

Implications for the use of indigenous arts in the therapeutic practices of traditional priests and priestesses of Asante Ghana.

BY

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**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
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**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF INDIGENOUS ARTS IN THE THERAPEUTIC
PRACTICES OF TRADITIONAL PRIESTS AND PRIESTESSES OF ASANTE GHANA**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the PhD and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no 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.

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ABSTRACT

The research is conducted to ascertain the implications for the use of indigenous arts as traditional priests and priestesses of Asante of Ghana perform their traditional therapeutic functions. This research therefore aims at finding the therapeutic significance of Asante indigenous arts with regards to their diagnostic, preventive, protective and curative implications in the therapeutic practices of traditional priests and priestesses of Asante of Ghana, and subsequent projection of this unique cultural heritage. The population area for the research was Ashanti region of Ghana using the qualitative and quantitative design methods. Primary data were gathered through direct and personal interviews whereas secondary data were collated from various libraries in Ghana to compile the relevant related literature. Using schematic overview of stratified sampling design, the target population was reduced to accessible population by equalization and then by randomization the sample was determined. The researcher employed interviews and observational situations as the instruments for data collection. Naturalistic methods such as unstructured interviewing, general observation and participant observation were the data collection procedures used. At the end of the research, it was discovered that: Traditional therapists of Asante perform integrative functions which first and foremost aims at the restoration of social harmony; and also serves as a social control mechanism. The position of the traditional therapists of Asante of Ghana may be comparable to the positions of the Reverend Minister, the medical Doctor, the Psychotherapist, the Counsellor and the Art Therapist of the West since the ultimate goal in the professions of these personalities is towards a holistic health-care delivery for humanity. The traditional therapy and explanations of the causes of ill health given by the traditional therapists of Asante of Ghana are usually based on what the society has developed and appears to it as a reasonable concept in explaining its therapy and the causes of ill health. The Asante of Ghana has two major categories of deities. The professional functions of traditional priests/priestesses of Asante are based on the requirements of the two categories of deities and on the belief system of the Asante people. In a traditional Asante setting, peoples' life, regulations of moral conduct, trade and industry, or any other facet of communal organization develops out of a sociological consideration of family stability by addressing its most fundamental expression in the magico-religious view of the people. Traditional

priests/priestesses express ideas, emotions, or forms to their numerous patrons by means of manipulating visually acceptable products of creativity which are shaped or selected to enhance their services. It is hereby recommended that: The health services in Ghana need much more of a team approach with greater co-operation between the hospitals and public health services, as well as joint planning with the agriculture and nutrition services, town planning and local government authorities. It is on this team that the traditional therapist might find a place. The traditional practitioner who knows the community well and understands its psychotherapeutic characteristics is expected to make good use of that knowledge in the best interest of the people. There is the need for traditional therapy to play a complementary role in the contemporary setting to allow the traditional therapist assume a more holistic approach using skills derived from his traditional setting. Some traditional priests and priestesses could be utilized in the rural health posts and Clinics under medical supervision to assist patients to cope with some of their anxieties. This might be tried as a pilot project. It is presumed that this will raise a high level of debate on the question of the feasibility of such an attempt. It may be necessary however, to take all diverse views into consideration in order to build an appropriate model.

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S.P.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Man as a gregarious being constantly strives for achievement and maintenance of total well-being through any reasonable means available to him. For this reason, man would go to any reasonable extent to uncover the causes of his ill-health and try to find acceptable and affordable solutions to the predicament. The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) defines health as a state of complete physical, emotional, mental and social well-being; and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.

Ill-health is a worldwide phenomenon with several adverse implications. In order to deal with this health condition and its destructive effect on humanity, every society entrusts its health professionals to try to find solutions based on the society's cultural practices, beliefs and available technology.

It is for this reason that since independence in 1957 successive Ghanaian governments have shown a sympathetic interest in the country's traditional medicine and its practitioners to compliment that of the orthodox medical practitioners. According to Twumasi, (1975) the Nkrumah regime in 1962 made a profound contribution by the Government of Ghana in recognition of the significance of indigenous healers and bringing them to the lime light by enhancing their professional status with the creation of the Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healing Association. Traditional Therapists and for that matter Traditional priests and priestesses of Asante of Ghana; most of whom are members of the association, have tried to explain and deal with this phenomenon in

accordance with their cultural practices and beliefs in pursuance of their major function; that is to care for the people and restore health as defined above.

In a more positive vein, however, medical sociology has pointed out the importance of social-causation theory in traditional therapeutic practices. The task of the traditional therapist in this regard is to diagnose the problem and then apply remedy based on indigenous etiological theory. Belief in the supernatural has traditionally played a significant role in the entire social life of the Asante people, and for that matter in their therapeutic practices. Rituals are performed to exert their control over the uncertainties of life by harnessing positive forces from ancestors, gods or other spirits, and by so doing limiting negative forces. The performance of these rituals and other therapeutic practices employ indigenous visual and performing arts. These indigenous Asante arts like any African art have a strong concern for symbolic meaning and rarely serve only one purpose. A piece of artefact, for example, may adorn the body of the wearer, indicate prestige and at the same time be the focal point of a ritual that protects the owner from negative forces.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Art manifesting in various kinds of human expression is universal to mankind's ancient root; and has been used in several ways and for several purposes in human societies. One such function has been its usage as a tool and process of resolving social and psychological imbalances of human personality. In Europe and Americas, art is used by art therapists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists as art therapy. Art therapy is a type of psychotherapy that depends on art-making and creativity to increase emotional

and social well-being. The principal goal in this case is a process of healing through art and creative acts. The art form may also offer insights into the troubles experienced by the subject and may suggest suitable approaches to be used.

The presence and application of indigenous art and creative acts in the life and operation of the Asante traditional priest/priestess cannot be over emphasized since art is a key player in Asante culture. The indigenous art and creative acts are used therapeutically as tool and process by which traditional priest/priestess carry out their professional responsibilities of caring and restoring good health of clients; as tool and process, the indigenous arts perform diagnostic, preventive, protective and curative functions in the traditional health-care delivery in contrast to orthodox medical practice. However, the significance of the immeasurable contribution of indigenous arts in traditional therapeutic practices is barely acknowledged or better still appreciated to underscore its effectiveness in traditional therapy of Asante.

A Ghanaian art educator therefore considers it highly imperative to research into the therapeutic functions of Asante indigenous arts in the traditional therapeutic practices in accordance with cultural norms and beliefs as traditional therapists pursue their major function of caring for the people and restoring health.

For the purpose of this research, the Asante traditional priest or priestess is referred to as Asante traditional therapist; and the terms healing and therapy may be used interchangeably for a subsequent projection of this unique cultural heritage.

1.2 Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the reasons for which people may resort to traditional therapy?
2. What are the symbolic significances of Asante indigenous arts to the Asante traditional therapists and clients?
3. What are the diagnostic, preventive, curative and protective uses of indigenous arts in the therapeutic practices?
4. Can this Asante traditional therapy be classified under art therapy? If so, how? If not, why not?

1.3 Objectives

This research seeks to address the following objectives:

1. To find out the reasons for which people may resort to traditional therapy
2. To identify, examine and discuss the symbolic significance of the selected Asante indigenous arts that are used in traditional therapeutic practices.
3. To examine the diagnostic, preventive, protective and curative functions of the selected indigenous arts in Asante traditional therapy.
4. To analyse and discuss findings to determine the acceptability or otherwise of the Asante traditional therapy in the light of art therapy.

1.4 Delimitation

This study covers only the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

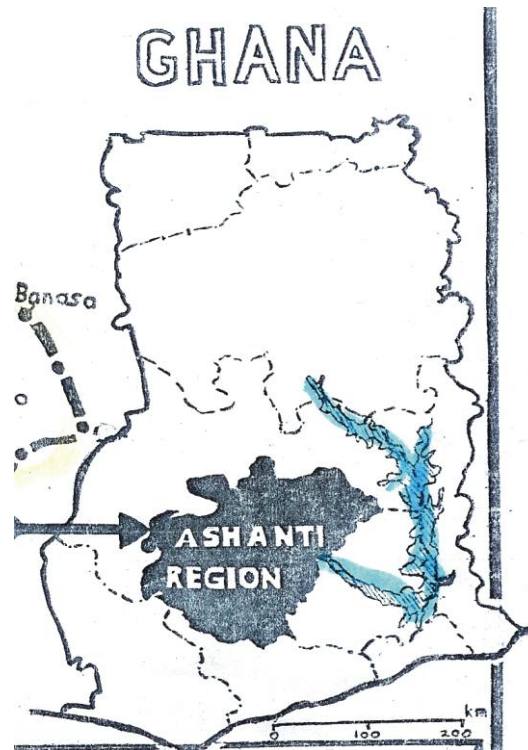


Figure 1: Map of Ghana showing Ashanti Region.

The study concentrates on the therapeutic practices of the traditional Priests and Priestesses in Asante, Ghana. The study gives attention to the practitioners' views, opinions, beliefs and practices with regards to indigenous arts and therapy. The research focuses only on selected indigenous arts of Asante to ascertain the diagnostic, preventive, curative and protective implications of the arts in the therapeutic practices.

1.5 Limitations

The traditional priests/priestesses have around them *Akyeame* (spokespersons). As regards to protocol, it is therefore the duty and responsibility of the *Akyeame* to adhere to strict traditional protocol as the profession demanded in the interest of the priests. The *Akyeame* were particularly concerned with the security of the profession and so would

not entertain any stranger unless they were fully convinced about the purpose of the visit. The researcher in some instances had to book for appointment and come at another time depending on the schedule of the priest or priestess. For this reason the researcher could not get easy access to the priests. This really hindered smooth and easy access to primary data.

To come out with a good material on the activities of traditional priests and priestesses based on evidence, it is so vital to have enough time with the priests/priestesses for the necessary interactions. It was observed that, acquiring first-hand information through personal interaction was very difficult because in many cases, the priests were seen to be very busy with clients who had come to seek consultation on their sickness, business, marriage etc. In such circumstance the priests become very apprehensive in responding positively to interactions with the researcher. The apprehension affected the consistency and logical sequence in releasing certain significant information.

The third form of limitation was identified as lack of co-operation on the part of the traditional priests. Since their work involves a lot of professional secrecy it became very difficult for them to give out vital information about the shrines to a complete stranger without knowing what the information would be used for. The lack of co-operation seriously affected the quantity of photographs taken because the study sometimes required that the researcher should take photographs to support the information taken.

The priests were some-how reluctant to open their doors and permit the researcher to have access to the privacy of the shrine. Moreover, some attendants trying to extort

money from the researcher before providing any form of assistance also added to the limitations. The researcher could not cope with some of the demands and this therefore caused the attendants to express blatantly their unwillingness to co-operate and assist the researcher to obtain the required material for the study.

The researcher does not claim of expert knowledge; for any biases or shortcomings, the researcher is solely responsible.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The following technical terms used in the text have been defined.

Therapeutics: The branch of medicine concerned with the treatment, with a view to cure, or alleviation of disorders.

Therapy: The cure, or alleviation of disorders though emphasizing the practical measures employed, rather than the scientific basis.

Psychodynamics: interaction of emotional forces: the interaction of the emotional and motivational forces that affect behaviour and mental states, especially on a subconscious level.

Psychoanalysis: method of understanding mental life: a psychological theory and therapeutic method developed by Sigmund Freud, based on the ideas that mental life functions on both conscious and unconscious levels and that childhood events have a powerful psychological influence throughout life.

Cognitive therapy: a treatment of psychiatric disorders such as anxiety or depression that encourages patients to confront and challenge the distorted way of thinking that characterizes their disorder.

Humanism: A system of thought that is based on the values, characteristics, and behaviour that are believed to be best in human beings, rather than on any supernatural authority.

Existentialism: involved in or vital to the shaping of a person's self-chosen mode of existence and moral stance with respect to the rest of the world

Eclectic: Selecting or employing individual elements from a variety of sources, systems, or styles.

Eclecticism: the theory or use of an eclectic approach.

Id: in Freudian psychoanalytic theory, the part of the psyche that is unconscious and the source of primitive instinctive impulses and drives.

Superego: according to Freudian theory, the part of the mind that acts as a conscience to the ego, developing moral standards and rules through contact with parents and society.

Ego: the division of the psyche that is conscious, most immediately controls thought and behaviour, and is most in touch with external reality.

Confirmability: The degree to which research results can be confirmed by other researchers.

Transferability: The means by which research findings are transferable to the extent that they can be generalized to settings other than the one in which they were made.

Symbolism: the artistic method of revealing ideas or truths through the use of symbols.

1.7 Abbreviations Used

W.H.O: World Health Organisation

N.I.H:	National Institute of Health
N.C.C:	National Commission on Culture
AATA:	American Art Therapy Association
HBM:	Health Belief Model

1.8 Importance of the Study

The result of this research will be of great significance to Art Therapists since it will augment their knowledge base and also enhance their skills in practice. The report will be useful to International Research Institutions that are interested in cultural influences on therapy as the entire therapeutic process is knitted into the culture of the Asante ethnic group. This will serve as a point of reference when dealing with traditional therapy. This research will pave the way for other African researchers to research in culture- based therapeutic practices in Africa.

The report will be of great interest to the Ashanti Home Page website (www.ashanti.com.au) to enrich its data base by throwing more light on how traditional priests perform their therapeutic rituals through the use of indigenous arts as well as revealing some hidden knowledge. The National Commission on Culture (NCC) and the Ministry of Tourism will benefit from the outcome of this research in that, the research will give the Asante traditional therapeutic practices the maximum exposure and as such give the traditional institution of priesthood the needed publicity in the Tourism industry to attract tourists. Furthermore, the research will provide a wealth of knowledge and reference material for other researchers in the field.

1.9 Organisation of the Rest of the Text

Chapter Two reviews the related literature. Chapter Three explains the methods used in the research. Chapter Four gives a detailed account of the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Chapter Five provides the summary, conclusion and the recommendations offered by the researcher.

Furthermore, the references are compiled alphabetically according to authors of books and journals, contributors of internet resource and newspaper articles, respectively. Finally, the Appendix is a sample of the interview checklist used by the researcher.

Having given the general introduction to the research in this chapter in the light of the problem addressed, the purpose and significance of the research, the preceding chapter is a review of related literature which served as the theoretical and empirical bases of the research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

The review of related literature covers the following major topics: (i) Theoretical Orientations, (ii) Social Setting and Culture of The Asante People, (iii) Traditional Therapeutic Practice, (iv) The Priesthood Institution, (v) Origin of Traditional Therapeutic Practice in Asante, (vi) Traditional Therapy Practitioners, (vii) Training and Graduation of Therapists, (viii) The Concept of Art, (ix) Cultural Role of African Art, (x) Asante Indigenous Arts and (xi) Therapeutic Significance of Art.

Four major theories and techniques that therapists use in contemporary practice have been reviewed by giving a general overview and basic understanding of the schools of thought in psychology.

Moreover, the chapter addresses the practice of therapy in the Asante Kingdom (Asanteman) in the light of the socio-spiritual values/ beliefs and general life pattern of the Asante society with its own set of established patterns of behaviour in traditional therapeutic practice.

The chapter also discusses types of traditional therapists in Asante; the training of traditional therapeutic practitioners, the origin of traditional therapeutic practices the routine practice of the traditional therapy at the shrine.

Finally the review takes us into the area of art to address the question, what is art? This has occupied artists and theorists for hundreds of years, and it is more hotly debated

today than ever before. Whatever the answer is (if any) this question is important to ask as a way of understanding how we can think differently about something we all recognize. As a result, a few theories of art have been discussed to reflect the varied opinions expressed by the various schools of thought in the attempt to answer the above question. Other significant aspects considered include Asante Indigenous Arts and the Therapeutic use of arts.

2.1 Psychodynamic (And Psychoanalytic) Theory and Therapy

According to Carol Wade and Carol Travris (1987), this is one of the old theories of psychology in which patients are viewed within a model of illness or "what is lacking." Individuals are seen as being made up from a "dynamic" that begins in early childhood and progresses throughout life. Psychoanalysis emphasizes that the roots of all adult problems can be traced back to one's childhood.

Therapists who subscribe to this theory tend to look at individuals as the composite of their parental upbringing and how particular conflicts between them and their parents and within themselves get worked out. Most psychodynamic therapists believe in the theoretical constructs of the ego (a mediating sort of force, like a referee), a superego (what is typically referred to as your "conscience," as in, "Your conscience tells you not to smoke!"), and an id (the devil inside us all that says, "Go ahead, what can it hurt?"). These constructs go to make up one's personality and the role of the unconscious is emphasized. In other words, what one doesn't know can hurt him. And more often than not, it does. Human nature, viewed through the psychodynamic context, is decidedly negativistic.

Wade and Travris, (1987), further state that, in therapy, psychodynamic therapists tend to emphasize the importance of the "frame," insight, and interpretations. The "frame" of therapy exists in all theoretical orientations. The frame is the therapeutic setting and boundaries, such as the meeting time, length of time of each session, how payment is handled, how much self-disclosure the therapist makes, etc. Because of transference (where the patient projects his or her feelings about another person in their lives, typically one of their parents, onto the therapist), the frame is more important here. It means that the patient might be engaging in some sort of transference that needs to be examined by the therapist and interpreted if necessary. Interpretations are the main weapons in their arsenal of therapeutic techniques, and the most powerful in almost all of therapy.

The Asante Traditional therapists might not have formal education to adhere to this theory consciously, yet they share similar ideas, and also determine the “frame” insights and interpretations based on similar concepts. Like the contemporary psychodynamic therapists interpretations are the main weapons in their arsenal of therapeutic techniques, though based on traditional beliefs.

2.2 Cognitive-Behavioural Theory and Therapy

Cognitive-behavioural theory as presented by John J. Veronis et al (1970) emphasize the cognitions or thoughts people have as an explanation to how people develop and how they sometimes get a mental disorder. They also claim that Cognitive-behaviourists generally believe in the role of social learning in childhood development, and the ideas of modelling and reinforcement. People's personalities, according to

Veronis et al, (1970) come from these experiences in which they are involved in critical learning, identification of appropriate (and inappropriate) thoughts and feelings, and imitation of these behaviours, thoughts, and feelings. They further emphasised that if one's parents don't cry when they're emotional, one may also learn to hide one's feelings and not cry when one is emotional. Children learn by observing and imitating. This is social learning theory, and that human's innate drives and habits affect all of this.

They moreover claim that, if one grows up in a maladaptive or unhealthy environment or one doesn't learn, for whatever reasons, proper coping skills, one can have mental disorder problems later on in life; despite how negative this sounds, the fact is that in this theory, humans are viewed as basically neutral. It is the environment and the other people they grow up with which shape a person into a healthy or unhealthy human being.

Cognitive-behavioural therapy, in a nutshell, seeks to change a person's irrational or faulty thinking and behaviours by educating the person and reinforcing positive experiences that will lead to fundamental changes in the way that person copes. So cognitive-behavioural therapists will work on helping the patient identify irrational thoughts, refute them, and help the patient change useless or frustrating and unproductive behaviours.

Just like the cognitive-behavioural therapists, the Asante traditional therapists may use their traditional concepts of acceptable behaviour to help their clients to identify irrational thoughts such as having sexual desire for one's blood relations or ever thinking of suicide.

2.3 Humanistic (And Existential) Theory and Therapy

The underlying basics of this theory, according to John M. Grohol, (2005), is that, it views human beings as basically good and positively endowed with the freedom to choose all of their actions and behaviours in their lives. What motivates behaviour is "self-actualization," of the desire to always seek out to become something more of oneself in the future. Because an individual can be conscious of his or her own existence under this theory, people are also fully responsible for the choices they make to further (or diminish) that existence. Grohol, also asserts that responsibility is a key ingredient of this theory, for all humans are responsible for the choices they make in their lives, with regards to their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. In effect, no matter what kind of childhood one suffered through, no matter what ones life experiences, one is ultimately in charge of how one reacts to those experiences and how one will feel. No blaming it on the parents here.

He further states that, there are a number of major conflicts that also need attention, according to this theory. These generally involve the struggle between "being" and non-being (life versus death, accepting parts of oneself, but not other parts, etc.), being authentic versus being "fake" or "fraudulent" in ones day-to-day interactions with oneself and others, etc. This theory tends to emphasize these epic but philosophical struggles within oneself.

Moreover, commenting on the humanistic therapy, Grohol, writes that, therapy tends to emphasize these struggles and the individual that comes into therapy as being a unique person who views life in such an idiosyncratic way that it would be nearly impossible to try and fit them into any one specific developmental or other theory. It

emphasizes the individualism of everybody and seeks to work with that individual's strengths and weaknesses as they apply to their particular problems. Humanistic therapy also seeks to help individuals find themselves and their own answers to the philosophical struggles mentioned above, since no two people's answers are going to be alike. The therapist is there more as a guide, than as a teacher or authority figure, to help the patients learn more about themselves and what it means to be on this planet for such a very short time.

Unlike the humanistic therapists the Asante traditional therapists are there more as teachers and authority figures than as guides. However, they share similar ideas as expressed in humanistic therapy.

2.4 Eclecticism Theory and Therapy

It's a pragmatic approach to therapy; eclectic therapists mesh all approaches together to fit the individualistic human being that sits before them for the first time with their particular problem. Unfortunately, since it is based upon individualism and pragmatism, many people get a bit confused. A typical eclectic approach in therapy is to view an individual from a psychodynamic perspective, but to use more active interventions, such as one might find in a cognitive-behavioural approach. That is, eclecticism. Most forms of this therapy are much more subtle and less distinct than that. For instance, Eclectics tend to view individuals who come into their office as much as through the patient's own eyes as possible, imagining their worldview and the system that goes to make up their problems. They look at things not only from what might be reinforcing unhealthy behaviours (behaviourism), but also unhealthy thoughts

(cognitive), and how these all relate together to go and make up the individual human being sitting in front of them (humanistic). In eclecticism, there is no one right or guaranteed way of approaching any given problem. Each problem is tainted and changed by that individual's own history and way of viewing or perceiving his or her own problem. Therapists are flexible, working as a teacher for one patient, as a guide for another, or as a combination of all of the above for yet another.

The Asante traditional therapists in this context may be described as eclectic therapists because of the flexibility expressed in dealing with the clients in their profession.

2.5 Theories of Health and Illness

Clebesch and Jaekle (1964) in Benner, (2004) note that healthcare has involved four primary elements: healing, sustaining, reconciling and guiding. Explaining these four elements, they claim that healing involves helping someone overcome impairment and move towards wholeness. This assistance can involve physical as well as spiritual healing, but the focus is always the total person. Sustaining is also explained to refer to acts of caring designed to help a hurting person endure and transcend a circumstance in which restoration or recuperation is either impossible or improbable. Reconciling refers to efforts to re-establish broken relationships. Finally guiding refers to helping a person make wise choices and thereby grow in social and spiritual maturity.

The four primary elements discussed by Clebesch and Jaekle are indeed strong pillars upon which any healthcare practitioner including traditional priests/priestesses should perform their duties. According to George Stone (1987), definition of health falls

into two categories; those that portray health as an ideal state and those that portray health as a movement in a positive direction. Stone, proposed that the psychological manifestation of health is a subjective feeling of well-being; and that social manifestation of health includes the capacity for high level of social productivity and low demand on the health care system.

Bisphenol-A Complete Resource website (2002) for environmental health and safety information, records that, theories about health and illness deal with the ideas people use to explain how to maintain a healthy state and why they become ill. Ideas about illness causation according to Bisphenol-A, may include such ideas as breach of taboo, soul loss, germs, upset in the hot-cold balance of the body, or a weakening of the body's immune system. Theories of illness causation that derive from the underlying cognitive orientation of a cultural group, and therapeutic practice usually follow the same cultural logic. For instance, the indigenous Asantes' strong belief in the ancestors and their relationship with the living go a long way to affect their health beliefs in that, offending an ancestor may lead to a consequential social or health hazards. The opposite is also the case.

Anthropologists often divide theories of illness into two broad categories: **personalistic** and **naturalistic**. In a personalistic system, illness is believed to be caused by the intervention of a sensate agent who may be a supernatural being (a deity or dead ancestor) or a human being with special powers (a witch or a sorcerer). The sick person's illness is considered to be a direct result of the malign influence of these agents. In naturalistic causation, illness is explained in impersonal terms. When the body is in balance with the natural environment, a state of health prevails. However, the disturbance

of that balance results in illness. Often, therapists invoke both types of causation in explaining an episode of illness, and treatment may entail two corresponding types of therapy. The Asante traditional therapist in this regard adheres more to the personalistic system than the naturalistic.

Further information recorded by the Bisphenol-A website on personalistic theories of illness states that illness may be linked to transgressions of a moral and spiritual nature. If someone has violated a social norm or breached a religious taboo, he or she may invoke the wrath of a deity, and sickness as a form of divine punishment may result. Possession by evil spirits is also thought to be a cause of illness in many cultures. This may be due to inappropriate behaviour on the part of the patient. Failure to carry out the proper rituals of respect for a dead ancestor for example or it may be simply due to bad luck. Sometimes, one person's envy of another's good fortune is believed to exert a malign influence through the "evil eye," which can result in illness or other calamities. Witches and sorcerers are malevolent human beings who manipulate secret rituals and charms to bring calamity upon their enemies. Recovery from an illness arising from personalistic causes usually involves the use of ritual and symbolism, most often by practitioners like traditional therapists who are specially trained in these arts.

The website (www.bisphenol-a.org), focusing on Naturalistic theories of disease causation, views health as a state of harmony between a human being and his or her environment; when this balance is upset, illness results. The 'humoral' system, according to the site, is a naturalistic approach to illness with its roots over two thousand years old. Humoral concepts of health and illness are widely found in India, Southeast Asia, China, and, in a somewhat different form, in Latin and South America. Maintaining humoral

balance involves attention to appropriate diet and activity, including regulating one's diet according to the seasons. Illnesses may be categorized into those due to excess heat and those due to excess cold. Treatment of an illness of overheat would involve measures such as giving cooling foods and application of cool compresses.

Good (1994) writing on Biomedicine, (modern traditional medicine), stresses that it is founded on a naturalistic set of theories about the body, and these theories are continually evolving. One of the core theories of contemporary biomedicine, the germ theory of disease, is of relatively recent origin. According to an older biomedical concept, the miasma theory of disease, poisonous emanations from rotting vegetation or carcasses were believed to cause disease. The "body-as-machine" metaphor has been a powerful way of conceptualizing the body within biomedicine.

Good, further states that ritual and symbolism play important roles in the healing process in biomedicine, as they do in other healing systems. A patient taking a prescribed medication, for example, has a symbolic as well as a pharmacological effect. Symbolically, taking the medication may indicate to others that the person is unwell and is deserving of concern and sympathy. All theories of health and illness serve to create a context of meaning within which the patient can make sense of his or her bodily experience. A meaningful context for illness usually reflects core cultural values, and allows the patient to bring order to the chaotic world of serious illness and to regain some sense of control in a frightening situation.

2.6 Alternative Medicine

Commenting on the "indigenous," "naturopathic," and "magico-religious" medicine practiced in North Carolina and Virginia under traditional medical systems, Holly Mathews (2005) writes. "Indigenous medical systems," are known by a confusing plethora of terms including alternative, unconventional, unorthodox, vernacular, fringe, nontraditional, unofficial, and ethnomedicine." (p.142).

These terms used interchangeably refer to therapeutic practices, techniques, and beliefs that are outside the realm of mainstream Western health care. Alternative medicine, the most commonly used term emphasizes therapies that improve quality of life, prevent disease, and address conditions that the so called conventional medicine has limited success in curing.

In traditional communities like that of the indigenous Asantes, alternative medical practices are the most widely used methods of health care. However, there remains considerable scepticism among practitioners of conventional medicine and among biomedical researchers regarding the efficacy of alternative medicine. Yet in recent years many researchers have begun to conduct studies to evaluate alternative therapies. It is possible that what was considered alternative in the past will become mainstream therapy in years to come.

2.7 The Asante People

According to Tufuo & Donkor, (1989), official and academic research sources state that the Asante people belong to the Akan ethnic group which migrated down into the country from the north of Africa. It must however be stated that much of the history

of the Asante people's origins is shrouded in legend. Traditional legend according to Rattray, (1969) maintains that the founders of Asante came from underground long ago on a certain Monday night. The group included seven men and four women who, within a couple of days, had begun building the settlement at *Asantemanso*, where *Odomankoma* the Creator found them while on His journey making things, and took one of them as His linguist.

In Microsoft® Student 2007 Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2006 writing on "*Ashanti Kingdom*" claims that the homelands of the Akan-speaking peoples were originally located between the Pra and Ofin rivers in the forest plateau region of what is now southern Ghana. The region according to him is rich in gold, and various Akan-speaking groups and chiefdoms throughout history generated wealth and power through gold mining and trading. In the 1600-1650, the kingdom of the Denkyira people became the most powerful state in the region. Denkyira subjugated neighbouring groups and exacted tribute from them.

According to Osei Kwadwo (2004), oral tradition during the reign of Osei Tutu of Kumasi, in the period 1695-1719, he organized a rebel coalition of peoples who were subject to the Denkyira. These included the people of Bekwai, Asumanya, Offinso, Tafo, Agona, Edweso Dwaben, Kokofu, Kumasi, Kumawu, Mampon, and Nsuta. (pp. 6-14). According to Redmond (2006) this rebel group, became known as the Asante, from *Osa nti* meaning those brought together "because of war.

Osei Kwadwo (2004) continues that, the Asante conquered the Denkyira in 1701. In the aftermath of the victory, Osei Tutu converted the military coalition into a

permanent political union with the help of Okomfo Anokye, a traditional priest who was also the Chief of Agona. The Asante Kingdom, a West African monarchy in Ghana was founded by a confederation of Akan-speaking peoples under the leadership of Nana Osei Tutu.

Legend has it that, Okomfo Anokye conjured a golden stool from the heavens. (A stool is a symbol of clan leadership among Akan-speaking peoples, a stool is also said to embody the spirit of its owner in Asante tradition.) Sarpong, (1974); this belief might have influenced the decision of Okomfo Anokye to conjure nothing other than a golden stool. The golden stool is said to have floated to earth and landed on the lap of Osei Tutu. The Ashanti Home Page Web site, commenting on the Golden Stool, asserts that the famous *Sika Dwa*, or Golden Stool, to this day symbolizes the unity of the Asante people. As a symbol of nationhood, and because it contains the *sumsum* or soul of Asante, the Golden Stool is considered to be so sacred that no person whatsoever is allowed to sit upon it. It is kept with the strictest security and precaution; and is taken outside only on exceptionally grand occasions. Never must it come in contact with the earth or the ground. It is always lying on its own stool or on the skin of an animal such as the leopard. Asantes have on many occasions made great sacrifices to defend it when its safety had been threatened. In 1896 they submitted to the deportation of their King, Prempeh I, rather than resort to a war in which they feared they might suffer defeat and risk the loss of the Golden stool. They deemed the loss of their King a small thing compared with the loss of their Golden Stool.

The Asante people retain a strong sense of historical and cultural identity in modern Ghana, and an Asante king is still designated. Ashanti Home Page,

(www.Ashanti.com.au) writing about the Asante people states; “The Asante thinks that by being born Asante, he has been ordained by the deity to bring into the world all that is best in the human race.” The above belief may be a deciding factor in the way a typical Asante perceives life and as such does everything in his capacity to have a successful life devoid of misfortunes. Redmond, (2006) giving a vivid description of the Asante in “Ashanti People” paints a picture of a people who he describes as renowned artisans especially in cotton weaving, pottery making, wood carving and the manufacture of gold and silver ornaments.

This description of the Asante may be seen as a true reflection of the people’s zeal for hard work and involvement in the field of indigenous art. Their belief in the significance of art in their entire life may also be seen as a propelling factor in their quest for financial independence and life devoid of diseases.

2.8 Village Life

In Asante, as in much of Ghana, the village is a social as well as an economic heart of society. In each village there are people of particular importance. The Chief together with the Elders maintain traditional customs and ceremonies and deal with disputes. The *okyeame* has no corresponding role in western society. A man wishing to consult the Chief or traditional priest addresses his remarks to the *okyeame*, who then passes them on and returns the reply (even though all three people are present together). The *okyeame* is an intermediary, acting as a buffer to reduce the severity of utterances and so save delicate situations. If the Chief should make a harsh pronouncement, it is the duty of the *okyeame* to paraphrase and clothe the statement in proverbs.

The traditional priest and the herbalist provide medical service which can be partly paid for in local produce (a hen, eggs etc.) as opposed to Western medicine which requires cash payment. The herbalist relies on local medicines to achieve a cure. Many of these cures are now being investigated by research institutes both in and out of Ghana as alternative remedies. Just as a family may request for autopsy to determine the cause of death in the scientific medical system, the traditional priest or priestess may be consulted to use spiritual powers to ascertain the cause of death of a relative in traditional therapeutic practice. This may be part of the post-mortem rituals. Sarpong, (2002). The priest, when possessed by the gods, is particularly powerful at dealing with spiritual problems. The Daily Guide News paper dated 7th March 2009, in an article titled “Kwaku Bonsam Challenged” the paper reports of Nana Subraku, a traditional priest who claims of having the ability to unravel mysterious deaths by means of a spiritual mirror that he said he employs to capture the soul of the corps to reveal what exactly caused his or her death.

Death is an uncompromising phenomenon among Asantes. This assertion might explain why the most popular ceremonies among Asantes are funeral rites which typically last several days. Everyone in the village is expected to participate in all the major ceremonies. The extended family - no matter where they live - will travel home to attend a funeral. The entire village/town and the inhabitants of its environs will also come to pay their last respects. Having gathered family and friends from far and wide, many often take the opportunity to conduct business or settle family disputes if there are any.

2.9 Proverbs

The Asante as part of the Akan ethnic groups speak various dialects of Twi. The language is very rich in proverbs, the use of which is taken to be a sign of wisdom. Euphemisms are very common, especially about events connected with death and toilet. Rather than say "the King has died", one would say "a mighty tree has fallen". Proverbs are often used to express ideas indirectly as can be seen from the following: "*Obi mfa ne nsa benkum nkyere n'agya amanfo*" - this is literally "Do not point to the ruins of your father's house with your left hand" which is equivalent to "Do not scorn culture inherited from your forefathers". It is with such impression that traditional therapy has been accepted and patronized by indigenous Asantes in the interest of sustaining inherited cultural practice.

Moreover, traditional therapists usually spice up their speech with a lot of proverbs to demonstrate their wisdom as well as communication skills. The traditional priestly institution by virtue of its social status in the Asante society is known for its extensive use of proverbs as a professional requirement adhered to by all renowned priests/priestesses as a cultural heritage. (www.Ashanti.com.au)

2.10 Treasures and Homes

The Ashanti Home Page Website writing on Treasures and Homes of Asantes asserts that the sense of responsibility is no doubt the desire of every Asante. The site continues that the traditional Asante man shares the view that real responsibility is better expressed in a home. So he believes owning a home where he will be responsible for a group of the clan must be a foremost goal in adulthood. In this regard, according to the

site, wherever the Asante may be settled, in whatever circumstance he may be placed, he tries to work hard to make his home. He builds a house to accommodate himself and all those under his care. For this reason the site further avows that the Asante's highest ambition and all his aspiration is directed to building a house and making a home. The site also claims that public opinion is so very bitter against celibacy, so the Asante's next pressing concern is to get married and have children. The Page contends that unfortunate victims of sterility have to endure contempt and derision.

Considering poverty and sterility as unacceptable misfortunes in ones life, the Asante may not hesitate to seek the assistance of the traditional therapist to address such problems. In this regard indigenous arts may be employed in the attempt to unravel the cause of the misfortunes and subsequent healing.

2.11 Marriage by Consent

According to (www.Ashanti.com.au) the Ashanti Home page website, the Asante man takes a lot of things into consideration before getting married. Union by marriage is too important to trivial treatment. The parents of a daughter must hand over the human life in their care to a really responsible custodian. No daughter will accept an offer of marriage from any man without the consent of her parents. "If my parents agree to your proposal, I shall have no objection," she will say. In practice parents are supposed to approve of wives and husbands of their sons and daughters. It is their responsibility as claimed by the site to solve the initial problems (with all their implications) in a lasting tie such as marriage.

Resulting from war effects, the site contends that customarily, the woman is the custodian of the children of the marriage and they are, in essence, hers. They claim clanship through their mother and to a larger extent, inheritance, especially since the land, the Asante's precious property, is known to belong to the woman and not the man. Then comes the adage that if a woman weaves a shield, she stores it in a man's room. In other words as explained by the site, what every woman acquires must belong to a man for absolute security.

Marriage therefore plays an important part in the communal life of the Asante. This assertion by the website is supported by the site's claim that many Asante wives have become known to their husbands for the first time in their first meeting as man and wife; and yet divorce is almost unknown in a true Asante community. The Ashanti Home page continues that parents on both sides have a duty to keep the marriage going or else break the marriage with the resultant break or a life-long tie not only between the couple but the two families. All marital leakage likely to flood and demolish the structure of a community is quickly blocked. "*Aware annya akyigyina, a egu.*" Meaning - It is the marriage that has no backing that breaks.

Reflecting on the above information in the light of the work of the traditional therapist, it may be realized that it is an open secret that some young couples go to seek spiritual backing and guidance to strengthen their marriage to complement the support offered by both families. The researcher's interaction with some traditional priests/priestesses revealed that such individuals are usually given marriage charm known as *aware suman* these charms are usually indigenous artefacts to be kept in the house or to be carried on the recipient's body.

2.12 The Asante Family Unit

As in most developing countries, there is a strong extended family system. Poorer members may seek financial assistance from their better off relatives for school fees, medical expenses etc. But visitors are always welcomed, even if their arrival may be a cause of financial concern. In Asante, the family line is matrilineal - in that, it passes through the mother to her children. Sarpong, (2002) A man is strongly related to his mother's brother but only weakly related to his father's brother. This must be viewed in the context of a polygamous society in which the mother/child bond is likely to be much stronger than the father/child bond. As a result, in inheritance, a man's nephew (sister's son) will have priority over his own son. Uncle-nephew relationships therefore assume a dominant position. The Ashanti Home Page Website asserts that in 1984, the Government of Ghana introduced a legislation to change this traditional pattern of inheritance with the aim of strengthening the father/child bond.

The traditional therapists of Asante are supposed to be very conversant with such traditional patterns of inheritance in order to guide their clients who might consult them for assistance since issues concerning inheritance among the Asantes are very dicey and as such must be handled by people who are knowledgeable in such customary issues.

2.13 Inheritance and Succession

Garbrah, (2007) in a website article titled *Asante Kingdom* writes that, principles governing inheritance stress sex generation and age – that is to say, men come before women and seniors before juniors. Even though the general notion is one of nephew-inheritance (matrilineal) the nephew is sometimes not an automatic successor to his

uncle. According to Garbrah, very often, the property or stool in question has to move, step by step, to the last male inheritor (brother) before passing on to a male son of a female member of the mother's family. It is when all possible male heirs have been exhausted that the females are sought after. Among the females, the order is:

1. Sister
2. Eldest sister's daughter
3. Sister's daughter's daughter

In the line of inheritance of an individual person's property or a chief's stool, what needs to be mentioned here is that the character of the person to inherit is also an essential determining factor. This is because no family, *Abusua* will allow a drunkard or a thief or a spendthrift, for instance, to succeed to property or a stool of a deceased rich man or eminent chief for fear that he might dissipate the wealth or bring the stool into disrepute or even disrepute it.

The relevance of the discussion with respect to the traditional therapist's therapeutic role is seen in the manner in which people will go to any extent to be prosperous and respected in the society. To achieve this goal the help of the traditional therapist is sought for the therapist to reform the person's presumed undesirable destiny.

2.14 The "Abusua" or Clan System

Sarpong, (1974, 2002) considers the *Abusua* or clan as a group or groups of people descended from one great-grand-mother on the maternal side. The constitution of Asante is based on the *Abusua* (Clan system). Sarpong claims there are eight established

Abusua in Asante namely: *Bretuo, Agona, Asona, Aduana, Oyoko, Asene, Asakyire* and *Ekuona*.

Sarpong, further holds that, every member of the Asante ethnic group is a member of one of the above *Abusua* or clans and can trace their descent only through the Female Line to the same female ancestress who would invariably be the founder of the *Abusua*. A child born of any marriage in Asante is a member of the same *Abusua* or Clan as its mother, and naturally comes under the chief whom its mother serves. The first effect of this relationship is clearly that members of one *Abusua* are considered to have the same blood, and marriage between them is therefore forbidden. Such forbidden behaviours attract the attention of traditional priest or priestess to handle in conformity to the cultural norms.

2.15 Communal Life

According to Buadi (2001), Asante communities are basically communal and the wealth of one should benefit all. Buadi continues that The Asante's best way perhaps, of sharing wealth is to show one's generosity by supporting a large family; many men therefore strive to reach heights that will make them successful. Despite difficulties brought about by the custom of inheritance by people other than one's own children, an Asante man feels a clear duty towards his wives and children. It is the father's responsibility to train his children to be truly men of valour and honesty. It is with regards to the above that Weinberg (1965) claim the Asante may become psychologically alarmed by the perception of witchcraft.

The image of the witch is one who destroys the security, happiness and life of others by spiritually stealing their souls, or placing obstacles in the way of their smooth attainment of success. It may not necessarily be out of spite, but could be even in spite of apparent mutual love between the witch and the victim. Weinberg (1965). For Littlewood, (1982) the belief in witchcraft is just a manifestation of paranoid thinking that allows the individual to divert aggression to others by blaming them when things go wrong.

Whatever be the case, the witch is not looked upon favourably by the traditional therapist and his client, and in the past witches found "guilty" of "killing" someone were stoned to death without delay or further trial. This apparent deep-seated hatred of 'evil' is not only expressed in the killing of this external witch, but some self-confessed witches have been known to offer themselves to be exorcised or killed. Weinberg, (1965).

The ideas held about witches and witchcraft indicate, or show it as a phenomenon associated with all that is obnoxious, spiteful and harmful to individuals and society in psychological terms. Witchcraft, according to Stone, (1993) is a way of 'thinking' or 'feeling' evil towards others; a state of oppressive aggression and intimidation. But the reality of the power of the human mind to affect others, even at a distance, has already been noted and brought under the scope of researchable phenomena. The traditional therapists appear to be in the know and using their understanding of this to their own and their client's benefit.

2.16 Medicine in Asante

In an article on Medicine, Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia Standard 2006 writes: Medicine is the science and art of diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease and injury. Buadi, (2001) writing on Asante traditional medicine and for that matter the African concept of medicine emphasises that, the word medicine rendered *aduro*’, employed in traditional medicine has several applications such as physiological, social and spiritual to mention but a few. Its goal is to help people live longer, happier and more active lives with less disability and disease.

Disease has been one of humanity's greatest enemies. In the context of this research, the word ‘**disease**’ shall be seen beyond a pathological condition resulting from various causes, such as infection, genetic defect, or environmental stress, and characterized by an identifiable group of signs or symptoms. Besides, it shall also be understood as being simply absence of ‘**ease**,’ where ‘ease’ is defined by the electronic American Heritage Talking Dictionary as: The condition of being comfortable or relieved; freedom from pain, worry, or agitation; freedom from constraint or embarrassment; freedom from difficulty, or hardship; freedom from financial difficulty. Indeed the absence of any of the above may send the Asante to consult a traditional therapist for the required medicine *aduro*.

It is within the above conception that Twumasi, (1975) argues on the traditional context of the Asante cosmology, within which illness or disease is not considered as just the result of pathological change. He further argues that, the supernatural is invariably invoked as the main causal factor. Within this frame work the concepts of the etiology of health and illness are far more behavioural than biological. Health and illness according

to Twumasi, are not isolated phenomena, but part of the whole magico-religious fabric. He further postulates that:

The traditional cosmology has no room for a purely naturalistic notion of illness, because there is no clear-cut conceptual separation of the natural or physical world on the one hand and the supernatural or magico-religious world on the other. Twumasi (1975, p8)

The quotation reflects the notion of Asante traditional therapeutic practices based on the traditional medical theory which does not consider illness as just the result of pathological change; but invariably invokes the supernatural as the main causal factor. The therapeutic services of traditional therapists are therefore performed through the utilization of magico-religious acts and concepts.

The Website (www.vitelnet.com) presenting a paper on Early Detection, Disease Prevention Management w/Telehealth Solutions asserts that, like detectives, health care professionals use clues to identify, or diagnose, a specific disease. After making a diagnosis, they pick the best treatment. Some treatments cure a disease. Others are palliative; that is, they relieve symptoms but do not reverse the underlying disease. Sometimes no treatment is needed because the disease will get better by itself.

Diagnosing disease and choosing the best treatment certainly require knowledge and technical skills; health care professionals must apply these abilities in imaginative ways to achieve required results. It is with such creative abilities in mind that the Asante traditional therapist employs indigenous arts for therapeutic purposes.

Buadi, (2001) writing on the concept of Asante traditional medicine asserts that the word 'medicine' has several meanings and connotations. He supports this claim with his discussion on traditional therapist's power in providing curative, preventive, protective and good fortune medicines. He asserts that traditional therapists do not have accurate means of diagnosis; and that apart from symptoms they cannot determine the kind of sickness from which one is suffering. Buadi however does not hesitate to add the following:

I have not seen a demonstration of any of these powers before. I am only reporting what people say. So I do not know the powers the traditional medicine men use; neither can I explain the secret behind any of them. The fact that most of us do not understand them does not mean that they are not effective (Buadi, 2001, p51).

The above quotation betrays Buadi's acceptance of his ignorance of the supernatural powers of the traditional therapist in his description of the diagnosis of traditional therapists. It must be stated here that symptoms determination according to the website (www.vitelnet.com) is as accurate as any other means of diagnosis. The question then is, whose efforts or what sickness determines the treatment that Buadi does not understand and yet he describes as effective? The researcher feels the above is a very serious and fallacious assertion, in that Talsky (1987) asserts that symptoms determination is as accurate as any other means of diagnosis.

2.17 Asante Traditional Religion

Religions are part of human culture in general, and are thus product of human inventiveness. Reynolds (1980) further claims that the Asante considers his traditional religion as an institutionalized or personal system of beliefs and practices relating to the divine and shares a strong belief in a universal God *Onyame*, but this does not exclude gods associated with a particular community; or spirits *abosom* by whom a priest may be possessed. Sarpong, (1974) contends that there is no doubt of the Asante's belief in the existence of the Kingdom of the Dead *Samanade* hence ancestral veneration. It is in this regard that custom requires that proper consideration is given to the appropriate performance of burials and funeral rituals; for death is the one great certainty. Reynolds contends that, traditional religion does not adhere to regular attendance at particular buildings for the sake of worship as a result of the contention that religion is not something that is remembered for an hour a week. They believe that the universal God and other gods and the spirits of the ancestors are always present.

Sarpong, (2002) on the other hand has a different opinion. In his claim that every religion comprises three essential parts, he explains by saying that it is what people believe in which constitutes their faith. This may be a personal being or an impersonal force. Whatever it is, Sarpong, contends that the object of faith has some influence over one's life. The next essential part of religion, according to him, is morality. He claims that people who have such an object of worship mould their characters in accordance with their belief; and from time to time, those with the same beliefs and morality come together on a regular basis to express their belief in worship. This is the third element of every religion, namely the liturgy. It is worthy to note that all the three characteristics

mentioned by Sarpong are elements that are associated with the Asante traditional priests and associates as they go about their responsibility of providing spiritual support to their communities.

2.18 Symbols in the Context of Religion

History of symbolism, according to Jung (1990) shows that everything can assume symbolic significance; natural objects (like stones plants, animals, men, mountains and valleys, sun and moon, wind, water and fire), or man-made things (like houses, boats, or cars), or even abstract forms (like numbers, or the triangle, the square, and the circle). In fact the whole cosmos is a potential symbol.

Symbol is said to be in the most original and basic sense the otherness of being itself through which the being is given expression to the concrete terms. Binsbergen (2002) quoting Heisig, describes symbolism/symbols as the very life's breath of religion, because every sentiment, every ideal and every institution associated with the phenomenon of religion subsists in an atmosphere of symbols. It is through symbols that religions survive and could be expressed in concrete terms. It is also through symbols that access to the religious life of the past is gained and can also bequeath something to the generations yet unborn. It is observed that nowhere throughout the broad spectrum of human culture can one constantly find the symbolic expressions of such an expanse and durability as in religion. There exists therefore a symbiotic relationship between religion and symbolism because of the nature of religion which is notoriously resistant to universal definition. Religious consciousness is kept alive by the use of symbolic representations. Symbolization then becomes a means of socio-religious communication.

Symbols are representations which allow the other to be present or 'to be there.' It is a supreme and primal representation in which one reality renders another present. Symbol becomes a reality in which another attains knowledge of being. Symbol is an essential key-concept in treatise on religion without which it is impossible to have a correct understanding of the subject matter.

Symbols are phenomena that are borrowed from the daily lives of human kind. Things which already have religious meaning are transformed and elevated to sacramental symbolism of the community through which the mystery of communication achieves comprehensibility

There are many definitions of the human being; one of the most recent and probably one of the most accurate is that a human is a symbol-making being. It is in the same light that Jung (1990) writes:

Man, with his symbol making propensity, unconsciously transforms objects or forms into symbols (thereby endowing them with great psychological importance) and expresses them in both his religion and his visual art; the intertwined history of religion and art, reaching back to prehistoric times, is the record that our ancestors have left of the symbols that were meaningful and moving to them. (p. 232)

Jung's quotation gives credence to the significance of the extensive employment and reliance on tactile and performing arts in the religious and professional responsibility of the traditional therapist of Asante; for it has been through such symbolism that the awesome nature of the gods have been personified through tangible expression. From their earliest moments of human consciousness,

humans and for that matter the Asante have engaged in interpreting their experience through symbols, and no waking moment will be without use of symbols.

Actually, the linkage of "human" with symbols goes even deeper: the merging of spirit and matter in our human reality, the fact that we are embodied spirits, means that we exist symbolically. Not surprisingly, then, the past half-century or so has witnessed an intensive and large-scale study of symbolism. One can without exaggeration say that the principal focus of modern thought has been on the nature and function of symbols. It is therefore not surprising when Cook, (1983) contends that Symbols are intriguing, because they are the very stuff of that wondrous and mysterious process that we call "human communication." Symbols not only give information and understanding; they touch people's imaginations and emotions and desires and loves and they trigger people's decisions and their activity. Any given symbol has this power to resonate with these deeper levels of consciousness.

For example, Colettine (2004) writing for the *Boston Catholic Journal* describes Christian Symbolism as some kind of artistic representation, an outward expression, or object that has shades of various, often hidden meanings. According to Colettine, the most commonly used symbol is probably that of the Cross. Commenting on the varied meanings of symbols she further wrote that the Cross has various levels of meaning according to life's experiences; this symbol she claimed, could convey a wealth of ideas, concepts, scriptural quotes, experiences of suffering etc. She concluded that symbols were needed in man's spiritual journey for they could be points of focus that lead humanity into deeper prayer.

Persons or things or happenings can be or become symbols. A few decades ago, Yaa Asantewa, with her relentless military aggression and particularly with her defeat of the British, became for many a symbol of valour. Mother Teresa on the other hand has become in recent years a symbol of human concern and compassion. The sinking of the Titanic still serves as a symbol of human folly in carelessly challenging the forces of nature. It must be noted that whereas human concern and compassion, and valour, are acceptable religious values that are encouraged, human folly is vehemently discouraged. It is in the light of the above that Cook, shares his views that for each of us there are certain things, places, persons, or events that have become especially meaningful and that continue to say something special to us whenever we remember them or encounter them again. Cook further claims that in this process of symbols emerging in ones consciousness as retainers and transmitters of meaning, a central role is played by ones memory.

It is because one can recall past happenings, relive them (sometimes with great vividness) in one's imagination and re-experience the joy or anguish or achievements of the past that these can still affect his awareness and emotions. Along with this, one has the ability, through creative imagination, of sharing vicariously in the meaningful experiences of others. This is done when one listens to another relate a harrowing experience he or she has just passed through.

It is in line with such display of commitment among Asantes in connection with the Golden Stool known as *Sikadwa Kofi* that Sarpong,(1975) writes on the symbolic significance of the Golden Stool. According to Sarpong, as a symbol of nationhood, the Golden Stool is believed to contain the *sumsum* or Soul of Asante; the Golden Stool is

considered to be so sacred that no person whatsoever is allowed to sit upon it. It is kept with the strictest security and precaution; and is taken outside only on exceptionally grand occasions. Never must it come in contact with the earth or the ground. It is always lying on its own stool or on the skin of an animal such as the leopard. The Asantes have on many occasions made great sacrifices to defend it when its safety had been threatened. In 1896 they submitted to the deportation of their King, Prempeh I, rather than resort to a war in which they feared they might suffer defeat and risk the loss of the Golden stool. They deemed the loss of their King a small thing compared with the loss of their Golden Stool.

Because symbols have this power to touch the entire range of consciousness-rational thought, imagination, emotions, and dreams, they are privileged means of expressing peoples' most personal, important and disturbing experiences. A reflection on it may reveal that symbols do more than express how people think and feel; they (symbols) are a powerful force in shaping the way people think and feel. Colettine (2004) propounds that Christian symbols could be used much more creatively within the catechetical field where children, and those young in the faith, will grasp them in their beautiful simplicity and begin to appreciate the profound meaning within them. Colettine further claims that each symbol contains an entire treasury of thought, a repository of the experience of life in the Faith in its many joyful, painful and hopeful dimensions.

The opinion expressed by Colettine, may be an adaptation of the Asante traditional therapist teaching role, in that, the traditional symbols creatively expressed in the indigenous arts become profound and explicit teaching and learning material to educate the children and those young in the values of Asante culture; for each symbol

contains an entire treasury of thought and a repository of the experience of life in the culture in its many dimensions.

As carriers of meaning from one person's awareness to that of another, symbols are the precious instruments by which one breaks through the isolation that spatial separation causes between humans. While inanimate objects and even plant life are incapable of reaching outside the particular place they occupy, and animals only partially break through this barrier by sensation and signal, humans are saved from this solipsism by symbols. Human beings are distinctive because they are symbol-making and symbol using beings .Because of this the human person is able to relate personally to one another, the Supreme Being, other spiritual beings and the ancestors.

From the above discussion, one could say that the individual who sees himself as a struggler against formidable odds and forces, both seen and unseen, in his search for wealth and social standing with full knowledge of the traditional concept of the nature of man and what can be injurious to his well-being or helpful, will naturally seek for redress by the perceived cause or causes when trouble strikes. And in general all misfortunes ascribed to or suspected as deriving from supernatural causes shall by all means be treated in the context of traditional therapy, while "doctors" are only seen or the clinic visited "for symptom relief" or in very critical cases. (Fosu, & Twumasi, 1981).

In his work on symbolism, Sarpong, (1975) shares that, for Asantes to bare the shoulders (if one is wearing a piece of cloth) in the presence of a senior or a deity is a sign of profound reverence and respect, as also is taking one's feet from off one's sandals and standing on them, or standing or walking on the ground. Hands are shaken to show

warm affection, or sympathy towards a bereaved person, or cordial relationship. Ghanaians embrace very dearly beloved ones, particularly when they have not met for a long time.

He continues that dancers can manipulate the body and its members in various ways to signify many things-ranging from praise to insult, to the erotic. In this, Sarpong claims the hands, feet, neck, eyes and legs feature prominently. The Asante observer raises the index finger and the middle finger in the form of a V to congratulate a polished dancer or to show admiration for the quality of the dance. Gesticulations with the left hand show an attitude of disrespect. To eye someone askance or squint at him is considered an insult. So also is pouting (protruding the lips). In order to express profound sorrow for an offence one has committed or admit, with sincere regret, his mistake, the Asante puts the back of the right hand into the palm of the left hand, usually with the trunk of the body bent a little forward. To express regret of someone's disobedience to him, the Asante places one index finger under the corresponding eye. As in many other places the Asante shakes his head to express disapproval or discontent, and nods as a positive sign of approval or contentment. However, to shake the head continuously, may mean: "How horrible", or "This is unbelievable" or "Be careful", and nodding several times without interruption may mean among other things "Now I see", I get you". One who clenches his hands and puts it on an open mouth is expressing bewilderment or admiration.

Sarpong further points out that to join the two hands by intertwining the fingers and placing them on one's head or behind ones neck is to express deep sorrow, particularly on the occasion of the death or funeral rites of a dear one. To point the

forefinger at someone and shake ones hand is to warn him against something. The Asante does not indicate the height of a human being manually by turning the palm downwards; the palm of the hand is turned to face the sky. To strike the breast with the palm of the hand is usually tantamount to a vehement denial of an accusation, or an expression of a painful feeling because of the wrong done by another person. When, however, one strikes the breast with the tips of one's fingers and thumb joined together, one is challenging another person, or owning up proudly, even when what one has done is totally wrong.

The few explanations given of some of the signs the Asante make with their body have made it clear that the need for a deep understanding of such signs and symbols cannot be overemphasized, if blunders are to be avoided. Sarpong (1975) then concludes with the following remark:

One may horrify others without knowing it, by using a sign which is innocent in one's own country but unacceptable in ours. A clear example is what in Europe and America is known as "thumbing". if one clenches the four fingers and raises the thumb over them, the meaning of this sign especially, if the thumb is kept moving up and down, is so utterly base and obscene. (p.115)

Writing about the effects of visual imagery, Cole, (1989) states that visual representations may be called icons when they achieve compelling prominence; through frequent repetition in sacred or secular art, icons become powerful because they encapsulate ideas and actions of central importance in human life. For the traditional therapist and his clients the symbolisms are very much a part of everyday life.

Symbolism to the traditional therapists are of immense value to anyone who wants to get an insight into the patterns of thought of any people (his own or others)

The way in which the Asante traditional therapists think about the world they live in, is often in symbolic, rather than, scientific terms. There are signs which give information about happenings of the past, present or future.

2.19 Magico-religious Arts and Concepts

A generally accepted view of traditional therapeutic practice is that the service is performed through the utilization of magico-religious acts and concepts. This is not to say that the practitioners of traditional therapy have no notion of physical cures and treatment. They have a stock of remedies with which to treat ill and some may have scientific validity. Most treatments according to Middleton, (1954) however, are regarded as aspect of a total therapeutic practice which does include magico-religious ingredients. The malignant action of another human being or intervention by a super- natural power may cause illness, which may be cured by resorting to the appropriate magico-religious formula or application to the supernatural power. Tradition is important not in the sense of empirical experience, but through its validation of the power of the unseen word.

2.20 Supernatural phenomena

This is related to or attributed to a deity, magic or the occult or attributed to phenomena that cannot be explained by natural laws. In other words the term is used to include all that is not natural, inexplicable in concrete terms. For example the scientific medical practitioner does not seek supernatural causes but employs the germ theory vis-à-

vis scientific method in his curative practices (natural causation), whereas the traditional therapeutic practitioner qualifies under this usage of the term supernatural.

However, Twumasi quoting Hsu (1952) clarifies this idea by pointing out that man interprets his universe in two (but not mutually exclusive) ways and on the basis of the interpretation he is provided with a behaviour model which relates to that universe so that he may know how to act. Naturalism and super-naturalism therefore are both ways of adjusting to the universe. The behaviour of an actor is based upon both lines of the interpretation; the act of the individual is affected by ‘the definition of the situation’

2.21 The Institutional Theory

Sociologically speaking, therapeutic practices take place in an institution. This leads one to the area of a study of purposeful behaviour. Twumasi, (1974) quoting Talcott Parsons describes institutional theory as a form of “action theory” in the sense that it involves cultural theories of human behaviour which examine the numerous ways in which men influence their environment for their benefit.

The central focus of institutional approach is on the basis that human aims are achieved through organisation. In this regard as Twumasi points out, “the culture of a group is seen in terms of the purposefully directed activities of specific groups” the institutional approach assumes that the general content of cultural knowledge determines the form of both the purpose for which groups are organised and the activities by which they hope to attain the aims. Furthermore, the institutional approach places emphasis on the fashion in which organised groups select specific purposes for accomplishment and fashion specific norms for achieving those aims.

Three main elements which Twumasi claims to be basic to the institutional approach are; (1) the concept of purpose, for which members co-operate to achieve (2) the concept of an institutional group, that is the group of members co-operating to achieve the purpose. (3) Then the concept of the institution per se, the complex cultural expectations which are shared by the men of the given institutional groups.

For the purpose of this research, the institutional theory analysis is in relation to the traditional therapeutic institution and its practices within the Asante societal context. It is necessary to stress that all institutions consider appropriate to determine ways by which institutional purposes shall be obtained by the members of the group with which they are associated. According to Wassen, (1951) a basic decision which members face is with the problem of recruitment; who shall belong to it. Personnel prescriptions arise from the decision group members make. Those descriptions define not only the criteria for admission to membership in the institution, but also the criteria for the determination of what personnel within it should do in order to retain membership.

This matter of determining relationship as presented by Wassen is necessary in institutional analysis because it leads to the variation in attitudes and influence of various personnel in the day- to- day operation of the institution. Individuals in the institution stand in a series of different relationships to each other. This in itself is determined by the cultural expectations concerning the personnel, as well as by the rules found within the institution. Twumasi, (1974) quoting Hertzler, in this regard writes:

Social institutions are purposive, regulatory and consequently primary cultural configurations, formed unconsciously and/or deliberately, to satisfy

individual wants and social needs bound up with the efficient operation of any plurality of persons. They consist of codes, rules and ideologies, unwritten and essential symbolic organisational and material implementations. (Twumasi, 1974, p 5)

The quotation is a true reflection of the traditional priestly institution of Asante which has its own established purpose and regulated by culturally based codes, rules and ideologies, unwritten and essential symbolic organisational and material implementations designed towards the satisfaction of individual wants and social needs. In the traditional healing situation, treatment involves the use of herbal medicines, and spiritual rituals. The traditional therapist is often consulted when the orthodox medical system has failed, as in cases of illness perceived as having spiritual causes.

2.22 The Traditional Therapeutic Institution

Such a research concerned with social change and with a specific institution requires a reasonable perspective that incorporates the idea of man planning consciously to take account of his successes and identified failures. This in effect involves a subjective process of orientation to an objective situation, the influence of various norms entering into the determination of ends or goals.

The potentiality of traditional therapeutic practice is derived from the supernatural assumptions underlying the practice. This is not to say that traditional therapeutic practice within this historical point in time, has never prescribed herbs or bandaged wounds. Traditional therapy utilized medical herbs, but the potentiality of herbal treatment was

sought in terms of the powers of the spiritual world. As an institution, traditional therapeutic practice has its own set of established patterns of behaviour, its purpose and its group members Twumasi, (1974, pp 2- 4).

2.23 Traditional Therapy in Asante

Traditional Therapy in Asante society is perhaps as old as the society itself since it appears to have developed along with the needs of the social set up and beliefs. Without many written records about the origin of therapy itself, there is wide scope for speculation. Oral tradition from practising therapists rarely goes back more than four generations on the individual line of transmission of each particular practitioner. One thing that is clear is that the traditional therapy in Asante is closely tied up with belief and religious practice. Remedy is a gift from God who is seen as the ultimate therapist. It is not uncommon to hear a therapist say that recovery will be successful if God wills. However, since man has no direct contact with God, his knowledge of therapeutic power is obtained through other secondary agencies.

The agencies through which therapists are generally called to practice include the lesser gods, the ancestors, and spirits of the forest and nature; the lesser gods act as tutelary divinities of therapy on behalf of God. They call would-be practitioners through dreams, possession or other unusual behaviour. They teach or inspire through dreams, and guide the traditional priest in his daily practice. (Mettle-Nunoo, 1990. pp 152-3); the researcher is of the view that getting to have knowledge of the origin of traditional therapy as presented above is indeed a sure way of enhancing one's

faith in the practice and trust in the practitioners for subsequent patronage to help sustain this rich cultural heritage.

2.24 Minor Deities

The existence of minor gods everywhere in Africa is a fact which needs no formal proof as everybody knows it. They range from great ethnic gods to little private deities and fall roughly into one of four groups: (Sarpong, 1974)

1. Those generally worshipped by one ethnic group. These traditional general deities are few in number. The Tano River is such a deity for the Ashanti.
2. Those worshipped by inhabitants of certain towns, localities or traditional area. These are the local deities. They are very numerous, every locality having several.
3. Those worshipped by the smaller sections of the community such as by special lineages or village companies. Every lineage or family has its own deity of this class.
4. Those worshipped each day by one individual or his household. In practice, the individual, since he is a member of an ethnic group, a community, a lineage and a family, is subject to gods from all the groups.

Minor deities according to Sarpong, have one generic name in every ethnic group, but a multitude of proper names. Citing the Akan for example, Sarpong, claims they term their minor gods *abosom*, a word which suggests that the gods which the Akans worship were formerly only stones.

Writing on sacred symbols, Jung (1990) comments that stones have had a highly symbolic meaning for ancient and primitive societies. Rough, natural stones, he asserts

were often believed to be the dwelling places of spirits or gods, and were used in primitive cultures as objects of religious veneration. Jung's assertion may clarify and support Sarpong's claim of Akans term 'abosom' for their gods. On the contrary this research has revealed that the term 'abosom' expresses the value the Asante place on their gods. According to Opanin Duku, the renowned Bosomfuo of Akyekyebiase, natural objects such as rivers, trees, stones etc, are believed by the Asante to be indwelled by spirits or gods and as such are accorded religious significance. He further added that the natural elements and objects are not gods per say, but have had a highly symbolic meaning for the Asante. For example he stressed that a rock or stone as a sacred entity symbolizes stability, strength, dependability, power and support. He further asserts that these symbolic meanings of the rock or stone may be attributed to the indwelling deity or spirit; and such deities or spirits considered worthy of worship or veneration were accorded great value and described as *esombo*. Rendered in English as 'That which is valuable'; this term later metamorphosed into 'abosom' which was referred to the gods; because the gods of Asante were cherished and so held in high esteem.

Deities of the last group differ from the rest, in that they may be "housed" in articles of some sort which are worn or hung in the house for protective purposes. Commenting on these deities Sarpong, asserts that one may not find it easy to determine the exact nature of these deities. He however, points out that they are believed to be spirits who have never existed as human beings but were created by God and use anything from rivers to creepers, and from beasts to rocks as their earthly abode. Sarpong, further stresses that the deities possess amazing powers which may be used to the advantage or detriment of man. As male or female, their effect is independent of their sex. Though being created by God and inferior

to Him, they use their massive powers autonomously of Him. They appear to have a special affection for environment which brings terror and awe.

Not every god is benevolent to man. Some indeed are, but others are mischievous. Sacrifices are made to them either to repay the benignity of the good ones or to avoid the malignity of the ill-disposed ones. The greatest ethnic gods are usually "wild", being domiciled in natural places and objects such as rivers, rocks, mountains and the sea. "Domesticated" gods usually supply private needs. There is hardly a nature god for whom a family has a special devotion.

From the foregoing it is evident that in talking about minor deities we should not confuse them with the natural or artificial phenomena always associated with them. Individuals consult their favourite gods to ask them what will happen in the future. They go to them for protection against calamities, as for example, bad crops, poverty and sterility. Others go to their gods to ascertain the underlying causes of disasters in which they may have been involved. There are some who consult minor gods to know the outcome of certain enterprises they want to undertake or to invoke their vengeance and wrath upon such people as have offended them in any way, clandestinely or openly. (Sarpong, 1974, pp14-17)

The ancestors may send cures of their own accord through dreams or when they are implored for blessing and aid from the land of the dead. Such ancestors may include elders who were healers themselves and who are also invoked to bless treatment and to make medicine more efficacious (Opoku 1978 p. 150).

The *Mmoatia* or dwarfs, *Sasabonsam*, or evil spirits, water spirits and others, who are all credited with special knowledge of therapeutic powers, may abduct their chosen candidates to their secret abodes where they appear to become imbued with

therapeutic knowledge. Their knowledge could be curative, protective, or offensive. Spirits of nature in trees, animals and plants may take possession of a person and turn them into agents through whom they heal. Quarcoopome (1987). Baeta, (1962) giving his opinion on why traditional therapy should be set in the context of religion writes on the doubtless interesting fact that, the word in the major Ghanaian languages for curative medicine *Akan-aduro; Ewe-atike, amatsi; Ga-tsofa* is also used for the various charms and talismans intended to afford protection from all threats to life, as well as accession of strength. Thus again it cannot be surprising that the healing art should be set squarely within the religious context, or that the fundamental quest of religion itself should be this selfsame 'life-force'. It is the inspiration and objective of all the multifarious activities in which people concern themselves with the various divinities, semi-deified ancestors, spirits, demons, witches, charms and spells.

There is no doubt that the therapeutic profession of the traditional therapists of Asante could be described in the context of Baeta's assertion quoted above; because the art of healing and care giving as practiced by the traditional therapists are usually done within the frame work of Asante traditional religion.

The most commonly known and recognised ancestral name associated with traditional therapeutic practice in Asante and believed to be the ancient custodian of all therapy is Komfo Anokye, the great traditional priest. The Asante broke their servitude to the Denkyeras through Okomfo Anokye and Osei Tutu. The priest showed where the capital of the new state was to be sited by planting two seeds of the *kum* tree. The capital was sited at the place whose seed germinated and named Kumasi. The other site whose seed failed to germinate was also named Kumawu. He is believed to have

conjured the famous golden stool of Asante from the skies before a durbar of chiefs; the golden stool is considered to be the soul of the Asante nation. He is said to have pushed his sword into the ground and defied anyone to pull it out. The site where the sword was planted may still be seen today although much rusted by decay. Another miraculous act performed by Komfo Anokye, was climbing a palm tree with his sandals on. The grounds of the palm tree have become sacred in a grove at Awukugua, now part of a museum monument. There are other relics from Anokye in the Ashanti museum in Kumasi like a black leather-bound bundle which has remained unopened since his day because he said no-one should ever open it.

According to legend, Anokye's last adventure to prevent the occurrence of death in Asante following the death of his royal friend Osei Tutu proved to be fatal. He is said to have undertaken to engage "death" in a seven-day battle so that if he won the Asante nation would be spared from death forever. For this task he therefore forced himself into a long sleep with the instruction that no-one was to weep during the period. On the last day, however, his sister, no longer able to contain her anxiety, broke out in tears and thus sealed his fate.

To remember his profound contributions in the light of traditional therapeutic practices a modern Hospital is named Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in his honour. (Tufuo, and Donkor, pp. 26-27).

2.25 Types of Traditional Therapists

Traditional therapy is part of a total treatment process which involves the use of magico-religious elements, (Tufuo and Donkor 1978) although the practitioner might

have some notions of physical cures and remedies for various problems. The traditional priest/priestess, otherwise also called medicine man, herbalist, traditional doctor, or even witch-doctor, is indeed a person whose knowledge and practice covers all the areas alluded to in these titles. In the society at large traditional therapists according to (Tufuo and Donkor 1978) include those whose practices are based on native Ghanaian religio-culture like belief in the ancestors, spirits of the dead, good and evil spirits of nature and the elements, lesser gods of both sexes, and the Supreme God who is out of man's personal reach. Among the purely Asante traditional therapists are: (a) The Bosomfuo (b) The Okomfuo (c) Medicine Men (d) Diviners (e) Magicians. Each of these is dealt with separately.

2.26 The Bosomfuo

The Bosomfuo may be the owner of a shrine or serve as the general overseer. These are possessed of a god, or became healers by virtue of being associated with someone possessed by a lesser god, or some other spirit. They may not know much about illness and herbal medicines themselves since they may only be serving as officials who are entitled to offer sacrifice to the gods on particular days set aside for such activities. They usually have Akomfo as mediums for the oracle that actually uses them for consultation and healing. Interpreters and assistants who translate the messages of the gods and also find the prescribed herbs for clients are employed and trained.

2.27 The Okomfuo

There are two main categories of akomfuo in Asante. These are akomfuo brafuo and Atano komfuo. The Okomfuo is the priest-healer who officiates at a shrine. He is

the servant of an oracle or spirit who takes possession of and works through him on the healing days, usually Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. The Okomfuo may be a trained priest or priestess but not necessarily the original person through whom the spirit was received. In other words, a Bosomfuo can necessarily be an Okomfuo by virtue of his first-hand experience of possession and contact with the spirits. But the Okomfuo is not necessarily a Bosomfuo. The researcher's personal contact with some of the traditional priests/priestesses (referred to as therapists in this dissertation) revealed some salient information about the traditional priestly vocation.

Nana Atta Yeboah, a renowned traditional therapist who claims to operate under the possession of dwarf spirits, asserts that anybody interested in the business of traditional therapeutic practices could obtain a portion of the Bosombrafuo also referred to as witch catching deity from a renowned Bosomfuo for a fee. If this person decides to operate himself as the officiating priest, he is required to acquire all the significant knowledge and skills from the origin of possession. He may then choose another person to be the Bosomfuo who will play the supervisory role. However, if this person decides to be the Bosomfuo, he teams up with a traditional priest Okomfuo who takes up the officiating role during days of operation.

In the case of the Atanosuman, the river deities, a particular spirit or god may choose someone to 'marry' through possession. The person in this instance has no hand in the possession. The experience of such possession in Asante is termed *akom aka no*. That is (he is possessed by a spirit) However, this person may then undergo proper training in the *art of akom* at a shrine

determined by a renowned traditional priest. Swithenbank, (1969) defines akom as the state of being possessed by a god; the dance executed while in the state of possession. Nana Atta Yeboah explained the art of akom as the means by which a particular spirit or deity is invoked to subdue the personality of an individual traditional priest/priestess and takes possession of the person to be used as a medium of communication and service between the said spirit/deity and an individual, a group of persons or a whole community.

It is worthy to note that it is in the function of the traditional therapist of Asante as a medium of communication and service between the said spirit/deity and an individual, a group of persons or a whole community that Asante indigenous arts are either required or not.

Training is carried out by a renowned traditional priest or priestess who prepares the person to become a medium of possession and serve as an Atano komfuo through whom the god works. Such a person after graduation is required to look for a Bosomfuo to work with.

2.28 Medicine Men

Medicine-men are people who have considerable knowledge of remedy. Medicine men may employ physical remedies such as herbal applications or massage using roots, barks, leaves and seeds of trees for their medicine. Sometimes these are mixed with parts of animals, eggs and so on. Whereas some medicine is practiced in collaboration with tutelary spirits and magic, others have nothing to do with mystical powers. Traditionally medicine is linked to religion and approaches the person holistically. The above assertion

supports the claim by Sarpong, (2002) that all traditional priests are medicine men but not all medicine men are priests.

Medicine men base their healing methods on the assumption that most, if not all, illnesses are caused by supernatural power and that supernatural powers are required to cure them. The individual may fall ill because of having offended one of the gods, or through the machinations of witchcraft or sorcery, or through the unprovoked attack of an evil spirit. The task of the curer is to employ spiritual approaches to diagnose the disease, usually by divinatory techniques, and then to apply the spiritual remedy, such as retrieving a lost soul, removing a disease-causing object, or exorcising an evil spirit. Hahn, (1999) writes that the effectiveness of the medicine man's treatment seems negligible in the light of Western medicine. Hahn further states that, Anthropologists have, however, observed that the works of medicine men have beneficial results. These may be due to a process of psychological release and consequent physiological healing.

2.29 Diviners

Divination is the art of finding out the future and hidden things. There are many forms of divination. There are divination by the tutelary spirits, divination by ordeal, divination through pots, divination through slaughtering animals, poison oracles and so on. Commenting on divination (Sarpong 2002 p103) asserts: “In some parts of the world, divination has been developed into a whole system which is depended upon tenaciously” he further states that all priests are diviners but not all diviners are priests. Sarpong’s assertion that the influence of divination in our society is considerable might be greatly influenced by his claim that most Africans do not believe in coincidence or chance but

believe everything must have a reason, a cause. Hence the significant role of diviners in traditional African societies.

2.30 Magicians

Magic, according to the Microsoft® Encarta® 2007 is a supposed supernatural power that makes impossible things happen or gives somebody control over the forces of nature. Magic is used in many cultures for healing, keeping away evil, seeking the truth, and for vengeful purposes. The magician according to Sarpong, (2002) is somebody who uses words and objects to effect extraordinary things. The magician's technique is physical but its operational effect is psychical. The magician is believed to be able to take a wooden carving and tie a knot around its neck and say: may 'X' get chocked when she sings. It is believed that whether the victim is in sight or not, when she sings the resultant psychic effect will come to pass. On the other hand, instead of saying 'X' may get chocked, the magician can say: may 'X' attract a huge listening body when she sings. One can simply conclude that a magician can be good or evil depending on the choice of words. Magicians are often referred to as juju men, voodoo, etc.

Sarpong further concludes that the evil magician is often called a sorcerer, and that he uses his powers to harm people whereas a good magician uses his powers to help others. Considering the position of the magician in traditional African society, the writer believes it would not be out of place to buy the idea that all traditional priests are magicians but not all magicians are priests.

One common feature that runs through all forms of traditional therapeutic practice is that of spirit possession. This is perhaps the most common form of the call to

healing practice among the purely native-based healers. It is however, a phenomenon which gives an added value to the claims of a healer and a sign of recognition in the society as a mouth-piece of the gods and ancestors.

2.31 The Training Programme

Besides therapists working under the direct inspiration of the spirits, other therapists must undergo a period of training in order to qualify for practice. The actual structure and content of the training programme varies from place to place, and several Ghanaian specialists in medicine, religion and sociology, such as Twumasi (1975), Opoku (1978), Quarcoopome (1987), Mettle-Nunoo (1990) and others have recorded the process and contents of these courses in some detail.

It is within the traditional therapeutic Institution that the aspiring novice receives his formal therapeutic education. Throughout his therapeutic socialization, the school provides him with his professional knowledge, skills and the identity so that at the end of his training, it is expected that he will think, act, and feel like a traditional therapy practitioner.

The novice who enters the training school to become a traditional therapy practitioner will say he chose the profession because he has experienced possession by some spirit influence. He may have been going about his ordinary daily duties, but more often was attending some religious ceremony, when suddenly and without previous warning he heard 'a voice'. Subsequently he fell down in a fit or went into a trance.

His relatives may call in a qualified traditional therapy practitioner to interpret the episode. The latter would say that it is the spirit of a particular god in the lineage who wishes the possessed individual to enter into the practice. Christensen claims that the

primary requisite to become a traditional therapy practitioner of a particular god or shrine is possession by a deity, *obosom*.

The final decision to permit a person to enter into training is left to his relatives. Then the individual decides to enter into the particular institution of his choice in order to train for the job. In other words, he would enter the service of some fully fledged practitioner of the particular god; whose spirit he has been told has manifested itself in him. Both men and women are accepted as traditional therapy practitioners and are trained separately at appropriate shrines.

The training period varies between two to seven years. (Mettle-Nunoo p. 121). It involves moral and ethical codes of conduct to be observed while the training lasts, such as abstinence from sex or a vow of celibacy, abstinence from alcohol, or from eating food prepared by menstruating women, respect for the teacher and elders, refraining from lies, and speaking the truth. If the novice breaks the vow of celibacy, he must make a sacrifice to the god at the shrine. He must, not gossip, quarrel or fight, observe the right courtesies in respecting elders, never adjure his god to kill anyone, never attend any chief's court of his own accord, and not go out at night to join the young men and women. (Twumasi, p.p. 25-26). But it is also an initiation into another world of reality from the known one, the world of the living dead, of spirits, and the secret of the book of nature and how to read and interpret it. Novices usually take up training for medical practice following a possession, hearing of voices, or some such phenomenon. A qualified traditional healer is often then called in to interpret the phenomenon, to its cause and purpose, as well as the implications for the person concerned if he chooses to obey or reject the call.

Initiation and training involves being taken to the cemetery for a ritual bath to open contact with the land of the dead and the spirits of ancestors or ghosts. *Nsamanfuo*. The shrine compound in the house of the trainer serves as the school, and the novice sleeps on the ground besides the god he serves and also helps the trainer on his farm. This marks out the phenomenon of healing in traditional society as not an arbitrary thing caused by chance possessions of extra-personal 'spirits', but as a subject capable of organised study and impartation of knowledge.

During the first year the trainee is given an orientation of the place, its people and other locations, but no secrets are told him. He carries out menial tasks and may be sent back if he misbehaves. He eats less on all days and keeps a fast on ceremonial days. The dress of the trainee is a rust-coloured cloth while he leaves his hair long, uncut *Mpesempese* and studded with cowries, to distinguish him from other people. On days sacred to his deity, he smears white clay on his face and shoulders. The hair style has been popularized by the Rastaman culture internationally.

Occasionally he may be interrogated and given little instructions by other medicine men in the community. In the third year he learns the names, and properties of, trees, herbal medicines and other therapeutic techniques. He learns about the god he is to serve as an intermediary and how to summon it by dance. He learns about the habitats and habits of animals, birds and insects as well as about the forest and its ways. He is introduced to charms *suman* and their construction and use, and has several of these fastened to his wrists, ankles and long hair. He is also taught how to offer sacrifices to the god. During the third year he receives instructions in techniques such as water-gazing, charging charms with spirits, interpreting of voices from the spirit world, and the secret

of what lies in water, such that for several weeks he is unable to look into water without seeing the faces of spirits and ancestors. And while this state lasts he is unable to practice the technique of 'gazing into water' *hwe nsuo mu*. (Twumasi p. 28) Beyond this, the trainee gradually acquires proficiency, confidence and repute in practice until he is deemed fit to be on his own by the trainer. The initiation into practice may take place in public. Here in practice is Jung's metaphorical water of the unconscious, with its haunting inhabitants who the trainee learns to "see" and "speak to."

For his graduation the prospective healer is dressed in his full regalia *doso* with charms. He dances the whole day to drums and song and must perform specific feats under possession *akom*. He has an interpreter who has also been trained to serve the new healer. The dance of possession is also one of the special skills he will have learned in the course of the training. According to Twumasi, the medicine man achieves the state of possession by rubbing a concoction made from white clay mixed with the liquid from the '*akakapempe*' plant in the soles of his feet and the back of his legs up to the knees. The reaction of this mixture on his nerves makes his legs shake. The typical red look in the eye of the healer is also attributed to the application of liquid from this tree on the healer's eyes. This of course, represents an interpretation to be expected from a scientific-minded intellectual who is also a medical doctor and who may not be too ready to credit the reality of the phenomenon of spirit possession with any degree of objectivity. But it could also be the attitude of an adherent of one of the more recognised world religions in denying the validity of the 'spiritual' experiences of others not within their fold'. However, the purpose here is to present what goes into the making of the traditional

therapist; and the impact of symbolic imagery associated with this whole process, between the therapist and his clients in the therapeutic context.

It appears also that the commissioned novice going out into the field of public practice, after training, needs to take an oath of secrecy to his trainer to safeguard certain knowledge from the general public. This pact of absolute secrecy or 'covenant of blood' (Twumasi pp. 29-30) performed in a secret ceremony just between trainer and trainee before the god of the shrine is sealed off with the payment of an agreed fee to the trainer which includes cash, an animal, and some drink. The new healer also offers a sacrifice to his god sealing his 'marriage' with the spirit and asking the god to stand behind him in his professional life. Thereafter, he may marry or, if already married, return to his marital life.

The test of the new therapist's qualification is his known effectiveness in treatment as borne out by the testimony of past clients, spread by word of mouth. In this way his reputation grows in the society as also his clientele and prosperity. The field includes quite a variety of practitioners with different professional backgrounds. The training of the traditional therapist, like that of the British Art therapist is not yet completely standardised everywhere. Nor is it likely to be for some time yet. What is unique is the recognition that, for those who did not have the exceptional experience of being possessed (in traditional Asante setting), a kind of training and experience was necessary for the practice of therapy. In the West, each practicing art therapist has a personal supervisor and undergoes occasional therapy to sharpen his or her own sensitivities and check his personality development. The traditional therapist, however, is on his own,

once he is qualified. Yet he may still seek extra and more knowledge through association with other healers, or propitiation of the ancestors and gods.

2.32 Cultural and Ethical Factors of Therapist-Client Relationship

Traditional therapists have learned the importance of taking a client's cultural background into account when assessing the problem and determining treatment. Sharf (1993) recognize that in order to provide effective treatment, therapists must be aware of their own cultural biases and become familiar with their client's ethnic and cultural background. Thus, techniques that might be effective for a particular client might be inappropriate for another client, in that whereas some cultures stress the desirability of individualism and independence, there are those that commonly emphasize different values, such as conformity, dependency on others, and obeying one's parents.

Rogers, (1940) the founder of person-centred therapy, believes that the most important qualities in a therapist are being genuine, accepting, and empathic. Almost all therapists today would agree that these qualities are important. Being genuine means that, therapists care for the clients and behaves toward the clients as they really feel. Being accepting means that therapists should appreciate clients for who they are, despite the things that they may have done. Therapists do not have to agree with clients, but they must empathize with them. Empathize in this sense means that a therapist understands clients' feelings and experiences. The therapist then conveys this understanding back to clients.

Mental health professionals agree that the effectiveness of therapy depends to a large extent on the quality of the relationship between the client and therapist. In general,

the better the rapport is between therapist and client, the better the outcome of therapy. If a person does not trust a therapist enough to describe deeply personal problems, the therapist will have trouble helping the person change and improve. For clients, trusting that the therapist can provide help for their problems is essential for making progress.

In helping their clients, all therapists follow a code of ethics. First, all therapy is confidential. Therapists notify others of a client's disclosures only in exceptional cases. Also, therapists are supposed to avoid dual relationships with clients; that is, being friends outside of therapy or maintaining a business relationship. Such relationships may reduce the therapist's objectivity and ability to work with the client. Ethically, therapists also must not engage in sexual relationships with clients, and must not accept as clients people with whom they have been sexually intimate. Sharf (2003) Microsoft ® Encarta ® Encyclopedia 2004.

2.33 A definition of art

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The term **art** is used to describe a particular type of creative production generated by human beings, and the term usually implies some degree of aesthetic value. An artist makes a work of art for various purposes, such as creating an experience for others or as part of a ritual. There is no general agreed-upon definition of art, since defining the boundaries of "art" is subjective, but the impetus for art is often called human creativity. Art has meant different things to different people at different times. The term as we use it today probably derives from the Renaissance words *arti* and *arte*. *Arti* was the

designation for the craft guilds of the 14th, 15th and 16th century to which the artists were closely tied by the traditions of their calling. *Arte*, the word for craftsmanship, implied knowledge of materials used by the artist, such as the chemical nature of his pigments and their interaction with one another, as well as the grounds on which a painter applied those pigments. *Arte* or craftsmanship also implied a skilful handling of those materials in the sense of producing images more or less like those of nature, but certainly not in the sense of imitating the exact appearance of nature. Art in the Renaissance thus served as both a technical and an interpretive record of human experience; it has continued to fulfil this function down to the present time although more meagrely at some times than others. At times, as in the 19th century, emphasis was placed on the technical aspects of art, but, in the hands of the greatest masters, it always remained "interpretive."

Art deals with visual signs to convey ideas, moods, or generalized emotional experiences. It may be called a *language* of visual signs. Unlike the language of words, however, art is not meant to be informative. Information is the province of symbols, as in the words of literature, or the numbers of mathematics. Sometimes in the interpretation of ideas or moods, however, the artist may employ visual symbols, but the meaning of such symbols is embodied in the forms or images which the artist creates just as are the ideas, moods, or experiences he conveys.

There is no general agreed-upon definition of art, since defining the boundaries of "art" is subjective, but the impetus for art is often called human creativity. In order to define art we would have to be able to identify some features or characteristics that would be common to all forms of art whilst at the same time distinguishing it from that which is not art. However, some people believe that it is a mistake to believe that, although certain

art forms overlap and resemble each other at times, this does not mean that they have a common characteristic. In other words it is impossible to define 'Art' in general. This difficulty has generated several theories in an attempt to answer the question what is art?

2.34 What is Art?

This question has occupied artists and theorists for hundreds of years, and it is more hotly debated today than ever before. Whatever the answer is (if any) this question is important to ask as a way of understanding how we can think differently about something we all recognize but have difficulty in defining.

Art is that which is made with the intention of stimulating the human senses as well as the human mind and or spirit. An artwork is normally assessed in quality by the amount of stimulation it brings about. The impact it has on people, the amount of people that can relate to it, the degree of their appreciation, and the effect or influence it has or has had in the past, and all accumulate to the 'degree of art.'

Art is something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses. It is also an expression of an idea and it can take many different forms and serve many different purposes. The term **art** is used to describe a particular type of creative production generated by human beings, and the term usually implies some degree of aesthetic value. An artist makes a work of art for various purposes, such as creating an experience for others or as part of a ritual.

According to the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Plato had two theories of art. One may be found in his dialogue The Republic, and seems to be the theory that Plato himself believed. According to this theory, since art imitates physical things, which in turn

imitate the Forms, art is always a copy of a copy, and leads us even further from truth and toward illusion. For this reason, as well as because of its power to stir the emotions, art is dangerous. Plato's other theory is hinted at in his shorter dialogue *Ion*, and in his exquisitely crafted *Symposium*. According to this theory the artist, perhaps by divine inspiration, makes a better copy of the True than may be found in ordinary experience. It wasn't until late in the nineteenth century that the idea of art as imitation began to fade from western aesthetics, to be replaced by theories about art as expression, art as communication, art as pure form, art as whatever elicits an "aesthetic" response, and a number of other theories.

Art is that which is made with the intention of stimulating the human senses *as well as* the human mind and or spirit. An artwork is normally assessed in quality by the amount of stimulation it brings about. The impact it has on people, the amount of people that can relate to it, the degree of their appreciation, and the effect or influence it has or has had in the past; all accumulate to the 'degree of art.' Most art that are widely considered to be "masterpieces" possess these attributes. Something is not considered 'art' when it stimulates only the senses, or only the mind, or when it has a different primary purpose than doing so.

In this regard, something can be deemed art in totality, or as an element of some object. For example, a painting may be a pure art, while a chair, though designed to be sat in, may include artistic elements. Art that has less functional value or intention may be referred to as fine art, while objects of artistic merit but serve a functional purpose may be referred to as craft. Paradoxically, an object may be characterized by the intentions (or lack thereof) of its creator, regardless of its apparent purpose; a cup (which ostensibly can

be used as a container) may be considered art if intended solely as an ornament, while a painting may be deemed craft if mass-produced. In the 1800s, **art** was primarily concerned with ideas of "Truth" and "Beauty." There was a radical break in the thinking about art in the early 1900s with the arrival of Modernism, and then in the late 1900s with the advent of Postmodernism.

Modernism used art to call attention to art. The limitations that constitute the medium of painting -- the flat surface, the shape of the support, the properties of the pigment were treated by the Old Masters as negative factors that could be acknowledged only implicitly or indirectly. Under Modernism these same limitations came to be regarded as positive factors, and were acknowledged openly.

2.35 Usage of Art

The most common usage of the word "art," which rose to prominence after 1750, is understood to denote skill used to produce an aesthetic result. Britannica Online defines it as "the use of skill and imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, environments, or experiences that can be shared with others." By any of these definitions of the word, artistic works have existed for almost as long as humankind: from early pre-historic art to contemporary art. Many books and journal articles have been written about "**art**". Weaver, (1998) claims that, it is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore.

The first and broadest sense of "art" is the one that has remained closest to the older Latin meaning, which roughly translates to "skill" or "craft," and also from an Indo-European root meaning "arrangement" or "to arrange." In this sense, art is whatever is

described as having undergone a deliberate process of arrangement by an agent. A few examples where this meaning proves very broad include artefact, artificial, artifice, artillery, medical arts, and military arts.

The second and more recent sense of the word "art" is an abbreviation for *creative art* or "fine art." Fine art means that a skill is being used to express the artist's creativity, or to engage the audience's aesthetic sensibilities, or to draw the audience towards consideration of the "finer" things. Often, if the skill is being used in a common or practical way, people will consider it a craft instead of art. Likewise, if the skill is being used in a commercial or industrial way, it will be considered Commercial art instead of art. On the other hand, crafts and design are sometimes considered applied art. Some art followers have argued that the difference between fine art and applied art has more to do with value judgments made about the art than any clear definitional difference.

However, even fine art often has goals beyond pure creativity and self-expression. The purpose of works of art may be to communicate ideas, such as in politically-, spiritually-, or philosophically-motivated art; to create a sense of beauty; to explore the nature of perception; for pleasure; or to generate strong emotions. The purpose may also be seemingly nonexistent. The ultimate derivation of 'fine' in 'fine art' comes from the philosophy of Aristotle, who proposed four *causes* or explanations of a thing. The Final Cause of a thing is the purpose for its existence, and the term 'fine art' is derived from this notion. If the Final Cause of an artwork is simply the artwork itself, "art for art's sake," and not a means to another end, then that artwork could appropriately be called 'fine.' The closely related concept of beauty is classically defined as "that which when seen,

pleases." Pleasure is the final cause of beauty and thus is not a means to another end, but an end in itself.

Art is a term that can be used to describe several things: a study of creative skill, a process of using the creative skill, a product of the creative skill, or the audience's experience with the creative skill. The creative arts ("art" as discipline) are a collection of disciplines ("arts") that produce *artworks* ("art" as objects) that are compelled by a personal drive ("art" as activity) and echo or reflect a message, mood, or symbolism for the viewer to interpret ("art" as experience). Artworks can be defined by purposeful, creative interpretations of limitless concepts or ideas in order to communicate something to another person. Artworks can be explicitly made for this purpose or interpreted based on images or objects.

Art is something that stimulates an individual's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, or ideas through the senses. It is also an expression of an idea and it can take many different forms and serve many different purposes. Although the application of scientific theories to derive a new scientific theory involves skill and results in the "creation" of something new, this represents science only and is not categorized as art.

2.36 Utility of art

One of the defining characteristics of fine art as opposed to applied art is the absence of any clear usefulness or utilitarian value. However, this requirement is sometimes criticized as being class prejudice against labour and utility. Opponents of the view that art cannot be useful, argue that all human activity has some utilitarian function, and the objects claimed to be "non-utilitarian" actually have the function of attempting to

mystify and codify flawed social hierarchies. It is also sometimes argued that even seemingly non-useful art is not useless, but rather that its use is the effect it has on the psyche of the creator or viewer.

Art is also used by art therapists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists as art therapy. Art can also be used as a tool of Personality Test. The end product is not the principal goal in this case; rather a process of healing, through creative acts, is sought. The resultant piece of artwork may also offer insight into the troubles experienced by the subject and may suggest suitable approaches to be used in more conventional forms of psychiatric therapy.

In a social context, art can serve to boost the public's morale. Art is often utilized as a form of propaganda, and thus can be used to subtly influence popular conceptions or mood. In some cases, artworks are appropriated to be used in this manner, without the creator having initially intended the art to be used as propaganda.

From a more anthropological perspective, art is often a way of passing ideas and concepts on to later generations in a (somewhat) universal language. The interpretation of this language is very dependent upon the observer's perspective and context, and it might be argued that the very subjectivity of art demonstrates its importance in providing an arena in which rival ideas might be exchanged and discussed, or to provide a social context in which disparate groups of people might congregate and mingle.

2.37 Judgments of Value

Somewhat in relation to the above, the word *art* is also used to apply judgments of value, as in such expressions like "that meal was a work of art" (the cook is an artist), or "the art of deception," (the highly attained level of skill of the deceiver is praised). It is this use of the word as a measure of high quality and high value that gives the term its flavour of subjectivity.

Making judgments of value requires a basis for criticism. At the simplest level, a way to determine whether the impact of the object on the senses meets the criteria to be considered *art* is whether it is perceived to be attractive or repulsive. Though perception is always coloured by experience, and is necessarily subjective, it is commonly taken that that which is not aesthetically satisfying in some fashion cannot be art. However, "good" art is not always or even regularly aesthetically appealing to a majority of viewers. In other words, an artist's prime motivation need not be the pursuit of the aesthetic. Also, art often depicts terrible images made for social, moral, or thought-provoking reasons. For example, Francisco Goya's painting depicting the Spanish shootings of 3rd of May 1808 is a graphic depiction of a firing squad executing several pleading civilians. Yet at the same time, the horrific imagery demonstrates Goya's keen artistic ability in composition and execution and his fitting social and political outrage. Thus, the debate continues as to what mode of aesthetic satisfaction, if any, is required to define 'art'.

The assumption of new values or the rebellion against accepted notions of what is aesthetically superior need not occur concurrently with a complete abandonment of the pursuit of that which is aesthetically appealing. Indeed, the reverse is often true, that in

the revision of what is popularly conceived of as being aesthetically appealing, allows for a re-invigoration of aesthetic sensibility, and a new appreciation for the standards of art itself. Countless schools have proposed their own ways to define quality, yet they all seem to agree in at least one point: once their aesthetic choices are accepted, the value of the work of art is determined by its capacity to transcend the limits of its chosen medium in order to strike some universal chord, by the rarity of the skill of the artist.

2.38 Communicating Emotion

Art appeals to many of the human emotions. It can arouse aesthetic or moral feelings, and can be understood as a way of communicating these feelings. Artists express something so that their audience is aroused to some extent, but they do not have to do so consciously. Art explores what is commonly termed as the human condition that is essentially what it is to be human. Effective art often brings about some new insight concerning the human condition either singly or en-mass, which is not necessarily always positive, or necessarily widens the boundaries of collective human ability. The degree of skill that the artist has, will affect their ability to trigger an emotional response and thereby provide new insights, the ability to manipulate them at will shows exemplary skill and determination.(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art>)

African art according to Chanda, (2007) does not constitute a single tradition; every great nation has indigenous societies with cultures that have their own languages, religious beliefs and ways of doing things. Each group produces its own distinctive art with variations in materials, intentions, and results. Whereas some groups excel in carving wood, others are known for casting objects in metal.

African art, unlike most modern and contemporary European art, generally serves a function. The art may satisfy an everyday household need, adorn the body, or fulfil a social or religious role. Sarpong, (1975) in this sense asserts that African art, like African myths, is expressive and very eloquent at that; it says something to those who understand its language and have several characteristics. These objects of use also have artistic value because skilled artisans have designed and created them with a strong concern for visual beauty and symbolic meaning. Art objects that serve basic household needs include baskets, water vessels, eating utensils, tools and stools. Ritual objects include masks drums used in ceremonies and statues that commemorate and guard the remains of important ancestors.

Personal adornment may take the form of decorative body scars, jewellery, cloths or staffs and other objects that identify a person's social status. Commenting on Ghanaian art Sarpong claims that it is the examination of such objects as mentioned that reveals the Ghanaian sense of art; and goes on to say that the Ghanaian aesthetic sense is high. Chanda, (2007) further maintains that African art objects rarely serve only one purpose. Chanda explains that a piece of jewellery, for example, may adorn the body, indicate prestige, and at the same time be the focal point of a ritual that protects the wearer from negative forces.

2.39 Art and Rituals

Welsh-Asante, (1993) writing on the topic *Keeper of the Traditions* claims that belief in the supernatural has traditionally played an important role in many African societies. This belief incorporates elements of magic (belief in the mystic potency of

certain persons or objects), animism (belief in the existence of spirits of several kinds), and religion (belief in the existence of gods and goddesses who must be appeased through rituals). Rituals are meant to exert control over the uncertainties of life by harnessing positive forces from ancestors, gods, or other spirits and by limiting negative forces. The performance of these rituals calls for special objects, including masks, headdresses, and statues. Many ritual objects are believed to house powerful spirits or to provide a means of communication with such spirits. Such rituals are very common in the profession of the traditional therapists of Asante as they seek the assistance of the ancestors and gods whose duties are to help the therapists exert control over the uncertainties of life among members of the community.

2.40 Ceremonial and Religious Objects

Chanda, (2007) in exposition on Ceremonial and Religious Objects asserts that most traditional religions focus on controlling the elements that produce and sustain life, such as air, water, and soil, as well as supernatural forces. Individuals seek to achieve this control through contact with ancestor or nature spirits. Chanda, also contends that most African cultures believe that ancestor spirits act as intermediaries between the human community and God, the creator. Art objects, usually wooden or clay figures may be used to make contact with these spirits and guide their powers.

Furthermore, Chanda claims that some ceremonial objects serve more personal ends; and that such objects can take various forms: statues, bowls, stools, masks, or even staffs and knives. By manipulating one or a combination of these objects, the handler may hope to benefit an individual, a group, or a community. The ‘handler’ in Chanda’s

claim no doubt refers to traditional therapy practitioners knowledgeable in the mystical arts such as the traditional therapists of Asante of Ghana.

2.41 Objects for Divination

Another important African religious practice is divination, which is the art of receiving hidden knowledge or insight from supernatural sources. Diviners attempt to uncover problems, determine their cause, and provide solutions, and they may use objects to aid this process. Some African cultures use artistically rendered objects, while others use parts of animals, such as feathers or horns. In western Africa, the Asante of Ghana, the Yoruba people of Nigeria and Benin may use a decorated tray for divination. This round, rectangular, or half-moon-shaped board is carved with geometric and animal motifs. The animal is chosen for its abilities to find something hidden. A dog, for example, is good at sniffing out game and a crocodile can attack swiftly without being seen, so both are good choices. Among the Asante people of Ghana, the divining process begins by covering the board with white clay. The diviner then throws cowries or cola nuts onto the board and interprets the markings and positions they make on its surface.

2.42 Art and Adornment

People in all cultures adorn their bodies in some way, typically with jewelry, hairstyles, or clothing. In Africa people also adorn their bodies with tattoos, scars, and other body art; they may also reshape their earlobes or lips. Adornment can serve as an expression of beauty and also as an indication of a person's title, age, social status, or

membership in an exclusive group. It may also protect against danger or assure health or success in war.

Scarification is the practice of cutting the skin and introducing irritants into the wound to produce a permanent scar. Scarification has a long tradition in many African cultures, and these traditional markings continue to appear on carved statues and pottery figures. Most scars were made on the face, back, chest, or around the navel. Scarification could indicate status or ethnic affiliation, or it could offer protection against harmful spirits. For example, among the Kumawu people of Asante of Ghana, scarification indicates a person's ethnic affiliation. An individual received his or her marks at birth, signifying the individual's exemption from any form of human sacrifice. This, according to Osei (2004), was initiated through a request made by the Paramount chief of Kumawu after he had given himself up to lead the marching warriors of Asante to war. Though he was armed, he was forbidden by Okomfo Anokye to shoot; he was required to sacrifice himself for the victory of Asante over Denkyira. Although human sacrifice is rarely practiced today, scarification among the people of Kumawu has a long tradition that is still rich.

2.43 Art to Denote Prestige and Importance

Many Ghanaian art objects serve to indicate the status of an individual, family, or other group. Objects such as weapons, staffs, and crowns act as symbols of rank, wealth, or position in the community. In addition to kings and chiefs, other personalities of importance in society may announce their position through items such as belts, emblems, and especially staffs. In Asante, spokesmen *Akyeame* carry staffs. The chief spokesman

carries a staff with a decorated knob covered in gold. The knob typically illustrated proverbs connected to the position of a chief. A knob showing two men seated on stools in front of a table, for example, indicates that “food belongs to the rightful owner and not to one who is hungry.” This proverb means that the position of chieftency must pass to the rightful heir, not to someone who thirsts for power.

2.44 Materials, Forms, and Styles

An art object’s appearance depends upon its materials, its form, and the stylistic practices at work in the artist’s culture and time. Each of these aspects of the object may convey symbolic meaning, reflect ideals of beauty, or disclose information about the society. The materials a particular group uses to make art depend to a large degree on the materials available to it. Wood, plant fibres, and clay are abundant in much of the region. Where riverbeds provide good clay deposits, as in Nfensi, pottery and ceramic sculptures are plentiful. Some materials are used not because they are commonly available, but because they possess special properties.

The form and style of an art object depend primarily on the traditions and beliefs of the artist’s culture. This contrasts with European art, in which form and style often reflect the artist’s desire for personal expression or the effort to imitate nature’s appearance. An object of Asante’s indigenous art must first of all perform its function well. Beauty is an attribute that enables it to do so, especially when an object acts as an intermediary between the human world and the world of spirits. Beauty makes an object pleasing to these spirits. The qualities that artists may strive for in order to achieve this

beauty include balance, clarity of form, straightness, exaggeration or distortion, and stylized or symbolic depiction.

Sculptures typically achieve balance through bilateral symmetry, which means that the right half and left half are mirror images. Balance and simplicity of form help convey meaning and aid clarity, and clarity helps the object carry out its purpose. When the hands, feet, head, or other parts of a figure are enlarged, it means that these parts are of particular importance to the society. (Chanda, <http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2007)

2.45 Utilitarian Aspect

As in most simple societies there is no art for the sake of art in Ghana; Art is always expressed in some object of utility' (Sarpong, 1974). Ghanaian art is generally expressed in the form of sculpture; carving, pottery, smiting (i.e. silver, gold and brass work), sandal making, and cloth weaving or dyeing. It is therefore such objects as tools, boats, edifices, especially sacred ones, stools, drums gold weights, cloths, masks and religious articles that reveal the Ghanaian's sense of art. Having said this however, Sarpong does not hesitate to comment on the quality of Ghanaian aesthetic as he writes:

The Ghanaian's aesthetic sense is high. For instance when carving a stool in the form of an elephant he takes care that the elephant is "beautiful". So also when he uses clay to mould a woman he takes care to highlight the characteristics of the woman which are most appreciated.

(Sarpong, 1974 p98)

Asante indigenous art is not art in the European sense of the word art for art's sake. It remained closest to the older Latin meaning, which roughly translates to "skill" or "craft," and also from an Indo-European root meaning "arrangement" or "to arrange." In this sense, Asante indigenous art is whatever is described as having undergone a deliberate process of arrangement by an agent.

Asante artists are more of skilled craftsmen than 'pure' artists. Even though their creation is highly artistic, its value lies in their practical use and application in the daily life of the people. Art to the Asante is an essential part of the daily activities of the community in all its facets. Asante indigenous art takes all kinds of forms because it deals with all aspects of community life.

Diallo, (1996) in a website publication titled "*African Art is not Art*" writes;

Art is an essential part of the daily activities of the community in all its facets; pregnant women use art objects like amulets to ensure the safety of the life they carry; female kids are given dolls both as protection means and role model symbols; boys carry amulets to ensure their potency.

Asante indigenous art is neither produced as a result of an artist's response to a personal urge to release his emotion, nor is it produced to satisfy an artist's ego needs. Rather, the driving force that moves the traditional artist to create is the local community and its socio-physical environment. According to Diallo, (1906) 'African art's primary aim is to serve community needs whether they are spiritual, economic or social'. The arts

serve a function in the traditional ethnic societies to preserve and convey the beliefs and values of these societies.

Quoting the Nigerian writer and film maker, Ola Balogun, Diallo writes that while European artists aim to please, African artists aim to frighten, to make one doubt the evidence of one's senses, to make one believe that what one is seeing has other dimensions, meanings and languages beyond him.

The Asante traditional artist is able to make what he does have a meaning. He "talks" to those who are capable of understanding him. His language is a set of patterns which may be grouped under the following headings: human figures, animal figures, tools and implements, geometrical figures, plants or seeds, and insects. The choice of object for symbolic interpretation may depend upon its own nature or on an historical or mythical event associated with it. Sarpong (1974). For example, when an Asante casts a gold weight in the form of a viper catching a bird, he is expressing good luck. For the viper is confined to the ground, whereas the bird's abode is in the air; it is therefore only an exceptional kind of good luck on the part of the snake which will make a bird become its prey.

2.46 Use of Geometrical Figures

Geometrical figures are employed in the production and decoration of several visual artefacts. Their usage however, depends on the particular aspect of art being made. In the constructions of objects considered to be sacred, the circle symbolises the presence and power of God. 'The circle stands for the life-stream which, as it were, flows continuously'. Sarpong (1974)

The square or rectangle as claimed by Sarpong (1974) is the sign of sanctity in the male aspect of both God and man. It also stands for territorial power and extent of a male ruler. Supporting his claim, Sarpong asserts that on many a regal ceremonial chair among the Asantes, especially, the "*Asipim*" chair, one sees a combination of square and circular figures known as "*Nyame Ntaakyire*", which roughly rendered into English would be "God's spiritual support and protection".

The Asante chief or the traditional priest when he sits in state on the chair therefore solicits continually the help of God. The square appears in the *kente* cloth and the smock of the traditional priest more often than any other symbol. In various combinations with other symbols it depicts such feelings as warmth, welcome and security. The triangle is a female symbol. A queen-mother's pectoral is usually triangular in shape.

Triangularly designed figures are found in their headgear and on their sandals. Such figures depict the charm and attraction of friendship. The triangle is also the symbol of the pride of state. This might explain why the triangle in various combinations with other symbols are equally used to adorn Chiefs, traditional priests and other men of high standing in society to portray their charm and friendliness. (Sarpong 1974).

The broken circle according to Sarpong (1974) is the symbol of fertility. It is used to warn dead people who failed to father children not to return into the world infertile. The oval is one of the commonest motifs in Ghana. It represents beauty, and bears with it a cleansing power. It will be noted that the egg, one of the commonest sacrificial objects, is oval in shape. The oval represents the ideal shape of a female figure. To be considered traditionally beautiful, a Ghanaian human figure should, in all its major shapes, fall into an oval egg. An undulating line represents the stream of life which is characterized by ups and downs. The

straight cross represents the rightful or pious interference of a male parent on earth. (Sarpong 1974).

2.47 Colour

Colour too has a rich symbolism in Ghana. Gold or yellow among the Akan, especially, represents royalty, continuous life, prosperity, warmth, glory, maturity, prime of life, and the presence of God. White represents purity, virtue, virginity, joy and victory, and green, newness, fertility, vitality, and primness in growth. Black symbolizes strength, deep feelings of melancholy, death and their power over life, and old age. Objects dedicated to the dead are usually coloured black. Red is used on occasions of melancholy, death of a relative, wars, national anger or crisis, violence or sudden calamity. Blue is the colour for love and female tenderness. Likened to the serene appearance of the crescent moon in the sky, it is often used to signify the rule of queen mothers. Grey seems to indicate blame, degradation, and shamefulness. The combination of red and yellow colours stands for life and its power over sickness. Green combined with white stands for bountiful harvest.

There is no doubt about the power and influence of art from the impression given above. Art indeed is the pivot upon which life in indigenous African societies rotates. Hamill, (2005), the director of Hamill Gallery of African Art, Boston commenting on the collection states categorically that; ‘I collect African art because of its power, beauty, magic and craftsmanship’. Hamill further writes that the work is “traditional” because it has been made in the same basic style for generations, even centuries; the style of each

piece is determined by its symbolic spiritual significance in the life of the ethnic group; the amazing range of style comprises a complex and varied visual language.

The description is a true picture of the indigenous arts of the Asante as an ethnic group. The visual arts of Asante range from body art (such as body painting); pottery, leather-work, jewellery, textiles and dress, to architecture, utilitarian objects (such as weapons, furniture and implements), musical instruments and sculpture, which are usually figures and masks. Also included are performing arts such as music, dance, drama, oratory and poetry. The basic style of each art form has tasted just a little modification or no change at all. The Asante indigenous arts continue to remain “traditional.” The researcher shares the opinion of Hamill in writing that: ‘it is certainly not necessary to fully understand African art to enjoy it with a sense of wonder and awe’ Sarpong (1974) sharing his impression on the symbolic aspect of African arts states that “African art, like African myths, is expressive, and very eloquent at that. It says something to those who understand its language and has several characteristics”

2.48 Asante Traditional Dance as a Form of Art

In Asante traditional dance, the dancers’ bodies can twist, jump, stretch, and turn. Dance blends these movements together, usually with the rhythm of the drums and other musical instruments. Dance uses space; dancers make patterns across the floor; dancers’ arms and legs make designs as they brush through the air; Dance uses time: Is the dance fast or slow? What rhythm pulses in the music? Dance uses weight: Are the steps light and quick, or heavy and limp? Dance uses energy: Does the dance have fast, choppy movements, or flowing, soft ones? All these elements are very profound in art.

Asante traditional dances are performed for different reasons and in different ways. Some dances can express feelings like sadness, anger, or joy. Other dances can tell a story. Dance may sparkle as an art form, as *adowa* does, and be performed for an audience. *Adowa* dancers train for years to learn to leap and turn across a stage. People may dance as part of an important ceremony, even as part of their religion. Some honour their ancestors through dance. Dances may celebrate important events, such as a birth, graduation, or marriage. In the Asante culture a traditional priest or healer, might use dance to reach a state of trance to perform acts of strength or courage, such as chewing hot coals or for diagnostic purposes for the cure of an illness.

The foregoing very brief and rather sketchy, analysis of Asante indigenous arts has made it clear that a deep and serious study of the art of the Asante will not only be found to be interesting but also useful for a better understanding of the Asante's patterns of thought and behaviour as a whole.

2.49 Theoretical Bases for Art Therapy

The theoretical bases for art therapy have been drawn from such disciplines as psychology, sociology, anthropology, physiology, aesthetics, and education. As a psychotherapy practice, art therapy spans the same theoretical landscapes as psychology, social work, and counselling, and reflects the history and development of psychotherapy in general, including changing understanding and preferences in modern practice.

Art can be used as a tool and process of resolving social and psychological imbalances of human personality. Art is used by art therapists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists as art therapy. Art therapy is a type of psychotherapy using art-making and

creativity to increase emotional well-being. The principal goal in this case is a process of healing, through creative acts. The artwork may also offer insight into the troubles experienced by the subject and may suggest suitable approaches to be used. Wikipedia.© (2006).

According to the American Art Therapy Association,(AATA, 2002) art therapy is based on the belief that the creative process involved in making art is healing and life-enhancing. Through creating and talking about art with an art therapist, one can increase awareness of self, cope with symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences, increase cognitive abilities, and enjoy the life-affirming pleasures of artistic creativity. Art therapists work with children, adolescents, and adults and provide services to individuals, couples, families, groups, and communities.

2.50 What is Art Therapy?

Lark, (2001) defines Art Therapy as a form of psychotherapy that uses art making as a part of the therapeutic process. Like any psychotherapy, the therapist provides the holding frame for the therapy, assesses and helps the client set treatment goals, and offers a reparative therapeutic relationship. In addition, the art therapist provides art materials and specialized training that helps the client engage in and make meaning from art making done in the service of therapy. Internal imagery and external process become visible within an art therapy session.

Essential components of art therapy include selecting and using art materials, creating a visual or tactile image, and contemplating and making meaning of the art encounter and the image itself. These mental processes and physical actions create

opportunities for the client to become aware of anomalies in thinking and feeling, and to create expanded options for viewing, clarifying, and making meaning of their feelings and beliefs and the events in their lives.

Art therapy is based on the conviction that the act of making art is an embodied action that reflects concretely and/or symbolically the client's experience of being, including conflicts the client may not be aware of. How these conflicts are perceived and interpreted by the therapist is a function of the therapist's own theoretical preferences; i.e., psychoanalytic, depth analytic, object relational, social-constructivist, etc. Interpretation in this case refers to the therapist's theory-biased understanding of the phenomenon being observed. Whether the therapist provides an interpretation and/or elicits one from the client is dependent on the therapist's theoretical stance regarding the role of the therapist relative to the client.

The use of art materials and processes as an integral communication within the therapeutic encounter distinguishes art therapy from counselling, psychology, and social work. While other professions might utilize art materials and art tasks in therapy sessions, such use is adjunctive to the primary verbal means of communication. Unless allied mental health professionals have acquired further training in art therapy, they usually are not qualified to use art materials and art processes for on-going intervention. While the art therapist may also utilize a primarily verbal approach in some therapy sessions, the core of art therapy service delivery is the ability of the art therapist to assess and intervene with art materials and appropriate art tasks.

The simple act of making art yields metaphors that can readily be acknowledged by the client. Asking the client to simply describe what decisions she made while making

the art can bring clarity to her behaviours, thoughts, and feelings in other situations as well.

Art taps into our internal images that hold keys to who we are and what we believe. Art makes visible those things that are difficult or painful to see or discuss in words. Art helps the client to "see" more clearly and to feel a sense of living in a body. As a client feels, discovers, thinks and creates, new insights are gained about self, relationships, and life patterns. Art is used as a form of language in art therapy sessions, along with verbal discussion, to help the client reach a fuller self understanding. Making art not only addresses what is wounded, it also supports what is strong, encouraging the individual to live more fully in the moment. It is especially effective for discovering and claiming an authentic sense of being whole, creative, and relational. 'Art Therapy' from *BookRags Student Essays* © (2000-2006) by BookRags, Inc.

2.51 The Function of Art in Therapy

Art making engages mental, physical and emotional reasoning that utilizes brain structures that are quite different, yet interactive with, verbal reasoning. Making art requires flexibility, close observation, perceptual development and spatial reasoning, physical and conceptual manipulation of tools and materials, tolerance for chaos and ambiguity, the ability to sequence material use, and the cognitive and manual skills to create cohesive form. (*Wikipedia*. ©2006).

Lark, (2001) contends that because the central work of art therapy is making art, aesthetic concepts such as balance, direction, or repetition, for example, as well as the technical qualities of the art materials, such as plasticity, resistance, softness and so forth,

can be reframed in psychological terms, drawing on the work of Jungian and Gestalt psychology among others. An artefact, she stresses can be viewed both for its potential symbolic and metaphoric content. Furthermore, Carol, maintains that the process of making the artefact is both concrete and metaphoric; the client's encounter with the art materials and creative process yields immediate behavioural information, which can also be viewed metaphorically by therapist and/or client as being an extension of the client's habitual response to life situations.

2.52 Therapeutic Relationship in Art Therapy

Art therapy takes place within the context of a therapeutic relationship. The art therapist can adopt a role position drawn from the same theoretical bases as counselling, psychology, psychoanalysis, or social work. That role may also be drawn from traditional medicine and shamanic practices, wherein the therapist is a "healer". Thus, the therapeutic relationship may be more or less "figure" in the "ground" of art therapy, to use a Gestalt metaphor.

Art therapy can also be done in groups of two or more people. Group art therapy provides additional interpersonal stimulus and creative impetus. Depending on the goals of the group, emphasis may be placed on the interpersonal dynamics, the acts of art making and/or the sharing and witnessing of the resulting images.

In its formative years in the U.S., from the early 1930 through 1950, art therapy was practiced by fine artists and art educators in medical, psychiatric and educational facilities. These artists, and their medical and educational colleagues, discovered that non-verbal and pre-verbal patients "came alive" as they made art, and that the "language"

of the art; i.e., the symbolic image, could be understood. Art opened windows and doors into the psyche. Suddenly patients could be seen and understood differently by themselves and the staff.

In these early years, psychoanalytic thought was a prevalent grounding theory for art therapists, who tempered it with Jungian concepts about active imagination, dream symbolism, and theories of the archetypal unconscious. Psychoanalytic theory was also a major premise for the interpretation of pictorial and sculptural images. The idea that art could be used to enhance diagnosis encouraged many early practitioners to search for keys that could decode the images. Diagnostic drawing series and protocols were developed that led art therapy onto an increasingly clinical path. (Lark, 2001).

In conclusion, it would not be out of place to state that the relationship between the divergent topics addressed in this chapter is evidently clear for one to accept as a true reflection of the theoretical and empirical foundation of the research; and this leads us to the preceding chapter to discuss the relevant and acceptable methods employed in conducting the research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The chapter gives a brief description of the population area for the research with regards to the geographical location and social setting of the research. This is followed by a discussion of the research design with particular reference to qualitative and quantitative design methods. The various libraries that were used to collate the relevant related literature are given equal attention. There is also a description of the population of the study indicating the target population, accessible population as well as the sample. The chapter further gives a brief description of the various sampling designs used; the instruments for data collection and the data collection procedures used are all addressed. There is also a description of both primary and secondary data and finally the data analysis plan.

3.1 The Sample Area

The Asante traditional society stands tall in terms of documentary evidence. Data related to the Asante of Ghana have been conveniently assembled and adequately documented by social scientists and historians who have worked in the Ghanaian cultural setting. This gives the researcher some indication of reliability and validity to judge the adequacy and the quality of the information available.

The sample area chosen for the research is the Asante of Ghana with Kumasi as its Regional capital. (see plates 1 and 2) The Asante Kingdom was founded at the beginning of 1700 by a confederation of Akan-speaking peoples.

Among the reasons for the choice included the fact that there has been relatively more written material about the Asante by both natives and foreigners as to make for easy verification of statements for future researchers. Again, over the years, Kumasi has come to be identified as the national cultural centre on the basis of the vigour with which it had preserved and propagated the native culture both at home and abroad. Redmond, (2005) giving a vivid description of the Asante of Ghana states that they are renowned artisans especially in cotton weaving, pottery making, wood carving and the manufacture of gold and silver ornaments; this description of the Asante is a true reflection of the people's zeal for hard work and involvement in the field of indigenous art. Their belief in the significance of art in their entire life may also be seen as a propelling factor in their quest for financial independence and life devoid of diseases.

The Asante people retain a strong sense of historical and cultural identity in modern Ghana. The philosophy of the Asante according to Redmond, is that by being born Asante one has been destined to bring into the world all that is best in the human race. This strong belief might be a deciding factor in the way a typical Asante perceives life and as such does everything in his capacity to have a successful life. A vivid description of the Asante is their craftsmanship in cotton weaving, pottery making, wood carving and the manufacture of gold and silver ornaments.

Their belief in the significance of art in their entire life may be seen as a propelling factor in their zeal for hard work and involvement in the field of indigenous art and quest for financial independence and life devoid of diseases. This description of the Asante is a true reflection of the researcher's decision in choosing this ethnic geographical location.

3.2 Research Design

Research methods can be classified in various ways; however one of the most common distinctions is between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomena. Examples of quantitative methods now well accepted in the social sciences include survey methods, laboratory experiments, formal methods (e.g. econometrics) and numerical methods such as mathematical modelling. (Straub, Gefen and Boudreau, 2004).

Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena. Examples of qualitative methods are descriptive research, analytical research, action research, case study research and ethnography. Qualitative data sources include observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts, and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers 2009).

The researcher's motivation for doing qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative research, comes from the observation that, if there is one thing which distinguishes humans from the natural world, it is the ability to talk! Qualitative research methods therefore are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) argue that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified. In psychology qualitative research has come to be defined as research whose findings are not arrived at by statistical or other quantitative procedures.

Qualitative research is often said to be naturalistic. That is, its goal is to understand behaviour in a natural setting. Two other goals attributed to qualitative research are understanding a phenomenon from the perspective of the research participant and understanding the meanings people give to their experience. It attempts to do this by using so-called naturalistic methods - interviewing, observation, participant observation and focus groups. Each of these methods seeks to understand the perspective of the research participant within the context of their everyday life. In this regard, the researcher is concerned with asking broad questions that allow the respondent to answer in their own words. These methods allow the researcher to try to qualify their understanding during the research process through further probing questions. In addition, a method such as observation allows the researcher to observe people within natural settings - particularly those in public places. This results in greater understanding of people's behaviours.

The researcher made use of Descriptive research method as qualitative research design, to compile this text. Descriptive research, sometimes referred to as non-experimental research, studies the relationships among non-manipulated variables. In descriptive research, one studies the events or human behaviour in natural settings, in this sense, events and behaviour within the natural setting of traditional therapists of Asante was put under critical observation for in-depth study.

In this type of research, the researcher selected the relevant variables from the events/conditions that prevailed among Asante traditional priests/priestesses in their therapeutic practices. These included the social setting and culture of Asantes, the traditional therapeutic practice, the institution of traditional priesthood, the traditional therapy practitioner, the cultural role of indigenous arts, and the therapeutic significance

of indigenous arts. Analysis of the relationship between indigenous arts and traditional therapeutic practices of Asante was then made without introducing any manipulations to the variables. The researcher adopted the Descriptive research method because the results of descriptive research provide a platform to make important decisions and also generate more research ideas to be tested by future researchers.

3.3 Library Research

Public institutions whose libraries were used by the researcher include

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi,

University of Ghana, Legon,

Institute of African Studies,

University of Cape Coast.

Centre for National Culture, Kumasi

St Louis College of Education, Kumasi,

Wesley College of Education, Kumasi.

The personal libraries of Dr (Alhaji) S.Y. Peligah and Dr E.C. Nyarkoh were made available to the researcher to augment the library research. These libraries were used extensively to gather the data for the review of related literature.

3.4 Population for the Study

The primary purpose of research is to discover principles that have universal application, but to study a whole population in order to arrive at generalizations would be impracticable if not impossible. A population according to the definition of John W. Best,

(1981, p8) is “any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher.” based on Best’s definition, the researcher’s population was a heterogeneous one involving all traditional priests/priestesses of Asante who are approximately eight hundred (800) of which five hundred (500) are priests and three hundred (300) are priestesses who fall under the two main categories of traditional therapists of Asante namely: (a) *Atano Akomfuo* and (b) *Abrafuo Akomfuo*. Of the five hundred priests, one hundred and fifty (150) belong to the *Atano Akomfuo* category whereas three hundred and fifty (350) belong to the *Abrafuo Akomfuo* category. Also of the three hundred priestesses, two hundred and fifty (250) belong to the *Atano Akomfuo* category whereas fifty (50) belong to the *Abrafuo Akomfuo* category.

A sub-total of four hundred (400) traditional therapists made up of one hundred and fifty (150) men and two hundred and fifty (250) women constitute the *Atano Akomfuo* category. The remaining four hundred traditional therapists comprising three hundred and fifty (350) men and fifty (50) women form the *Abrafuo Akomfuo* category. Therefore, the grand total of eight hundred (800) traditional priests/priestesses of Asante represents the target population.

Since it was impracticable for the researcher to attend to each of the traditional priests/priestesses of Asante within the time frame for the research, the researcher chose two hundred and forty (240) traditional therapists by calculating thirty percent (30%) of the target population. ($30\% \times 800 = 240$) of the two hundred and forty therapists, one hundred and fifty (150) are men whereas ninety (90) are women. Out of the one hundred and fifty priests, forty five (45) belong to the *Atano Akomfuo* category; whereas one hundred and five (105) fall under the *Abrafuo Akomfuo* category. The ninety priestesses

also comprised seventy five (75) *Atano Akomfuo* and fifteen (15) *Abrafuo Akomfuo* respectively. The two hundred and forty priests/priestesses drawn from the target population represents the accessible population.

Out of the accessible population, the researcher selected a sample that is genuinely representative. That is a sample that shares same characteristics as the population from which it was drawn for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the selected sample, the researcher could then make certain inferences for generalization.

Target Population

CATEGORY	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Atano Akomfuo	150	250	400
Abrafuo Akomfuo	350	50	400
GRAND TOTAL	500	300	800

Table 1a shows a breakdown of the number of Traditional priests and priestesses representing the Atano Komfuo and Abrafuo Akomfuo categories of the target population for the research

Accessible Population

CATEGORY	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
Atano Akomfuo	45	75	120
Abrafuo Akomfuo	105	15	120
GRAND TOTAL	150	90	240

Table 1b shows a breakdown of the number of Traditional priests and priestesses representing the Atano Komfuo and Abrafuo Akomfuo categories of the accessible population for the research

Clients

DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
MALE	96
FEMALE	192
TOTAL	288

Table 1c shows a breakdown of the number of males and females representing the sample clientele population.

3.5 Sampling Design

Sampling methods are classified as either probability or non-probability. In probability samples, each member of the population has a known non-zero probability of being selected. Probability methods include random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling. In non-probability sampling, members are selected from the population in some non-random manner. These include convenience sampling, judgment sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. The advantage of probability sampling is that sampling error can be calculated. Sampling error is the degree to which a sample might differ from the population. When inferring to the population, results are reported plus or minus the sampling error. In non-probability sampling, the degree to which the sample differs from the population remains unknown. Sampling methods used in the research include (a) Snowball, (b) Convenience, (c) Judgement (d) Stratified and Random sampling. Each is given a separate attention in the paragraphs bellow.

(a) Snowball sampling also known as chain sampling, chain-referral sampling or referral sampling, formed part of the sampling designs employed by the researcher. Snowball sampling is a special non-probability method used when the desired sample characteristic is rare. It may be extremely difficult or cost prohibitive to locate respondents in these situations. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. This technique dramatically lowers search costs. With the Snowball sampling approach, the researcher initially contacted a few potential respondents (traditional priests/priestesses) who are known to have licence of operation. The researcher then asked them to refer him to other therapists who fit his study

requirements, then followed up with these new traditional therapists who also referred the researcher to other traditional therapists operating within the same catchment area.

(b) The convenience sampling method was also used by the researcher. Convenience sampling is used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. As the name implies, the sample is selected because they are convenient. This non-probability method is often used during preliminary research efforts to get a gross estimate of the results, without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample. Using the convenience sampling approach, the researcher had the opportunity of interacting with some traditional therapists to whom the researcher was introduced. Individuals who patronised the services of these traditional therapists were equally interacted with. By simply stopping anybody at the shrine who was prepared to stop, the researcher then asked these individuals whether they would answer his questions or not. Those who accepted to interact with the researcher were then interviewed. In other words, the sample comprised subjects who were simply available in a convenient way to the researcher.

(c) Additionally, the researcher made use of Judgment sampling. This is a common non-probability method by which the researcher selects the sample based on judgment. This is usually an extension of convenience sampling. Using the Judgment sampling, the researcher decided to draw the entire sample from selected "representative" districts, even though the population includes all districts of Asante of Ghana. When using this method, the researcher was very confident that the chosen sample was truly representative of the entire population. The researcher's preliminary investigation revealed that the Asante Akim district for example has a well organised branch of the Ghana Psychic and

Traditional Healers Association whose membership was a befitting representative of the segment of the population for the study. Moreover, the leadership was also ready to open its doors to the researcher to enable him to interact with the members. Other selected districts include Offinso north and south, Ejura Sekyedumase, Afigya Sekyere, Kumasi, Ejisu Juabeng Adansi east and west. (see Plate 1)

(d) Considering the heterogeneous nature of the population, Stratified sampling was an obvious method to be employed in the research. Stratified sampling is a commonly used probability method that is superior to random sampling because it reduces sampling error. A stratum is a subset of the population that share at least one common characteristic. The strata considered appropriate for this research were the traditional priests and priestesses, and male and female clientele. The researcher first identified the relevant strata and their actual representation in the population. Random sampling was then used to select a sufficient number of subjects from each stratum. "Sufficient" in this context refers to a sample size large enough for one to be reasonably confident that the stratum represents the population. Random sampling is the easiest method of sampling. The value of this method is that each person in the sampling population stands an equal chance of being selected.

Stratified sampling is often used when one or more of the strata in the population have a low incidence relative to the other strata. This sampling is used when one knows that the total number under investigation consists of homogeneous sub-groups. With regards to this research the homogeneous sub-groups were the Atano group, the Abrafuo group and the clients. These three sub-groups constitute the population. Knowing for instance, that there were 300 women in the population of 800,

the researcher could create two sub-groups (one for each sex) for a proportionate random sample to be taken from each; for example of 80, 50 would be taken from the male group, 30 from the female. This would avoid the danger of disproportionate female representation that might occur in purely random sampling.

Random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling. Each member of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected. It involves a lottery method where numbers are 'picked out of a hat'. For example, the names of all the people in the population could be numbered and then a sample chosen by using tables of random numbers. However, it follows from this that random sampling does not ensure that the various types of persons in the population will be represented proportionately.

The final consideration in sampling is the size of the sample to be taken. Obviously most investigators would prefer to use a small sample since much less work is involved. However, a small sample can really be used only where all the subjects in the research are known to have a large number of characteristics in common. In this research for instance, the subjects (the traditional therapists and clientele) are known to have a large number of characteristics in common. However, in general the larger the sample, the more reliable the results are likely to be.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Observation

Most field work involving people or objects, observation and interview are data collection instruments that are often used. Of the two instruments observation is probably the more widely utilized. Some types of research, such as field studies carried out by

students, may rely exclusively on observation. Usually some kind of field book is used for recording notes. One problem with this instrument of research is that human observation is known to be unreliable; one tends to bring his own prejudices and a tendency to select what suits him to every situation; what one sees and what one thinks he sees are often very different. For this reason film and/or a tape-recorder are often used. Another problem which arises with research into people is that human beings tend to behave untypically when they know they are being watched. For this reason some researchers have gone to unusual length to conceal their presence, employing such devices as two-way mirrors and hidden cameras. However, these gadgets can only be used where the researcher controls the environment of the research. In this research, there was no way the researcher could control the environment of the research.

Some types of investigation involve mixing with the subject. This is sometimes called 'action research'. Example of this includes going to work in an institution or an organisation or joining a community or a group to observe the behaviour of people at close hand over a fairly long period. The researcher may ask the people questions but, wherever possible, he tries not to draw attention to himself so that his presence does not cause the subjects to behave in an untypical manner. Indeed some researchers have felt it necessary to disguise themselves changing not only their clothes but their whole demeanour. Naturally, in these circumstances, note-taking tends to be a problem; observations may have to be recorded surreptitiously on scraps of paper! Alternatively a concealed tape-recorder may be used.

Using the observational situations approach, the researcher joined the enthusiastic observers who thronged the premise of Manhyia Palace in Kumasi to partake in the two

separate durbars organised for the traditional priests and priestesses to pay homage to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene. (King of Asante) the traditional priests and priestesses used the occasion to display their professional prowess. They performed amidst drumming and dancing as part of the King's 10th anniversary celebration activities. The enthusiastic spectators with feeling of amazement and respect mixed with fear that is coupled with personal insignificance or powerlessness from a reasonable distance observed steadily the spectacles displayed by the traditional priests and priestesses.

As custodians of the spirituality and 'security' of Asanteman, the spiritual leaders were charged to intercede for the people of Asanteman for God's blessings and that of the gods of Asanteman. The researcher joined the enthusiastic crowd and steadily observed and made notes of every activity that appeared significant to him as the situation seemed appropriate and possible. (See plates 3- 8)

Interviews

Interviewing is a technique that is primarily used to gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations for people's attitudes, preferences or behaviour. Interviews can be undertaken on a personal one-to-one basis or in a group. They can be conducted at work, at home, in the street or some other agreed location.

Advantages of Personal interview

- Serious approach by respondent resulting in accurate information.
- Good response rate.
- Completed and immediate.
- Possible in-depth questions.

- Interviewer in control and can give help if there is a problem.
- Can investigate motives and feelings.
- Can use recording equipment.
- Characteristics of respondent assessed – tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc.

Disadvantages

- Time consuming.
- Respondent bias – tendency to please or impress, create false personal image, or end interview quickly.
- Embarrassment possible if questions are too personal.

Interviews could follow a Semi-structured format or unstructured format. In the Semi-structured format, the interview is focused on asking certain questions but with scope for the respondent to express himself at length. With the unstructured format which is also called an in-depth interview, the interviewer begins by asking a general question. The interviewer then encourages the respondent to talk freely. The subsequent direction of the interview is determined by the respondent's initial reply. The interviewer then probes for elaboration. (see plates 9 and 10)

3.7 Data collection procedures

Naturalistic methods such as unstructured interviewing, general observation, and participant observation were the procedures employed by the researcher to collect the needed data. In order to change or adapt questions to meet the respondent's intelligence, understanding or belief, unstructured interviews were employed because unlike structured interviews, they do not offer a limited, pre-set range of answers for a respondent to

choose, but instead advocate listening to how each individual person responds to the question. For instance the researcher employing the unstructured approach in an interview with Nana Atta Yeboah of Asante Akim received a lot of vital information to enrich the researcher's data base. Nana Atta Yeboah is the former secretary of the Asante Akim branch of Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association,

3.8 Primary and Secondary Data

Primary data

Primary data is data observed or collected directly by a researcher from first hand experience using methods such as interview and questionnaire. Primary data is important for all areas of research because it is unvarnished information about the results of an experiment or observation; it is like eye witness testimony at a trial which is admissible as evidence. No one has tarnished it or spun it by adding their own opinion or bias, so it can form the basis of objective conclusions. The researcher gathered primary data through direct and personal interviews conducted for a considerable number of individuals, and traditional authorities.

The Nsumankwaa Stool House for example is one reliable point of reference where the researcher had the opportunity to interview some traditional authorities with regards to Asante traditional healing and spirituality. One such personality was Nana Domfe, the Nnsumankwaahene (ie Chief physician) of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene; and President of Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association (see plates 11 and 12)

Other prominent men and women who are custodians of the ethnic groups' culture, folklore and customs were also interviewed. (see plate 13)

Others interviewed included traditional priests and priestesses of Asante of Ghana. Some clients who patronised the services of the traditional priests and priestesses were equally interviewed. Besides the interviews, the researcher observed the traditional priests and priestesses as they performed their duties at the healing shrines and in public.

(see plates 14 – 17)

Secondary data

Secondary data may simply be described as documented or published data collected by someone other than the user. A clear benefit of using secondary data is that much of the background work needed has already been carried out. Secondary data generally have a pre-established degree of validity and reliability which need not be re-examined by the researcher who is re-using such data. It is therefore wise to begin any research activity with review of the related secondary data.

Secondary data that provided the baseline with which the collected primary data results were compared to was gathered from documentary sources from Institutions, Libraries, and the Internet. These include The National Commission on Culture, The Centre for National Culture, Kumasi, The Manhyia Palace Museum, Kumasi, Ashanti Library, and the Libraries of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Ghana, Legon, Institute of African Studies, University of Cape Coast, British Council Library, St Louis College of Education, Kumasi, Wesley College of Education, Kumasi and The World Wide Web

3.9 Validation of instruments

The outlines for interview and observation checklist were properly edited first and foremost by the researcher after which it was given to a colleague to cross check every item to ascertain its correctness and validity before finally submitting it to the supervisor for final assessment and approval as an error free material that could be used. This was done to authenticate the outcome of the research by avoiding erroneous results. The instruments were administered by the researcher and supported by two assistants.

3.10 Data Analysis Plan

The entire data were systematically assembled, critically analysed, logically interpreted; acceptable conclusions drawn and relevant recommendations made using Critical or Discourse Analysis. According to Bernd (1992), it is difficult to give a single definition of Critical or Discourse Analysis as a research method. Indeed, rather than providing a particular method, Discourse Analysis can be characterized as a way of approaching and thinking about a problem. In this sense, Discourse Analysis is neither a qualitative nor a quantitative research method, but a manner of questioning the basic assumptions of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Discourse Analysis does not provide a tangible answer to problems based on scientific research, but it enables access to the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind a project or research. Bernd (1992) further asserts that Discourse or Critical Analysis always remains a matter of interpretation. Bernd goes on to say that as there is no hard data provided through discourse analysis, the reliability and the validity of one's research/findings depends on the force and logic of one's arguments.

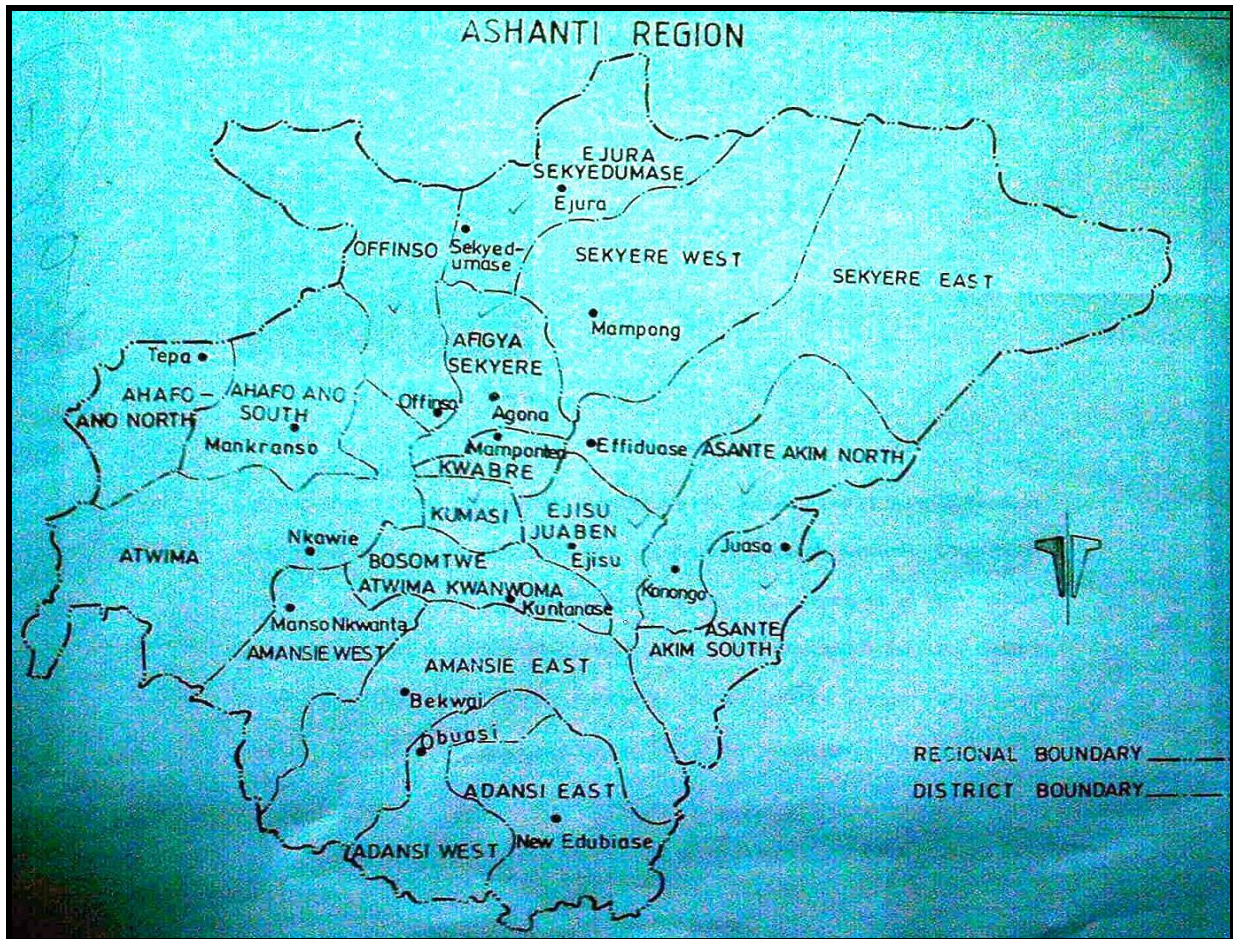


Plate 1: Map of Ashanti Region showing the districts.



Plate 2: Kumasi, the Regional Capital Cityscape.



Plate 3: Traditional priest carrying water in a hat to display his powers.



Plate 4: Traditional priest chewing hot coals of fire to display his powers.



Plate 5: A priestess performing a magical feat to demonstrate her power.



Plate 6: A priestess dancing with a stool stuck at her buttocks with her two attendants behind her as she performs to the amazement of the spectators.



Plate 7: Three strong men pounding tree-barks in a mortar placed on the back of a traditional priest as he performs to the amazement of the spectators.



Plate 8: The researcher in a photograph with two traditional priests after an interview with them at Manhyia, Kumasi.



Plate 9: Researcher waiting to meet Nana Atta Yeboah to conduct an interview at his shrine.



Plate 10: Researcher interacting with Nana Atta Yeboah through unstructured interview.



Plate11: The Nsumankwaa Stool House (The residence of Nana Domfe and Office of the Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association)



Plate 12; The Researcher and assistant in a photograph with Nana Domfe the Chief physician and President of Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association.



Plate 13: Photographs of traditional priests/ priestesses and some prominent men and women who were interviewed by the researcher at Akyekyebiase of Asante Akim district.



Plate 14: Nana Nkrumah and Bosomfuo Frimpong performing divination for a client.



Plate 15: The researcher in a photograph with Nana Nkrumah and Bosomfuo Frimpong in the shrine room.



Plate 16: The researcher in a photograph with Nana Nkrumah and Bosomfuo Frimpong after inspecting the Kune shrine room.



Plate 17: The shrine room of Asuo Subin and Asuo Suntre.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Overview

This chapter gives detail analysis and interpretation of data collated from the researcher's interviews, participant observations and general interactions with the research population within the sample area. The chapter examines and discusses the research questions in line with the research objectives. In addressing the question on the reasons for which people resort to traditional therapy, the chapter examines and discusses five major reasons in addition to pertinent topics such as The Concept of Traditional Therapy, Significance of the Traditional Priestly Profession, The Practice of Traditional Therapy, Routine Shrine Procedure, The Community and Traditional Therapy, The Effect of Belief on Traditional Therapy.

Moreover, to examine and discuss the question on the symbolic significance of indigenous arts to the traditional therapists and clients of Asante, the chapter reviews topics such as Images of the Shrine and the Therapist, Asante Indigenous Arts in Traditional Therapy, The Shrine Ensemble and Symbolic Implications of Indigenous Arts.

Furthermore, the chapter examines and discusses the diagnostic, preventive, curative and protective implications of indigenous arts of Asante in the therapeutic practices. Finally the chapter examines and discusses Asante traditional therapy alongside art therapy to ascertain the applicability of classifying Asante traditional therapy under art therapy. This is done by addressing topics such as the concept of Art Therapy,

Theoretical Bases of Art Therapy, and The Function of Art in Therapy. Others include Therapeutic Relationship in Art Therapy, Authenticity and Acceptability of Asante Traditional Therapy as ‘Art Therapy’

Question1. What are the reasons for which people resort to traditional therapy?

Responses to the question about reasons for visiting the traditional therapist were gathered from a total number of 288 clients interviewed. The responses were divided into five broad categories as follows:

- (1) Gynaecological and venereal diseases (Barrenness, repeated miscarriages, disturbed pregnancies or other complaints described more vaguely as (“womb trouble”). (40% representing 115 women of the 288 clients were in this category)
- (2) Other Physical. – This is self-explanatory, but it should perhaps be added that borderline symptoms one might suspect of being psychosomatic in origin were also included. (5% representing 14 clients of the 288 clients were in this category).
- (3) Mental. – Many of the cases were categorised under this general heading – from acute behaviour – disturbances of a type which may be attributed to organic or functional psychoses. Others were more suggestive of psychoneurosis, though such categorization must necessarily remain speculative. (15% representing 43 clients of the total number of 288 clients were in this category)
- (4) Job, power, love and marriage. – This covered all the specific problems relating to these crucial aspects of life. (20% representing 58 of the total number of 288 clients were in this category.)

- (5) Protection and Ritual. – The former refers to a wish for safeguards against any enemies who might be scheming some supernatural way of doing harm, so that the client would continue to prosper. The latter concerns various types of customary ritual, including the “cleansing” of clients believed to be witches as well as reversal of curses. (20% representing 58 of the total number of 288 clients were in this category).

What could be inferred on the basis of this study is that among the female stratum of the sample a large majority was classified as suffering from the area of Gynaecological and venereal ills. As this is a recent study it will be inferred that patients continue to “see” the traditional therapists with these ills. It could also be inferred that some of these patients might have received unsatisfactory cures from scientific medical service hence their consultation with the traditional therapists. Other fundamental factors that may lead people to resort to traditional therapy are discussed below for clarification.

4.1 The Concept of Traditional Therapy

In the traditional society, therapy is much more than just the art of curing ills; it performs an integrative function as well. The diversity of challenges that are sent to the traditional therapists for redress as gathered by this research support this claim. The various research studies done in this area by social scientists and psychiatrists also substantiate this claim; for example, traditional practitioners perform social analysis in order to restore harmony to the group. The explanations for many ills are believed to be found in some anti-social

behavior on the part of either the victim, or of some persons closely related to him in the family unit.

For example, according to Komfuo Ataa Abena, one of the traditional therapists the researcher interviewed, her diagnosis of one of her female clients whose problem was infertility revealed that the client's misfortune had resulted from a revengeful spiritual attack on her womb by a house- help, as a result of the client's wickedness towards the poor girl. According to the concept of traditional therapy, to cure such ills require the righting of such social wrong. In the Asante society when situations arise in which hostility and conflict threaten the harmony of the group, and when people are stricken with prolonged illness, such disasters may be traced to the theory of supernatural causation; or to a socio-spiritual origin; or it is traced to an ill-will which has wormed its way into the group. This conception plays a significant role in the institution of traditional therapy. The function of social integration is therefore experienced via the traditional therapeutic theory. And this function is one of the social control mechanisms which help to reinforce the spiritual, the mental, the social and the physical growth of the people.

It was realized that practitioners of traditional therapy find it helpful when the patient shares enough of their beliefs and attitudes to make acceptable a professional or logical explanation of disease. Likewise, they find it frustrating when a patient cannot understand or accept their (therapists) explanations or orders because they (explanations) are found to be inconsistent with his (patient) beliefs and attitudes.

The testimony of one respondent may support the point raised above. He said he had not been successful with his search for assistance from the few traditional priests he had encountered. However, he did not hesitate to add that maybe, his unsuccessful experience might be as a result of finding their views and explanations of his problem to be unfounded and inconsistent with his belief and attitudes. This could mean that people who claimed to get or hope to get positive results are those who believe and accept the concept of traditional therapy and as such accept what is explained to them as the cause of their problems without question and follow any instructions given them. This attitude is likely to go a long way to build their confidence and trust in the therapist concerned. Additionally, the researcher supports the view of some of the clients the researcher interacted with that though the therapist's explanation may not seem to be quite coherent, but the fact that they (clients) see the therapists as mouth-piece of the gods and ancestors, they believe. This belief psychologically builds their faith in the therapeutic process; this in one way or the other increases the clients' chances of positive results.

The threat of suffering therefore becomes a powerful psychosocial incentive for moral behaviour; since the cure of suffering is said to be a sign denoting that the gods and the ancestral spirits are pleased once more and that the society is to be restored to moral good health. Giving an account of a case in connection with the threat of suffering, Nana Kwaku Bonsam described a case involving a man who was suffering from swollen feet and was sent to his shrine for treatment. According to Nana Kwaku Bonsam, upon diagnosis it was

discovered that he had stolen some foodstuff from somebody's farm that had been entrusted into the care of a deity and was been punished by the deity. The patient's personal confession of the crime and promise of good behavior gave the family the opportunity to appease the deity for subsequent forgiveness and restoration. To the traditional Asante, the traditional therapeutic theory is satisfying because it provides explanation of what is happening, and the traditional social structures give support in terms of the dependence on the supernatural causation of ill-health and misfortune. It could be deduced from the above discussion that each society develops what appears to it as a reasonable concept in explanation of its therapy and the causes of ill-health; as such successful provision of such an explanatory model would lead to a tolerable result from an appreciable patronage.

4.2 Significance of the Traditional Priestly Profession

It may be relevant to remark that in the traditional society ill-health is a phenomenon with accompanied social, psychological and biological implications in the lives of the inhabitants and take a heavy toll in death and disability. To deal with the burden of recurrent sickness, the society attempts in one way or the other to explain and deal with this fact of life and its destructive effect on humanity. In this sense they build up a system of traditional healthcare with trained traditional therapists.

Three main themes from the data about the traditional system of therapeutic practices are: (1) the social organization of the people from which arises the nature and the degree of mutual dependence of group members, together

with the respect accorded to those who are recognized as possessing the art and the skills of healing; (2) the method of treatment and the measures taken to prevent and to ward off misfortunes and diseases; and (3) the concepts of supernatural world, which provide the inhabitants with some basis for their beliefs. Traditional therapy therefore, has come to be recognised and somehow respected.

The evidence of which is seen in the Kumasi regional branch of the Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association from where all practising traditional therapists are supposed to be registered and given identity cards for their professional practice; and the support offered to the group by central government. The Asantehene's chief physician is the nominal head of this organisation.

The professional theory maintains that diseases and illness may be caused by natural forces, supernatural forces or a combination of natural and supernatural forces. For example, Nana Abass of Medoma, said a client of his was diagnosed of eating contaminated food. However, the poison was put in the food via magical manipulations of nature. Here the combination of natural and supernatural forces causing disease is evident.

There is a common belief that scientific medical practitioners in the government hospitals are only able to cure those diseases caused by natural elements but not those caused by supernatural forces. This is the realm of the traditional therapist. For example, at one of the shines the researcher visited at Offinso, there was a case of a woman who had suffered from a strange stomach disease that had troubled her for more than three years, the family had moved from one hospital to another with the aim of seeking treatment for her but all to no avail. She was later admitted at one of the regional

hospitals. After medical Doctors had done all they could for more than a year without success, the medical team advised the family to send the woman somewhere else since they thought they were not making any meaningful headway. The family then decided to resort to traditional therapy because they thought it appeared to be more of a spiritual or supernatural problem than physical or natural.

This recognition of the significance attached to the professional responsibility of the traditional priests/priestesses in the entire lives of the people have gone a long way to enhance and heighten the level of confidence among the adherent clients to resort to traditional therapy.

4.3 The Practice of Traditional Therapy

With reference to a traditional situation in which the only available institutionalized therapeutic technology is in the hands of the traditional priest the reliance upon the supernatural theories of disease, and its identification of magico-religious prescriptions will not be adequately treated without giving a brief discussion of the main types of deities with whom associated practitioners are involved in the magico-religious practices. According to Nana Domfe, the Chief physician and President of Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association, the two main types of deities among the Asantes are (a) those housed in “brass pan shrines” that represent river deities and (b) those that represent witch catching deities. The Asante shrines can be seen as reflections of social and political realities.

River deities

The river deities are referred to as ‘*Asu bosom*’ ‘*Suman fufuo*’ or ‘*Atano*.’ Examples are Tano Odomankoma, Tano Abenamu, Subunu, Fofie, Tano, Mmee, to mention but a few. Priests/priestesses who serve the Atano deities are known as Atano Akomfuo. The (Atano), ‘‘brass pan shrines’’ is usually exposed in public (See plates 18 – 23).

It is worth stating that priestesses serving the Atano deities are not supposed to carry the *Atanosuman* (Atano shrine) like their men counterparts. An Atano priestess may carry a mortar during public performance. The mortar which is a wood carving is used to prepare a local meal called *fufuo*, the rich delicacy of the Asante of Ghana. The mortar is carried in public to signify the symbolic caring and motherly nature of the Atano deity. The Atano deities are therefore compared to a caring mother *obaatan*. The mortar is here seen as a symbol of life and vitality provided by a caring mother. (see plate 23)

According to Kyinaman Komfuo, (see plate 24) a renowned priest of Kyinamanso near Nobesu and his outfit; Atano also known as (suman fufuo) have great antiquity; older Atano shrines often have smaller shrines as sons (and, rarely, daughters) housed together with the parent gods in the same room. These are general tutelary deities whose functions are very broad; prophetic, preventive, protective, providing, healing, martial and politico-judicial (social control). The Atano stress all but the last function.

The researcher also discovered that family and social nature of deities is supplemented by a political dimension in the case of some powerful Atano shrines. These deities have the full regalia and trappings of chiefs and their courts. Such shrines

are usually linked to real chiefs, who visit them and/or provide for periodic sacrifices. Examples are Atano shrines connected with the Asantehene. Such shrines' equipment include linguist staffs, state swords, and flywhisks, gongs, *asipim chairs*, umbrellas, sometimes cast brass lamps, kuduo, spoons and other brass or pottery vessels in which ceremonial meals are prepared and eaten.

Of all the old shrines of Asante, the ten shrines that were registered under the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board belong to the Atano category. These are:

1. Saamang shrine
2. Dwenase shrine
3. Darkwa-Jachie shrine
4. Asawase shrine
5. Besease shrine
6. Abirim shrine
7. Kentenkrono shrine
8. Bonsam shrine of Patakro
9. Bodwease shrine
10. Asenemaso shrine

It is worth stating that Okomfuo Nyasu the priestess serving the Tano Abenamu Subunu deity of the Abirim shrine is the only surviving priestess; the rest are all dead. Surprisingly, all the nine deities have neither 'picked' a priest nor priestess to take over the affairs of the shrines.

Witch-catching deities

This category includes those that are often represented by symbolic materials contained in leather covered wooden bowls. These witch catching deities are referred to as “*Abosommerafuo*”. (*abosom* = deities, *abrafo* = executioners) (see plates 25 - 28)

Examples are Tigare, Kwaku Firi, Kune, Atia Mframa etc. The *Abosommerafuo* are not usually brought to the public domain. However, during festivals celebrated in their honour, they may be exposed to the public. Traditional priests who serve the *Abosommerafuo* are known as *Akomfo brafuo*.

The witch-catching shrines according to the informants can be started by anybody, and most of them are brought from various parts of Northern Ghana, as evidenced in their artefacts (smock, clubs, and leather goods). (see plates 29a and 29b). The *Abosommerafuo* like the *Atano* have several functions that they perform. These include protection, providing healing and especially, social control.

A “family” or entourage of these deities, sometimes personified by wooden figures (see plates 30 and 31). This according to *Bosomfuo Takyi*, may live together to symbolise unity and interdependence that is needed by both nuclear and extended families.

From the above discussion under the practice of traditional therapy, there is no doubt that people who find themselves under traditional situations in which the only available institutionalized therapeutic technology is in the hands of the traditional priest are bound to resort to what is available to them; and since such

people are familiar with the traditional therapeutic practices, they seem to be very comfortable with its magico-religious prescriptions.

4.4 Routine Shrine Procedure

There are private, public and state cults, with a great variety of shrines. Private cults as the name imply are privately owned by individuals who use them to satisfy their personal spirituality and spiritual growth. It may not necessarily be known by the general public. Even if it is known, it may not be open to the general public for patronage. Public cults may either be owned by individuals or group of people but such cults are usually open to the general public. These have professional staff who provide services to their patrons. A state cult is owned by a state and has a priest who takes care of it. The priest offers sacrifices to the state deity on behalf of the entire community. It must be put on record that rarely are two shrines similar, for each grows individually according to what the deities themselves dictate in details of ritual and priestly technique, and what the priests and supplicants build or bring. For example one of the deities at Kyinamanso unlike the other deities does not accept eggs for consultation; instead he accepts day old chicks. Cults increase or decrease in popularity with the fortunes of their priests and the efficacy of their gods. Shrines that do not produce the desired results loose their patrons, and others fall into disuse when important officials die and no one takes their place.

The following therefore is an account of a typical procedure at one of the therapeutic shrines. Women at the shrine are employed to look after the domestic duties. They look after the daily activities such as cooking for the traditional therapist and personnel, washing and keeping the place tidy. They are not specifically concerned with

the professional activities at the shrine. They are carefully instructed on the taboos and all the avoidances observed at the shrine by the professionals and the trainees. This adds very considerably to the women's ordinary housework. Because of the difficulty involved in remembering all these "avoidances", they are made to wear a special little bracelet on their left wrist called *nkae* which means remembrance to help remind them of the numerous "avoidances". Such as not entering the shrine room during menstrual periods, avoiding contact with the meals of the priests etc.

After dark on the evening before a shrine working day, of which there are three every week (Sunday, Wednesday and Friday), the drums will beat to remind the entire village or the community to prepare for the healing day. This means that the shrine officials are to eschew sexual intercourse till after the day of healing. Soon after dawn the next morning the drums are beaten again and women members in the compound start to sing, and to beat their rattles.

About nine in the morning of the healing day, the drums are beaten again to summon all the officials. The elders, spokesmen, drummers, singers and the wives of the officials assemble in the big compound. Clients coming in are offered seats by the assistants who then go on to enquire about the reason for their call. This gives each visitor a clear chance to say the purpose of his visit and what he requires. The visitor's details are then recorded in the visitors' book along with their complaint and date of call. From outside one could hear the sounds of tingling silver bells coming from the shrine room. After a few minutes of mounting expectancy suddenly out dart the attendants, two spokesmen, and lastly the possessed and quivering priest.

He holds out his hands to receive an egg. This he flings onto the flat top of the shrine. If it breaks unpropitiously (with the concavities of the shell fragments downwards) he looks worried because that meant the offer had been rejected by the deity; if satisfactorily, he looks pleased and bows in reverent gratification over the act. Then he stoops while entering the low door of the sanctuary. The therapist meanwhile, gets ready for the day's work inside the shrine room. The work involves: healing, sustaining, reconciling and guiding. (See Chapter One) The practitioner is familiar with the cultural tradition, the fear, and the wishes of his clientele, so he utilizes such knowledge in his curative practices, in a form of psychotherapy as he tries to explain and deal with the demands of his patrons in his role as a mediator between the society and the unseen spirits.

(1) The healing function of the therapist involves helping someone overcome impairment and move towards wholeness. This assistance may involve physical as well as spiritual healing, but the focus is always the total person. For example, a baby boy who was attacked by convulsion was sent to Nana Yeboah. After washing the baby with some concoction and squeezing the juice of a herb into the boy's nostrils he immediately recovered from the convulsion attack.

(2) The sustaining function is to help a hurting person endure and transcend a circumstance in which restoration or recuperation is either impossible or improbable. According to Babaso Komfuo of Ejura, when a person loses a married partner, especially through witchcraft, the widow or widower finds it very difficult to forgive the family involved in the witchcraft attack. Such a person is given an object usually an artefact

which is believed to provide the needed security. Additionally, such people are taken through adequate counselling sessions to prepare them for meaningful life.

(3) The reconciling function refers to efforts to re-establish broken relationships. Sharing her views on the reconciling function Komfuo Yaa Bee of Asaaman explained that Asantes have two main categories of relationships, these are: (a) relationships between a human person and a fellow human person and (b) relationships between a human person and a spiritual being. According to Komfuo Yaa Bee, it is their social responsibility to re-establish any broken relationship between parties involved in any of the two categories. For instance in a case involving two people, both parties are encouraged to accept each other and live in peace after the offender has been encouraged to apologise to the other. Usually a bottle of rum is provided by the one who is pronounced guilty. This is shared by all present to serve as witnesses to the peaceful reconciliation. In the case between a man and a spiritual being such as a deity or ancestral spirit, there is usually a ritual involving a sheep, fowl or eggs depending on the seriousness of the case to pacify the said spirit being.

(4) The guiding function refers to helping a person make wise choices and thereby grow in social and spiritual maturity.

4.5 The Community and Traditional Therapy

There are several ways in which the community may receive assistance. As maintained by the traditional therapists; people may appeal directly to the ancestral spirits, or to their god, or better still they may travel to the shrine to ‘see’ the therapist. Abugri (2007) in a newspaper article described the traditional

therapist as a consultant physician and soothsayer who had a roaring business going. According to Abugri, many relied upon the traditional therapist to diagnose and prescribe remedies and therapeutic interventions for all physical, emotional and psychological ills. The nature of their quandary may influence the decision. These challenging situations may be physical, emotional, psychological, social, financial, material, or spiritual in nature as described by Abugri. It was discovered that all manner of people with diverse intentions visit the shrine to seek assistance from the therapist as documented in this chapter from the responses gathered from the clientele of the traditional therapists.

The people who patronize the shrines are not only from within Asante of Ghana, but from other parts of the country; there are a portion of the people who avail themselves for the deity's protection. These include healthy people who require protection from evil spirits. Financially successful men who believe envious kinsmen could, by means of witchcraft, bring about their ruin. On the other hand unsuccessful men are of the conviction that envious malice is the cause of their failure and so seek the therapist's assistance to better their course. There are also the unhealthy who report at the shrine for treatment; the rest comprise a portion of the patrons who have very private and confidential intentions of visiting the shrine. Thus a strikingly 'paranoid' attitude is normal among the pilgrims or patients.

The typical pilgrimage is made to the shrine to ask the deity, through the therapist for various forms of assistance, blessings and protection. A year's protection usually covers the protection of the person, business, marriage, children

and possessions; and promise is made, offering a sheep and a bottle of rum at the end of the year. The deity's protection and blessing is granted conditionally on the supplicant's keeping of the deity's prescribed rules including that of the society such as ethical conduct. He must not steal; commit adultery, bear false witness, nor curse another person. If he breaks any of these rules, the deity may punish him with sickness and/or death.

4.6 The Effect of Belief on Traditional Therapy

Beliefs are integral parts of the cultural life of a people and can therefore be understood only in their own total social context. What in effect is being said is that any point in time, what a given society believes in has a sound logic of its own. When one accepts the basic premise of their thought system, what flows from it is consistent with their world view. For example, the Asante as a society believes that the gods and ancestors are integral part of the family set up. It is upon the basis of this basic thought system that the act of libation, which is consistent with their world view flows as an acceptable act of veneration. In addition, the belief system provides explanation for coincidence and disaster. For example in the traditional society a woman in labour who is finding it very difficult to deliver would be interrogated to testify if she has ever had extra-marital affair with another man besides her husband; because such abomination could result in delivery problems. The point is that the society has used its belief system to explain the difficulty in delivery as marital unfaithfulness instead of considering it to be a mere coincidence.

As noted earlier, the practitioner has a stock of remedies with which to treat ills. However, most treatments are regarded as aspects of a total treatment, which include magico-religious ingredients. The distinction between physical cures and magico-religious (supernatural) cure is not usually made at the shrine. The Asante indigenous society relies upon the supernatural theories of disease, and its identification of magico-religious prescriptions is quite in keeping with their world view. One could conclude at this juncture that there are indeed several reasons that might lead the indigenous Asante to resort to traditional therapy as indicated by this study. Some of the reasons are religious and socio-cultural based whereas others are by personal inclination.

Question2. What are the symbolic significance of Asante indigenous arts to the Asante traditional therapists and clients?

In response to the above question, the following topics are discussed in the light of data gathered through observation and interviews.

4.7 Images of the Shrine and the Therapist

The image of the shrine and its numinous effect as a spiritual fortress and refuge against evil is not so much in its physical appearance as in the mental and psychological imagery and symbolism it carries. That is secondary and only takes its numinosity after the patient's experience of the encounter with the therapist in the setting of the shrine. Shrines are thought of as the temporary abodes of the spirits and deities. They are usually associated with sacred places or sites, such as forests, fields, cross-roads, river sources and banks, hills and mountains, rocks, trees, graveyards, marketplaces and the outskirts

of human habitats. Shrines possess sanctity by virtue of being the abode of the spirits and the gods, and they may belong to individuals, special groups or whole tribes.

The shrine of a therapist 'possessed' by a river spirit may usually be kept in a brass pan or earthenware pot *kukuo* specially prepared for the purpose following possession. In view of this variety of physical appearance and images, it is clear that the image of the 'shrine' in the life of the traditional therapist and his client lies in some physical objects other than the said river. Basically, it is a sacred space, whose attraction is the numinous effect reposed in the 'spiritual acclaim' or effectiveness in providing the people's need for security. It is the image of the 'centre' for social control, protection against and exposure of evil and its agents through supernatural means, of repulsing and exposing witches.

The research revealed that the particular sacred object such as a brass pan, may not house the 'spirit' or god as such. It is the 'image' or 'symbol'. But the 'shrine house' or building where the healer lives and works, together with his family and or assistants, constitutes the 'sacred space' or protective boundary where its patient seeks security. Although shrines may employ some items and images of symbolic significance such as the iron staff in the centre of a four-part circle, bow and arrows, clubs, knives stuck unto a smock or a sword stuck on the seat of a stool, carved images of spirits and gods; yet according to Rattray, not all shrines or gods employ such paraphernalia. Moreover, under the influences of modernity, the traditional therapist's shrine and setup is fast adapting to the looks of contemporary health clinics. But, all taboos concerning abstention from sexual relations at least twenty-four hours prior to a healing session, and the exclusion of menstruating women from the shrine premises, are still kept.

The shrine and its immediate environment together with its usual inhabitants and their routine activities constitute the healing location and context. It is the confluence between the seen and the unseen worlds, into which the therapist is ushered when he goes into trance or possession to heal. Possession may be seen as a dramatisation of causality through which the therapist, as an agent of spirit familiar, engages the individual or group's faith and brings into full play the cultural beliefs about aetiology of disease and its cure. The spirits familiar in this threshold world are the ancestor spirits and sub deities.

Indeed both the spirits, the gods and the therapist, are addressed by the generic term *Nana* (singular. Ancient One) or in the plural *Nananom* (Ancient Ones) In everyday life, it is also applied to The Chief, and to paternal and maternal grandparents of either sex, as also to other elderly people as a mark of respect and honour, but with varying degrees of imagery and weight.

The therapist is seemingly "ageless" and "formless" in essence. He could be as old as eighty years or more, and as young as eight. (see plate 41) Regardless though, he is still *Nana*, the very image of the ancient ancestors and spirits whose knowledge and authority the patient accepts unquestionably. For this reason, the word *Nana* when addressed to the therapist is almost always said in a reverential tone. Nor does the patient speak to him directly. His words must be transmitted through and translated by the assistant. It is similar to the procedure before the chief, who speaks through and is spoken to through his linguist. And it is not unusual for the linguist and also the therapist's assistant, to re-embellish his master's words in more picturesque or dramatic form and style. Both the traditional therapist and his patients, due to their shared traditions and values, have implicit faith and

trust in the ancestors and in the messages they send through dreams from the ancestral world.

4.8 Asante Indigenous Arts in Traditional Therapy

The people of Italian Renaissance according to Ocvirk et al (1960), quoting (Machiavelli), made art the measure of all things, and their lives were motivated by its enjoyment. Accomplishment in other fields were measured by their “artfulness,” even to the extent that war itself to them became a work of art.

The Asante as an ethnic group like the people of Italian Renaissance are people who are very artistically inclined and have enjoyed unusual interest in art forms in every facet of their life. Local artisans produce exquisite leatherwork, sculpture, pottery, jewellery, metalwork, and fashion design and a wide range of decorative brassware to be utilized at the shrines. Local weavers make textiles, raffia skirts and a range of cloths. Others include decorative arts to furnish or embellish the spaces within the shrine, or adorn bodies of therapists, officials and patrons. Each of these media exists to fulfil a specific need and therefore has its own province of expression. The themes depicted are usually of religious origin, and of greatest interest to the people. (see plates 32 – 40)

In the profession of the traditional priest/priestess of Asante, the artistic media which are most frequently used are music, dance, plastic arts and other visual works that combine materials or forms. These products of creativity are human activity in which materials are shaped or selected to convey ideas, emotions, or visually interesting forms. The performing arts feature priests/priestesses, dancing enthusiastically to drumming and singing. (See plate 41) Traditional music is also performed in honour of great men and women of traditional priesthood in Asante history.

Sculpture, a broad category of Asante indigenous art are made using a wide variety of materials and techniques by modelling a soft material such as clay or wax; by carving or chiselling hard materials, such as wood or stone and casting metal; or by assembling different sorts of materials. The sculptures comprise objects attached to a background and called relief sculpture or three-dimensional, whether freestanding (without other structures for support)

The best-known indigenous Asante sculptures are the small abstract, disk-headed figures known as *Akuaba*. This name comes from the legend of a woman named Akua who was distraught at being barren, for Akan women desire above all to have children. She took her problem to a traditional priest, who instructed her to commission a small wooden child *dua ba* from a carver and to carry the surrogate child at her back as if it were real. Akua was instructed to care for the figures as she would to a living baby, even to give it gifts of beads and other trinkets. She did these things, but after a while she was laughed at by her fellow villagers for her foolishness. “Akua, is that your child? Oh, look at Akua’s child, they teased. With time the wooden figure became known as *Akuaba* (Akua’s child). Eventually, however, she conceived and gave birth to a beautiful daughter, and this measure was later adopted to cure infertility.

“*Akuaba*” figures, consecrated by priests who invoke the influence of their deity to induce pregnancy are now widely used. Some shrines’ “*Akuamma*” (plural of “*Akuaba*”) receive their own names and are accorded special powers which may or may not have to do with childbirth. Others are fitted out as priestesses and may become general symbols of tutelary deities. (see plates 43 and 44).

Some figures are carried by women wishing to conceive, while others are specially prepared by priests for women already pregnant, to ensure safe delivery and an attractive child. Not all childless women, however, carry an Akuaba. According to Okomfo Sakyiwaa of Asante Akyem, a woman who is sincerely looking for a child is diagnosed to determine if she is capable of giving birth. When found to be fertile the woman is given an akuaba to be taken home and keeps it with her when making love with her husband. The woman is instructed to return the akuaba as soon as she becomes pregnant. Akuaba are meant to be beautiful images, parts of whose job is to ensure, by familiarity and imitation, the physical attractiveness of the child when born.

Komfuo Sakyiwaa further declared that sometimes, a woman will be asked to bring a piece of calico before the deity, a terracotta image in one shrine, believed to have extraordinary fertility-inducing abilities. The woman desirous of a child is asked to carry this clay figure for some minutes with a piece of calico. The piece of calico is then consecrated to promote conception. This in effect shows the extent to which the indigenous arts are utilized in the profession of the Asante traditional therapist to ascertain the efficacy of the supernatural powers that is enshrined in the traditional arts.

4.9 The Shrine Ensemble

Shrines are specially housed accumulation of sacred materials which often include indigenous artefacts that accrue over a considerable period of time and sometimes become quite elaborate. The materials are arranged around its main focus-the symbol of the deity; a collection of sacrificial offerings and other substances. (See plates 46- 50) The shrine is placed on a stool with a small pot

standing close to the shrine and accompanied akuaba dolls, club, spear and a smock all found in the room.

This centerpiece houses the deity and it's carried by the priest when he is possessed by his god or it is carried to induce possession of the god. Shrine materials such as swords, figures, stools, containers and other objects are carefully arranged. This according to many of the therapists is a conscious display of the power of the god by showing its material wealth along with its symbols of spiritual strength. Shrine art as noted by one female therapist Nana Nyarko is symbolic; she contends that figures may occasionally be addressed as if they are deities, but in most instances these images are revered as representations and aids to worship and to perform priestly functions.

The priest of one witch-catching shrine gives prominence to several sacrificially-encrusted wooden figures of varying sizes. Each one is named, and possesses specific powers; the “big man” and judge, the daughter who helps with fertility, the policeman who guards the shrine, the executioner and so forth. Most shrine figures are supplied by the priests. Some priests claimed to have found plastic art pieces in the forest or caught one coming out of the sky. “In actual fact a number come from Kumasi; many others are produced in the Bono area; the religious carving is done in secret by local craftsmen.” one priest revealed.

4.10 Symbolic Implications of Indigenous Arts

Upon closer examination, the researcher realized that, symbolically, the production and decoration of visual artefacts depend on the particular aspect of art being

made and the purpose for which it is made. So in the constructions of art forms considered to be sacred, spirituality symbolisms take precedence. The circle for example, which symbolises the presence and power of God and the life-stream which, as it were, flows continuously, is used in most religious or sacred art. (See Chapter Two).

The square or rectangle is the symbol of sanctity in the male aspect of both God and man. It also symbolises territorial power and extent of a male ruler. On many a regal ceremonial chair among the Asantes, especially, the "Asipim" chair, one sees a combination of square and circular figures known as "*Nyame Ntaakyire*", which roughly rendered into English would be "God's spiritual support and protection". The traditional priest when he sits in state on the chair therefore solicits continually the help of God. The square appears in the cloth and the smock of the traditional priest more often than any other symbol. In various combinations with other symbols it depicts such feelings as warmth, welcome and security. (see Plate 51)

The triangle is a female symbol. A queen-mother's pectoral is usually triangular in shape. Triangularly designed figures are found in their headgear and on their sandals. Such figures depict the charm and attraction of friendship. The triangle is also the symbol of the pride of state. This might explain why the triangle in various combinations with other symbols are equally used to adorn Chiefs, traditional priests and other men of high standing in society to portray their charm and friendliness. (See Plate 52)

The circle symbolises the life-stream which, as it were, flows continuously. Ironically the broken circle is the symbol of fertility. The explanation however, is that the circle must first and foremost be broken to induce fertilization which is the root of the life-stream that is expected to flow continuously. The message being put across in this language of symbolism is that, man must first break the circle of life to introduce a new life into the

society before he breaks the circle to stop the life-stream from flowing; or better still before he dies.

The oval is one of the commonest motifs in Ghana. It symbolises beauty, and bears with it a cleansing power. It will be noted that the egg, one of the commonest sacrificial objects, is oval in shape. It is again worth noting that the handle of the flywhisk used by traditional priest/priestesses is usually oval in shape. The oval, as a result of its cleansing power, feature greatly in the design and production of amulets, talismans and general shrine equipment as well as general paraphernalia. The oval symbolises the ideal shape of a female figure. To be considered traditionally beautiful, a Ghanaian human figure should, in all its major shapes, fall into an oval egg. (Sarpong, 1997) An undulating line symbolises the stream of life which is characterized by ups and downs. This proverbial symbolism reminds the populace that life on earth is not always smooth and straight forward. One is bound to meet variety of challenging moments. The straight cross symbolises the rightful or pious interference of a male parent on earth. This indeed is a symbolism of parental guidance, parental control and leadership, parental discipline, love and care for the young ones in the community. In other words it is a symbol of adult responsibility in the home and society at large. In effect when the traditional priest is clad in any costume with the straight cross motif, he would be reminded of his leadership obligatory role as a model of society.

Asante traditional visual art forms, employed in the institution of traditional priesthood, may be considered as institutionalized art forms, ritual art forms and decorative art forms. The institutionalized and ritual art forms may first and foremost be perceived as icons. For example, drums, stools, smocks, swords, raffia skirts, sculptures, paintings, talismans, beads, cowries. (to mention but a few). These and several others are

used and seen in the general setup of shrines; and as part of traditional priesthood regalia and insignia.

The drum for example is a symbol of communication; it symbolises the voice of the people in the therapeutic interactions between the people and associated spirits or deities. There are two main sets of *akom* musical instruments. Set (a) comprises *Mpintin*, *Dondo*, *Dawuro*, *Ntrowa* and *Brekete*; with the *Brekete* as the lead drum. Set (b) comprises *Atumpan*, *Apentema*, *Adedema Apenten*, *Dawuro*, *Ntrowa*, with the *Atumpan* as the lead drum. *Atumpan* and drums are in most cases used to sound the appellations of the gods and spirits to induce possession. These drums are sometimes appeased with eggs and white clay (kaolin) The *Apenten* is carved with the *Tweneboa* tree which is believed to be a deity.

An icon in this context is the visual representation of an idea, often using a recognizable figure although it can be more abstract or geometric. Some of these icons are culturally or institutionally specific; some are specific to context. The raffia skirt is institutionally specific; whiles the swards are culturally specific. However, sculptures may be specific to context. An icon is a sign of something else, a clue or a shorthand notation for getting somewhere else mentally, and other people will make the same connections as you. The connection a person has to an icon is not limited to one person; if it were, it would be a personal memory or association, for example a knife stuck in the mouth of a traditional priest in public (see Plate 53). This gives onlookers the idea that he must not be engaged in any verbal interaction. Or better still it is a symbolic caution to the traditional priest to avoid undue distractions from his call to duty. It may also reveal the type of traditional priest he is. The fact here is that a simple expression using a

recognizable image (knife) has been able to generate all the ideas described above. However, when one sees a knife in real life, though, one recognizes it as a knife. But that's the point; a thing itself, or a precise representation of a particular thing is not an icon.

Icons often represent something else, but not every representation is an icon. A representation in this context is an image of something that has already been seen, something which exists before the object was made: the object and what it represents are not identical although they look alike. For instance, in sympathetic magic, a symbolic action such as tying a cord tightly around the neck of a figurine affects an object with which the symbol is in “sympathy” or harmony. To explain the point, the person to whom the symbolic action is in harmony already exist before the creation of the image (figurine) that physically received the impact of the action. The living person and the image are not identical although they may look alike. For example, if the person is a man who wears a beard, the image may be made wearing a beard for the two to look alike. The image (art) in this regard is a representation in that the man is a known person before the creation of the figurine.

The arts may also serve as tools and process of operation by traditional priests/priestesses. Herbert and Doran (1977) claim the indigenous arts “are aids to worship”. As a tool, art forms in unique variety give a reflective insight into the supernatural world in relation to the therapeutic interaction between the spiritual forces, the therapist and client. For instance, a traditional therapist asked a sexually impotent young man to place his hand onto the head of a sculptural figure while the therapist addressed the figure in accordance with the client’s predicament, the client

instantaneously assumed the figure as a symbol of potency and restoration. This psychologically increased his chances of getting positive result. In this circumstance the visual art; (sculpture) has served as a tool to heighten the belief of the client in both priest and the particular deity; and at the same time helped the therapist to achieve a successful operation. The sculpture and the spirit from the other world become one; the young man's problem is activated in the physical form of a sculpture and becomes one with it. In other words the art form has been a means to an end.

As a process, traditional art serves as an interactive expedition of self-actualization undertaken by the client under the guidance and company of the traditional therapist. That is, the young man's interaction with the icon opened him up to a mental realization of his weakness and the possibility of attaining solution if he should believe in the efficacy of the gods. The whole process might have been successful within the therapeutic connotation of art.

Icons are visual representations which, in the words of Herbert Cole, "achieve compelling prominence through frequent repetition in sacred or secular arts." The key words here are "compelling prominence" and "frequent repetition." They are likely interdependent, because it is the repetition which gives the image prominence and memorability. And that is the difference between an icon and a representation. A representation is so specific to a single person or object that it is not encountered in a variety of contexts and it does not have that sense of prominence or memorability or even recognizability. Finally, the power of the icon lies in its ability to condense an idea which is centrally important in human life. This means that most icons of traditional therapy in Asante are icons because they deal with essential or "root" ideas such as fertility and

power; (to be perceived in a broader perspective) this is part of what makes them recognizable; the idea is more universal than most and the form has some broad recognition and association with the idea; this is why we can, in many cases, speak of icons that are almost identical across cultures and time. For example, the sword has some broad recognition and association with the idea of power and authority in traditional leadership within the akan ethnic groups of Ghana, which includes the Asante.

This could be made more complicated. An icon may represent something in the priestly vocation of traditional priests/priestesses and also "presentify" something. So what is presentification? Presentification according to Cole, refers to the act of making something visible which has not been seen; the object gives it visibility and is essentially identical to what it presentifies when the spirit is in this world. It is more than saying representation, and it is more than saying "the spirit resides" in the object; there is a mutuality between object and spirit and this mutuality above all has to do with the act of revealing the invisible and the unseen, and enabling or activating its power. According to Cole, in medieval times, there was the belief that the spirit of a saint resided in the representation of the saint; that saint and image were equal. We might find this to be close to the idea of presentification. But presentification is still different from this because of the fact that what is made visible has never been seen, and because a spirit may be presentified in different forms at different times. Presentification is the most unusual idea to comprehend in the whole concept of cult art; it is a power of art which goes beyond representing and beyond symbolizing. It is difficult to imagine the work of art as "being" what it signifies, but that is the essence of presentification (see Plate 54)

A traditional priest or priestess and a god become one most especially during possession; (note that presentification may involve a human being, in addition to or instead of an object of art); for example a traditional priest who was possessed by a serpentine spirit acted in presentification of the said reptile by crawling on the ground and feeding on raw eggs that were picked with only his mouth and swallowed just as the respective reptile does. (See Plates 55a, 55b and 56).

A neatly covered brass pan respectfully positioned on a chief's stool (Asipim stool) or carried by a traditional priest under an umbrella makes the royal status of the deity visible. When carried and danced in public, the traditional priest makes the spirit and his/her ideals present.

Question3. What are the diagnostic, preventive, curative and protective implications of indigenous arts in traditional therapeutic practices of Asante?

In response to the above question, the diagnostic, preventive, curative and protective implications of Asante indigenous arts are discussed separately in the light of data gathered through observation and interviews.

4.11 Diagnostic Implications of Asante Indigenous Arts

The traditional priest may either on his own volition, or at the request of the patient, consult his god or through divination ascertain the cause of the problem. The diagnosis of illness is largely viewed as a diagnosis of a social offence and the curing of the illness requires the establishment of normal social relationships. Viewed in this light, the threat of suffering becomes a powerful incentive for moral behavior, and the cure of suffering becomes a sign denoting

that the gods and the ancestors are pleased once more in restoring the social unit to good health.

Diagnosis is deeply embedded in the whole magico-religious system. The traditional priest employs major techniques of divination, possession, and casting lots which give the 'sick' inspiration and restoration of confidence. One technique that is being utilized is filling a divining bowl with water and placing some floated objects in it. The traditional therapist then interpretes the movements of the objects to diagnose the problem before a cure is prescribed. (see Plate 57).

Some of the therapists also may employ what they term as *ahunu* (that which sees) for diagnostic purposes. The ahunu is basically an art work made of leather, brass or wood. It could also be in the form of body art designed on the body of the traditional therapist. The researcher wishes to state categorically that the use of indigenous arts take precedence in the whole process of traditional mode of diagnosis. Be it divination, possession, or casting lots. While possession as a public diagnostic ceremony is induced by drumming and dancing, it is achieved in private treatment by having an assistant rhythmically beat a gong. (see plate 56).

It has a "magico-religious" effect. The traditional priest sometimes serves as a passive medium, for while he is possessed, his god or deity speaks through him, and on recovery he claims no knowledge of what he has said or experienced. The guttural speech of the traditional priest is unintelligible to all present but the *okyeame*, who serves as the translator.

There may be a positive psychological value present in the role of the traditional therapist as a medium of diagnosis, which makes it possible for the client to believe that he (client) has established rapport with the "god" and this contributes to his feeling of security. This view was shared by most of the therapists.

Moreover, according to the respondents, the therapists work with the strength of their own personality and with that of the magico-religious ritual of divination, which is part of the common faith of the society of which they are a part. In other words, the whole weight of the community, its arts, religion, myth, and history enter into the therapy. The supernatural theory of medicine, according to the therapists then serves as a form of social concept which helps to reinforce the mental and physical well-being of the social group. One may deduce from the above discussion that the success of traditional medicine lies in its psychosocial therapy.

4.12 Curative Implications of Asante Indigenous Arts

The traditional priest does not differentiate between illnesses of the physical type and that of the psychological in origin. He is no dualist, for he knows only one kind of disease and one kind of therapy. His mode of operation follows directly from his idea concerning the causation of disease. This idea about disease is understood by the general public of which he is a part; there is unity of thought.

If he decides after the diagnosis to treat the client who is actually sick, the patient's relatives appoint an *okyigyinafo* (patient's supporter) who will remain with the patient during the course of treatment at the shrine. Literally the supporter is the person who stands behind the sick man. He discusses with the therapist all matters concerning the treatment. He is responsible for any fees to be paid and for providing any supplies of objects that may be required. He must discuss with the therapist all matters concerning the nursing of the patient. No family will ever fail to support a sick relative, for to do so would be a standing reproach to the whole extended family unit.

In treatment, the therapist ensures that the causative agents (disease demons) may be denied rest and quiet, and must be allowed no peace. For this reason the traditional therapist may use drumming and singing to achieve the purpose of making the said demons uncomfortable to speed up the healing process. At times the demons are frightened away by the employment of terrifying artefacts such as masks and other sculptural figures as directed by the deity being consulted to induce healing. *Abrafo* deities for example may attack the suspected spirit/s by the use of traditionally designed and constructed weapons such as bows and arrows clubs spears etc to effect the cure. If they are strong enough to endure all these hardships, then by sorcery they must be lured elsewhere to take their abode in some scapegoat, or an inanimate object; usually plastic art. If the demons are "too clever" to be fooled, they must be appeased with sacrifices and precious gifts some of which include indigenous art such as beads, figurines and earthenware pots. The *akuaba* doll is one indigenous art that

is extensively used in handling infertility cases. Essentially, the patient's faith and the therapist's personality are important factors in the therapeutic setting.

The test of the therapist's qualifications is his known effectiveness in treating illnesses. If he has proved his ability to communicate with the supernatural in such a way as to diagnose and to prescribe cures, he is obviously the man to consult. This method of handling disease through the medium of artistic- magico-religious acts and concepts satisfies the traditional Asante because it provides an explanation of what is happening.

4.13 Protective and Preventive Implications of Asante Indigenous Arts

In the face of witchcraft the traditional Asante never feels himself completely helpless, for he at once sets out to counteract it by protecting himself, or endeavouring "to detect the guilty ones" to prevent them from attacking him. In the daily life of the traditional Asante this detection and protection play a big part.

The witches are believed to act on the life-souls of their victims. This life-soul *okra* has in turn to be protected by the personality-soul *sunsum*. Therefore the best protection of the individual against the witches is a strong personality-soul, co-ordinated harmoniously with a strong life-soul – a balanced or integrated personality. This is the basis of protection in the believer's mind, and everything else, powders, charms, treatments, medicines, etc., simply serve to give additional strength to both the personality and the life-soul. The basic statement about protection is therefore: "*Se wo sunsum ye duru a, abayifuo ntumi nha wo.*" – "If your personality-soul is strong, the witches cannot harm you".

This was repeated to the researcher by both therapists and patrons. It was therefore discovered that, in all the treatment of patrons at anti-witchcraft shrines last but not least, their ‘spirits are strengthened’ both *kra* and *sunsum* – to make powerless any further onslaught of the evil. Another way of securing protection is appeasing the witch with an *ahoni*, a kind of effigy, meant to represent a sick person, which is put at the outskirts of the town for the spirit or witch supposed to be troubling the person.

In the mind of many Africans, there is no difference between *suman* charms and “medicine”. But it seems handy for practical purposes to make the distinction in this study. Rings, pots, amulets, beads, etc., are all used as anti-witchcraft charms. They are supposed to either just strengthen the user’s personality and life-soul, or work by destructive counter-magic.

Charms are often dispensed by the priests of shrines. The *sebe* or *abansere* charms (talismans) are the most prevalent: they are said to consist of verses from the Arabic magic formulae sewn into leather. Nana Gyedu, a traditional priest described anti-witchcraft charms thus: “They are rings on the finger, *sebe*, (bangles) beads, arms rings etc”. “These things must always be worn and carried about”. (see plate 60) Some are hung at the gates of houses and doors so that evil doers may not approach. All these Asante indigenous arts work spiritually. (See plates 60-61)

Question4. Can Asante traditional therapy be classified under art therapy?

To answer the above question it would be necessary to place the two practices on the same scale to see how similar or different they appear to be. Below are the modalities from which the assessment was made.

4.14 The concept of the Therapy

According to the American Art Therapy Association, Art therapy is a type of psychotherapy using art-making and creativity as a part of the therapeutic process to increase emotional well-being. Art Therapy is based on the belief that the principal goal in this creative process involved in making art and creative acts is healing and life-enhancing. Art therapy is again based on the conviction that the act of making art is an embodied action that reflects concretely and/or symbolically the client's experience of being, including conflicts the client may not be aware of. How these conflicts are perceived and interpreted by the therapist is a function of the therapist's own theoretical preferences. Interpretation in this case refers to the therapist's theory-biased understanding of the phenomenon being observed.

The use of art materials and processes as an integral communication within the therapeutic encounter distinguishes art therapy from counselling, psychology, and social work. While other professions might utilize art materials and art tasks in therapy sessions, such use is adjunctive to the primary verbal means of communication.

Like any psychotherapy, the therapist provides the holding frame for the therapy, assesses and helps the client set treatment goals, and offers a reparative therapeutic relationship. Essential components of art therapy include selecting and using art materials, creating a visual or tactile image, and contemplating and making meaning of the art encounter and the image itself. Making art not only addresses what is wounded, it also supports what is strong, encouraging the individual to live more fully in the moment. It is especially effective for discovering and claiming an authentic sense of being whole, creative, and relational.

If the above description in simple terms is what constitutes art therapy, then one can conveniently conclude that what goes on between a client and a traditional priest with regards to healing through indigenous arts is art therapy because the same features are present in the therapeutic practice of the traditional priest at the healing shrines as thoroughly discussed in this document.

4.15 Theoretical Bases for the Therapy

The theoretical bases for art therapy are drawn from such disciplines as psychology, sociology, anthropology, aesthetics, and education. If the above premise is anything to go by, then it could logically be concluded that the traditional priest's therapeutic practice is also art therapy because it is done under the same theoretical bases in addition to the magico-religious belief. It must however be stated that though the traditional priest might not have formal education, the traditional institution has its own way of equipping practitioners with relevant knowledge in the disciplines mentioned above. Moreover, as a psychotherapy practice, the art therapy of the traditional priest spans the same basic theoretical landscapes as psychology, social work, and counselling.

Art can be used as a tool and process of resolving social and psychological imbalances of human personality. Art is used by art therapists, psychotherapists and clinical psychologists as art therapy. In this regard, the traditional priest who also uses art as art therapy after undergoing intensive professional training in the art of healing can be likened to any of the professional titles above.

4.16 The Function of Art in the Therapy

Art making engages mental, physical and emotional reasoning that utilizes brain structures that are quite different, yet interactive with, verbal reasoning. Making art requires flexibility, close observation, perceptual development and spatial reasoning, physical and conceptual manipulation of tools and materials, tolerance for chaos and ambiguity, the ability to sequence material use, and the cognitive and manual skills to create cohesive form.

Because the central work of art therapy is making art, aesthetic concepts such as balance, direction, or repetition, for example, as well as the technical qualities of the art materials, such as plasticity, resistance, softness and so forth, can be reframed in psychological terms. An artefact can be viewed both for its potential symbolic and metaphoric content.

Furthermore, the process of making the artefact is both concrete and metaphoric. The client's encounter with the art materials and creative process yields immediate behavioural information, which can also be viewed metaphorically by the therapist and/or client as being an extension of the client's habitual response to life situations.

4.17 Therapeutic Relationships

Art therapy takes place within the context of a therapeutic relationship. The art therapist can adopt a role position drawn from the same theoretical bases as counselling, psychology, psychoanalysis, or social work. That role may also be drawn from traditional therapeutic practices, wherein the therapist is a mediator between the client and ancestors and/or gods. This idea confirms Herskovits' assertion that although the prescription

administered to a client may be only a placebo, the belief that he is being helped through the attention and actions of a skilled practitioner will thus have a positive psychosomatic effect on the client.

To conclude, the art forms used in the traditional art therapy of Asante are analysed from a traditional thematic point of view; focusing specifically on context, purpose, and meaning. For example, singing and drumming at the shrine is meant for specific purposes. It may be used to invoke the presence of a particular deity or to 'charge' the traditional therapist for divinatory functions or to make the place lively and entertaining to help alleviate the emotional burdens of patrons. In this sense the context within which singing and drumming is needed may determine the choice of song and its accompanied rhythm. For example an *akom* song like *Obene ye* (it is helpful to be spiritually powerful) may be sung if the traditional therapist wants to suggest to the patrons to imitate him since it is helpful to be spiritually powerful. The *akom* song *Berebere na eye* (it pays to be gentle) may also be selected if the therapist wants to admonish the patrons to be gentle and live lives devoid of violence.

The indigenous arts used by Asante traditional priests in therapeutic practices are meant to be purposeful and informative. The above is supported by the claim of British critic and semanticist Richards (1929) that art is a language. He asserts that two types of language exist: the symbolic, which conveys ideas and information; and the emotive, which expresses, evokes and excites feelings and attitudes.

To acknowledge the role of indigenous arts in the whole process of traditional therapy of Asante and accept the practice as traditional art therapy, it would be expedient to address the term 'traditional' in the light of art therapy.

If tradition is a word that seems to relate more directly to style and technique, while function relates to context, purpose and meaning, perhaps the technique and stylistic connotations of Asante traditional arts are what could be deconstructed. In other words, style could be accepted as something that may change and respond to outside influence if the therapist chooses to. In the light of this research and with regards to the implications for the use of indigenous Art by Asante traditional priests in their therapeutic practices the researcher would like to say that therapeutic practices of traditional priests/priestesses of Asante can be termed Asante traditional art therapy.



Plate 18: Atano Shrines honourably placed on asipim/royal stools as displayed in public.



Plate 19: *Nsumankwaa* carrying the *Samanka* in front of the King to ward off evil spirits and all manner of evil.



Plate 20: A traditional priest carrying atano shrine with the assistance of his akyeame during possession.



Plate 21: The Tano shrine being carried and guarded with swords.



Plate 22: Traditional priests carrying their Atano shrines as they dance to akom music.



Plate 23: An Atano Traditional priestess carrying a mortar in public instead of the usual brass pan.



Plate 24: Kyinaman Komfuo and daughter Komfuo Attaa (of the Atano category).



Plate 25: Bosombrafo shrine with accompanied accessories.



Plate 26: The Kyinaman shrine being carried under an umbrella in public.

Plate 27: The shrine is being sent back into the shrine room.



Plate 28: The Kune shrine as seen in the shrine room.



Plate 29a: Abrafo priests belonging to Tigare category.



Plate 29b: Abrafo priests belonging to Tigare category.



Plate 30: Relief wooden sculpture used to personify some deities served by the traditional priests.



Plate 31: Variety of wooden sculpture in the round used to presentify some deities served by the traditional priests.



Plate 32: The Atumpan, Brekete and Mpintin drums used for akom music



Plate 33: Royal Stools for chiefs, queen mothers, traditional priests and priestesses.



Plate 34: Royal chairs (Asipim) for chiefs and traditional priests.



Plate 35: Samples of traditional priests' regalia for festive occasions.



Plate 36: An umbrella and palanquin used to honour great Asante deities.



Plate 37: Nana Kwaku Bonsam (a traditional priest) clad in regalia for festive occasions.



Plate 38: Bullet proof charms used by traditional priests.



Plate 39: Smock tucked with a variety of talismans.

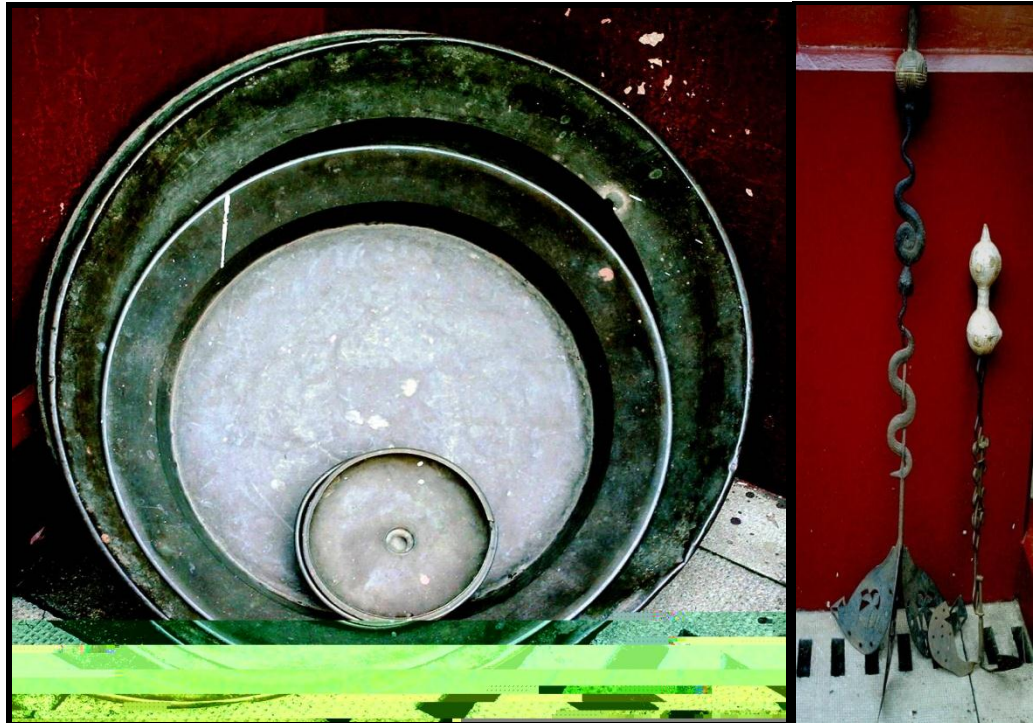


Plate 40: Different sizes of brass pans and swords used at the shrine for various purposes.



Plate 41: Traditional priests and priestesses exhibiting their skills in akom dance.



Plate 42: Energetic men and women happily performing traditional music with the akom musical instruments such as drums gongs and rattles.



Plate 43: Variety of Akuaba collection meant for therapeutic purposes.



Plate 44: A collection of wooden and brass figures used for shrine set up.



Plate 45: The Krachie Dente shrine as exhibited in public.



Plate 46: The Asuo Yaa shrine at Sokoban Kurofrom.



Plate 47: Komfuo Attaa Akosua's shrine as displayed in the shrine room at Nobesu.



Plate 48: The Asuo Fri shrine altar where animals are slaughtered as sacrifices to the deity.



Plate 49: Display of fly whisks, jawbones of sheep, beads, loin cloth and black smock as shrine objects in a shrine room.



Plate 50: Display of some terracotta and wooden sculptures as shrine objects in a shrine room at Kyinamanso.



Plate 51: The cloth is designed with the square in diverse combinations.



Plate 52: The foot stool is designed with a combination of square, triangle and circle.



Plate 53: A Tigare Komfuo in his traditional smock with his club on his shoulder and a knife in his mouth.



Plate 54: A work of art used as a presentification of a deity.



Plate: 55a: A Traditioanl priest acting out the serpentine nature of his deity in search of egg.

Plate 55b: A found egg is picked with his mouth.



Plate 56: The priest struggles to swallow the egg but eventually swallows it.



Plate 57: A divining wooden bowl filled with water and floated objects in it.



Plate 58: An Okyeame beating a gong to induce possession in the shrine room.



Plate 59: A driver wearing a protective artefact on his wrist.



Plate 60: Assorted indigenous handiworks used as protective charms.

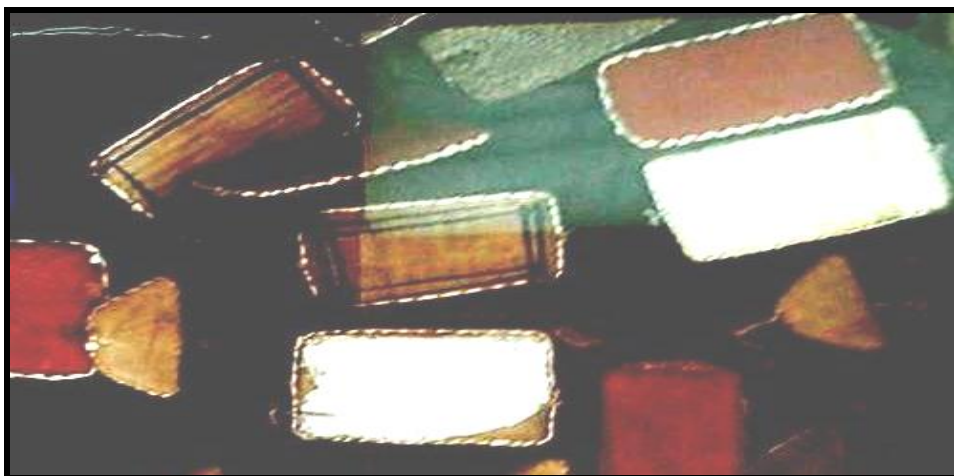


Plate 61: Assorted leather works used by traditional priests/priestesse as protective charms.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Summary

The research sought:

1. To find out the reasons for which people may resort to traditional therapy
2. To identify, examine and discuss the symbolic significance of the selected Asante indigenous arts with regards to traditional therapeutic practices.
3. To examine the diagnostic, preventive, protective and curative implications of the selected indigenous arts in Asante traditional therapy
4. To analyse, discuss and determine the acceptability of the Asante traditional therapy in the light of art therapy.

In order to research into the therapeutic functions of Asante indigenous arts in the traditional therapeutic practices in accordance with cultural norms and beliefs as traditional therapists pursue their major function of caring for the people and restoring health and to satisfy those objectives, four research questions were designed.

The study concerned itself with the Asante of Ghana and concentrated on the therapeutic practices of the traditional Priests and Priestesses giving attention to the traditional therapists' views, opinions, beliefs and practices with regards to indigenous arts and therapy. The research focused on selected indigenous arts of Asante to ascertain the diagnostic, preventive, curative and protective implications of the arts in the therapeutic practices.

The theoretical framework, social setting and culture of the Asante people, traditional therapeutic practice, the priesthood institution and origin of traditional therapeutic practice in Asante, were discussed as review of related literature. Other major areas discussed included traditional therapy practitioners, training and graduation of therapists, the concept of art, the cultural role of African art, Asante indigenous arts and therapeutic significance of art.

5.1 Findings

1. Traditional therapists of Asante perform integrative function which first and foremost aims at the restoration of social harmony; and also serves as a social control mechanism which helps to reinforce the spiritual, the mental, the social and the physical growth of the people.
2. The position of the traditional therapists of Asante of Ghana may be comparable to the positions of the Reverend Minister, the medical Doctor, the Psychotherapist, the Counsellor and the Art Therapist of the West.
3. The traditional therapy and explanations of the causes of ill health given by the traditional therapists of Asante of Ghana are usually based on what the society has developed and appears to it as a reasonable concept in explaining its therapy and the causes of ill health.
4. The Asante of Ghana have two major categories of deities. These are referred to as *Atano bosom* and *Abosom brafo*. The two categories of deities control all professional functions of traditional priests/priestesses of Asante. A traditional priest's mode of operation, types of artefacts used

- and dress code are all determined by the kind of deity being served. However, these are based on the belief system of the Asante people to whom the services are rendered.
5. The rich cultural heritage embedded in the traditional symbols of Asante are surprisingly known to just a few people who happen to be associated directly with the symbols by virtue of their profession as artisans.
 6. It was discovered that in a traditional Asante setting, peoples' life, regulations of moral conduct, trade and industry, or any other facet of communal organization develops out of a sociological consideration of family stability by addressing its most fundamental expression in the magico-religious view of the people concerned. In other words, the entire life of Asantes within a traditional Asante setting, is intertwined with the magico-religious belief of the people.
 7. The culture of the people, consists of a number of integrally related aspects which arise in the first place from their efforts to control and manipulate their environment for the satisfaction of their primary needs, with traditional therapeutic practice as part of the design which has been developed as an integral part of the system.
 8. Traditional priests/priestesses express ideas, emotions, or forms to their numerous patrons by means of manipulating visually acceptable products of creativity which are shaped or selected to enhance their services. The artistic media which are most frequently used to express human feelings in the profession of the traditional priest/priestess are prose, poetry, music, dance, plastic arts and other visual works

- that combine materials or forms. Each of these media exists to fulfil a specific need and therefore has its own province of expression.
9. “Akuaba” figures, which are consecrated by priests who invoke the influence of their deity to induce fertility, are now widely utilized. Some figures are carried by women wishing to conceive, while others are specially prepared by priests for women already pregnant, to ensure safe delivery and an attractive child. Some therapists make use of Akuaba which are accorded special powers which may or may not have anything to do with childbirth. Others are decorated with assorted beaded charms and are regarded as general symbols of tutelary deities.
 10. Acculturation has brought changes in the types of request the traditional therapist receives from his clients. Clients expectations have changed and some of these are accommodated by the traditional practice. In terms of the requests made nowadays, the usual broad pleas for good health, protection and fecundity are still made. However, there has been increasing emphasis on “aids and nostrums” to meet with the needs of the modern society.
 11. The huge impact of foreign religions such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism in Ghana has not succeeded in overshadowing traditional religious beliefs and practices.

5.2 Conclusions

1. Traditional therapeutic practice has acquired a new status. Traditional priests and priestesses who before political independence worked quietly on their own have now come out boldly into the open to form their associations in various levels. Traditional priests and priestesses who formally did their numerous activities such

as festivals without much publicity now advertise through the various mass media to encourage and invite people to visit their shrines.

2. In the healing context of the traditional healer, both healer and client often agree right at the start that the source of evil is out there, even where an apparently discontented or rebellious *kra* is concerned. It is an "externalising process" as opposed to the "internalising process" in the West. The image of the healer is that of a friend and ally against the evil 'other': the witch, the demon of the wild. Dwarfs, the angry gods or ancestors, mercenary spirits, jealous siblings or other members of the society at large who are to blame for the client's predicament. This state of affairs highlights the significance of the common cultural background of the healer and his patient.
3. Traditional therapy is a magico-spiritual remedies built on social and cultural sanctions unlike Western psychology psychotherapies and Art Therapy. Although apparently, two different modes of psychic expression of the numinous artefacts, the researcher is of the view that the images in the Western psychological and psychotherapeutic setting and that of the traditional therapeutic setting do share the common feature of symbolism.
4. In the traditional therapy situation, treatment involves the use of herbal medicines, and the spiritual rituals, the herbal treatment has been compared to the scientific medicine in its method, because it is based on observation and experience in many cases. The traditional therapist is however also

often consulted when the orthodox medical system has failed, as in cases of illness perceived as having spiritual causes.

5. The traditional beliefs and customs, which surround ill-health, seem to persist to a much greater extent than the pace modernisation would appear to suggest; for this reason problems that face a person and the choice of solution may be influenced rightly or wrongly by what he believes to be the ultimate cause of the problems. It is evidently clear that the success of the traditional therapeutic practice lies in its adherence to psychotherapeutic approach that makes use of indigenous arts. The fact is that under the stimulus of severe anxiety that may lead to fright, the sympathetic nervous system supplies the body with unusual amount of adrenalin to cause physiological changes to bring relief to the person concerned. This is achieved by the skilful manipulation of appropriate indigenous arts by a traditional therapist. Through the physical actions with and in arts, the person is rendered capable of carrying on normal behaviour; and this relieving action is the speciality of the traditional therapist as he encourages the patient to participate in the whole process of the therapy.
6. The researcher feels it would be a mistake to reject outright the traditional therapeutic practice, the psychology and remedies since it possesses certain valid features; even if nothing more than employing principles related to the Ghanaian cultural setting in treating ills, the traditional medical practitioner's concept does not recognise any separation between physical and mental disease. There is no separation between diagnostics

and therapeutics. As disease is fundamentally disintegration on all levels-mental, physical and social-it is understandable that this approach should have some value.

7. Traditional therapy, or its functional equivalent, may never wholly disappear from the Ghanaian traditional society, regardless of how urbanized life becomes, because there is a continued prevalence of doubtful-medical beliefs and therapeutic measures existing in the practice of scientific medicine. Observers of traditional therapy have related its patronage to the fears and anxieties arising from rapid social and psychological upheavals of the present society. The evidence is clear in the continued vitality of traditional therapeutic practice among the indigenes of Asante.
8. In the sphere of traditional medicine perhaps the most recent development of note is the formation of a Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association which purports to research into mysticism as employed by the traditional practitioners. The pharmaceutical values of known herbs are being investigated as well as some of the therapeutic claims of the practitioners.
9. Although there are many new types of request made of traditional practitioners, the old forms of requests continue at least in the rural setting. However, as a result of contemporary social changes, it is remarkable that traditional forms and beliefs continue, exhibiting a great adaptability. The evidence would seem to indicate that traditional therapy will continue to play an important role in the social organization of the Ghanaian people.

10. The traditional therapist has a place in the traditional society because he is the intermediary between the spiritual world and the people. He also puts up a high level of professionalism by considering it imperative to create an atmosphere of confidence and trust in order to allay the anxiety felt by the patient and makes himself comprehensible through the use of concept and language that are familiar to the patient and could be accepted.
11. Despite the huge impact of foreign religions such as Christianity, Islam and Buddhism in Ghana, traditional religious beliefs and practices are still on the ascendency; traditional priests of Asante employ diverse forms of indigenous arts as aids to provide therapeutic services to a large number of people in the society. Through divination and other traditionally acceptable forms of therapeutic practices, many people are provided with diverse forms of assistance. Even some professing and practicing Christians and Muslims are known to patronise the services of the traditional priests. In recent years it is no news to hear that Christians are engaging themselves in curses which cause them to visit some notable shrines of Asante for reversal of the curses.
12. This research is a contribution towards a holistic health-care delivery in Asante and for that matter Ghana; in addition to orthodox health-care delivery. It is believed through this research that other traditional forms of therapy are carried out in Asante of Ghana through the use of indigenous arts, and these forms of therapy are not offered by orthodox medical practitioners.

5.3 Recommendations

1. It should be emphasized that in the Ghanaian urban setting, there is little ritual in social life, hardly any in domestic relations. Yet the gods and the ancestors will continue to be honoured. This fact is perhaps a factor which may seem reasonable to support the continuance of ritual practices in the institutional context of traditional therapy to sustain and enforce appropriate ritual practices to enhance the Asante traditional belief systems. The traditional therapy is a cultural heritage which must be recognized and respected as such.
2. In any social formation in Ghana, where “Traditional mentality” predominates, it would be reasonable to expect that traditional therapy would be a vital medium in health care delivery. For that matter the practitioner who knows the community well and understands psychotherapeutic characteristics is expected to make good use of that knowledge in the best interest of the people. In the light of this the researcher is of the view that the traditional therapist be given maximum opportunity to operate without any encumbrance.
3. There is the need to encourage traditional therapy practitioners to play a complementary role alongside modern medicine. The researcher would therefore recommend that traditional therapists be given a part to play in the contemporary setting with regards to contemporary health delivery. In this regard the traditional practitioner will make use of a more holistic approach using skills derived from his knowledge of the patient and his environment.
4. The researcher would suggest a further period of training for the practitioners of traditional therapy in the principles of hygiene. The researcher

- would also recommend that Government should subsidize the practitioners of traditional therapy to make it possible for them to operate in hygienic environments and to use aseptic techniques.
5. Some traditional priests and priestesses could be utilized in the rural health posts and Clinics under medical supervision to assist patients to cope with some of their anxieties. This might be tried as a pilot project.
 6. Therapeutic systems, like other aspects of cultural institutions, grow up to meet the specific needs of a given society. In Ghana the health services need much more of a team approach with greater co-operation between the hospitals, private and public health services, as well as joint planning with the agriculture and nutrition services, town planning and local government authorities. It is on this team that the traditional therapist might find a place.
 7. In future field studies, there will be the need to conduct interdisciplinary research which will look into the therapeutic claims of the traditional therapists in every sphere of their profession. There is also the need to study the types and the calibre of patients who frequent the services of traditional medicine. This will contribute greatly to understand some of the referral patterns.
 8. There is the need for future researchers to look into the number of patients who actually receive "cures" from traditional healers. This type of research is necessary as well as expedient in order to estimate the actual potentiality of these healers. At the moment many of their techniques are

clouded in mysticism and secrecy; and it is quite difficult to disentangle the truth from the opinion.

9. The general public should be educated to eschew all negative tendencies towards the traditional therapists to prevent them from hiding and employing obscure techniques in their practices. Moreover, society could be a driving force, which could break their morale or contribute positively to make good practitioners out of them.
10. To create the appropriate environment to attain a proper understanding of the use of art by the traditional priest in his profession, art educators, art students and artists in general must adopt the practice of building a conducive atmosphere for a better interrelationship within the art environment.
11. Furthermore, teachers, social workers, artists, students, private individuals or groups who are interested in investigating art usage in relation to traditional therapy may rely on this dissertation as suitable reference material. Additionally, individuals or groups of persons seeking psychological, psychoanalytical and therapeutic interpretations of art will find this dissertation a rewarding practical source.
12. Finally, there is no doubt that a psycho-social study of the therapeutic practices of Asante traditional priests/priestesses is of both theoretical and practical interest; for it cannot be denied that the practice will go on for as long as the traditional values which support it remain operative.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW CHECK LIST

A. Personal Data

1. Name of therapist.....sex.....
2. How would you describe yourself: (a) Bosomfuo..... (b) Komfuo..... (c) Other.....
3. Age.....
4. How did you become a priest/priestess: (a) apprenticeship..... (b) other.....
5. Type of priest/priestess: (a) Mmotia..... (b) Tano..... (c) Brafo..... (d) Other.....
6. Marital status: (a) single..... (b) Married..... (c) divorced/separated.....
7. Level of formal education.....

B. The Shrine

1. Name of shrine.....Location.....
2. Date of registration.....
3. What are the shrine's days of operation.....?
4. What are the forbidden food(s) or taboos of the shrine for your clients if any?
5. How many attendants are serving at the shrine.....?
6. How long has the shrine had therapeutic experience.....?

C. General

1. In what circumstances do people prefer to consult you the traditional therapist?

2. How do you make your diagnosis of clients presumed ill-health
3. Does the profession of traditional priesthood call for the use of Asante indigenous art forms?
4. What are the various difficulties that people bring to your outfit for assistance?
What is the average number of clients you see in a day?
1. How do you come by the numerous art forms found at the shrine?
2. Are all the art forms found in the shrine meant for decorative purposes
3. How do you get the art works that you use for therapeutic purposes?
4. How do you make use of Asante indigenous art forms found at your shrine?
5. What are the symbolic significance of Asante indigenous art forms to:
 - (a) You as a traditional therapist?
 - (b) Your Clients?
6. Why would you ask a client to use a particular art form as part of the therapeutic process?
7. Could you explain the effectiveness of the Asante indigenous art forms as a tool for therapeutic services?
8. Can you describe some of the means by which indigenous art forms are employed in therapy?
9. In the course of your therapeutic interactions with clients, how can art form(s) specifically serve: (a) Diagnostic function? (b) Preventive function?
(c) Curative function? (d) Protective function?