,
I will still go with him. If it rains,
We will stay out for fresh air

***Anhwewoakyire* (do not look back)**

This is a game in which all the players squat in a circular form. They all sing an *anhwewoakyire* song without looking behind them. In the game, one person runs round behind the squatters, holding an object. He places it behind any of the squatters, who picks it up and runs round the squatters the same manner with it.

In the process, if the object is placed behind a squatter quietly, and he does not realize it, and consequently fails to pick it to continue with the usual round, he is eliminated from the game immediately and the one who placed it behind him finishes his round by coming back to the object. What is remarkable about this game, as far as this thesis is concerned is the *anhwewoakyire* song (which is a Performing Art) which is sung until the game ends, usually when those participating in the game become tired. Below is an example of *anhwewoakyire* song recorded during interview

***Anhwewoakyire* song**
Anhwewoakyire ee yee!
Obiba oo! Yee, yee!
Obeyε deen oo, yeeye!
Obene oo!, yeeye!
Obeyi mframa oo!

Translated as

You should not look behind, yee ye!
Somebody is coming yee ye!
What is she coming to do? Yee ye!
She is coming to ease himself, yee ye!
She is coming to fluctuate, yee ye!

Asiesie* or *Ateteatete

Asiesie or *Ateteatete* is another traditional game in which the players group themselves into two. The groups are made up of two to five people or more. Usually, a circle is drawn on the playing ground by the players (with stones, charcoal, red dried clay, white dried clay, etc). One group is asked to go and hide while the other group hunts for them.

The group that is supposed to hunt usually leaves some of its members in the drawn circle to prevent the group members from entering the circle. If one person (from the hiding group) manages to enter the circle, it will mean that the hiding group has won the game. On the other hand, if those from the hunting group manage to catch even just a member from the hiding group before the person rushes into the drawn circle, it implies the hunting group has won. With this, they (the hunting group) will also go and hide themselves for the other group to do the hunting. Usually, when a hunting group member catches a person from the hiding group, he or she sings the following song.

*Makye no, makye no
Woantumi annuro kanko no mu
Makye no, woantumi antetε, makye wo*

Translated as

I have caught you, I have caught you
You could not enter the circle
I have caught you, you could not hide
I have caught you.

With this song, the other group members who are still hunting for the hiding group members will rush to where the circle is formed, followed by the members of the hiding group. Usually the winning team goes into hiding. On the other hand, if the hiding group is able to outwit the hunting group and enters the circle without being caught, they go into hiding again since they have won.

Inferring from the songs in the various games, the researcher realized that *ampe* songs are very simple and do not involve so many words which is characterised by clapping and *Asɔ* games. In the example of the clapping song, the details of the song involve a past goal keeper (Robert Mensah) who was murdered. This tells us that, the type of songs for this game is picked from the things that go on around us. To this end, one interviewee remarked that songs for this game are spontaneous, but later form part of the game when

the players get used to them. Furthermore, the *aso* game also involves love songs. The songs that were disclosed during the researcher's interviews were love songs, and that, the *aso* game was mainly for young spinsters, hence the love songs.

Furthermore, on occasions when members of a community come together for any kind of collective activity such as going to the bush to search for the lost, putting out fire, clearing paths, digging graves, etc, the people sing to inspire themselves of the great task and at times go round the town singing to draw attention to people who are supposed to be part of that collective activity. Some of these songs have been presented under the ordinary *Adεε*.

Aside these recreational activities there are other areas in the social system which employs songs of mockery. Below are three of such songs. The first one is sung to ridicule those who urinate to wet their beds while sleeping. The second one is sung to tease prostitutes and womanizers, and the third is used to mock thieves.

Songs against “Bed wetters”

Bed wetter, bed wetter Where is your dress?
It fell into water, oh! Where is the water?
I can't find it. Bed wetter, where is your sleeping cloth?
I can't find it. Oh liar, you've soaked it in urine.

Songs against Prostitutes and womanizers

If anyone dare fornicate, let the gods kill him
If anyone dares commits adultery, let the gods punish him.
If anyone dares rapes, let the gods burn him
Good behavior is a good asset.

Songs against thieves

The hand that does not work does not eat
A thief is a murderer and a murderous thief
A thief is inhuman, so let us banish him.

Meanwhile, lullaby which has been treated under birth rites is one of the vehicles of mockery. It could incorporate all of the above behaviours in its songs. These mockery songs were usually sung to scare or prevent people from doing all these shameful behaviours, but in reality when one is caught stealing, fornicating or committing adultery (in the olden days), the person is punished by death sentence or banished from the community. Another song of interest that was disclosed by Yaa Pomaa is a song against lazy people.

Okwadwofoɔ eei, ko ntatia nkyɛn na hunu nyansa.
Efiri sɛ ensa a enye adwuma no ɛre nnididi
Okwadwofoɔ, ssore na pɛ adwuma bi yɛ oh

This is literally translated as

Lazy one, go to the ant .Be wise, for a hand that does not work
Eat not. Lazy one wake up and look for a Work to do ooh

These critic and mockery songs makes it easier for one to even use harsh words which would have been difficult to say verbally; to sing it without fear or favour. Agordoh (1994:45) in affirming this writes: “A striking feature of song texts in Africa is that in song, the individual or the group could express deep- seated feelings not permissibly verbalized in other context.” Agordoh’s view explains why Africans choose song text as a vehicle of critic.

4.3 Performing Arts and Economic aspect of Asante culture

Asantes employ Performing Arts in their economic activities. Music acts as a source of inspiration, while dance and drama form part of ritual ceremonies pertaining to the economic system. The farmer, potter, carver, shoemaker and umbrella maker among the lot employ music in their professions to motivate them. A hunter on the other hand employs gestures in his work to help him catch a game. One may wonder why the hunter

employs only gestures in his profession. He does so because it is believed that music will certainly scare away his game.

Interestingly, hunters in Asante are by instinct actors, for a hunter who wants to catch or kill an animal may follow it slowly at a pace, and at times make certain noise like some of the animals in the forest. This entire act is performed by the hunter so as to enable him to attract an animal of his choice to kill. This is in consonance with what Nketia described in the literature review. Throwing more light on this information, Nana Akwasi Boakye, a former hunter in Kumawu said the tracing of an animal's footsteps, its noise, sound or noise is not an easy task. One has to learn the act very well for if missed, it could lead to one's death or one going home empty handed. He later revealed that because the profession involves acting, a hunter cannot just pick his tools and go for hunting, he needs to be trained in these acting skills.

Nana Akwasi Boakye again disclosed that there is a big feast and ritual ceremony when a hunter kills one of the biggest animals and an animal believed to embody a god or have powerful *sasa* (spirit). On the former, he said, usually a day is set for such occasion and it begins with a prayer (libation) by the chief hunter and later in the afternoon, people gather around at a place allotted for such feast. He said it is at this time that the hunters display their hunting skills by acting and also dancing the “*abofosɔ*” dance (a type of dance that comprises miming of hunting scenes – finding a new foot print of an animal, firing and sharing of meat). The ritual funeral is usually performed to prevent the evil spirit of the animal from harming the hunter or preventing him from catching or killing animals in the forest.

Another economic activity which employs Performing Arts in its occupation is carving. Carving plays an important role in Asante culture in that, most of the stools and drums used on festive occasions are all carved out from wood. The researcher was told that when a carver wants to fell a tree, he sacrifices an egg or fowl to the spirit of the tree before he lays the cutlass or axe against it. He does that saying “*Osese dua, mehia wo de wo ayε adwuma, mma sekan ntwa me, ma m’adwuma no nkɔso. Emfa yadeε mmre me. Gye kosua yi di*” translated as “osese (funtumia sp) tree, I need you to work with, please do not allow the cutlass to cut me, let me progress in my work, take this egg and eat it.

When the carver begins his work, he offers the same prayer to his tools pleading with them to ensure safety and good work. Furthermore, when he is through with the carving, he offers a prayer to the spirit of the trees and then prays on the finished product in order to serve its purpose. This is how he addresses the stools or the drums:

I have finished, I’m thankful to you for the protection rendered unto me during carving. Let the stool (or drum) serve its purpose. Thank you, thank you.

Buttressing this information, Opanin Kwadwo Kyere, a former carver, of Ahwiaa (a popular town in the outskirts of Kumasi) said these rites are very important to the carver. He sees these dramatic rites as important as the carving itself. In view of this, before somebody gets into that vocation, he is taught how to perform these rites before the carving skills. Invariably, these rites are very dramatic.

Another economic activity is *kente* weaving which is another occupation of the people of Asante. It is the main occupation of the inhabitants of Bonwire and its surrounding villages. This unique craft has been handed down over the centuries and every member of a household has some knowledge into the intricacies of these weaving styles.

The researcher's own observation and interviews revealed that music is the only performing art employed in the weaving vocation. The researcher realized that most of the weavers seen during the research period were singing. Nana Antobre (a master weaver from Bonwire) focusing on the music aspect of the craft sang several songs relating to *kente* weaving. The following is one of the songs:

Asante Bonwire *kente* weaving is something I've not seen before, it is rich in designs appealing to the eyes. Where else can we get something like this? No where else, no where else.

This song is usually sung throughout weaving by a group of weavers when weaving, or even an individual weaver could also sing it. Opanin Kwame Nyamekye, (a weaver at Abira in the Kwabre District) throwing more light on the issue said the weavers employ music a lot in the weaving craft and that there are special songs relating to the craft (an example is the above song) and others do not relate to it at all. He said the latter is usually open. One could choose a religious song, historical song, work song or any song of one's choice. He further explained that it is not compulsory for one to sing when weaving. A weaver may find himself singing immediately he sits in front of the loom.

Another economic activity that employs Performing Arts in its activity is pottery making. Potters in Asante pray before they pick their clay. The researcher infers from her interviews that this prayer has some dramatic elements. The potter wakes up in the morning to go for the clay. On arrival, she pours libation to the spirit believed to be inhabiting in the land known in Asante as Asaase Yaa (The land Yaa), talking to it as if it is a human being.

Land Yaa, forgive me for disturbing you, I have come in peace. I need some portion of this clay to work with it. Please do not be angry with me. Please do not let me fall sick. Good mother Yaa, I need your assistance.

Umbrella makers, goldsmiths and bead makers pour libation which have dramatic orientation like that of the libation poured by carvers before they start carving.

The information revealed in literature review concerning how gold smiths sing in the process of working, one of the renowned goldsmith in Kumasi disprove this and further explained that, is believed by the people of Asante that the spirit of gold does not like music or any utterances while working. He said despite this belief of the people, he also thinks that, gold is precious and needs special attention to prevent any loss. This is why goldsmiths probably do not sing or talk.

Farming is another economic activity in Asante that employs Performing Arts in its activity. Farmers normally sing to while away boredom when they are working and also have a great feast when there is a bumper harvest. Throwing more light on this, such a feast takes the form of a festival. They pray (pour libation), sing, play drums and dance to thank the Supreme God for rain and sunshine, the ancestors and the gods for their support (personal interview, Opanin Akwasi Amankwa, a ninety six years old retired farmer, Ofoasi Kokoben, 2005).

4.4 Religion and Performing Art

Religion is one of the things in which the soul of the people of Asante is buried. This was disclosed by quite a number of the people the researcher interviewed. Asante religion cannot thrive without Performing Arts, in that, they pervade all the activities within it, from the training of a priest through to his duties and the worship in general. The researcher discovered that a would-be priest under training usually goes through it for three years. An example of this awareness occurred in the researcher's conversation about Asante religion with the chief priest Nana Akwasi Amoako of Yaw Nkrumah

village near Ejisu Juaben. He disclosed that during the first year the would-be priest is taught how to dance and also bath with some leaves at the cemetery. All these are believed to prepare him to be well-equipped in dancing. Concerning the reasons for the ritual bath, the mind of the researcher is set back to what Rattray (1927) disclosed and which is recorded in literature review of this thesis. He gave the explanation that the bath is usually performed to help the trainees to come into contact with the *nsamanfoɔ* (spirits of the dead). But in addition, the researcher discovered that this act was done to instill boldness, take away fear and also to tell the trainee that he can do the impossibilities with the help of the gods, when ordained as a priest. This ritual bath is very dramatic, for it involves a great deal of dramatic elements (the process of bathing the would-be priest as a young boy). This is how one of the oldest priests in Asante describes it. At the cemetery, the old priest (his instructor) baths the trainee priest saying:

I am bathing you, the ancestors are here.
They are witnesses. You should learn to be bold
Everything about our profession is horrendous.
Therefore you need to be fearless. For the spirits
Are there to guide and protect you.

After this bath, the trainee is asked to proceed home without looking backwards. He is then asked to sing the following song:

Obedience is our priority we listen to our gods
We listen to our ancestors we listen to our predecessors
Always obeying, for that is our priority, our priority.

The ritual bath goes on throughout the first and second years of training. During the third year, the trainee goes through a lot of priesthood techniques. When he comes to the end of the training, there is a ritual ceremony performed to ordain him into priesthood. This ceremony involves drumming, dancing and singing. The ceremony begins with the shaving of the trainee's hair followed by prayers and some music in honour of the gods.

Nana eeh! Nana eeh! Come oh! Nana eeh! Nana eeh!

Come oh! Come and fill your servant your servant is more than ready, Come and fill him, fill him, for he knows you

Then follow the drums and the dances. The drummers play drum music for the invited priests to dance to the tune. The researcher's observation at Yaw Nkrumah village near Juaben was an interesting episode. She witnessed how the various priests danced to portray their powers. Some danced as hunters, others like snakes, warriors and many others. The ordained priest was not left out; he is allowed to dance till the programme come to an end.



Now the priest has been ordained, what next? The answer is simple; the service begins. He and his religious followers worship during festivals, sacred days, rites of passage and in times of need. Their worship usually takes place at sacred groves, shrines, stool rooms, cemeteries, banks of rivers, cross-roads, beneath sacred tree, etc. The foundation and commission of such worship places are not laid without prayer and thanksgiving. All these involve Performing Arts (especially music and dance).

The study revealed that a full worship service in Asante takes place on days known in Asante as *nnabone* (evil or bad days). On these days, the worshippers gather at the place of worship. They start the service by singing songs full of adoration. For instance, they sing the following song.

*Onyankopon Kwame, gye wo ayeyie Woa
Wobɔɔ nnipa, Woa wobɔɔ nsuo ne awia.Asaase
Yaa, wo mma da wo ase. Nananom, wo
nananom da wo ase Mo nngye mo ayeyie.”*

Translated as

One and only God, Kwame, receive your praise
You created human beings you created water and the sun
Land Yaa, your children do appreciate you. Our ancestor,
Your grandchildren extend their thanksgiving.

Having finished with the adoration, it is followed up with confession prayers by the worshippers which follow the pattern of libation. After this, a series of sacrifices are offered to the deities in appreciation of some success achieved by the people, or to show their gratitude. The researcher's observation at Yaw Nkrumah village revealed that these sacrifices are very important in the worship, for without it the deities could stop protecting the people. This is how the sacrifices are done in Yaw Nkrumah village. The worshippers presenting the sacrificial items sing thanksgiving songs. Here is an example of a song text recorded at the deity kobri's shrine:

We thank you, God, we thank you, we thank you our ancestors, we thank you, we thank you God's representative, we thank you, we thank you for your protection we thank you for giving us food and shelter. We thank you for giving us children thank you oh! Thank you oh!

What follows the thanksgiving offering is supplication prayer. At this stage, the worshippers go down on their knees to present their problems to the gods, for they believe that they (the god's) are the servants of God. The priest, who is believed by the people to be a mediator between the gods and man, dances around the items presented for some time and gives the worshippers the assurance that their sacrifices have been accepted. After this, he performs "ntwaho" and *adaba* (whirling and circling) dance calling on some of the worshippers to join him by touching them with his cow tail whisk or any item in his hand. The priest together with the "called out" worshippers gives pivotal turns in a circular manner. The impetus of these turns is so great that the ceremonial ground is thrown into a dusty atmosphere. (At this time it becomes so difficult for the onlookers to see the performance.) What the researcher realized was that throughout the service, the drummers never had rest; they played the drums with panache and alacrity till the end of the ceremony. Several dances are performed at the ceremony by the various priests such as *ntwimuu*, *ahuriahurie* and *akotoakotos* dance and this is evident on Plates 30, 31, 32 respectively in Appendix A

Aside the Wednesdays and Fridays which are the sacred days of worship, Asantes worship on other occasions such as festivals, naming, puberty and, marriage ceremonies and when calamities like sickness, death, famine and diseases befall them.

Inferring from the researcher's interviews conducted and her observation made, the trend of worship on these days is not much different from that of the sacred days. The only difference realized is in the words of libation poured and the song text but the rest remains the same. For example, libation poured at festivals, naming, and puberty and marriage rites begins with thanksgiving and ends with thanksgiving whereas that of death, sickness, famine and diseases starts with a petition and ends with a petition. The same goes with the worship songs. The discussion above has made it clear that Asante religion involves Performing Arts.

4.5 Medical System and Performing Arts

The medical system like the other cultural components discussed, uses Performing Arts in diagnosing and healing of a sick person. In Asante medical system, two people are recognized as traditional healers. They are the *Dunsini* (herbalist) and *Okomfo* (shrine priest). The *dunsini* usually deals with sicknesses that are physical (very few of them traverse into some spiritual sickness) whereas the *okomfo* deals with both spiritual and physical sicknesses. Again, the *dunsini* does not employ the Performing Arts so much in his therapy like the *okomfo* who employs all the Performing Arts in his therapy. Furthermore, *odunsini* diagnoses one's sickness only through an interview with the sick person, but the *okomfo* uses spiritual means (from the gods) and less interviews to diagnose diseases or sicknesses.

Regarding the diagnoses and healing skills of *odunsini*, the researcher was informed that after *odunsini* has diagnosed a sickness, he proceeds to the forest to pluck leaves, cut stumps, roots and branches of trees to prepare the medicine. Before and after he does that, he pours libation. This libation usually contains some dramatic elements which could best be described as an aspect of Performing Arts. He speaks to the leaves, roots or bark of a tree as if they can hear. The researcher's observation at Nana Abena Nkrumah's therapeutic centre at Dwaben revealed the following form of prayer.

*Nana, nana, nana wo nana, ere frē wo, memma wo akye
Mehia wo ahahan no bi de aye aduro ama no ntumi nsa yadee
no. Sē medi nkonom a, mesan abeeda wo ase”*

translated as: Grandsir, grandsir, grandsirYour grandchild is calling you, I greet you. I need some of your leaves to prepare medicine Please let it heal the sick .If it becomes successful, I will return to express my gratitude to you.

After this Nana Abena Nkrumah plucks some of the leaves and comes home for the preparation. This medicine, she claims is meant for curing barrenness and she added that she always goes back to offer sacrifice to the trees after being successful in healing a woman of her barrenness. This process of healing is also acknowledged by Idowu (1973:200) “It is also significant that more often than not, the collection of ingredient and the dispensing and application of medicine are accompanied by some form of ritual” The word “significant” chosen by Idowu may imply that, the absence of such ritual could lead to ineptness of the medicine man or render his therapy ineffective. This could explain why medicine men in Asante pour libation or propitiate the spirit believed to be residing in the trees they pluck their medicine from.

Regarding the performance of healing by *ɔkomfoɔ* (priests and priestesses), the researcher was informed in the following villages and towns (Juaben, Yaw Nkrumah, Essienimpong, Onwe) that the priest has certain days allotted for diagnosing and healing one's sickness. For instance, the medium of the god 'Kobiri' of Edweso Onwe's days are Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Also, the healing day of the medium of the 'Ntoa' gods of Yaw Nkrumah village, near Juaben, is Sunday. Fridays and Wednesdays are days for the priest of Tano god of Essienimpong near Onwe. On these days singers, drummers (*akyeremadefoɔ*) and spokesman of the shrine gather there early in the morning to perform. They do this till the priest joins them. After the priest has joined them, he offers prayer to the gods and officially asks the gods to come. They usually present an item of interest to the deity, for example eggs, fowls, cowries, colas, etc first to God, then to the land and finally to the deity saying:

*Otwediampɔng Kwame hwε Asase Yaa hwε,
Nana asimasi hwε. Ene yε mo da, nti mo
mmra na mo mmedi dwuma die yi mu akotene*

translated as

Our dependable God Kwame behold land Yaa,
behold, Nana so, so and so behold. Today is your day,
so you should come and play a great role in this work.

This presentation of items is accompanied with music and dance. One interesting thing that the researcher noticed throughout her observation at the shrines was how the shrine priests and priestesses combined the presentation and pouring of libation with dances. At one point in time, the researcher thought the items for example egg, cola, fowl, etc would fall off their hands, but quite surprisingly, they held on to these items throughout the prayer. After this, the atumpan drums are sounded and an invitational song is sung to entice the gods to come and possess the priest. The following is the text of the song the researcher learnt at Onwe, at the god Kobiri's shrine.

*Frε frε no ma me oh! Kobiri bra, bra, bra. oo!
Nante brε, brε, Kobri nante brε brε oo!
Bosom papa a ɔkye mma, ɔsa mmofra yareε
Deε akyire koraa ne se abayifoo suro woo o!*

Translated as

Call, call him for me oh! Come! Come! Come!
Kobri walk majestically, Kobri walk majestically
A good god who gives children freely and heals children
Furthermore, witches and wizards fear you

The priest then comes in to dance. This dance is based on that particular deity's duties (whether, a warrior, giver of children, identifying witches and wizards etc). For instance, if the deity is capable of identifying witches and wizards, her priest may dance an *atɔpre* (executioners') dance. In the *atɔpre* dance, Nana Akwasi Amoako (of Yaw Nkrumah village) uses his sword to perform acts characteristic of the executioner, trotting around, as if about to slash the observers head away. It is around this time that the deity possesses the priest. Nana Akwasi Amoako rushes to stand in a nearby fire (set ablaze by devotees) without burning. At this time, he returns to the dancing arena to perform another dramatic event. He shoots at an egg (an act depicting his readiness to catch a witch or wizards) and then proceeds to catch a "witch". She is then asked to dance *Awurugyen* (the dance of the witches). In this dance, the "witches" go round the dancing arena as if trying to gobble something. They are then given some concoction to take (to enable them to testify to the atrocities committed so far). The priest then sprinkles some concoction on the "witch" and commands the evil spirit to come out (The aftermath rituals do not involve Performing Arts.)

Other witch doctors also chew fire and swallow eggs when they are possessed (refer to Plate 20 and 21 in appendix A). Not only is the god Ntoa of Yaw Nkrumah village capable of catching witches and wizards but his other spiritual line of actions are *akyemma* (giver of children) and *boafoo* (helper). When he is ready for consultations his

singers, sing and clap accompanied by drums, to alert the people that the time for consultation is up. Immediately a person enters the shrine, Nana Akwasi who is possessed by the god (*Ntoa*) reveals the person's problem without enquiring from the person. The god solves his problems by asking the priest to go to a nearby forest to pick some leaves or obtain some roots and barks of the deity's choice to prepare some medicine for him. He is then given some specific instructions as to how to go about it.

The researcher's observation at Yaa Nyantakyiwaa's and Okomfo Nimo's shrines (all of Essienimpong) and at Komfo Adasi's and Yaa Konadu's shrines of Akyinakrom had a similar orientation at the beginning of the service. The diversities come at the area of consultation for they have different spiritual obligations. Among these priests and priestesses, Komfo Nimo's deity is a *suman* (herbalist) and the other priests and priestesses' deities are fertility deities, those who diverge curses, heal "witches" and many others.

At the shrine of Nana Nimo, the researcher discovered that the sick people who came there had no idea of the type of sickness that was bothering them. His (Nana Nimo) duty was to diagnose and cure the sick. In diagnosing a sickness or a disease that is of spiritual background, he dances to portray actions relating to warriors' dance. In the diagnostic process, one of his devotees fires a gun while the other sprinkles white powder or clay on the ground. When one of the devotees was asked why white powder or clay is sprinkled on the priest; he said it is to drive away evil spirits who happens to be present at the healing center.

After the performance, he discloses the cause of the sickness and how to cure it to the sick person. If the sickness is of spiritual background, the priest makes certain incantations. Through these incantations the priest is able to present the plight of his patient to the deity. Afterwards he will demand some items from the sick person claiming is the voice of his deity. To the researcher, the demands may be mere exaggeration; for a deity may go to the extent of requesting for an ant's intestines. To this end, one of the researcher's interviewees said she believes it is a calculated devise by the priest to gain wealth. This attitude of the priest is very tantalizing, for the diagnosis raises the hopes of the sick person whereby the items demanded for a cure usually bring one's hopes down, if he does not have the means to pay for these items. Let the researcher retrospectively tackle the incantations made by the priest. It is so dramatic no wonder Nketia (1972:37) said "the priests are by instinct actors and actresses. The way the priests act on behalf of their deities is remarkable. For instance, if the object of the deity is said to be a snake, the priest upon delivering the message of his god acts like a snake, An example of a such performances is represented on Plates 20 and 21 (snake and fire deities respectively).



Plate 20: A priest believed to be possessed by a snake deity.

Source: From 2004 *adεεkesee* video clip.



Plate 21: A priest believed to be possessed by a fire deity
Source: From 2004 *adεεkesee* video clip

Interestingly, as noted already, some priests or priestesses employ dances as part of the healing process. In this performance, the researcher was told the priest usually transfers the possession dance to the sick person by touching him or her with his cow tail whisk or any object in his hands. This involves some dramatic enactment involving some interesting gestures, some of which are discussed here under.

The priest may point his cow tail whisk to the sky, down to the earth, to the left and right and make some spins and turns. He then touches the sick person with the whisk thereby transferring the dance to him. Here, music, drumming and clapping form part of the dramatic scene. Since the deities are believed to be music loving spirits, the efficacy of the music, drumming and clapping causes the deities to perform their healing functions. The researcher was told that if the Performing Arts are not performed well, the deities refuse to come to heal the sick (and the priest fakes a possession dance). The medical system surely can not be effective without the Performing Arts. For these arts are

employed in all the activities of this cultural component (medical). The significance of these performances discussed under medical aspects will be examined later in Chapter Five.

4.6 Belief and Performing Arts

How can one relate belief to Performing Arts? For it is generally known that, belief is an internal factor (intrinsic), whereas Performing Arts are external factors (extrinsic). Regarding belief of the people, Performing Arts serves as a common place where the people's beliefs are influenced. These beliefs are associated with Performing Arts. For instance, the belief that there is existence of God gives them hope to sing, to praise, adore, play drums, just to mention a few.

Asantes beliefs are mainly expressed in their religious, medical, economic and social systems. Firstly, the researcher would like to recount some of the things discussed under religion. There, the researcher made mention of some of the songs that the worshippers sang to praise God and the supposed servants of God (the deities). The words in the songs show that the worshippers believe in the deities. As a matter of fact it is this 'belief' that actually influences the people to sing such songs. Without the belief there would not be any importance attached to the songs, and certainly there would be no religious music.

Furthermore, recalling some of the things that were discussed under the medical system, it was realized that the priest in his diagnosing activities dances to portray the supremacy of God and the deities (as perfect and whole, higher than all, malleable as in *nwahoo*, *ahuriahurie*, *ntwemuu*). Aside this art of dance, the devotees also sing, play drums, and clap to entice the deity to come and perform his healing functions. All these

performances are based on the people's belief. The priest knows that when he sings, plays drums, claps and act out some of the characteristics of his deities, he will win his favour and admiration, thereby receiving more spiritual powers.

Moreover, in economic activities, the carver, hunter, weaver, etc who perform rites involving some Performing Arts before commencing their work, do so because of their belief in deities who are thought to dwell in trees, clay, water, animals and many others. As a matter of fact the 'belief' of the people plays a significant role in the dramatic rites performed by these professionals, for without the 'belief' there would not have been any rite. That is, they believe the deities can help them to work successfully, that is why they perform the rites.

Meanwhile, funeral rites performed under the social system could be best described as a rite based on 'belief.' In the 'water rites' performed by the family members of a deceased, It was realised that the members addressed their deceased persons as if they were not dead. This dramatic event is done because of the people's 'belief' in ancestors. They perform these rites because they believe the deceased is embarking on a journey so when he is treated well, he will repay with blessings to the family. Meanwhile, the dirges, the sorada purification rite, dance drama (to portray one's occupation) and many other rites, are all performed under the context of 'belief. Invariably, belief is very important in the performance of these arts, for it is the "belief" of the people that serves as a motivation in performing these arts in Asantes' religious, medical, economic and social activities.

4.7 Summary of the Discussion

Having gone through the involvement of Performing Arts in the various cultural components namely political, social, economic, medical, religious, and the belief of the people, the researcher disclosed that, in the political system, from the enstoolment through to the death of the king Performing Arts are involved. Music, dance, drama and drumming are involved in his enstoolment rites. In performing his duties as a warrior, ~~from~~ *fɔntɔmfrom* dance are performed to portray his strength over the enemy. In the settlement of arbitration before and after he sits on judgment seats the *kwadwomfoɔ* (court minstrels) sing songs of praises to the king (which outlines his achievements, bravery and wisdom). Funeral rites are not left out. Music accompanies the spread of his death, the funeral dirges (with which the past and the present deceased kings are praised), music, drumming, dance and drama are portrayed in the kings' grand funerals and the aftermath rituals.

Socially, the events of life such as birth, puberty, marriage, death and festivals amongst others employ Performing Arts in celebrating them. In the birth rite, music, dance and drama feature prominently. “*Nsuo a nsuo, nsa a nsa*” translated as “if it is water say water, if it is wine say wine” are always dramatized. Also, the singing of lullaby is employed by mothers to put their babies to sleep and is also used as an avenue for expressing their sentiments.

Moreover, puberty rites involve music, dance, drama and drumming. *Bragorɔ* puberty (initiation) songs are performed as part of the ceremony to spell out the duties of womanhood. Drumming and dance are also performed as part of feasting activities in the

afternoon of the said occasion. There are series of dramatic events (ritual bathing) that take place at the riverside, the *anoka* (eating) and the catching of children's hands.

Invariably, Asantes marriage is one of the rites that do not involve Performing Arts extensively. The researcher noticed that after the actual ceremony, the girl is asked to go to the husband's house and her husband provides her with ingredient to prepare a special meal for the man's relatives and friends. It was disclosed that it is at this time that music, dance and drumming feature prominently. The swearing of oath by unfaithful husbands and wives also has dramatic elements in which the perceiver sees as an organized form of drama.

Furthermore, the funeral rites of Asantes from day one to the fortieth day celebration involve Performing Arts. They are exhibited in the water rites, the spreading of the news, the shaving of hair, the song of the deceased grandchildren, the drummers and the dancers at "wake" (in the night), the dramatization of the occupation of the deceased, the dirges (full of praise of the deceased) and the dancers during the actual funeral.

In the economic field, the researcher wrote that the hunters are natural actors for they can follow an animal and mime some steps, so as to enable them to catch it. When they kill a big animal or animal believe to have powerful *sasa* (spirit), a feast or ritual ceremony is performed respectively. Meanwhile, the carver before cutting a tree performs rituals and when he is through with the carving performs another ritual. In the same way potters offer a dramatic prayer to land Yaa before picking clay for making their pots. Weavers and farmers on the other hand sing throughout weaving to while away boredom.

Umbrella makers, goldsmiths and bead makers dramatically present their prayers before and after finishing their works.

Concerning religion, it was discovered that a would-be priest goes through a training which involves Performing Arts: the dance lessons, bathing at the cemetery, (how the trainee is bathed by the trainer and is asked to sing a song on the way home by the trainer) and the final ordination durbar. On the worship itself, it was mentioned that the worshippers begin the service with adoration, then proceed to confess their sins, thank the gods for their protection and finally present their petitions, all these are performed alongside music, dance, drama and drumming.

In Asante traditional medicine, the *odunsini* (herbalist) heals sicknesses that are physical, but *ɔkomfoɔ* (priest) deals with both spiritual and physical ones. The only Performing Arts that the *odunsini* employs is drama, he performs the act of libation pouring (in which he talks to the spirits of trees as physical beings), while the priest involves music, dance, drama, and drumming in diagnosing and healing the sick people.

Finally, the people believe in God, ancestors, divinities, lesser spirits, etc. The belief that there is the existence of the above beings, and that they could bless and protect them influence them to sing, dance, act, clap and play drums. These performances are done to portray their (god, ancestors, and divinities) supremacy, appreciate their protection, ask for their intercession, supplicate to them and teach the people to be obedient, humble and dedicated to their gods.

In the light of the presentation made on the findings, one can correctly attest to the fact that Performing Arts are involved in the activities within Asante culture and this goes to answer the first research question which states “ does the performing permeate every facet within Asante cultural system?”



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

This chapter is devoted to the interpretation and discussion on the findings. In this vein, it discusses the role, importance and significance of Performing Arts displayed within the cultural components. The researcher's presentation of this chapter is based on the pattern of narration in the preceding chapter. It shall also discuss the modification that has taken place based on the recent performances the researcher discovered from the field.

5.1 The role of Performing Arts in the Political system of the Asante

Invariably, Performing Arts play a prominent role in the political system of Asantes. The functions of these arts are made evident in all the programmes organized within the political system (nomination, installation, enstoolment, duties of the king, death of a king, etc).

In the nomination, installation and enstoolment rites of kings in the political system, it is music and drama that play a major role. Music plays panegyric, motivational and an entertaining role. Regarding the role of music as a panegyric, it is the *kwadwomfo* (court minstrels) that are employed to do so. Any time a king sits in state, they sing to praise him before and after his speeches. When festivals and durbars are organized, the *kwadwomfo* sing to recount the exploits of their past kings who fought selflessly for the Asante nation.

Looking at music from the communicative point of view, it was disclosed in the previous chapter that, the people upon accepting a nominated king (Otumfuo Osei Tutu II) sang an “*Ose*” (jubilant) song. This song helps the elders to ascertain the acceptance of the choice. On the other hand, the same medium is used to reject the nominated king and that the elders did not make a good choice. Here, music plays a communicative role making it simple for the people to communicate to the elders and the nominated king.

In music's role as an entertainer, the songs the *kwadwomfoɔ* (court minstrels) sing and *ose* songs performed during nomination, installation and enthronement rites of an Asante king entertains the people and also helps them to merry. The role of drama in the nomination, installation and enthronement rites is also evident in the Pampaso rite. Inferring from that section, drama can be seen as playing the role of “beautifying and enriching the culture and also entertaining the royals present and the audience”. The ceremonial act of Pampaso *hemaa* (the queen mother of Pampaso) carrying the Asantehene-elect on her back (from Opoku Ware I to Osei Tutu II) makes the whole rite very interesting and appealing to the eyes of onlookers and even royals present at the rite.

Concerning the role of Performing Arts that are exhibited in the duties (judiciary, religious and commander-in-chief) of kings in Asante, music, dance, drama and drumming are all involved. In the king's role as judiciary of the Asante traditional court, music and drums are the main Performing Arts displayed there. Music plays the role of praising the king before and after adjudicating disputes. The *kwadwomfoɔ* are the musical group that perform this task, Moreover, the role of the drums in the arbitration process is laid bare in summoning counselors to court (*kantamanto & susubiribi*) and

also escorting criminals (*nkraviri & mpebi*) on their way to the execution field. It is also used to march thieves on the street as part of their punishment.

In relation to the king as commander-in-chief of the army, all the four Performing Arts (music, dance, drama, drumming) that the thesis has chosen to narrow down to are exhibited. Music plays the role of inspiring, praising and encouraging the commander-in-chief of the Asante army (the Asantehene), the warriors, the royal family and the entire community members.



It may be recalled that, mention was made concerning songs of praise and motivation performed by community members and even the entire warriors in praise of the commander-in-chief as a valiant fighter and entreating him to lead the army to victory. These kinds of songs serve a motivational and an inspirational purpose. It motivates the king and the entire army to fight and defend the land of the Asante when the need arises. It also instills hope and confidence into the entire army, the queen mother, the entire royal family and the community at large. The following are examples of praise and inspirational songs recorded during the researchers interviews:

Praise song

Who can fight him,
no one can
He is strong as wind.
No one can face him.
The one who can strangle
a lion with his bare hand
Who can stand before him in battle.
No one, no one, no one.

Inspirational song

Who can turn the mighty warriors down?
no one, but god. They are brave and strong
Slay a thousand and a thousand will surface.

Anytime the community members or warriors sing these kinds of songs, they are reminded of the powerful commander they have (a commander who is able to lead the army to victory) thereby given the warriors and the entire members of the community hope and confidence of winning a battle. Again, the *sumangorɔ* songs performed by *sumankwafɔɔ* (spiritual physicians) also portray anger and preparedness to go for war. The lyrics “*Yɛn ani aye kɔkɔɔ dada, yɛn ani nsuro hwee*” when sang in preparation towards war could scare opponents away. In times of war, victory songs performed by the people of Asante could compel the warriors of Asante to be very dedicated to their nation and be ever ready to defend it anytime and at all cost.

Dance role is made evident in the *sumangorɔ* dance and the gestures of the king. The *sumangorɔ* or *sumankwagorɔ* (spiritual physicians dance) serves a protective role in war times. The dance is believed to offer protection to the warriors on the battle field. The gestures employed by the king to portray his authority and supremacy over the enemy also manifest the role of dance as a communicator. Through dance the king is able to portray his military prowess to his people

Drumming plays a protective role on the battlefield; for instance when one gets lost around this time and cannot trace one's people, the sound of the drum will direct him to his people (his camp) thereby saving the one from being captured and killed by the opponents. Then again, it is drumming that is employed to bring warriors together on the battlefield.

In the king's role as religious leader, music, dance, drama and drumming play a vital role. The kings of Asantes exercise their religious functions mainly during their festivals.

Before the commencement of the ceremonies, there is a day allotted for cleaning and tidying up the community. On these days, music plays a motivational role. The people usually sing to while away boredom and gets strength to tidy up the community. Music again is employed to entertain, welcome and educate the people present at festivals, durbars of the culture of Asante. This is made possible through the words in the song text by *kwadwomfoɔ* and the various *nnwomkorɔ* groups. Dance like music, also entertains and educates the celebrants and visitors of the culture of the Asante through the various gestures employed by the king, the celebrants and the various professional dancers.

The act of guarding the Golden Stool by Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II assures the people of Asante of the protection of Asantehene and his protection for the Golden Stool at all times. This act also imbues confidence in the people of Asante, for if the people know that their king is able to defend and protect them at all times, they will definitely have confidence in him.

Drums are supportive musical instruments in festivals and at all occasions. They play the role of supporting other musical instrument in making music. Not only that, in their communicative role, they help to signal the approach of a king or queen on a festival durbar grounds for people present to acknowledge him or her, they also draw people to the durbar grounds and communicate the solemnity of the occasion.

Realistically, Performing Arts play a dominant role in the funeral rites of royals of Asante. The day a royal dies to the day of the final funeral rites is coupled with music, dance, and drama and drumming. Once again, music plays a communicative role in royal funerals. The use of dirges by female royals to express their grief and pain and the

atrocious nature of death, in a way incite sadness in the heart of sympathizers and onlookers. Again, dirges employed to praise a dead king or any royal also reminds the people present at funeral of the mighty tree that has fallen.

The role of music manifests itself again in the grandchildren of the king processional song “*Nana awuo! Yεn mmua nna oo!*” This song helps to communicate to the entire community of what has happened and also educate them of the fact that the grand children are not suppose to fast since their grandfather accomplished his mission before joining his ancestors.

The role of dirges is again exhibited on the dawn of the first day set aside for the *ayikesee* (grand funeral). The queen mother together with the past royal wives and other female royals walk through the principal street of Manhyia through to Adum singing dirges and wailing to bring to the notice of *Asanteman* (Asante nation) what is going on. In this respect, the role of music is to draw the attention of the people to the event of the day and the two weeks allotted for the “grand funerals” known in Asante as “*Ayikesee*”. Again, music is employed by the various singing groups to communicate the solemnity of the occasion, express their grief and also in a way entertain mourners, sympathizers and onlookers in general.

Another Performing Art that plays a vital role in royal funeral is dance. It is used to communicate feelings and also to entertain sympathizers as well. Through dance gestures, a dancer could communicate his or her grief, pain, dejection and a lot more. The gestures employed in communicating this feeling their meanings will be handled under the topic “the significance of dance in the cultural system.

Ostensibly, every activity organized during royal funeral celebration has a dramatic orientation. The role of water ritual on the bedside of the king is believed to help him climb the hill (leading to the other world) without being thirsty or finding any difficulty. It is also to enable the royals to send their petition through him to the royal ancestors

The swearing of oath by the paramount chiefs, presentation of burial items and the preparation of food by the traditional cooks are to relieve pain from the heart of mourners. This is made possible, because it gives them hope that the king is not gone forever but lives afterwards as an ancestor in the spirit world. Since these dramatic rites relieve pain in the heart, it is evident that, they play therapeutic role in royal funeral.

The drums performed during royal funeral rites serve both communicative and supportive functions. In its role as a communicative instrument, it draws the attention of the people in the community of the event in question (the sound of the various drums performed at a royal's funeral) makes it easier for even a foreigner to sense the presence of an occasion. As a supportive instrument, it prepares the stage for singers to perform at royal funerals and also help other drummers in making music

5.2 The role of Performing Arts in the social system of the Asante

The role of the Performing Arts in the social system cannot be over-emphasised, for it permeates all the activities organized within the social system namely; birth, puberty, marriage, death, festival, recreational activities among others.

In birth rite, music plays a substantial role immediately after the name of the child is mentioned and after the child is made to taste wine and water. These songs play the role

of outlining the pride of womanhood, so that all present at the ceremony will appreciate women on their procreational role in the society. (personal interview, Obaapanin Afia Kobi, one hundred and ten years old woman, Atwima Apampatia, Oct. 2005) Quite a number of the researcher's interviewees also attest to this information. These songs again bring to light what is expected of the parents and the society at large in bringing up the child. The role of music here again, is to ignite happiness, smiles, laughter and above all entertain the people present at the naming ceremony.



One other form of music that plays a role in birth and its associated activities is the lullaby. Aside the cradle role it plays to quieten or put the child to sleep, it is also used to criticize, and praise people. Some of the researcher's informants said that, lullaby is an effective tool for expressing one's sentiments. This is evident in Nketia (1974:193):

Cradle songs are not confined to subjects of interest to children. A mother may use them for conveying matters of personal interest, for reflection, or for commentary. Hence, the theme of strained relations, envy, and jealousy also come into cradle songs.

Agordoh (1994:47) also shares a similar view, "... more often she uses the crying baby as a pretext for having a slydig at a co-wife or a neighbour (probably childless) with whom she might not be on good terms." Dance also is believed to prevent death, when it comes to child bearing. This preventive role is made possible when a woman (who has lost a child and gives birth again) dances before her new child to prevent him or her from dying again. (Personal interview, Nana Gynayε, shrine priestess of Yaw Nkrumah village, Nov., 2006)

Furthermore, during merrymaking periods in the puberty rites, music plays the role of challenging the initiate and the young girls of the community to behave in accordance

with the words in the songs. Aside the role that music plays, dance and drumming also have a role to play. Whereas dance plays an entertaining role, drums play a supportive role by supporting other musical instruments used in entertaining the people present at the puberty rite.

Three dramatic rites precede the merry making period. They are the *adwaree* (bathing), *anoka* (eating) and atenaseenstoolment rite. The role of the bath rite is to prevent the ghost mother (at the other world) from coming for the girl after the rite, the *anoka* rite is performed to prepare the girl to be fertile and the enstoolment rite is also believed to make the girl live long. Customarily, these three dramatic rites play preventive roles.

In marriage rites performed in Asante, music play the role of entreating marriage couples to remain faithful to their spouses, love each other, and help each other and to perform each other's function well in marriage. Some of the songs also praise hard working wives and husbands. The dances during marriage feast are mainly for entertainment purposes with the drums playing the role of a supportive musical instrument, with its tune entertaining the celebrants as well as onlookers.

In the funeral rites of Asante, Performing Arts play the role of a motivator, communicator, educator and a critic. Music is one of the Performing Arts that play communicative, critical and educational role. Its communicative role is laid bare in dirges and processional songs by the grandchildren of the deceased. These songs help communicate to the entire community of the event in question. Nana Osei Mensah (a devotee at Onwe shrine) narrating the role of dirges in funeral celebration said they are performed at the dawn of one week observations, fortieth and annual celebrations to draw

people's attention to the event. Again, he drew the researcher's mind to the point that the kind of dirge sang (whether general, deceased men, deceased women, deceased youth or child) also educate people of the state of the sex or state of the deceased. It brings to light the hatred man has for death. Furthermore, the processional song by grandchildren of the deceased also draws the community's attention to the fact that children do not fast and that fasting is only for adults.

The role of music again is made clear in the songs provided by *nwomkorɔfɔɔ* (musical orchestra) at one week observation, final funeral rite, fortieth day, or one year celebration. These traditional singers constitute the *adowa* orchestra. As part of their role, they set the mood (motivate) for various musical instruments and drummers to be on course. Opoku (1965:18) in asserting this fact writes "The drum and choral ensembles play a vital role in this drama of life. They set the scene, create the mood and the atmosphere for the dancers. The drums act as prompters but sometimes engage in a dialogue with the dancer." It also criticizes and praises death and the deceased respectively through the dance gestures employed.

Dance, like music, also plays the role of a communicator and a critic on Asante's ordinary person funeral ground. In both roles, the bereaved on a dancing ground may employ some gestures to express her inner feelings. For instance, a widow who wants to portray her irreparable loss may place both palms on her head meaning "her head is gone". The head means her husband, lord, superior, etc. Dedinger (1980: 40) in discussing funeral rites of Asante also gave her version as:

When a woman holds her fingers interlaced and puts them on her stomach the gesture can mean hunger. She is saying, I am going to die of hunger now that my bread winner is gone. When she presses in and rubs from side to side it means that her intestines are torn... palms are placed on the head

it means ‘What has befallen me; all of my hopes and aspirations have been dashed to pieces. Oh Father, I’m finished, I’m finished, I’m finished. My plans have been brought to an end for the rest of my life is nothing without you.’

Bame in describing the gestures of the woman who has lost a relation also writes:

In similar idiom of symbolic gestures, a queen mother or any other woman who has lost a relation as a result of death may express her irreparable loss, her grief and her hope with her right finger pointed at her eyelid, she says to observers “see what has happened to me.” She may also either place both palms against her stomach with her torso tilted forward or support her tilted head with both palms or place the two palms on the top of her head, all to signify grief and dejection.’

Aside this communicative and critic role dance plays, it also entertains mourners, sympathizers and onlookers who are present at the funeral and therefore add “spices” to the ceremony.

As a matter of fact, water rites, presentation of burial items, cooking of best meal (of the dead of royal or person) and *soroada* (purification or ascention day) are evident in both political and social systems. The role Performing Arts play in them are the same. The enactment of one’s profession or hobby by workmates or friends reminds the people present at the funeral grounds of who the deceased was and also entertains them as well. The carrying and breaking of the widowhood pot (with three stones) is also performed because it is believed to dissolve the marriage between the deceased and the widow.

Drumming at funerals serves a three fold functions – a motivator, an entertainer and a supportive musical instrument. If played alone or played with other musical instruments, it serves the same functions named above. Drums set the atmosphere for dancers, enticing them to dance gracefully to the tune of the drums, tantalizing them to bring out their graceful and meaningful gestures, not only that, it also supports other vocalist to make music.

One other area in the social system where Performing Arts play a pivotal role is festivals. This is laid bare in the role they play as a motivator, entertainer and educator. Recalling from what was discussed in the previous chapter. Mention was made of the fact that the people who gather to clean the path to the mausoleum and the entire community, usually sing to motivate them to work. Here, the role of music as a motivator is realized through the way it brings the people together to work with one accord and also strengthens them to work tirelessly to achieve good results.



Apparently, historical songs play the role of entertaining and educating participants and observers at festivals. These songs are the type of songs that reminds people of their past. Nketia (1974:196) in writing about historical songs referred to it as “songs of the elders” he further explained that, “they remind people of the past and of the values of society, and require some knowledge of oral tradition before one can understand them” Historical songs are performed at various durbars during festivals to entertain and educate the people present at the durbar of the rich culture of Asantes. In buttressing this information, Agordoh (1994:48) writes that historical songs are also used as a teaching device. Dance, like music, also entertains and at the same time educate the celebrants of the culture of Asante on such occasions. This is realized through the various dance gestures employed by kings and celebrants when dancing.

Drums are beaten to herald the coming of festivals, call on community members to come together for tidying up the community, order the steps of an approaching king at the festival durbar, sound appellation, etc. Dramatic rites performed at festivals help celebrants to have faith that they are being protected in other words, these rites influence the belief of the celebrant and assure them of the deities protection. For instance, the

dramatic enactment of the deities' powers by their priests and priestesses assure the celebrants of the protection of the deities.

Performing Arts also have a role to play in Asante's recreational activities namely: *anansesem*, *aso*, *ampe*, *anhwe woakyire*, *nsempo* and *nsiesie*. In Ananse (spider) stories, music plays the role of correcting false narrators and also prompts listeners to pay attention to the story. Dramatisation of characters in the stories also helps the listeners to understand the stories being told.

The drumming and dancing that are mostly incorporated in the story (in the middle of narration) also help listeners to have fun and also prompts them to pay attention to the continuation of the story. (The people who benefit a lot are those who usually dose off in cause of narration). In *aso*, *anhwe woakyire*, *ampe*, *nsempo* and *asiesie*, music plays the role of "salt" and "spices" which add taste and aroma to the game respectively. Here, it is the music that holds the game for without the music, there would be no game.

Aside these recreational activities, music plays the role of a critic. It is employed to ridicule "bed wetters", tease prostitutes and mock thieves. Music makes it easy for one to communicate to such people without fear or trembling. It is a powerful tool in rebuking such indisciplines and accepted by the people than verbal utterances.

5.3 The role of Performing Arts in Economic System of the Asante

Music serves as a source of motivation to the farmer, potter, carver, umbrella maker, weaver, etc in Asante. It also gives them the energy to work. My informants, Nana Akwasi Amankwa and Opanin Kwadwo Kyere, said that, music instill some sort of

strength in them when working. Music again can help increase output, for a motivated worker can tirelessly work without even realizing how much effort he has put in.

Dramatic role is also evident in carving and pottery. A carver or a potter, who wants to fetch his raw material for example wood or clay, may propitiate the spirit believed to be residing in the raw materials. The way a carver and a potter propitiate the spirit of their raw materials when they want to acquire some materials shows the presence of drama. Through dramatic acts they are able to present their needs to these spirits believed to be inhibiting in the tree and clay.

A hunter who wants to have a game at the end of his hunting expedition may employ certain dramatic acts to enable him achieve his aim. The role of drama here is attraction as it possesses some attractive force to lure animals to be killed. There is a big feast coupled with some rituals when a hunter kills one of the biggest animals or animals believed to have powerful *sasa* (spirit). This feast plays a preventive role, for it prevent the spirits believed to dwell in the animals from killing, hurting or rendering the hunter ineffective.

Drama and dance play a very significant role at this time. Through dramatic presentation of their hunting skills, people present are educated about what transpire in the forest, before meat could be found in their various kitchens. It also entertains onlookers and causes them to stay throughout the ritual ceremony or the funeral (if it is named so). The drums also serve the purpose of communicating and motivating the dancers to perform well and also communicate to them. Ihekeazu *et al* (1985:77) also acknowledge the role

of drums as communicative instruments. The writers state, “Such an instrument may also be used to communicate directives to dancers in an arena on how to behave or dance”

5.4 The role of Performing Arts in religion, medical and the belief of the people

Performing Arts pervade every activity organized within religious and medical systems as well as the belief of the people of Asante. As a result of this, they play a very prominent role in the components named above. The role of music in the religious system cannot be ignored, for it is through music that the gods are communicated to by worshippers. For instance, at the beginning of worship, the congregation commune with the gods through songs of adoration. In the middle of the service when sacrificial items are being presented to the deities, music is also employed. Again supplicatory and thanksgiving prayer are all performed in music by worshippers.

Music again plays a communicative function. Through music, the shrine priests and patients are able to present their plight to the deities. In the same way, dance, through bodily gestures, shrine priests are able to serve as the interpreters between the deities and patients. The priest also communicates to the deities through dance. If a priest wants to tell a deity that he (the deity) is perfect and whole or wants to prove to worshippers or sick people that his deity is perfect and whole, he will dance the *ntwaaho* dance.

Concerning dance used as a means of communication, Dendinger (1974:1) writes “Dance is a means whereby man communicates with his gods or spirits and gets them to co-operate.” Here, Dendinger’s view combines both the communicative and the attractive roles. This assertion by Dendinger makes it easy for one to conclude that the deities are advocates of dance. Through dance, the shrine priests are able to adore the deities and

present the nature of the deities to worshippers (whether a hunting deity warrior, lame or snake). A hunting deity (usually a witch doctor) may dance the *abofos* dance, a snake deity may also crawl on the floor/ground (with the chest) when possessed, the lame may crawl with the buttocks sticked to the ground and the warrior may use gestures similar to killing, and firing of guns. With this role the priest may impress it on the minds of the people present that, he is unforgiven, fearful, patient and a lot more. In adoring the deities, dance gestures like *ntwaaho*, *ntwemu*, *ahuruhuri* to mention a few are employed by the shrine priest to communicate to the deities and the worshippers that the deities are perfect, whole and supreme.

Performing Arts also have roles to play in the belief of the people. People's beliefs are influenced by the five senses namely sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. Invariably, they are influenced by what they see, smell, taste, touch and hear. Three out of these five senses (touching, hearing, seeing) can be found in Performing Arts, even smelling and tasting are debatable, since they can in a way have something to do with the Performing Arts. When the people see, hear and get the feel of what the deities and ancestors are capable of doing, it influences their belief and causes them to serve and put their trust in them.

Furthermore, music also plays the role of attracting the gods to come and perform any duty assigned to them by their priest. This attractive force is made evident in the ordination ceremony. Here, music is used to call on the deities to come and possess the would-be priest in order to empower him. Again, mention was made in chapter four, concerning a ritual bath at the cemetery. In that section, it was noted that the would-be

priest is made to sing to assure himself and the deities that, he would be obedient in his work.

Drama (of worship) like dance makes communication easier for shrine priests and worshippers. For if a worshipper sees the enactment of the powers of the deities mentioned in our preceding paragraph, it will communicate what the deities are capable of doing and also increase the faith of the worshippers. Drums also play the supportive role of supporting other musical instruments to play to the tune of the deity's special songs.

Medically, the roles of Performing Arts run through all the healing activities within the Asante culture. Apparently, Performing Arts help in making a distinction between the shrine priest and a herbalist, they also help the shrine priest to present the plight of patients to the deities. It is through Performing Arts that patients gain faith and confidence in the deities (the way they represent the healing deities and act out their powers).

Aside these general roles that Performing Arts play in the medical system, each Performing Art has a role to play in the medical system. For instance, music plays the role of attracting the deities. Its attractive force invokes the deities to come and perform their healing functions. Nana Akua Afra (Ejisu Onwe), in response to the question, "why the priests sing songs (on the day of healing) before they perform libation?" said, the songs can communicate best to the deities, since they possess some magnetic substances (in her words). She further said that the "magnet" (she claims the music contains) is able to attract the deities to come even if they don't want to. For the so-called "magnet" is

even stronger than the deities. The possession of shrine priests and priestesses by the deities, help increase the medical belief of the patients. Not only does drama play a role in the healing deities' shrines, it also plays its role in the *odunsini's* (the herbalist) healing centre. Through dramatic acts, the herbalist is able to propitiate the spirit of the trees and herbs he uses in his operation. . In view of our foregoing discussion, one can say that Performing Arts play a major role in Asante traditional politics, and this goes to answer the second research question which states "what roles do the performing Arts play in Asante culture?"



5.5 The importance of Performing Arts in the Asante culture

Performing Arts are very important in Asante culture for without them the culture of Asante will fall short of its beauty. For instance, music makes communication easier in the nomination of the king. It may be recalled from the previous chapter that the *ose* (jubilant) song that is performed when a king is nominated helps the elders to discern the acceptance of the nominated king. On the contrary, the absence of such a song could mean objection to the nominated king. Based on this fact, much importance is placed on this kind of song for without it, it would be difficult for the elders to determine the mind of the people at that stage.

The songs by the *kwadomfɔɔ* (court minstrels) is also very important in Asante politics, in that, historical, praise and ceremonial songs are performed when the king (Asantehene) is about to give a speech, end his speech, or at any point in time when he (the king) is performing any kingship role. Perhaps, absence of such music in the palace will create a vacuum in the political music of the Asantes. The lyrics in historical, praise and

ceremonial songs will not get a better avenue to be expressed for easy absorption by the people of Asantes and even foreigners.

War songs are also very important in the political system of Asante. This is because it elevates the spirits of the commander-in-chief of the army (Asantehene) and the entire warriors to fight to defend their nation. Victory songs after war is considered very important because of the motivational role it plays. Nana Asumanin, (a retired army officer, Adum Ankobeahene and the chief of Afaatia) narrating the importance music plays in the past battle of Asantes said that, the absence of praise songs from the members of the community upon victory, will mean the people do not appreciate the sacrificial work of the entire warriors. This he confessed could bring intense tension in the whole of the Asante kingdom. These songs (praise songs) sang after war could also raise the spirits of the victors to be more dedicated to their community or nation.

The queen mother and the wives of past kings usually perform songs at some royal gathering or durbars to praise the king. A typical example is the durbar held to herald the coming of 2004 *Adεεkεsεε* at the Centre for National Culture, Kumasi. These kind of songs show the love and respect the queen mother and the past kings wives have for the king. This type of song will make the king happy and feel accepted by his queen mother and wives. They could have chosen to use other means of communication like verbal, but because they know the impetus music possess, they would not replace it with speeches at that particular time, for it is evident that music helps them (queen mother and wives) to harmonize their thoughts.

Music at royal funerals by *kwadwomfoz*, *nwomkorɔ* (musical ensemble) and female royals (dirges) are considered very important, because it is used in spreading the news of a dead king, queen mother, chiefs, sub-chiefs or any royal in the highest ranking. It is also used to honour, mourn, elevate, adore and to spell out the deceased's achievements and exploits. Much importance is placed on these songs because the absence of such songs could mean a king's death would be pronounced explicitly, taking away the solemnity of the occasion and the culture of using songs and proverbs to pronounce a king's death. It could also bring boredom on the funeral grounds.

The use of dirges as chosen medium to announce the event of the day (final funeral rite) and also to tell the dead king that, his people are about to perform his last send-off rite is considered very important. One of the queen mothers who does not want to be disclosed commenting on dirges (when her king died in 2006) said, the ancestors are music loving beings, therefore the choice of dirges as a tool (by women) to communicate to them is the right choice, for the spirits could best appreciate the words in the dirges when they are performed. The queen mother's comments bring to light the importance that is attached to music (dirges) at royal funeral.

The performance by the *nwomkorɔ* groups at the royal funeral gathering permeates the entire ceremony. Their continuous performances, actually, remind the people of what has happened. If music is taken out of the activities discussed earlier, it could take away the real beauty, richness and the meanings attached to the activities causing the Asante culture to lose its ethnic meanings and popularity.

Dance, like music, plays a momentous role in Asante's political system. A king dances throughout the various installation and enstoolment rites, when he ascends the throne, when there is a durbar, when he is mourning, when going for war or when jubilating to portray his authority, and supremacy (over Asante land)and when he wants to express his feelings.

One dance in Asante, that is prominent and very essential in war, is the dance of the *sumankwafosɔ* (the king's spiritual physicians) known as *sumangorɔ*. This kind of dance is performed prior to war. Though in recent times, Asantes do not go out for war, they still perform *nsumangorɔ*, but this time around, it is performed as a ceremonial dance. The protective role this dance plays makes it very important, for it could be that the absence of this dance is tantamount to defeat.

Much magnitude is placed on this dance, because of the protective role it plays during war times. One of the informants, (who wants to remain anonymous) commenting on the importance of *sumangorɔ* said that Asante warriors in the past believe that the absence of *sumangorɔ* is tantamount to defeat. He further disclosed that, the dance is a petition dance to the deities, so the absence of such performance would ostensibly mean the deities would not offer their help and protection during war times, thereby causing their (Asantes) defeat.

Furthermore, in times of war, a king may dance with a gun or sword to show his preparedness to protect his people and defeat his enemies. The absence of such a dance by the king could mean otherwise. In view of this, such gestures are employed by the king (in all occasions mentioned in the preceding paragraphs) to assure his people.

Apparently, dance at royal funerals is also very important, since it entertains sympathizers (throughout the ceremony), stirs up sorrow among sympathizers and praises the dead king. The researcher's interview with Nana Amankwah (a staff at the Manhyia Palace) revealed that, gestures at royal funerals are forcefully portrayed by the dancers to ignite sorrow among sympathizers.

Seemingly, this observation by Nana Amankwah made the researcher very vigilant in her observations at royal funerals. The main purpose of this vigilance was to find out if truly the gestures are forcefully portrayed by the dancers as this raised some concerns in the literature review (concerning how Bame also used the same expression). Throughout the observation, the researcher discovered that the dancers were not too aggressive, but their major concern was to communicate the pain inflicted on them by death. Observations reveal that, dance is equally important in royal funerals like music, for every royal funeral without dance could not be counted as one. Hence, what those gestures do (entertaining, stirring up sorrow and praising the king) would not be realized.

Moreover, the dramatic presentation of *aseda* fee by the nominated king's spokesperson is considered important because, the absence of this (paying of *aseda* fee) could mean a total rejection by the *Gyaase* (the general supervisor of the duties at the king's palace). Another dramatic act by Asante kings is the guarding of the stool (see plate 11). This act is considered very important, because it portrays the king elect as the custodian of the Golden Stool, and is also symbolic of the protection the king can give to the stool at all times. When a king of Asante ignores such act, it could mean he is not ready to protect and defend the stool, and this could raise an alarm (since Asantes believe their soul is buried in the named stool).

Three dramatic acts that are very conspicuous in the funeral rites of Asante kings are the swearing of oath by the chiefs, sub-chiefs and subjects of the dead king, presentation of burial items and the preparation of the favourite meal of the dead royal. All these rites are very important, since it gives special touch to the royal funeral. Attempt at withdrawing them from the funeral rites will take away the real beauty and meaning attached to royalty during the royal funeral rites of Asantes.

In the preceding sub-topics (the role of Performing Arts in Asante's political, social, economic, religious, medical, and the belief of the people) mention has been made concerning the role of drums as communicative and supportive musical instrument. The importance of drumming in the political system is so clear that, they even collect drums as war booty. This importance manifests itself in the procession of kings and chiefs to a durbar or any occasion. If drumming is taken out of a king's procession to a durbar or any gathering, it may be difficult for one to distinguish the kings and chiefs from the ordinary people at such gatherings. In view of this, one can conclude that drumming in the Asante political system cannot be replaced with any other thing, thus making it very important.

Socially, Performing Arts play crucial roles in all the rites of passage together with festivals and recreational activities in Asante. The songs performed at birth, puberty, marriage and death, are mainly for entertaining, advising, praising, criticizing and expressing the solemnity of the occasion (especially funeral rites). Lyrics are more easily remembered when they are communicated to in songs. Nothing can replace music in such ceremonies, for if taken out; it would be difficult for one to be able to remember the words in a critical, praise and advisory songs.

Music helps early childhood development and also helps the child to know the language of the parents very fast. This confirms the researcher's earlier assertion concerning how music is easily remembered as compared to mere words. Music cannot be ignored in child upbringing for it cannot be replaced by any other Performing Arts. This substantiates the fact that, music is very important in child upbringing.

Historical songs performed during festivals are considered very important because they educate the people about their past. Of course, if the festivals had completely been without any song at all, it would have totally been boring and unattractive, and at the time of its celebration the durbar might have largely been silent and unknown to many people. Ihekweazu *et al* (1985:88) acknowledges the fact that without music, festival gathering would be boring, thereby causing participation to be low. They therefore write:

The use of the music arts – song, dance and instrumentation in the festival theatre gives extra rhythm to festival environment and allows for performance of epic proportions... Without the music arts communal participation in the funeral drama would be minimal.

Music again is indispensable in the Asante story telling. In the previous chapter, mention was made to the fact that music (*mmoguo*) is employed to explain the deeds of the characters in the story and also to draw the attention of a narrator when he or she is noted to be deviating from the true story and this urges him or her to tell the true story. *Mmoguo* or songs raised in the middle of the story is very essential, for it prompts the listeners to pay attention in order to follow the characteristics of the story as it helps them recollect the story whenever they (the listener) want to make reference to or even narrate it. In view of the importance of music exhibited in *ananse* (spider) stories, one can boldly infer that the absence of such songs in the narration of stories will make narration very boring and the listeners may also forget the story with time.

In the same way, the songs that are employed to draw the attention of false narrators are equally important, since it is used as a tool for putting them (narrators) on the right path. The songs harmonise the words of the listeners (of putting them on the right path) to prevent quarrelling. The absence of songs in the narration of the stories may results in quarrelling and making the entire narration boring.

Practically, music is very important in *ampe*, *aso*, *nnsembɔ*, *anhwɛwoakyire*, etc. These games would be incomplete without music, for it forms the integral part of it. The absence of music in these recreational activities will cause the players to mime in addition to the clapping, jumping, dancing, running, to mention a few. This will render the game uninteresting and also prevent the players from expressing their feelings, which are very imperative in *aso* (singing clapping jumping)

Music enhances criticisms, as it ridicules “bed wetters”, prostitutes, womanizers, thieves and lazy people without fear or favour. It could be sung at any point in time without the singers being accused of insulting anyone as compared to mere verbal utterance. Again, music can last longer on the minds of people than words, for this is made possible because of the rhythmic nature of it. Music is considered very important, as it cannot be replaced by any other Performing Art in ridiculing, criticizing and mocking those groups of people. Without music, retaining words on one’s mind will be difficult, thereby making it difficult for one to make reference to such words.

Dance like music, is also very essential in the activities organized within the social system of Asantes. For instance, the dances performed at *bragɔrɔ* (puberty) ceremonies not only entertain the merry maker but also declare the state of the young men and

women present (whether spinsters or bachelors) through gestures. This makes it easier for one to decide on a spouse during such occasion. The absence of such dances will make it difficult for one to know who is married and who is not.

Interestingly, dance is also very important due to the feelings it portrays at funerals. Anyone who knows the meanings attached to each symbolic gesture can easily discern the state of the dancer through his or her dance. These gestures make communication easier at funeral grounds, so the absence of dance during funeral may create a vacuum in the process of communication. The bereaved may find it difficult to impress on the minds of sympathizers, his or her inner feelings (grief and pain). Since the nature of Asante funerals make it difficult for one to stay throughout the ceremony without being entertained, dance adds “spice” to funerals rites.

Again, based on the roles (of dance in festival) discussed in the preceding sub-topic (education, entertainment and praises), it is easy for one to conclude that dance is very important in festivals. A matter of fact, these roles played by the Performing Arts in festivals may not be replaced, so the absence of them (Performing Arts) will mean the festivals will lose its significance, beauty and publicity and would be boring

Dramatic presentation of certain rites, performed under the social system is also very important. For example, it is believed by the Asantes that, the presentation of water and wine to a newborn baby is to inculcate into him or her loyalty and truthfulness. Death rite for babies (who die before the seventh day after birth) is also performed to deter babies from reappearing. Much importance is placed on these two dramatic rites, because it is believed that presentation of water and wine if not performed, will render the children of

Asante untruthful. In the same way, it is believed by Asantes that the absence of death rite for babies will encourage dead babies to come again and die through the same process. The death of a pregnant woman discussed is also an important act since it is believed to give the “living pregnant woman” confidence that she will live to give birth to her baby. This rite is considered very important because it is believed that the absence of it could create panic among pregnant women and may even lead to their death. Based on this fact Asantes consider it as a very important act until today where the abundance of Hospitals have relieved their fears.

Again, the eating, enstoolment and bathing rites performed under the puberty rites for girls are considered very important, since the Asantes believe that, the absence of these rites will bring calamity (death and barrenness to the girl). To them there are no alternative rites that could be performed to prevent such occurrence, that is why they infuse it in their culture. The facts that this rite involves the life of individuals make it important in the people culture for they believe in procreation and perpetuity.

As a matter of fact, the importance placed on water rites, presentation of burial items, cooking of best meal (of the dead person) and *soroada* rites in the political system are the same as that of an ordinary man’s funeral in the social system. One dramatic rite that lies in between the two components (political and social) is the widowhood rite (performed on the way to the cemetery). The absence of this rite is believed to cause the spirit of the deceased to have intercourse with the living spouse thereby preventing her from remarrying. This rite is recognized as important because it is symbolic of the dissolution of the marriage between the dead and living spouse.

Economically, Performing Arts are essential in economic activities like farming, carving, shoe making (native sandals), umbrella making, weaving, etc. Performing Arts are employed in diverse ways to increase output and decrease the risk involved in their work. For instance, during the researcher's interviews in the fieldwork, she uncovered the fact that, music motivates them to work almost tirelessly without really realizing how much effort he or she has put in. Without music in these economic activities, there would be no increase in the output of these craftsmen.



Concerning the risk of production, dramatic rites are employed by the craftsmen (goldsmith, carvers, farmers and potters) to propitiate the spirits of their raw materials and tools to help them work without any unfortunate occurrences like accidents. The process of propitiating the spirits believed to be residing in the raw materials is very dramatic (an example of these dramatic rites has been discussed under the involvement of Performing Arts in the Asante economic system.) It is believed by these craftsmen that, without the performance of these dramatic rites, their tools may injure them. In view of this, these dramatic rites are never substituted for any other thing.

Owing to the above is the dramatic rite performed by a hunter, upon killing one of the biggest animal(s) believed to have a powerful *sasa* (spirit). This rite discussed in chapter four, is believed to deter the *sasa* of the dead animal from causing the hunter to fall sick or even die. As a result of this fear, the rite is considered very important in the hunting profession. Practically, without the performance of these Performing Arts in the economic system, the various craftsmen will experience a lot of havoc in their work.

Religiously, Performing Arts play a very vital role in the activities within the Asante traditional religion. The impetus of religious music, dance, drama and drumming among others is so high that, it is believed to aid God, deities and ancestors to perform their benevolent functions. A typical example is the adoration song, sung by worshippers, at the beginning of worship service. These songs are believed to influence the deities to offer protection to their subjects. As a result of this important function of music, it is rated so high by the priest and the group of worshippers. Music is very indispensable since the absence of it could mean God, deities and the ancestors would not be present, hence, there would be no worship, as the invocation of the spirits would not be realized. This shows how important music is when it comes to Asante religion.

The importance of dance is also made clear in the training period of a priest. Since much importance is placed on religious dance, a priest under training is taught how to dance throughout his or her training period. To enhance the dance, the priest who is training the trainee priest gathers leaves of *asoia* to strengthen the ankles (Rattary 1927:41). These strengthening of ankles by *asoia* leaves (*Cariespermum Grandiflore*) show how important the dance is.

Again, as part of the ordination ceremonies organized for a would-be priest or priestess, he or she is asked to dance all night (throughout a night set aside for the rite). This is done to ensure that he is well vexed in religious dance. It is through dance that, the deities are acknowledged. In view of this, dance is seen as a very important tool of worship, which cannot be excluded from the religious activities. Perhaps the absence of it will make it difficult for the priests to incite their worshippers' belief (since the gestures employed are used to show the presence of the deities during worship service).

Drama of worship is also seen as very important in Asante religion, for it is through the imitation of the various spirits that worshippers beliefs are influenced. As he rightly puts it, “From time to time, it becomes necessary to hold a public act of worship for renewal of faith and dedication of converts (Nketia, 1963:96). A possessed priest who presents himself as an executioner and hunter is easily seen as a priest who hunts for witches and wizards. When a worshipper sees such act, it increases his or her faith in those deities, thereby causing him to remain faithful to them (deities) by worshipping at these shrines or grooves allotted for worship services. When this dramatic act is taken out of worship, worshippers might stay away from the religion, because they may think there is nothing to hold on to.

The importance of drums at worship cannot be overlooked, for it is the drums that incite the priest to dance, for they outline dance rhythms for him. This assertion directly finds a link with what Nketia (1963) again discloses as drummers outline particular dance rhythms for the priests”. This goes to buttress the point that, drums incite religious dance. The absence of drums may mean links that are established between priests and spiritual beings through dance would not be realized, thereby causing the religion to suffer rejection by worshippers.

Medically, the healing activities organized within the medical shrines cannot do without music, for it is through music that the spirits of deities are invited, for they are sensitive to the language of music. My interviews and observations concurs Opoku’s view in the literature review that, the efficaciousness of the healing therapy depends on how best the song is played. This shows how important music is when it comes to the medical system, for without it, the medical deities will not come and perform their healing functions.

The dances at the medical shrines are very significant since, it is believed to scare away evil spirits and instill beliefs in the sick people. This is made possible through dances like hunter's dance, (to hunt evil spirits believed to be tormenting sick people) and *atopre* dance (trotting around, as if about to behead the spirits heads). All these dance gestures give the sick people hope of being healed. These dances are very important, because of what it does in the medical system (giving hope to the sick). The dance is evident of the great healing prowess of the gods.



Drama, like dance, is also important in the healing shrines. The enactment of the various deities and the powers they possess infuse some element of faith and confidence in a sick person. It may be that, the absence of drama in medical shrines could make people lose faith in the healing deities. This explains why drama is considered very important in shrines and their healing therapies.

Invariably, every shrine has its own set of drums which combines harmoniously with songs to call on the deities for the effective use by the deities and priests of the shrine. Healing shrines are no exception to this fact. Nana Akua Afra (shrine priestess) of Edweso-Onwe, in the researcher's interactions with her revealed *ntumpan* drums as the main drum of her deity Kobri which is her deity. She claimed that before she starts attending to patients, the *ntumpan* drums will sound (because the god *Kobri* loves the *ntumpan* music) and with this she confessed that the deity comes to possess her. She further claims that, the sound of the drums also deter evil spirits from coming around the healing centre (shrine). She added that, her deity's drums are seen as sacred and it is only brought out on their healing days (Wednesdays). In view of what Nana Akua Afra

disclosed, one can infer that drumming is very important in healing shrines since the absence of it may lead to the absence of a healing deity.

The peoples' belief in God, ancestors and deities motivates them (worshippers, devotees and priests) to communicate to them. For instance, the belief that the deities are music loving beings, dancers and actors by instinct motivates the priests, devotees and worshippers to communicate to them in these Arts. Looking at the importance of the Performing Arts in the belief of the people, it is expedient to fish out what these Performing Arts do in it (the people's belief). Apparently, music, dance, drama and drumming instill belief into worshippers. Not only does it increase their faith and hope in the deities but it also strengthens their belief and faith. As a matter of fact, it is the Performing Arts that lure or persuade these worshippers to worship God through these deities (which they claim to). In the same way, it is these same Performing Arts that increase a sick person's medical belief and hope to be healed at various healing shrines. Observations at one of the healing shrines (which the researcher is warned to remain anonymous) saw a particular sick person who had spent, more than six months at that shrine (as of the time the researcher visited) without any improvement.

When asked why the medical deities of that shrine has not been able to heal him, the priest replied vehemently that, it is the sick person that is rather refusing to be healed, since he does not believe in the deities' power to heal. With this, the sick person retorted, "you cannot heal me and you will not allow me to go home". This observation gave the researcher an insight into what the healing shrines claim "belief" can do. My question therefore was, what role did the Performing Arts play during the six month period the man (sick person) has been in the shrine? There could be a lot of answers to this question,

but what the researcher deduced from her observation is, perhaps, the man (sick person) was not ready to be influenced by these Performing Arts to increase his medical belief or the shrine which claims to be a healing shrine, is not one, or because intrinsic and extrinsic factors are two separate things, it takes longer period before one can influence the other. Perhaps, after some additional months, the sick person might finally believe in that medial deity (for him to be healed). Concerning intrinsic and extrinsic factors that have just been mentioned, it connotes belief (intrinsic) and Performing Arts (extrinsic) respectively. Most of the healing shrines the researcher visited confirmed the fact that, Performing Arts influence their belief (be it medical or religious).

5.6 The significance attached to the Performing Arts within the cultural components.

Asantes have lots of meaning attached to everything they do. Their music, dance, drama and drumming performed at every occasion has its own significance. To the onlooker, a normal interpretation of the performance is given, but behind the scene, there is more to it than what is generally known.

Having gone through various interviews and observations, the researcher would want to write the meanings attached to the Performing Arts displayed in all the cultural components involved in Asante culture.

5.6.1 The significance of music in the cultural systems

In the political system, mention was made of songs like *ose* (jubilant), war, victory and praise songs with which the lyrics were clearly codified. Not all the songs have special meanings (attached to it) apart from the general meanings of the lyrics. Meanwhile, *ose*

songs and *nsuman nnwom* (by *sumankwafos*) have special meanings attached to the words in the songs. For instance, a traditional *ose* song learnt through interviews conducted goes like this:

Asanteman onie, zhene dada koo!
Zhene foforo aba oo! Mo nhya no oo!
Zhene ee! Onyame ahyira hyira no ee, ee!
Nana ee! Onyame ahyira no oo

Translated as

Asante nation, behold, the old king is gone oh!
A new king has come oh! Meet him oh!
King eh! God has blessed him eh! Eh!
Nana eh! God has blessed him oo!

When an Asante man sings this kind of song, aside the literal meaning translated above, it also means Asantes should put what has happened (the death of a king) behind and focus on the new king, and accept him, for he is the chosen one from God, blessed by him to lead the nation to a successful end.

Again in the *suman nnwom*, "Yen ani aye kokoo dada, yen ani nsuro hwe" performed by *sumankwafos* in times of war, implies that they are grieved as a result of being trampled upon, so it behooves on them to fight the person who caused their anger without any fear or favour. Invariably, when an Asante says "ne ani aye kokoo", literally meaning "his eyes are red". Red here connotes anger, pain, digestion etc... so it means he or she is grieving or feeling sad or angry.

Socially, one song that we recorded that has special meaning attached to it is the grandchildren's processional song at funerals.

Nana ee! Nana ee!
Nana awuo, yen mmua nna oo

Translated as

Grandmother or grandfather eeh! Grand mother or grandfather!
Grandmother or grandfather is dead, we don't fight ooh!

This song means grieving is for adults alone, children are not supposed to grief; for it behooves on them to be happy all the time. In the remaining Performing Arts (economic, religious, medical and the people's belief), no song of special significance was recorded.

5.6.2 The significance of dance in the cultural systems

Dance is one of the avenues Asantes and Africans in general use for the expression of ones sentiments. In consonance, Agordoh (1994:32) writes: "The African attaches great importance to dancing for the fact that, it is an avenue for bodily movement which provides for release of emotions"

Politically, the kings dance at installation, war times, funerals and *sumangoro* has significance attached to these gestures. Firstly, as part of installation and enthronement rites, the king dances to both *adowa* and *fontonfrom* tunes. In these dances, the king (whether in a palanquin or on the ground) may point to the sky, the ground, then to the left and to the right and then to his chest, signifying beside God and mother earth, there is no one besides him in authority and that he owns all that he surveys, It also emphasizes his authority over his territory.

Secondly, in times of war, the king may dance with both sword and gun in his hands, also signifying his preparedness to protect and defend his people at all times. It also means, he is the commander-in-chief of the army and that the gun and sword are his protective weapons, so anyone who dares challenge him in war (would be put to sleep forever), he may point his forefinger to God, then to the ground and all the four corners of the earth, then to his chest meaning, God has given to him all that he surveys. In a congruous idiom

of symbolic gestures, a king may point to the sky, make some prominent stamping on the ground to denote the fact that he has made his enemies his foot stool.

A commoner or any of the warriors may be allowed to portray the same gestures by observing the etiquettes governing it (removing one's hat, headgear, tying one's cloth around the chest, pointing to the king instead of one's chest, etc). Agordoh (1994:116) also share this same view in his discussion on Akan *fɔntɔmfrɔm*.

Since *fɔntɔmfrɔm* is a court dance, common people who are brave Enough to step into the dancing ring must always observe the courtesies that drummers expect of such people; in the way they comport themselves, in the way they wear their cloth, and in the reward they give to the drummers. All commoners must dance bare footed, and they must be stripped down so that their shoulders are bare; a dancer who ignores these will be asking for trouble.

In situations where one wants to say beside God and mother earth, there is no one in authority than the king, he will point his forefinger to the sky, the earth, then to the king and then proceed to wave both hands in the sky.

One notable dance that is performed during war times, is the dance of the spiritual physicians known in Asante as *nsumangro* (traditional physicians' dance). This dance is usually performed by *sumankwafɔɔ* (the spiritual physicians) and the commander-in-chief of the army (the king). Sword, guns, shield and all weapons for war are used in dancing. The dancers act with those items of war as if they are on the battlefield. In recent times, Asantes do not go out for war, they still perform *nsumangorɔ*, but this time around, the hands are used in place of the war items mentioned earlier. So in the process of dancing, if one wants to portray an act of slashing, he may put one hand on top of the other and use the upper hand as sword to slash the lower arm.

In the same way, if one wants to portray an act of firing, the hand is again used as a gun to shoot. This kind of dance is performed to scare evil spirits from following the warriors and also to assure them of their protection and victory over their enemies. It also portrays that they are dangerous and unforgiving and could silence anyone who wants their downfall.

However, symbolic gestures employed at royal funerals express ones grief or pain, but also exalt and praise the dead royal. For instance, a female royal whose relative is dead, may express her grief (in *adowa* symbolic gestures) by tilting her head and supporting it with both palms. With this, she means she depended on the dead person (for advice, protection, comfort, etc) so what will become of her, that is, now that the person is no more). She may again place both hands on her stomach meaning her provider is gone, so who will provide for her? When she places both hands on her head and then stretch her open hand forward, she wants to say, her king, superior, lord, father, mother is gone, who will she deliberate issues with? Again, if she wants to tell the onlookers that, they should see what has happened to her, she will point her forefinger to her eyelid. All these gestures in a way, pay tribute to the dead royal (be it a king or any of the royal members).

Alternatively, similar gestures could be employed by a male royal or a king when dancing on a relatives funeral grounds. He may point his forefinger at his eyelid and then proceed to stretch his hand forward, then back to himself and further make movements of capturing and binding. With these symbolic movements, he says to sympathizers and observers; look at what has happened to me, if only I had power over death, I would have tied him (death) before he laid his icy hands on my precious one. In appreciation of the king's dance, his subjects may stretch their fore finger together with the third fingers (to

form “V” shape) and point them at the king on the dancing ground signifying, well done. All these symbolic gestures employed at royal funerals makes it easier for a king, queen or any royal to communicate his or her feeling without necessarily crying out loud.

Interestingly, dance gestures employed at royal funerals have a similar orientation with that of an ordinary man’s funeral. In view of this, the researcher would like to discuss the gestures of a widow and widower in an ordinary person’s funeral. When a widow wants to portray her irreparable loss, may place both palms on her head meaning “her head is gone”. The head means her husband, lord, superior, etc. She could also place both palms on the tummy signifying her depender is gone, who will feed her? Moreover, she may place one palm on top of the other, parting them and joining them at an interval for about two seconds. With these gestures, she impact on the minds of people to sympathise with her and be of tremendous help to her. Similarly, a widower may express his feelings by biting his forefinger meaning “he cannot bear the pain”. He may also place both palms against his stomach, signifying “he will starve to death, now that his cook is gone”

Religiously the most important and foremost gestures employed by all the shrine priests and priestesses (that the researcher witnessed) takes the form of the king’s dance discussed earlier. They (shrine priests and priestesses) may point their dancing sword or cow tail whisk into the sky, then to the ground, saying “God and mother earth are his superiors”. Nketia, (1963: 93) states twelve pieces of drum music.

Drum pieces	Translated version
<i>Ntwaaho</i>	Whirling
<i>Adaban</i>	Circling
<i>Abofɔɔ</i>	Hunters’ dance
<i>Abofotia</i>	Minor hunters’ dance
<i>Ta kεseε bekɔ Takyiman</i>	The great Ta will go to Techiman
<i>Akumu</i>	Outburst
<i>Sapa</i>	Dance of enjoyment

<i>Dwenini katakyie</i>	Valiant ram
<i>Denkyemkye</i>	Hat of the crocodile
<i>Asonko</i>	
<i>Okwaduio bedi mperem</i>	The antelope will receive shots
<i>Samrawa</i>	

Nketia mentioned the fact that “every piece, therefore, correlates with a style of dancing and with movements in the period of worship. The researcher’s observation also reveals that most of the names given to the drum tunes listed by Nketia describe the dances. For instance, in the *ntwaaho* (whirling) piece, the priest whirls round and round at a marked spot (with white clay or powder). In the *adaban* (circling) dance, the priest retreats in a circular form for some time before the *abofoo* piece is also introduced. Aside these twelve dance patterns. The researcher found out, and Nketia pointed out that, ntwemu, ahuriahurie and akotoakoto are also dance pieces that originates from adaban, ntwahoo, and abofoo dances.

Ahurie (jumping) dance gesture is also another form of dance performed by shrine priests and priestesses in Asante’s shrines. In this dance, the priests and priestesses may hold on to their dancing sword with both hands and jump as high as they can on three consecutive times. This is usually repeated three times to denote God, ancestors and the deities are higher than all also to mean that they will go high and never fall.

Ntwemmu (stretching) dance gesture employed by various priests and priestesses at Asante’s religious worship is performed to mean that the gods can never be torn or broken; for they are malleable, but strong in mind. In this dance, they hold both hands up and make a gesture similar to stretching while turning around. Again, *akotoakoto* (squatting) dance is also employed by the shrine priest to denote the gods can come to the level of everyone, if they want to accomplish a mission. In this dance, the moment the

atmosphere is set by the drums (for dancing), the priest will walk slowly (nodding his head in appreciation of the drum tune and the songs) to the dancing arena, then whirl for some time, before he proceeds to squat. He then moves around for some time and retreat. This process is repeated for some time until he stops the drummers. He may not stop them abruptly, but rather sit on the ground and raise his hands or place them on his laps to signify his total surrender to the gods. With this, Nana Akwasi (the shrine priest) of Yaw Nkrumah village said, they at times wipe their face with their hands to take off the “dance veil” to enable them get back into the physical world. The ‘dance veil’ is also known as “possession”. These dances are common to all the shrines in Asante.

There are other dances like *atɔpre* (the executioner dance), *asafo* (warrior) and *ahuregyen* that is mostly linked with the healing shrines. *Atɔpre* (warrior) dance, takes the form of executioner’s dance. The priest uses his dancing sword to perform acts characteristic of the executioner, trotting around, as if about to behead the observer, meaning he is unforgiving, quick-tempered and can make out and execute witches and wizards. The warrior’s dance takes the pattern of attacking and striking. The priest employs this gesture to mean he can fight every spirit without fear.

The significance of the dances discussed so far makes it easier for priests to communicate to worshippers during worship and also instill belief and hope in the sick person to enable him to be healed.

5.6.3 The significance of dramatic rites performed within the cultural systems

There are lots of rites that pervade all the activities organized within the cultural system. These rites have special meanings attached to them, of which this section of the thesis

proposes to identify and give the various meanings attached to them.

Politically, there are certain dramatic rites that have some significance. Seemingly, every aspect of the political system has a dramatic orientation. The nomination through to the death of a king involves a great deal of drama. The handing over of Bosomuru sword, guarding of Golden Stool, water rite, the swearing of oath to the death, presentation of bath and burial items and preparation of the favourite meal of the dead royal or king and the firing of masketry rites.

The handing over of the *Bosumuru* sword (a state sword) to the nominated king (discussed in Chapter four) signifies empowerment. The guarding of the Golden Stool by Asantehene (king of Asantes) is symbolic of the protection the king can give to the stool and all the people of Asantes at all times.

The water rites performed by the queen mother and other royals, is done to signify the love the family members have for the departed soul. This is laid bare in the utterances by the queen mother. The rite is also performed to help the king or the dead royal to journey to the ancestral world without being thirsty and also to climb the hills (believed to be leading to the ancestral world) easily.

The swearing of oath (by chiefs and sub-chiefs) to the dead king implies, even in death, the subordinate chiefs and servants still hold allegiance to him (for they believe the king is not dead, but journeying into ancestral world, where he will intercede for them).

Similarly, the presentation of bath and burial items shows how wealthy the king was and still would be even after death. On the preparation of the king's favourite dish, the king's traditional cooks prepare this meal to connote the king (being their provider) ceases to provide for them because of death. This account from field has drawn the researcher's mind to Odotei (2001:17) observation at Otumfuo Opoku Ware 11 funeral (the fifteenth monarch of Asante). She reports “

The final act before otumfuo [sic] was put in the casket was the meal cooked by the “sodoo” that is the traditional cooks to be eaten near the corpse by the Gyaase and otumfuo’s attendance.

Furthermore, the firings of masketry rites also have some significance attached to them. Asante Kings fire masks on three major occasions; when he being enstooled, when he is organizing the grand funeral for his predecessor, and when he wins a battle. In some cases, when his queenmother dies, he is entitled to perform the firing of masketry rites.

In the enstoolment rite, the king fires masket to prove to his people that, he is capable of commanding the military force, and that he is ready to defend the golden stool and his people at all times. The firing of masketry rite at the grand funeral is to bid the dead king farewell, it also connotes grief, and hostility towards death (by the king together with his paramount chiefs). It is also to prove to the dead king that, they would have fought to save his life, if not for the fact that death is stronger than them. Again firing of maskertry ceremony after war is also performed to officially bring the war to an end. Concerning this, Osei (2002: 86) has also given a similar account in his discussion on Asantes and war. He states:

Whenever any war ended, all the warriors would first report at the capital where they would wait for the king and the paramount chiefs to perform the funeal rites for those who lost their lives in the war before they would be allowed to leave for their individual towns on the appointed day... each

chief and his soldiers would march to a place holding their guns. They would sing the particular war song of their area and at a special spot, the chief would fire his gun and the soldiers too would fire their guns.

The only difference that exists between Osei's account and the account from field exists only in groupings of the various paramount chiefs and their soldiers (in the firing of the musket). This grouping, to the researcher, does not affect the rites, the only thing that is of interest is the rite. All these dramatic rites discussed add beauty and meaning to royalty.



Socially, birth, puberty, marriage and death rites exhibit some dramatic elements throughout the rites. These rites have salient meanings that are very interesting. In the birth rite for instance, the dramatic presentation of water to the child (by the spokesperson assigned to do so) is a sign of loyalty and truthfulness.

On the other hand, death rite for babies (who die before the seventh day) is believed to put a stop to child mortality. The general meaning that correlates with puberty rite is to tell the people in the community that the girl is of age. The placing of the girl on a stool three times means she will live long; for the significance of three in Asante is “endless” “nsa da”

Pragmatically, water rite, presentation of burial items, cooking of best meal (of the dead person), *soroada* (the day of rising) purification rites are evident in both the political and social systems. The only dramatic rite that has a direct link with the social system alone is the widowhood rite. The performance of the rites is symbolic of the living spouse.

In the Asante religious and medical systems, the priests and priestesses employ drama to instill and strengthen the belief of the community of worshipers and sick people. This is made possible through the dramatic presentation of the various powers of the deities by the priest or priestess. A possessed priest who presents himself as an executioner and a hunter is easily seen as a witch doctor. A warrior is seen as a healer of diseases and sickness. Some priests imitate various creatures (like snake, lion, eagle, horse, etc) to show the extent of their powers.



The impersonation by priests at medical shrines helps convince sick people to increase their medical belief. This act of impersonation (in the healing shrines) which influences sick people's medical belief is characteristic of drama. Through drama, the actors who impersonate the characters in the story convince their audience to believe in what the story brings to light and also make them believe they are the characters themselves. This fact is also appreciated by Ihekweazu, et al., (1985: 84). They write: "Drama" or "Theatre" is a mimetic art. Through its medium, actors impersonate closely (imitate) characters in the story. The actors do not merely narrate a story about characters; they make us believe that they are the characters themselves'. When a sick person sees the character of a deity in a priest by interpretations given to him, it gives him the idea of who that deity is, and what he is capable of doing for his area of specialization.

Furthermore, the researcher through her observations, interviews and videos revealed some performances by priest and priestesses to portray the powers of their deities. One of the possessed priests used his back as a mortar (for pounding the bark of a tree) to constitute the strong nature of his deity, another priestess sat on a stool, and begun to dance with it, without the stool falling off from her buttocks. With this act, he tells his

people my deity can do the impossible things. The significance of music, dance drama and drumming discussed in all the cultural components, has answered the research question “what are the significance of the Performing Arts in the Asante culture”

5.7 Modification that has taken place in the Performing Arts of the Asante

In answering the fifth research questions “has there really been modification in the Performing Arts of the Asante?” the researcher’s mind is cast back to the statement of the problem stated on page 2 of this thesis. In that page, mention was made concerning the influx of other religions bodies, foreign influences and technological advancement being the main cause of changes or modifications in Asantes Performing Arts. In the statement, the researcher proposed to investigate to unearth the Performing Arts that have gone through some changes. So this sub-topic (modification) is as a result of the proposal made in the first chapter. Based on the researchers interviews and observations made, she identifies the areas in the cultural components where there has been some changes or modifications (based on a comparison between the old and new performance of the arts). Chapter four of this thesis mainly deals with the old performance and this column of the chapter brings to light the modifications disclosed during the researcher’s observations and interviews

The past caused the present and invariably, the present will shape the future. Therefore modification is irresistible when it comes to culture, for cultural values in Asante and the world at large have reciprocal influences. As a result of this, there is the need to examine the old and new performances of the Performing Arts and expose the areas in the Performing Arts where there have been some forms of modification. For this purpose to be accomplished, the researcher compared the old performance discovered in Chapter

Four to the observations on the field to bring to light the changes or modification that has taken place within the Performing Arts in Asante culture. In respect of this, the researcher picks each cultural component discussed in Chapter Four and discusses one after the other. Politically, interviews and observations made revealed that there has not been so much change in the political system since the 19th century. This, the researcher believe has come about as a result of the fact that the chiefs are the custodians of the arts. In spite of this, there are some areas in the political system where there has been some form of modifications.



The first area of concern is the jubilation song (*abamu awie*) performed by the people out of the palace upon accepting the nominated king. The researcher discovered that this song is a popular gospel song in Ghana and not a traditional one. Well, it was included in the discussions in Chapter Four because of the role it played there as a jubilant song and not as an indigenous traditional song. The fact that gospel songs are chosen in place of a traditional songs depict the presence of modification. Some modifications are very significant and some are not. The significant ones make the culture very attractive and move with time but the insignificant ones rather come to take up the traditional roles it play in the culture.

The next thing in the political system that shows there has been some form of modification in the Performing Arts is the announcement of a king's death. Usually, there are ways of pronouncing the death of a king or making the death of a king known to the general public. In the case of the fifteenth monarch (Otumfuo Opoku Ware II) the news of his death was spread within some few hours of his death. The British Broadcasting Corporation, the various frequency modulation stations in Ghana and the general public,

including Asantes themselves pronounced his death without observing the traditional rules of pronouncement (thereby eliminating the idiomatic way of pronouncing a king's death) Not only that, his burial rites and thanksgiving rites were also coupled with church services (where hymnals were sang in place of the various traditional songs). This is due to the fact that, a lot of foreign cultures have found their way through Asante culture and it has become part of the culture, making it difficult for even some of the Asantes themselves to know the original culture. This assertion directly finds expression in the statement made by Ihekweazu et al (1985:59, 60):

This form of cultural penetration which cannot easily be eliminated has become a visible or invisible part of the African culture. Western religion, education, etc., have left traces and prints on the cultural body, they have transformed it to an extent that makes it impossible to call them foreign any longer. Christianity, for example has been widely accepted and merged into African cultural context, her habits and modes. Values and standards which were alien to our grandfathers have in the meantime become so familiar that we can claim them as our own property and would not gain anything from denying them.

Ihekweazu, et'al statement in the last line "would not gain anything in denying them", has raised some concern to the researcher. It is true the people whose arts have been altered would not gain anything from denying them, but if these arts(altered one) are exposed, it will help the people in knowing what belongs to them and what is foreign, with this information, they can promote their arts so that, they will not lose all their arts and its ethnic significance.

Again in both 2004 and 2009 *Adεεkeseε*, church services were held to commence and end the festival. The merging of both traditional and Christian religion at *Adεεkeseε* festival connote modification in the political system of Asantes. At the church service, hymnals were chosen to replace traditional songs which were usually sung during festivals. When this is continued, the traditional songs will lose its popularity, thereby

causing it to fade out of the system or lose its traditional roles. The Performing Arts in both religions are performed along side making it difficult for observers and even some participants themselves to know whether or not these arts are indigenous.

In the social system, the Performing Arts displayed in birth, puberty, marriage and death have really been modified to the extent that it is not easy for people to fish out which one is of Asante origin and which one is not. In the birth rite, the traditional style of performance discussed in chapter four has been changed. The traditional music that was sang to outline the pride of womanhood and the love of a mother has been replaced by gospel songs, hiplife, reggae, etc (usually played on a “CD player”, cassette player or on a computer). The inclusion of the modern songs in this rite makes it clear that the Performing Arts have been modified. Furthermore, lullaby which is supposed to be sung in the local dialect of the mother (to facilitate in early childhood development – especially the language) is now being formed in the English Language, throwing away the traditional beauty and significance of these songs. During the researcher’s observations and interviews conducted, she discovered that most of the educated Asante mothers and even fathers sing to their children in the English Language. This is an example of one of the songs recorded.

Whose son is this, Mr. so and so’s son
He is a big boy, handsome boy
He is a fortunate child, handsome boy.2x

This song could have been sang in the local Asante dialect like

*Hwan na ne ba ni, Agya asimasi ba ni
ɔyε ɔkεsεε, ne ho yεfε
Ne tiri yε, ne ho yεfε 2x*

Interestingly, the influx of various foreign religious bodies (such as Christianity, Islam, paganism, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc) and other Western culture have succeeded in branding the *bragorɔ* ceremony as outmoded and uncivilized ceremony. In view of this, girls of today and even parents refuse the performance of this rite. In situations where they are performed, the original performance is merged with foreign cultures. In 2005, the researcher observed some few hours of puberty rites at Asante Bekwai. She could not observe all the rites due to misinformation of the commencement time. During her few hours of observation, the researcher saw that the music that was played there was secular songs played by “live spinners” (those who use computers and tapes to play music at occasions). The only traditional song recorded was by one of the old women performing the rite for these young girls, even so the song sounded more like a gospel song with Twi lyrics.

Interviews conducted based on the part of the ceremony that was missed revealed that even some of the dramatic rites (bathing at the river and enstoolment rite) were omitted for no apparent reason. In some situations, the various religious bodies mentioned earlier have chosen to replace the *bragorɔ* ceremony with a modernized form of ceremony that fits the style of their worship. An example of this is the Roman Catholic confirmation performed for their young girls and boys. To the researcher, these modifications are somehow significant, since it is done to suit the modern concepts or situations. But if some of these performances involved are recorded. The people will know what belong to their culture and what do not so as to enable them to promote and preserve what they have.

One other area in the Asante's social system that has experienced alterations in its Performing Arts is marriage ceremonies. In the past, during the *Aduane Keseε* (feasting) period, traditional music, dance and drumming were the only source of entertainment and one of the tools in advising the married couples and all present. In recent times, those Performing Arts displayed at marriage ceremonies have been replaced by foreign performances. For instance, music during marriage feasts has been replaced by foreign songs like gospel, hiplife, reggae, raga and the rest. Marriage couples who are wealthy, hire life bands or even some artiste themselves to perform at their marriage feast. Those who are not economically sound, employ the services of "spinners" to play those songs (mentioned earlier) on their computers and "CD" players to entertain their guests. The dances at such occasions (marriage) are now "free style" way of dancing. A dancer could incorporate both traditional gesture and foreign gesturers in the dance. The only thing taken into consideration is the rhythm. Conscious efforts are made not to go "off beat" or in other words not to miss the rhythm of the song.

Asante is one of the tribes in Ghana that are very conscious with rhythm. A child is unconsciously taught how to be rhythm conscious in everything he or she does, the pounding of *fufu*, sweeping, grinding, running, dancing, singing, drumming and a lot more. A. M. Opoku (1965; 18) in attesting to this fact writes:

To our older generation, the identification of dance with life was such a vital moral truth, that they exposed the young throughout infancy and adolescence, to rhythm in many forms and graded complexities. They also trained the body, in the same way as is done in speech training for actors, so that it could express a wide range of impulse and moods—love, hatred, joy, grief, comedy, tragedy, satire – to the accompaniment of songs and drums in this way, the heritage of dance was kept alive, so much the latent of all that even in these times the African who is not dance-conscious is a rarity.

Opoku's view goes a long way to explain why Asantes are rhythm conscious. Continuing what was being discussed earlier, (the merging of traditional and foreign gestures in Asante marriage feast) the merging of foreign and traditional gestures in marriage feast of Asante confirms that these arts have been altered, there is therefore the need to find a way of promoting the original performance of the arts so as to help maintain the rich culture of Asante, other than that, a time will come where their indigenous performances will be out of the system and they may not have any traditional art to boast off.



There has been some alterations in the Performing Arts displayed in the funeral rites of Asantes. Dramatic rites such as water rites performed at the bedside of a dying soul is gradually fading out of the culture of Asante. As a matter of fact, if a foreign culture finds its way into another culture and is not identified with necessary amendments made, that culture may gradually overshadow the existing culture thereby causing a complete change. This dramatic rite is barely seen in Asante funeral rites today. Even when it is performed, the significances attached are mostly not known by performers; the only thing that they know is "it is a cultural rite". In this regard, the researcher believes this dramatic rites that is fading out is also losing its meaning and importance. If the people do not know the meanings and the importance of this rite, they cannot appreciate it and they may reject it. In this vain, the researcher thinks that if these meanings and importances of the Performing Arts are laid bare it will encourage the people to see the need to perform and appreciate it.

Moreover, the performance by *adowa* orchestra and the various *nwomkro* groups at Asante's ordinary man's funeral, have also been merged with western cultural way of entertainment. In recent funeral rites, the *nwomkro* songs, gospel and highlife songs are

recorded on computers and “CD” and played on funeral grounds (on one week observation, final funeral rite, fortieth day celebration, etc). The researcher’s observations at various funeral rites again reveal that, in some situations, the services of both *nwomkɔɔ* and spinners (those who play the recorded songs) are employed and they perform interchangeably. They usually play in turns calling on sympathizers to dance. The dance at funerals today is mainly free style. Some also incorporate the modern form of dances such as boggie, step up, salsa etc.



Meanwhile, the few *adowa* symbolic gestures which are still employed by mourners and sympathizers are not well portrayed. The only people, who really portray the dance gestures well, are people of the royal family or professional dancers of the various *adowa* ensembles. The combination of both traditional and western style of entertainment and this inadequate way of portraying the real dance gestures at funeral shows modifications in Asante “ordinary funeral”.

With the introduction of television, computer games, frequency modulation stations, etc, hardly will one see children playing traditional games such as *ampe* (singing, clapping and jumping), *assɔ* (singing, clapping and dancing), *nnsɛmbɔ* (clapping) and *anhwɛwoakyire* (not looking at one’s back) or even listening to stories. All these recreational activities have been replaced by the western form of entertainment mentioned above by some children. Others do not even know how to play these games left alone the songs involved. In situations when they are played, they form the songs in foreign languages causing the games to lose the ethnic beauty (that is, the language).

My observation in some basic schools in Kumasi Metropolitan namely: Assembly and district Assemblies: Konadu Yiadom Primary 1, St. Joseph Primary, K. O. Methodist Primary (all in Asante New Town), Pankrono M/A Primary, Buokrom M/A Primary, Bantama M/A Primary, State Boys and Girls M/A Primary, Santasi M/A Primary, Yaa Achiaa Girls M/A Primary, Asem Mixed M/A Primary; Atiamtim D/A Primary and Ahwiaa D/A in the Kwabre District; Heman D/A Primary and Darko D/A Primary in the Atwima Kwanwoma District revealed, the combination of English and Twi lyrics in recreational songs. Example of *Aso* song recorded at St. Joseph Primary School at Asante New Town is stated below:

***Aso* (clapping, singing and dancing)**

*Me nya hwan na ṣbesa meacho
Ṣbesa macho, hwan na ṣbesa maeho*

*Me ma hwe na eisa emba
Ṣbesa emba, hwan na bese emba
Obese emba, hwan na obese emba*

Translated as:

Who will I get to perform macho dance
Perform macho dance, who will perform macho dance
Who will I get to perform emba dance
Perform emba dance, who will perform emba dance

Here the word ‘macho’ and ‘emba’ are not Twi words, but rather foreign. This shows that there are foreign influences on the traditional *aso* game and its songs. An example of *nsempo* song is also stated below:

***Nnsempo* (clapping) songs**

Robert Mensah goalkeeper number one
Aka nansa, na ḥko aburokyire
Kwasea bi te ḥɔ, εyε no ya, skin pain
εyε no ya, su ara na osu
ɔfa pintoa, ḥde awɔ ne yam
Adee kye yε ara, ne yere no woo

Ne ba no din de sen? Kofi Anto

Translated as:

Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one,
It was left with three days for him to go abroad
A foolish man was jealous, skin pain, he picked broken bottle
And stabbed him with it, so I will go and tell Osei Kofi.
The next day, Robert Mensah's wife gave birth
The baby's name is Kofi Anto. He didn't meet his father"

The use of goalkeeper number one, and skin pain, in the song text shows how the *nsembo* game has been altered.

***Ampe* (clapping and jumping)**

Ten, t....wenty, thir...ty, for....ty, fif....ty
Sis...ty, seven...ty, eigh...ty, nine...ty, hundre....d.

The children could have mentioned those numbers in Twi for example, *edu, aduonu, aduasa, aduanan, aduonum. Aduosia, aduoso, aduwotwe, aduokron ne sha*. Some of these children even mention the words in the song in addition to the clapping without singing. They do this because they do not know the tune of the song, hence, the clapping gives them the rhythm to play satisfactorily. Based on these observations, there is no doubt that Asante recreational activities have been modified.

Economically, the traditional songs that were sung by farmers, carvers, weavers, potters and umbrella makers among the lot have been replaced by a recorded version of songs (played on tapes) and songs from FM stations. These two media have taken the place of traditional song usually performed by workers any time they feel bored and still want to work. I also discovered that the dramatic rites performed to propitiate the spirits of the raw materials and tools of these craftsmen and farmers have been exchanged with the Christian way of praying (that is when the craftsman is a Christian) and those who are not

Christians also do not perform any rite at all. All these pieces of informations reveal the modifications in the Performing Arts in the economic system.

As a matter of fact, religion, medical and the belief of the people of Asantes are the cultural components which have suffered a great deal as a result of the influences of other religious bodies and foreign cultures. It is not the researcher alone who share this view, Idowu also share this view and therefore writes:

One of two things has happened to man's religion in any given situation: modification with adaptation, or extinction. The first may be said to have been the fate of religion throughout the world, of any religion. There is no living religion that has not taken into itself elements from other religio-cultures. Influences from other cultures and contacts with immigrant religions have brought, not only changes in the complexion of religion, but also modification of its tenets. The most particular of religions have not been able to escape this factor: they have been forced by the nature of things to give and take elements to and from even those religions which they regard as their enemies or rivals.

People in Asante barely worship at the shrines; go to the healing deities (for cure of sicknesses and diseases) and even continue to have the belief in ancestors and deities. As a result of this, the Performing Arts displayed in religious and healing shrines are not generally known by the people of Asante (today). This is due to the fact that, people's belief concerning the deities who own those shrines have changed, thereby causing them to refrain from these religious and healing activities. This has rather made the Performing Arts in Asante's religion and healing shrines unpopular. People barely know the music, dance, dramatic rites and drumming of the deities, so if the arts are publicized, people will know them and when this happens, it can promote continuity of the Arts.

In the light of aforementioned areas in the political, social, economic, religious, medical and the people's belief in Asante, there is no doubt that there has really been some form of change in the Asante Performing Arts. This has answered the fifth research question

asked by the researcher “has there really been modifications in the Performing Arts of the Asante. The influx of religious bodies and the influence of foreign cultures are not making it any easier, though there are still inter marriages within cultures, religious groupings, migrations etc, the Performing Arts in Asante culture can still go through some changes but if attention is given to it by documenting, educating and studying or learning etc the original culture will not lose its ethnic significance though there will still be some modifications within the Arts to fit modern situations.



5.8 Summary of Discussion

This chapter has exposed the fact that Performing Arts play an important and meaningful role in Asante culture and it has gone further to capture the areas in these arts that have been modified. Firstly, it shows the role of music in Asantes political system as evident in the nomination and enstoolment rite (jubilant and praise songs), the duties of the king and the death rites of royals. Performing Arts in this respect play motivational, communicative, panegyric and supportive roles. Again, it has laid bare that music plays a protective, educative, communicative, supportive, critical roles in the social system. Moreover, it also discusses the indispensability of music in the social system by pointing out what it (music) does in pregnancy, birth, puberty and funeral rites, festivals, recreational activities and wrong doers in society (prostitutes, womanizers, thieves, etc).

Furthermore, the chapter also looked at the role of music in economic activities in Asante, thus, farming, pottery making, carpentry, carving, shoemaking, umbrella making, weaving, to mention but a few. Music serves as a motivating factor to the workers in the economic activities to help increase production. However, the chapter brings to light the fact that music is used as a vehicle to communicate with God, ancestors and the deities. It

again unveils that music influences the beings (God, ancestors and deities) to offer protection and supply the needs of worshippers. Meanwhile, music as stated earlier also instigates the healing deities to come and perform their duties (healing functions).

Secondly, the chapter discusses the importance of dance in the political system by uncovering some gestures employed by the kings in Adowa, *fɔntɔnfrom*, *sumangorɔ* (a dance to drive evil spirit who may wish or cause defeat in battle.) Meanwhile, the significance of gestures employed during installation, war and funerals also add meaning to the entire dance art in the political system. However, in the social system, the momentous role of dance and its meaning also finds itself in the *bragorɔ* (which help spinsters and bachelors to choose their spouses), funeral dance, (help bereaves to communicate their feelings) and festivals, (also entertains and educate the participants).

On religion, much importance is placed on dance to the extent that a would-be priest is taught how to dance throughout his training period. Mention was made of the fact that, the dances help incite belief in worshippers. Dances like *ntwaaho* (circling), *ahuriahurie* (jumping), *ntwemmu* (stretching) and *akotoakotoɔ* (squatting) are to describe the spiritual being (God, deities, mother earth) as supreme, whole, omniscient, etc. Furthermore, the medical system also made mention of the fact that dance instills belief in the sick and scares away evil spirits. *Abofɔɔ*, *asafo* and *atɔpre* dances are the main dances that scare away evil spirit and instill belief in the sick.

Thirdly, this part of the chapter discussed the significance of drama in the cultural system of Asante namely, political, social, religion and the belief of the people. Under the political system, the installation rites (presentation of *aseda* fee, carrying of the king by

Pampaso queen mother, the first born spear act, presentation of Bosomuru sword and the guarding of the stool) and funeral rites, all have dramatic orientation. Again, in the social system, dramatic rites are apparent in naming ceremony, puberty and funeral rites. All these dramatic rites are considered important because the absence of such rites will bring calamity or social vice. However, the dramatic presentation of the powers of the various deities by the shrine priests and priestesses instill and strengthens the “belief” of worshippers to believe in the capabilities of the deities.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Summary

The thesis has therefore established that Performing Arts permeate all the cultural systems namely political, social, economic, religious, medical and the people's belief. Politically, the thesis reveals that music permeates every activity organized within the political system of Asantes (enstoolment, the duties of a king, and funeral rites of royal). This is laid bare in the performances by the *kwadwomfo* (court minstrels) and *nnwomkoro* groups. Meanwhile, the *adowa* and *fɔntɔnfrɔm* symbolic gestures help the king to communicate his supremacy over Asante land and his enemies as well. Owing to the above is the *sumangoro* performed in times of war to prepare the way for warriors.

Furthermore, the various rites performed at enstoolment of the king's and royal funerals exhibited some dramatic scenes of which guarding of stool (by the king of Asante), water rites and purification rites are apparent. The main significance attached to these three rites are, the king is a custodian of the act and should protect and defend the Golden Stool at all times; to help the dying soul to climb the hills of the ghost land without getting thirsty and lastly the *soroda* purification is a cleansing rite performed to purify the bereaved from dirt believed to be inflicted on them by death. This rite again paves way for the bereaved to discard their mourning cloth.

On the social front, the performance of music at birth, puberty, marriage, death, festivals and recreation among others harmonises the programmes and not only that, it also makes

it easier for one to communicate a feeling or express his or her sentiments. This is made possible through funeral songs, lullaby and recreational songs (*ampe* and *assɔ*).

Pragmatically, dance is just like music. One could use dance to express his or her feeling at funerals or other social occasions like marriage ceremonies and festivals. Adowa symbolic gestures are usually employed at such occasions. Meanwhile, dramatic presentation of birth rite, puberty and death rites also have some meaningful attachments that makes it more interesting to the dramatist or even the observer. The tasting of water and drink rite performed for the baby signifies truthfulness. Therefore this rite is performed to instill loyalty and truthfulness into the child. The enstoolment rite signifies that the initiate will live long, while the *adwareɛ* and *anoka* (eating) signifies end of contact with the ghost mother and fertility respectively.

Furthermore, the widowhood ceremony performed on the way to burial grounds also signifies the spiritual and physical termination of the marriage between the dead and the living. This act is considered very important because it is believed that the absence of it will mean the deceased is still married to the living spouse. In this regard, it is believed that the spirit of the deceased will prevent the living spouse from remarrying (since the rite to terminate the marriage has been ignored). However, festivals also reveal a lot of dramatic enactment by priests and priestesses, who took turns in displaying their powers through drama of possession. It has been discussed that traditional Asante stories known as spider story (*Anansesem*) are sometimes acted out to help listeners to keep those stories in mind and also to learn the moral lessons from it. This is made possible because of the realism of presentation. For it is believed that visual things stick to the minds than verbal things.

Economically, the thesis has brought to light the motivational aspect of music to the farmer, carpenter, carver, umbrella maker, etc. It strengthens and gives them more energy to work. It has unveiled the dramatic rites performed by carvers and potters to propitiate the spirit believed to be inhibiting in the raw materials and tools of operation. They pray to these unseen spirits as though they were physical beings and to the observer, it may work like real episode of drama.

Religiously, it has been discussed that Performing Arts pervade the training of a priest through to his duties and the worship in general. Medically, two groups of people are recognized as physicians, they are the *adunsifoo* and *akomfoo* (herbalists and shrine priests). The *adunsifoo* heal physical illnesses whereas the *akomfoo* heal both physical and spiritual illnesses. The only Performing Art the *adunsifoo* employs in their operation is drama. They dramatically ask for permission from the spirit believed to be dwelling in the tree and herbs before they proceed to pick its leaves, stem or tree bark. Meanwhile, *akomfoo* in their diagnosing activities employ Performing Arts.

The priests together with their devotees sing to invite their deities to come and perform their healing functions. Dance, however, helps them to instill hope and faith in their patients. This is made possible through the impersonation of various deities and the dramatization of their capabilities. The dance of witches (*ahurigyen*) is performed by the witches to tell onlookers that the deities are powerful. These Performing Arts are very important in the healing process because the greater the performance, the higher the response of the deities.

The thesis again recalls that, belief influences the performance of music. Discussions revealed that, the gods are music loving beings and as such if one wants to win favour in the sight of them, one should communicate to them in songs. It was also established that worship services were commenced and ended with songs of adoration and thanksgiving respectively. These songs serve a very important purpose since the absence of it will deter the deities from being present at worship services.

The thesis again unearths some dramatic rites like ritual bathing at the cemetery. The old priest (instructor) baths the trainee priest urging him to be bold and fearless for the gods are there to protect him. This rite is considered important, for it is believed to instill boldness into the new priest.

Again, because dance in religion is very important a “would be” priest is instructed in dancing and is allowed to dance during his inaugural ceremony for a longer period of time. It is through dance that a priest would expose the deity operating in him (by impersonating the deity operating in him). A priest can also acknowledge his deity in his dance – *ntwahoo*, *ahuriahurie*, *akotoakotoso* – to signify, perfect, wholeness, malleability and supremacy of that deity

Finally, the thesis has revealed that the indigenous Performing Arts have been modified, in that, the various traditional songs and lyrics have been merged with gospel songs. Moreover, the various ceremonies that involves vigorous rites are seen to be in the minimal and have been replaced with other religious rites, this is evidence of modification and changes that has taken place in the the Performing Arts of Asantes. The

traditional gestures employed in the various dances have all been merged with other foreign gestures.

6.1 Literature Review Compared with Field Research

This part of the thesis compares the “literature review” to the field research in order to reveal similarities and dissimilarities that exist between the two. However, the information in the literature review and questionable assertions that raised some concern to the researcher would be explained based on field findings.

It may be recalled that both the literature review and field research affirm that music permeates every activity of the African and for that matter Asantes. Observations and interviews reveal that music pervades all the activities organized within Asante culture and this directly finds assertion in what Nketia (1994:28) disclosed during the review exercise concerning how “the African is born, named, initiated into manhood, warriored, armed, housed, betrothed, wedded and buried to music”.

Both literature and field research also acknowledge the fact that there are a lot of dramatic elements in the culture of Asante. For the African act out the most part of their lives - the enstoolment of a chief, the performance of a king’s duty, organization of royal and ordinary funerals, the performance of birth, puberty, marriage, etc, rites, the economic activities, worship services and diagnosing and healing of the sick. All these rites have dramatic orientations.

Comparing literature review with information from field research, the researcher noticed that, the water rites performed when a royal is dying are the same, the only difference lies

in utterances of the one performing the rites, but the researcher discovered that, there is no restricted style of presentation; therefore the performer is allowed to say what he or she feels like.

As indicated in the literature that Asante chiefs have drums kept and regarded as stool regalia, this has been confirmed during observations made at royal funerals. All the chiefs who came for the funeral (with the exception of sub-chiefs) were followed by their drums in procession.



Again both literature review and field agree on the fact that *fɔntɔmfɔm* suite is performed to serve four fold functions which comprises a warrior's dance of harassment, the chief's dance of achievement as a valiant military leader, the queen mother's dance of peace, stability and motherliness, and victory dance by warriors. In addition, both literature review and field agree on the fact that the *fɔntɔnfɔm* dance is suppose to be performed by Asante kings alone so any other person who want to perform it should observe etiquettes governing it, such as tying one's cloth around one's chest, dancing without handkerchief, removing one's sandals and a lot more.

Meanwhile, both literature review and field research concluded that lullaby is an effective tool for expressing one's sentiment. In the literature review, a rival used lullaby to make fun of her rival who was favoured by their husband more than her, and in the field research a wife also used lullaby to praise her irresponsible husband. This revelation affirms the potency of lullaby in expressing one's feelings.

Furthermore, on the economic front, the literature review and field research agree on the fact that carvers and potters propitiate the spirit believed to be dwelling in their raw materials (tree and clay) before they proceed to cut or pick respectively. They both confirm the fact that Asante craftsmen pray to the spirit of their tools to protect them against any accident and any form of calamity.

Field research affirms what literature review brought to light concerning how African priests acknowledge God, mother earth and the four winds when dancing. The report went further to include the gestures involved. Again in the literature review, Bame (1991:18) asserts that drumming, singing and dancing is a prerequisite to African traditional religion. Field research confirms his assertion by bringing to light what those Performing Arts does in the religion of Asante (who forms part of Africans). Furthermore, both literature and field research agree to the fact that the gods are music loving beings

However, the researcher would from this stage want to bring to light dissimilarities in the comparative study. Firstly, the comparison has brought to light a contrast between what Busia (1968:21) describe in the literature review concerning enthronement rites of a king in Asante. It is recalled that, Busia mentioned the *kontihene* as the one who holds the right hand of the king, the *kyeame panin* (chief spokesman) his left hand and the queen mother his waist. In contrast, the field research reveals that, the right wing chief holds the right arm, the left wing holds the left arm, the rear chief (*kyidomhene*) holds the waist, *Kontire* and *Akwamu* chiefs hold the right foot and *Ankobea* and *Manwere* chiefs hold the left foot.

The second contrasting view that exists between literature review and field research is about the rite that is performed when a pregnant woman dies. Literature reports that, the pregnant women on entering the house where the deceased has been laid in state make some verbal utterances urging the deceased to carry her bad luck away. On the contrary, field research reveals that these utterances are not mere words but they are rather presented in a form of song. These two contrasting ideas have raised some amount of concern, but this notwithstanding, whether a song or no song, there is still an aspect of drama in the whole rite and that makes it a Performing Art.

Another contrasting view that exists between the two studies is about bath rite performed by a would-be priest. Rattary, in literature review, gave the reasons for the rite as being done for the would-be priest to establish contact with the *nsamanfɔɔ* (host of ghost). But field research reveals that, it is done to instill boldness, and also to confirm the deities' protection over them. Owing to the above, is the person who does the bathing, whereas literature review states that it is the "would-be priest" alone who does the bathing ritual, field reports has it that, it is the old priest (instructor) who does the bathing.

Meanwhile in the literature review, mention was made of a goldsmith who murmurs incantations to the spirit of gold, fire and air. It further reveals that, the process of fashioning the gold into an ornament is accompanied by songs as well. This is in contrast to what the field research unveils. With the field research, apart from the incantations made, the song which accompanies the production of ornaments was not confirmed. Rather, it has been ascertained that Asante goldsmiths do not sing when working. For it is believed that, the spirit of gold does not want to be disturbed when you are operating with it, for it might get lost. One of the researcher's informants said, realistically, he believes,

it is not because the spirit of gold does not like to be disturbed, but rather because gold is precious and also demands intricate designs. It is important for one to concentrate on the work, without any interference.

The comparative study made so far has brought to light what literature review revealed in relation to field research. The field research has corrected some of the questionable assertions that raised some concerns during the review exercise.



6.2 Conclusions

This thesis has discussed the role of Performing Arts in relation to Asante culture. In view of this, Performing Arts that are performed within the cultural components namely political, social, economic, religious, medical and the belief of the people has been identified. It has also examined the importance attached to the Performing Arts in the cultural systems and has drawn conclusions from it. Meanwhile, the significance attached to the performance of music, dance, drama and drumming (at the installation of a king, durbar of chiefs, royal funerals, birth, puberty, marriage, death, economic activities, worship and healing shrines) have been discussed.

Furthermore, the thesis has thrown more light on three other Performing Arts namely shield spinning, umbrella whirling and horn blowing. Although these activities are vigorously seen in the political system of the culture, the study has shown that they are forms of Performing Arts which other writers probably ignored as such, which to the present researcher are Performing Arts and make the various activities in the culture very interesting. Horn blowers blow their horn at every occasion where the king is present,

shield bearers torso their shield in the air and spin it to the tune of *fɔntɔmfrom* drum piece known as akyem, and umbrella bearers whirl their umbrellas to the tune of the drums.

Moreover, it has concluded that, Performing Arts are indispensable to all the cultural components and the meanings attached to the performances will also make it easy for one to appreciate these arts when they are performed.

This thesis has again concluded that without the Performing Arts, religion and medical systems will suffer because they serve as a channel of communication to the deities. The absence of these Performing Arts will mean communication between the gods and the worshippers will cease. The thesis has again unearth the fact that, without the Performing Arts Asante culture will be monotonous and boring

Some of the, Performing Arts displayed in the cultural systems of Asante have gone through some changes. In this vain, the researcher believes if attention is not given to these arts they could lose their ethnic significances.

6.3 Research findings - A contribution to knowledge

Other writers have written something around Performing Arts in Africa and have allotted some portions to Asante Performing Arts. This topic (the role of Performing Arts in Asante culture) however, seems to be the first literary work of a kind. Since no one seems to have previously written on the topic “The role of Performing Arts in Asante culture”, the researcher propose to submit that this thesis is the first informative literary work based on every aspect of Asante culture. The thesis is however educative material for

students, researchers, anthropologists, ethnographers and other scholars who want information about Performing Arts in Asante

As a matter of fact, the thesis has unearthed a lot of new ideas that embellish the researcher's contribution to knowledge. Mention has been made of these findings in Chapter four, five and in this chapter, but the present researcher would want to reiterate it here so as to emphasise the contribution made so far to knowledge.



Chapter four of this thesis has brought to light some new findings. The thesis has again unearthed some additional meaning to already existing interpretation given to the Performing Arts. Not only that, it has also given answers to some unanswered questions raised in the literature review.

Regarding the new findings, the reference to a dance called *sumangoro* or *sumankwagoro* (the spiritual physicians dance) discussed in chapter four. Mention was made of the fact that this dance, was usually performed in times of war to drive away evil spirits who might want to bring defeat on Asante nation. Today it has become a ceremonial dance, usually performed as part of the *adεεkeseeε* ceremonies. The study unveils horn blowing, shield, spinning, and umbrella whirling as an aspect of Performing Arts in Asante where shield bearers spin their shield in tune with drum music, horn blowers blow their horns alongside music and umbrella bearers also whirl their umbrellas to the tune of drum music in procession

Owing to the new findings is the dance of the shrine priests and priestesses. Mention has been made of *ntwahoo*, *adaban* and *abɔfɔɔ* in which *ahuruahurie*, *ntwemuu* and

akotoakotoɔ were derived. The study has revealed its significances and importances in the culture of the people. Furthermore, the study has revealed that the ritual bathing at the cemetery is to establish contact between the *nsamanfɔɔ* (a host of ghosts) and a would be traditional priest. Field research has however added that, it is to instill boldness in the new shrine and gives him confidence in the deities as well. Meanwhile the rite performed for pregnant women upon the death of a pregnant woman; unveil the music part of the rite in addition to the old verbal rite discovered.

In relation to some unanswered questions raised in the literature review, concerning drums that are used to match thieves on the streets, the field research revealed *aworoban* as the drum used to perform that function. Again, the researcher comments that, one of the main contributions lies in the interpretation of the importance and significance attached to music, dance, drama and drumming. The whole of chapter five has been allotted for that purpose. More importantly the dramatic rites mentioned in chapter four have been explained to facilitate comprehension of the various rites.

6.4 Recommendations

Asante culture, like all the African cultures, is very rich and therefore needs to be preserved. This could be done by making available books that relate to Performing Arts identified in Asante (by researchers and the custodians of the arts) to historians, anthropologists, students of culture and tourist among others. Pragmatically, “man is not only a social but also a historical being. Therefore his cultural products reflect to a great extent his natural, social, and historical background... they don’t come to him as inspiration from another world.” (Ihekeweazu et al., 1985:56) this assertion by these writers explains why there is the need for cultural preservation. The expression “they

don't come to him as an inspiration from other world," suggests "monopoly in culture". This implies that promoting and maintaining of one's culture depends on oneself. Therefore the researcher wants to take the opportunity to suggest some means to help maintain the culture of Asantes

Despite the 1985 awareness creation of cultural preservation by the Ministry of Education, not much has been done to preserve the nation's cultural heritage. As a result, I suggest that, the music and dance syllabus for primary and junior high schools be reviewed again with special attention given to the traditional music and dance starting from the child's immediate local culture. This will give the children an insight into their own Performing Arts.

Again, each child should be made to know how to play at least one drum and not only that; he or she should be taught the drum language and the significance attached to it. Furthermore, at the senior high school and tertiary levels, syllabuses should also be improved to cover the Performing Arts so as to ensure the consistency in the performances. This could also help them know the, significance of the various rites and know the interpretation of the gestures in order to fully understand the drum language as well as know the traditional songs.

However, to help make the Performing Arts popular in Asante and the nation as a whole, I suggest that, the Ministry of chieftancy and Culture together with the Ministry of Information organise programmes on the Performing Arts of Asante and other tribes on national televisions and radio stations to ensure massive participation and understanding

of drum language, gestures of traditional dance, lyrics in traditional songs and the significance of the various traditional rites by the general public and tourists.

Again, traditional rulers in Asante can also play a role to promote and maintain lyrics, gestures, significance of dramatic rites and the language of the drum. I therefore suggest that they (traditional rulers) help document the music, dance, dramatic rites, the drum orchestra, their meanings and their importance in various occasions (durbar of chiefs, festivals, religious worship, birth, puberty, marriage, death rites, etc). This will help promote and maintain the rich aspect of the Performing Arts of their culture.

Meanwhile, the government through the National Commission on Culture and the Ghana Tourist Board should give scholarship to researchers, students, historians, ethnographers among others to conduct research pertaining to Asante's Performing Arts and even Ghanaian Performing Arts in general. This will help the entire custodians of the arts to know what has "peeped" into the Performing Arts, so as to check on the rate of acculturation or modification. This could be done by educating the general public on the right performances and their meanings.

Not only that, it will also help future researchers and students to get new books and reliable information concerning the Performing Arts. These suggestions have come about as a result of the researchers encounter in gathering library material and conducting interviews. It was discovered that some of the materials reviewed were even older than the interviewees and also, most of the interviewees were reporting on the current performance of the arts (performing) which the researcher believe is full of foreign components. Some of them even tried to hypothesise some of the information on the

significance attached to the various performances, of which were not too sure if these pieces of information were really true. Having given this suggestion, the researcher believes it will help cut down the rate of modification thereby maintaining the rich aspect of the various performances.

Still on how to maintain the beauty and meaning attached to the Performing Arts of Asante, the researcher propose that chiefs and other custodians of Asante arts help organise programmes pertaining to their culture that involves the Performing Arts so as to help educate the general public. When this is done, parents in the society could be encouraged to teach their younger ones the arts, and in so doing it will be a habit and a tradition for parents to pass on information (about Performing Arts) to their wards. Ihekweazu et al., (1985:56) writes: culture does not grow like a plant, nor can it be destroyed by an earthquake, it is made and preserved by man.it lives and dies with the attention man pays to it. And the role which it is allowed to play" so, based on this assertion I can boldly say that when much attention is given to the various Performing Arts in Asante culture it will preserve it.

Aside these suggestions, I would want to recommend to future researchers what to do in order to obtain the right information from field research and some of the possible topics they can research into. I recommend that, in conducting interviews,future researcher could group the interviewees at one particular place and interview them together. When this is done, the researcher is sure, a group member on answering a question could raise another question from his or her answer. This kind of question could quickly be put to the floor for another person to answer. As a matter of fact, this group interview could facilitate transparency and sincerity among interviewees, for one may not be able to hide

pertinent information when the other is aware, but when they are separated they can easily give unreliable pieces of information.

Furthermore, I would want to recommend that, anytime future researchers want to interview, any of the following category of people – shrine priests and priestesses, traditional carvers, potters, goldsmith, dancers, musicians, etc the researchers should develop interest in participating in what they do rather than to observe, in other words they should try to join in what they do rather than be observers. The involvement in professionals work, create room for them to open up on things that are not suppose to be revealed.

If these beneficial recommendations are not taken as mere scribbles on a paper but are taken serious, there is no doubt in this period of cultural awareness, the Performing Arts in Asante culture and other cultures would be promoted to achieve the main objectives in the culture and remain bound in the culture for perpetuity.

REFERENCES

- Adu-Boahene, A. (1968). *Topics in West African History*, 6th ed., London: Longman, p.122.
- Agordoh, A. A. (1994) *Studies in African Music*, 1st ed., Ho: New Age Publication, pp. 4-55.
- Amankwah, S. K. (2003). The Role of Music in Fokuo Festival by the people of Sessiman in Nkoranza: Unpublished Diploma Thesis, Winneba: Department of Music, University of Education.
- Ameyaw-Benneh, K. (1994). Body arts in funeral ceremonies in Ashanti, Unpublished Monograph, Kumasi: Department of General Art Studies, p.37.
- Ameyaw-Benneh, K. (1999). Bono-Ahafo Funeral Arts: Aesthetic social and economic significance. Unpublished Undergraduate Thesis, Kumasi: College of Art and Social Sciences Library, KNUST, pp. 117&127.
- Amlor, M.Q. (2001). Music in Ghanaian indigenous Religious Worship, Unpublished Master of Philosophy Thesis, Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, p.29.
- Amoako-Attah, F. K. (2000). *Funeral Celebration by Akans*, 1st ed., London: Longman
- Amoako-Attah, F. K. (2001). *Festivals in Ghana*, 2nd ed., Kumasi: Amok Publications
- Anderson, J. & Poole, M. (1994). *Thesis and Assignment writing*, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Assimeng, M. (1989). *Religion and Social change in West Africa*, Accra: Ghana University Press, p.34.

Bame, K. N. (1985). *Come to Laugh: A study of African Traditional Theatre in Ghana*. New York: Lilian Barber Press Inc.

Bame, K. N. (1991). *Profiles in African Traditional Popular Culture: Consensus and Conflict*, New York: Clear Type Press Inc, pp.121-122.

Bebey, F. (1975). *Music: A People's Art*. New York: Lawrence Hill and Company.

Beecham, J. (1968). *Ashanti and the Gold Coast*, 1st ed., London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, pp.198-199.

Braffi, E. K. (1990). *The African Traditional Priest and his work*, 1st ed., Kumasi: Ghana University Press, pp. 19-28.

Braffi, E. K. (2002). *Akwasidae and Odwira Festivals*, 1st ed., Kumasi: Bayoba Graphics

Busia, K. A. (1968). *The position of the Chief in the modern political system of Ashanti*, 1st ed., London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., p.91.

Cohen, L. & Marion, L. (1980). *Research Methodology in Education*, 4th ed., London: Helm Ltd

Dedinger, R. A. (1974). Dance and Religion at an Ashanti Shrine, Unpublished Diploma Thesis, Legon: University of Ghana, pp.1, 29, 40, 42.

Dedinger, R. A. (1980). Movement and Dance in Ghana: A Model for Movement Therapy, Unpublished MA Thesis, Los Angeles: University of California, pp.32 & 40.

Dome, C. M. (1930). *Games, Plays and Dances of the Khomani Bushmen*, New York: Bantu Publications, pp. 466 – 470

Fox, D. (1969). *The Research Process in Education*, USA: Hott Rinchart and Winton Inc., p.94.

- Geoffery, G. (1935). *African Dances*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.
- Idowu, F. B. (1973). *African Traditional Religion*, 2nd ed., Gateshead: Northumberland Press, pp.161 & 200-202.
- Ihekweazu, E. (1985). *Traditional and Modern Culture*, 1st ed., Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, pp.59,60,70,77,83,84,88.
- Kwakwa, P. A. (1974). *Dance and drama of the Gods*, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, pp. 20&32.
- Latham, J. (1998). *Ashanti Ballads*, 1st ed., Glasgow: Latham Services.
- Lefco, H. (1974). *Dance Therapy*, 1st ed., London: Nelson Hall Company Ltd.
- Lynne, H. J. (1970). *The Anthropology of Dance Ritual*, 1st ed., London: University Microfilms International, p.49.
- Manford, R. (1996). *Beginners guide to Research in Education*, Accra: Swl press, p.35
- Maquet, J. (1972). *Africanity, the Cultural Unity of Black*, London: Oxford University Press
- Mbiti, J. S. (1969). *African Religion and Philosophy*, 1st ed., England: Clays Ltd, pp. 67 & 180.
- Meyer, L. B. (1970). *Emotion and Meaning in music*. Chicago: University of Chicago
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1963). *Drumming in Akan Communities*, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, pp.93-96.
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1965). *Ghana – Music, dance and drama* (2nd Printing). Accra: Information Services Department Press, pp.20 & 29.

Nketia, J. H.K. (1966). *Music in African Cultures, a review of the meaning and significance of traditional African Music*, Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, p.18.

Nketia, J. H. K. (1974). *The Music of Africa*, 1st ed., New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., pp.193,196,218,219.

Nisbet, J.D. (1977). *Small-Scale Research, Guidelines and suggestions for development*, Glasgow: Scottish Educational Studies, p.15

Odotei, I. (2001). *Royal Rites – Death, Burial and Installation of an Asante King*, Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, p.17,19,33.

Opoku, A. A. (1979). *Festivals of Ghana*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, p.17

Opoku, A. M. (1965). *African Dances: A Ghanaian Profile*, Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, pp.18,192.

Osei, K. (1995). *Owuo Apakan*. Kumasi: Cita Press.

Osei, K. (2000). *An Outline of Ashanti History*, Kumasi: Cita Printing Press, p.17.

Osei, K. (2002). *A handbook on Asante culture*, Kumasi: Cita Press, pp.33-34.

Ottenberg, S. (1971). *The Analysis of an African Play*, Legon: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana Research Review Vol. 7 No.3. pp. 69 -77.

Rattray, R. S. (1923). *Ashanti*, 1st ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Rattray, R. S. (1927). *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 1st ed., London: Oxford University Press.

Shore, H. L. (1964). *Africa Drama today*, AMSAC Newsletter, Vol.6 No. 7.

Webster, J. B, Boahen, A. A, & Idowu, H. O. (1968). *The growth of African Civilization, the revolutionary years West of African since 1800*, 2nd ed., London: Longman, p.135-136.

GLOSSARY

<i>Abofɔɔ</i>	hunters
<i>Abowonsem</i>	clapping
<i>Aburukura</i>	a drum that forms part of the kete orchestra
<i>Abusua</i>	family; members of a matrilineal clan
<i>Abusua kuruwa</i>	family pot or chalice
<i>Adaban</i>	a dance in which the performer moves in a circular direction and intermittently fumes
<i>Adenemma</i>	a type of drum which is found in the kete orchestra
<i>Adesiedie</i>	burial items
<i>Adεε</i>	resting place
<i>Adonten</i>	the main military flank in Asante
<i>Adontenhene</i>	the chief commander of the palace vanguard and the Main military flank
<i>Adumfɔɔ</i>	executioners, police officers and reciters of panegyrics
<i>Advira ahaban</i>	a type of leaf
<i>Ahosiesieda</i>	the preparation day
<i>Akotoakotoɔ</i>	squatting
<i>Akɔm</i>	a possession dance
<i>Ahuriahurie</i>	jumping
<i>Ahurugyen</i>	the dance of the witches
<i>Akwadum</i>	a master drum of the kete orchestra
<i>Akwasideεε</i>	Sunday <i>adεε</i> ; a festival celebrated on every forty-second Sunday in honour of past kings in Asante

<i>Akyeamehene</i>	the chief of the king's spokesmen
<i>Akyemma</i>	the giver of children
<i>Akyempenhene</i>	the chief of Akyeremade and the commander of the rear flank
<i>Anantahene</i>	the king of the Ananta
<i>Anansesem</i>	Ananse story or spider story
<i>Anhwεwoakyire</i>	you should not look back
<i>Ankɔbea</i>	caretakers in the palace
<i>Ankɔbeahene</i>	the chief of caretakers in the palace and Adum
<i>Apem</i>	thousand
<i>Apentemma</i>	one of the kete supporting drums
<i>Aprede</i>	a type of drum
<i>Aseda</i>	thanksgiving
<i>Asantehene</i>	the king of the Asante kingdom
<i>Asensieye</i>	place for burning pots
<i>Asiesie</i>	hide and seek
<i>Atanoso</i>	plural for Tanoso (name of a river)
<i>Atɔpre</i>	executioners dance
<i>Awia</i>	the sun
<i>Ayikeseε</i>	grand funeral
<i>Bantamahene</i>	the chief of Bantama (a suburb of Kumasi)
<i>Batakari kesee</i>	grand military tunic or traditional war dress
<i>Benkum</i>	the left wing
<i>Benkumhene</i>	the chief of the left wing

Bempanase	one of the Asante mausoleum
<i>Boafoo</i>	helper
<i>Bodwoafoo</i>	the queen mother's female servants
<i>Bɔmmaa</i>	a large and tall drum for Asante chiefs
Bosomtwe	patrilineal clan of Asante and the name of a renowned lake
<i>Bragorɔ</i>	puberty rites for females
Breman	mausoleum
<i>Buramfoɔ</i>	royal goldsmiths
<i>Busumuru afena</i>	special sword
Dadiesoabahene	the chief of Dadiesoaba, a town in Asante
Dapaa	a day that precedes <i>awukudɛɛ</i> or <i>akwasidɛɛ</i>
<i>Dawuro (nnawuro, pl)</i>	a metal gong
<i>Denkyɛmkyɛ</i>	a crocodile hat
Denyasehene	the chief of Denyase, a town in Asante
<i>Donno</i>	a type of drum that forms part of almost all the drum orchestra found in Asante
<i>Dua</i>	a tee or wood
<i>Dunsinii</i>	herbalist
<i>Dwabrem</i>	the durbar grounds
<i>Dwantoa</i>	using an intermediary to present one's intentions to the queen mother
<i>Eto</i>	mashed yam or plantain
<i>Esuan</i>	a climber leaf

<i>Fekuo</i>	the military flanks in Asante
<i>Fekuotire</i>	the head of the military flanks
<i>Fo</i>	good
<i>Firikyiwa</i>	castanet
<i>Fontonfrom</i>	large bomma drums for Asantehene
<i>Gyaase</i>	the general supervisor of the duties of king's palace
<i>Kontire</i>	one of the military flanks
<i>Kontihene</i>	the chief of kontire who is war leader number one in Asante
<i>Kobiri</i>	a particular deity of Ejisu Onwe
<i>Kotoko</i>	porcupine
<i>Kronkron</i>	holy
<i>Kuntunkunideε</i>	a day set aside for the remembrance of royal ancestors
<i>Kuru</i>	exalted or holy
<i>Kwa</i>	open or free
<i>Kwadum</i>	kete master drum
<i>Kwadwomfoɔ</i>	court minstrels
<i>Kyemsuafoɔ</i>	shield bearers
<i>Kyeretwie</i>	someone who catches a tiger(the name given to the brave ones in Asante)
<i>Kyidom</i>	the rear guard
<i>Kyidomhene</i>	the chief of the rear guard
<i>Kyiribra</i>	one who does not go through puberty rites before getting pregnant
<i>Manwere</i>	royal guards responsible for supervising gold smiths at

an Asante palace and one of the military flanks in times
of war

<i>Memenda dapaa</i>	Saturday preceeding Akwasideε
<i>Mmekensoo</i>	palm leaves
<i>Mmentiafoɔ</i>	horn blowers; they blow the short elephant tusk horn
<i>Mono</i>	fresh
<i>Monto</i>	tobacco leaf
<i>Mponpomsuo afena</i>	a state sword
<i>Ngona</i>	shield
<i>Nifa</i>	the right wing
<i>Nifahene</i>	the chief of the right wing and commander of the right Wing in battle
<i>Nkɔsuo</i>	progress
<i>Nkrawire</i>	a drum that follows the king in procession and also played during execution of criminals
<i>Nkyi</i>	destructive
<i>Nnɔnko</i>	slaves
<i>Nnwomkorɔ</i>	musical ensemble
<i>Nsa</i>	drink
<i>Nsamankyire</i>	when someone joins the dead
<i>Nsamanfoɔ</i>	spirits the dead
<i>Nsumankwafɔɔ</i>	the king's spiritual physicians
<i>Nsuo</i>	water
<i>Ntoa</i>	one of the deities of Yaw Nkrumah village

<i>Ntrowa</i>	small dried gourd with stones of pebble inside
<i>Ntumpan</i>	talking drums
<i>Ntwaho</i>	circling dance in which the dancer turns round swiftly and repeatedly
<i>Ntwima</i>	ochre coloured clay
<i>Ntwimuu</i>	stretching
<i>Nyanya</i>	grass
<i>Odupon</i>	great one
<i>ɔhemaa</i>	the queen mother
<i>ɔkyeame</i>	the kings spokesman
<i>Otadeɛ</i>	lake
<i>Otadeɛ Bosomtwe</i>	lake Bosomtwe
<i>Otumfoo</i>	title given to Asante kings
<i>Ose</i>	jubilant
<i>Oyoko</i>	a clan in the Asante kingdom
<i>Pampaso</i>	a suburb of Kumasi
<i>Penpensiwa</i>	is a master drum of nnwomkro and name Of an orchestra
<i>Piesie</i>	first born
<i>Pramkesieso</i>	a place at Manhyia palace
<i>Predwan nsia</i>	an amount of ₦2,400.00
<i>Sankroase</i>	some part of Manhyia palace
<i>Sasa</i>	the spirit of animal believed to be Unforgiving or evil spirit.
<i>Sikyi</i>	a type of drum orchestra

<i>Sorada</i>	purification
<i>Soroapata</i>	purification shed
<i>Suman</i>	herbalist or a spiritual physician
Tano	one of the deities in Asante
<i>Werempe</i>	a term used for the blackening of a deceased king's stool



APPENDIX A



Plate 22: Otumfo dancing to the tune of *fɔntɔmfrom*

Source: Photographed by researcher



Plate 23: Otumfo in *batakari keseε* (grand military tunic) dancing with sword and gun on his way to Baba Yara stadium (for the firing of musketry rites after his installation)

Source: Acquired from one of the researchers informants.



Plate 24: Nana Akua Afra 3rd from right in a dramatic procession

Source: Photographed by the researcher.



Plate 25: A priestess displaying her deities' powers by performing with the stool without the stool falling off from her buttocks.

Source: From 2004 *Adεεkεsεε* video clip.



Plate 26: Priest holding his conjured gift on a *kuntunkunidεε*
Source: culled from *Adεεkeseeε* video clip.



Plate 27: Devotees pounding bark of a tree on the back of their priest to display the strength of his deity (with this he tells Otumfoø that he is protected)
Source: Culled from *Adεεkeseeε* video clip.



Plate 28: Otumfo and his stool wives dancing to the tune of *fɔntɔmfrom*

Source: Photographed by the researcher in December 2008 *akwasidɛɛ*.

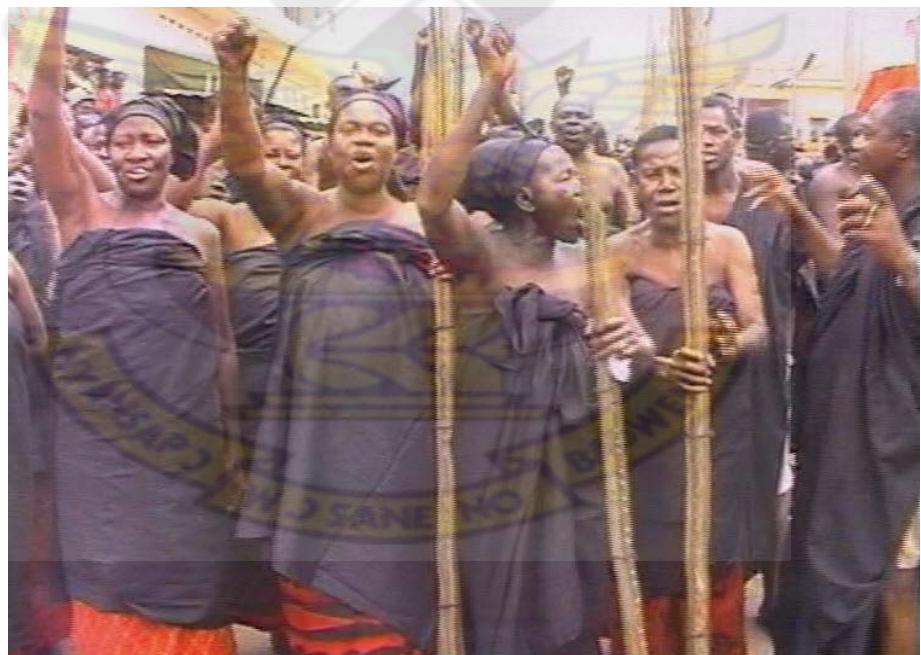


Plate 29: Otumfo's Grandchildren singing during procession

Source: Culled from Otumfo Opoku Oware II funeral video clip



Plate 30: Priest performing *ntwimuu* (stretching) dance

Source: Culled from *Adεεkesee* ε video clip.



Plate 31: Priest performing *ahuriahurie* (jumping) dance

Source: Culled from *Adεεkesee* ε video clip.



Plate 32: A priest performing *akotoakotoJ* (squarting) dance
Source: Culled from *Adεεkesee* video clip.



APPENDIX B
SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of General Art Studies
Kwame Nkrumah University Of
Science and Technology, Kumasi

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am a Ph.D student of the above mentioned department writing on the topic “The role of Performing Arts in the Asante Culture.” I would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully

Nana Ama Pokuua Arthur

SECTION A
Personal information

1 Name

2. Age

3. Position/Status

Section B

Performing Arts in Asante Political system

4. Does the election of a king or chief involve Performing Arts?
5. If yes, what types of Performiing Arts are portrayed at this stage?
6. Does the enstoolment rite involve Performing Arts?
a. Yes b. No

7. If yes, state the Performing Arts involved.

8. Do the king and his elders involve Performing Arts in council meeting?

- a. Yes b. No

9. If yes, state the Performing Arts involved.

10. Do Asante warriors involve Performing Arts honouring their duties?

- a. Yes b. No

11. What types of Performing Arts are employed by the warriors?

12. Do traditional Asante courts involve Performing Arts in their sitting?

- a. Yes b. No

13. Does enthronement of a king or chief involve Performing Arts?

- a. Yes b. No

14. Do you think Performing Arts are important in Asante political system?

- a. Yes b. No

15. Can the political system survive without the Performing Arts?

- a. b.

16. Do you think Performing Arts in Asante have been adulterated?

- a. Yes b. No

Performing Arts in Asante social system

17. Do Asantes involve Performing Arts in birth rites?

- a. Yes b. No

18. If yes, what types of Performing Arts are involved?

19. Do Asante marriage ceremonies involve Performing Arts?

- a. Yes b. No

20. If yes, what types of Performing Arts are portrayed here?

21. Do birth rites in Asante involve Performing Arts?

- a. Yes b. No

22. If yes, state some of the Performing Arts involved.

23. Are Performing Arts important in the puberty rites of Asantes?

- a. Yes b. No

24. What are the Performing Arts that are displayed here?

25. What performing rites are displayed in Asante funeral?

26. Can death rites in Asante survive without Performing Arts?

- a. Yes b. No

27. Are performing rites indispensable in Asante festivals?

- a. Yes b. No

28. Please mention some of the festivals you know in Asante

29. Are Performing Arts important in recreational activities in Asante?

- a. Yes b. No

30. If yes, in what ways are they important?

31. Based on your response, can you say Performing Arts are important in Asante

culture?

- a. Yes b. No

32. Do you think Performing Arts in the social system have been adulterated?

- a. Yes b. No

Performing Arts in Asante economic system

33. Do farmers (in Asante) involve Performing Arts in their farming activities?

- a. Yes b. No

34. If yes, what Performing Arts are employed in the activities?

35. Do Asantes have festivals associated with farming?

- a. Yes b. No

36. If yes, can you mention the ones you know?

37. Do weavers involve Performing Arts in their work?

- a. Yes b. No

38. If yes, can you mention the Performing Arts that are involved in it?

39. Do carvers involve Performing Arts in their work?

- a. Yes b. No

40. If yes, can you mention the performing arts are involved?

41. Do potters involve Performing Arts in their work?

- a. Yes b. No

42. If yes, can you mention the Performing Arts that are involved?

43. Do you think there has been a change in the performance of these festivals?

- a. Yes b. No

44. Based on your response, do you think Performing Arts are indispensable in the economic activities in Asante?

- a. Yes b. No

Performing Arts in Asante religious system

45. Does Performing Art play a role in Asante traditional religion?

- a. Yes b. No

46. If yes, what types of Performing Arts are displayed in it?

47. Do rituals performed in Asante shrines involve Performing Arts?

- a. Yes b. No

If you responded to the first two questions, then, you can answer the next four questions.

48. Do you think dance is indispensable in Asante religion?

- a. Yes b. No

49. Do you think drama has a role to play in the religion of Asantes?

- a. Yes b. No

50. Do you think music important in Asante traditional worship service

- a. Yes b. No

51. Do drumming play essential role in Asante traditional worship?

- a. Yes b. No

52. If yes can you mention them?

Performing Arts in Asante medical system.

53. Do Asante medical system involve Performing Arts in diagnosiing diseases?

- a. Yes b. No

54. Do Asante medical system involves art in the healing process?

- a. Yes b. No

55. Based on your response, can you say Performing Arts are indispensable in the medical system?

- a. Yes b. No

56. Do you think the medical system has suffered adulteration?

- a. Yes b. No

Performing Arts in the belief of Asantes

57. Do you think Performing Arts can have influence on one's belief?

- a. Yes b. No

58. Can Performing Arts influence one's belief in God, ancestors, deities, etc

- a. Yes b. No

59. Do you believe there is an element of drama in the belief of Asantes?

- a. Yes b. No

60. Do you think Performing Arts are indispensable to the belief of the Asante people?

a. Yes

b. No

Any Suggestions?



APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Political system

1. Does the election of a king involve music dance and drama? If yes, what types of music dance and drama are portrayed at this stage?
2. What is the significance of the music at this stage?
3. May I please know if the enthronement rites involve drama music and Dance?) If yes
4. If yes please tell me the significance of each of them?
5. Can you please tell me the procedure in electing an Asante king, chief, and sub-chiefs?
6. Do the elders involve Performing Arts in their council meetings? If yes, then
7. Please state the Performing Arts portrayed and their significance?
8. What are the music dance and drummer that are performed in the king's role as a commander in chief of the military?
9. How is the news of a dead king announced?
10. May I please know if the burial and thanksgiving service of a late king involves music dance and drama?
11. If yes, then, please state them and give the significance attached to it?

Social

12. Do Performing Arts play roles in the social system of Asantes?
13. What are some of the dances performed at marriage ceremonies?
14. What are some of the songs performed at marriage ceremonies?
15. State some of the songs and the role it plays in marriage?
16. Do marriage ceremonies involve drama? How is it involved?
17. Has there been a change between the marriage ceremony of the past and present?
18. What are some of the changes you have noticed?
19. What role does the dance play in birth ceremonies?
20. Is there an organized form of drama in such ceremonies?
21. Please mention the Performing Arts that are involved in the puberty rites of Asantes.
22. How do the Asantes spread the news of a dead person?

23. Does it involve any of the Performing Arts?
24. Has there been a change in the funeral ceremony of the past.

Economic

25. Do hunters incorporate Perfoming Arts in their profession? If yes, then mention how they go about it.
26. Are Performing Arts indispensable in farming and hunting activities.
27. Do the artisans in Asante involve Performing Arts in their Activities
28. What role do the Performing Arts play in Asante culture?
29. Has there been a change in the way people go about economic activities in recent years?

If yes, then pinpoint the areas that have undergone some changes

If you answered yes to question 24 and 25, then please tell me if you have observe any change in the performaning arts displayed in it

Religious

30. Do Perfoming Arts play roles in Asante traditional worship?
31. If yes, at what periods do the worshipers involve these arts?To what extend is music important in the worship?
32. When do Asantes worship? State the day, month, and time of worship?
33. How many of the dance can you identify and name?
34. Can you sing one song that is associated with the worship?
35. Can you mention any ritual or rites that is associated with Asante religion?.
36. How is thanksgiving prayer done? Does it involve music dance and drama?
37. Can you state the importance of Religious songs in Asante?

Medical

38. Do you involve Performing Arts in healing shrines?
39. .If yes, how do you involve them?
40. At what times do the deities come come?
41. In what ways are they important in the therapy?
42. How many of the dances can you identify and name?
43. Are there any importance that is attached to these dances.

Belief

44. Do you think Performing Arts can influence the belief of the people?
45. If yes, how can it influence them?
46. Are performing arts important in Asante traditional medical system?

