

GENDERING MUSICAL DISCOURSE: INDIGENOUS MUSIC AND DANCE IN THE HEALING RITUALS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHURCH IN GHANA

AMOS DARKWA ASARE

Abstract: In this article, I apply a gendered analysis to a healing phenomenon understood through indigenous musical performances in a ritual context. Ghanaian indigenous music has been widely researched and documented, however, a contextual analysis of the gendered musical roles associated with the healing rituals of the Twelve Apostles Church (TAC) is scant. In this research, the data was obtained from six congregations of the TAC, between 2014 to 2019. Based on participation, observations and interviews, the analysis is a description of how music is gendered in the indigenous healing rituals of the TAC. The main question I seek to answer is: how is gender constructed and how are the gender roles ascribed to musical performances in the healing rituals of the TAC? In answering this question, I discuss the cultural interpretations ascribed to gender in a musically informed healing ritual. The findings revealed that in the TAC, singing is mostly initiated by females who sing about illnesses. Males, on the other hand, are mostly in charge of playing the *dondo*, an hourglass drum. However, the *mfoba*, an enmeshed rattle is played by both males and females and it is the *mfoba* that aids spirit possession. Spirit possession is an integral part of the healing rituals of the TAC and females are more susceptible to being possessed by spirits than males. Based on various rules I argue that the healing ritual of the TAC is based on complementary rather than opposing musical roles of males and females.

Keywords: *dondo*, gender, indigenous music, healing, *mfoba*, rituals, Twelve Apostles Church

Introduction

Musical performances in the healing rituals of the Twelve Apostles Church (TAC) in Ghana are considered spiritual by the adherents and adepts of the church. Different aspects of the ritual are musically held together by different yet complementary roles of males and females. As in most rituals, the music of the TAC serves as the “ritual time-frame in which the ceremony is brought into existence” (Shapiro 1991, 8). The healing rituals of the TAC involve singing, the playing of two main instruments (*mfoba* and *dondo*), handclapping and dancing (Asare 2019). These instruments provide the sonic context for the healing ritual. Whereas the *mfoba* is used to invoke spirits, the repetitive patterns of the *dondo* help in inducing altered states of consciousness. While drumming is performed by only males, singing is dominated by females. Shouting and stomping that contribute to the sonic experience are mostly performed by females.

The TAC is the first of the African Instituted Churches (AIC) in Ghana (Omulokoli 2002). It was established under the leadership of Grace Tani and John Nackabah

(Breidenbach 1989). These leaders were converted by the Liberian preacher, William Wade Harris (1860–1929), who preached in the coastal areas of West Africa and the Nzema area of Ghana (Ayeboyin and Ishola 1997). As part of Harris’ evangelistic work from 1913 to 1915 in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, he selected leaders and named them “twelve apostles”, to watch over his converts anywhere he preached (Shank 1986). This is why the church is called the Twelve Apostles. Due to its emphasis on spirits, it is also named *sunsum nsore* (spiritual church/es) by the Fante people of Ghana (Baëta 2004). The TAC is known for its use of indigenous music in its healing activities which they refer to as *sunsum edwuma*, which means, “spiritual work” (Asare 2019). For the TAC, the *sunsum edwuma* takes place at the residence of the healer on Fridays.

In my ethnographic engagements, I observed that the entire healing ritual is gendered, including spirit possessions, musical performances, and healer-patient relationships. I obtained data from six congregations of the TAC between the years 2014 to 2019. These congregations are in the Fante Coast of the Central Region of Ghana and include the towns of *Anomabu*, *Amamoma*, *Biriwa*, *Broforyedru*, *Kormantse* and *Yamoranza*. Throughout this article, the TAC in Ghana specifically refers to these congregations. I participated, observed and conducted interviews in the congregations. I witnessed healing proceedings in all six congregations of the church and subsequently interviewed all the prophet-healers and a few “patients.” I have presented the analysis by giving a detailed account of my field experiences. In other words, I have provided a thick description (Geertz 1973; Holloway 1997) of the gendered roles in the musical performances of the TAC.

The Fante belongs to the Akan socio-cultural group, a linguistically and culturally homogenous people (Nkansah-Kyeremateng 1999), who constitutes about fifty per cent of the Ghanaian population (Warren 1986).¹ In Akan indigenous practices, spirits are prime elements of power, authority and protection. The connection between the natural and the supernatural covers every aspect of the life of the Akan. In Akan cosmology, power is ascribed to the Supreme Being, *Onyankopon*, who is worshipped through other lesser spirits (gods) known as *abosom* (Smith 1950). *Onyankopon* is the creator of the universe, which includes the visible and invisible worlds (Guthrie 1994). It is within the visible and invisible worlds where the Akan concept of spirits (*sunsum*) resides. The Akan acknowledges two spirits, *sunsum pa*, a benevolent spirit, and *sunsum bɔne*, a malevolent spirit (Afriyie 2010). Whereas misfortune, bad luck and illnesses are attributed to the *sunsum bɔne* (Asare 2019), all forms of good, including healthcare, are attributed to the *sunsum pa*. In the fifteenth century, Ghanaians had contact with Christian missionaries who described Ghanaian traditional religion as heathen, fetishist and superstitious (Amanor 2004). However, the Christian missionaries could not address the spiritual needs of the Akan people. They introduced an alien God and suppressed traditional African culture (Mbiti 1977).

¹ The Asante people are the largest group, followed by the Fante people.

The Harris movement

The Harris movement has been described as a remarkable and outstanding mass movement in the development of Christianity in west Africa (Barrett 1968). Harris is well known for his evangelistic work in Liberia, Ivory Coast and Ghana, which resulted in the conversion of thousands of Africans (Omulokoli 2002). The Liberian evangelist, who arrived in the Ivory Coast and the southern part of Ghana in 1913, directed his preaching against “fetishist” practices (Shank 1997). Krabill (1990) explains that the Harris movement had a simple and easy-to-remember form of worship to which the Indigenous people could relate. The use of music and dance that resonated with Indigenous people in this newly found faith proved to be ideal for Harris’ converts. Omulokoli (2002) remarks that Harris would characteristically enter a village with his followers by singing and playing gourd rattles which attracted the Indigenous people. In Ghana, he encouraged his converts to join already-established protestant churches, particularly the Methodist church. The Catholic and Anglican churches also benefitted from this movement (Amanor 2004). Within the many places where Harris preached, his converts encountered a few restrictions. These included the use of their local languages for worship and the prohibition of the use of indigenous instruments. This resulted in many of Harris’ converts refusing to associate with any church. Such converts were encouraged to build their churches for worship (Krabill 1990). Krabill argues that the calabashes that Harris and his followers used were able to summon and capture fetish spirits. Common in all Harris churches was the interest in having local leaders and the emphasis on healing and the supernatural (Baur 1994). In his evangelistic work, his wives sang and played the *mfofa*. Harris inspired prophetism and was regarded as an African prophet. Shank (1986, 175) wrote that “there was a growth of ‘prophetism’, a kind of third way between traditional religion and the mission-planted churches. Their mode of worship was influenced by African cultural expressions of music and dance (Skelton 2010). Dealing with spiritual problems, including healing, was a hallmark of the Harris movement and this movement inspired the establishment of the AICs.

In this article, I examine the gendered roles associated with musical performances, power structures and spirituality, as expressed in the healing rituals of the TAC. The main aim is to discuss the cultural interpretations ascribed to the performance of gender in the healing ritual. I also examine the worldviews of the Akan that reflect on how the TAC deals with gender discourses in the performance of musical instruments. Many scholars have written about the role of females in traditional musical performances. Ampene (2005) has discussed extensively the role of females in *nwonkorɔ*² performances. Ebeli (2015) discussed the role of females in the performances of *totoeme*³ music by the Avatime people of the Volta region of Ghana. Johnson (1987), Anku (2009) and Burns (2009) have elucidated various roles of males and females in a musical sense.

I situate the article within Bem’s (1981, 1983) gender schema theory framework.

² *Nwonkorɔ* is an ensemble dominated by females and practised by the Akan of Ghana.

³ A musical type performed by Ewe females in various communities in the Volta region of Ghana.

The main question I seek to answer is: how is gender constructed and the gender roles ascribed to musical performances in the healing rituals of the TAC? Gender schema theory is a social-cognitive theory indicating the gendered notions of people within a society (Starr and Zurbriggen 2017). These gendered notions evolve throughout one's lifetime. The development of ideas about the meanings surrounding masculinity and femininity is what is referred to as gender schema. A gender schematic person organises his or her perceptions and processes them before concluding. The gender schema theory proposes that "the phenomenon of sex-typing derives, in part, from gender-based schematic processing, from a generalised readiness to process information based on the sex-linked associations that constitute the gender schema" (Bem 1981, 355). Sex-typing becomes a cultural construct that affects the individual or group of people regarding their conceptions and definitions of masculinity and femininity. This presents an "interconnection between sex role plans and certain environmental circumstances" (Sanday 1981, 56). Sex differentiations are key as some "cultures do construct such distinctions, for example, distinctions between those who are high caste and those who are low caste, between those who are inhabited by spirits and those who are not, between those who are divine and those who are mortal" (Bem 1981, 602). Although they are distinct in their conceptualisations, gender and sex are often used interchangeably. Whereas sex may dwell on biological or physiological characteristics of the male and female dichotomy, gender presents a wider framework based on beliefs, traits, norms, values and activities that differentiate males from females within a social and cultural system (Anselmi and Law 1998; Lips 2019).

A typical healing ritual in the TAC

Asare (2019) categorises the healing ritual of the TAC into five stages where the music serves as an important component. In the first stage, patients go through a process he describes as water-carrying, where they present basins of water to be blessed by a prophet healer for use later in the cleansing ritual. The performance of this ritual is led by the prophet-healer with singing. This musical prelude is exclusively performed by the prophet-healer. Prophet-healers argue that they perform the singing alone to put them in the mood for the ritual. The congregation takes over the singing after the prelude. In the second stage, there are ritual interrogations where the prophet-healer asks a series of questions and demands answers related to the cause of the illness from the spirit afflicting the patient. This is where musical performances are heightened for spirit possessions to take place. The third is the divination stage where the prophet-healer gains more knowledge about the illness and how to treat it. In the fourth stage, there is ritual bathing where prophet-healers bathe patients with the water they carried in the first phase. The ritual bathing is held together with music. Before the water can be used, it is blessed by the prophet healer. In the final stage, patients whose illnesses demand more attention are detained at the residence of the prophet healer for daily rituals (Asare 2019).

I visited the "garden" of prophetess Comfort at *Biriwa* near Cape Coast in the

Central region of Ghana. The “garden” is where the healing rituals take place. I met a few adherents who were preparing for the service. Four patients were residents in the “garden.” Similar to other healing rituals I witnessed elsewhere, it was open to all with several observers being present. These observers took part in the musical performances. A family had brought a girl whom they claimed had been sick (schizophrenia) for about two years. They claimed to have tried other means for her healing, including a visit to the hospital. The prophetess began the ritual with songs and then she recited prayers. The girl was able to go through the water-carrying process successfully. This was followed by intense musical performances that led to spirit possessions. After the spirit possessions of both prophet-healer and patient, interrogations began. The interrogations paved the way for the prophet-healer to know more about the cause of an affliction. The interrogations proceeded as follows:

Possessed patient: What do you want from me, what do you want from me?

Prophetess: I want you to tell me what you have done to this girl. Where are you from?

Possessed patient: Hmm...hmm...hmm...leave me alone. I do not owe you any explanation.

Prophetess: Speak! Where are you coming from? I command you to speak now.

Possessed patient: This girl has been offered to serve me all her life.

Prophetess: Why?

Possessed patient: She offended someone and the person reported to me to afflict her.

Prophetess: But who are you?

Possessed patient: I am the spirit of a great deity.

Prophetess: What exactly do you want from her?

Possessed patient: I want her to serve me.

Prophetess: And what if she can't serve you?

Possessed patient: Then she will remain like this. Why do you think she has not been healed after several attempts by her parents?

Prophetess: She is going through all of this because she has refused to serve you?

Possessed patient: She is mine and she has to serve or face the consequences of going mad.

Prophetess: Eii...Eii...Eii...you claim she is yours and you are causing her such pain all these years?

Possessed patient: You see? Instead of them bringing her home to me, they brought her here.

Prophetess: Well, she is not yours; she belongs to Jesus Christ so you can't do anything to her.

In the performance of music within the healing ritual, certain roles are gendered. The musical performances are mostly based on singing and playing of the *mfoba* and *dondo*. Singing is about sickness and it involves ululations and shouts (Asare 2019). The melodies are simple and short, and some of them are composed at the “spell of the moment” during the healing ritual. In the same way, harmonic structures are not determined and the individual is at liberty to harmonise a melody in the way he or she feels comfortable. Melodies can be harmonised by singing in thirds, fourths and in unison. Singing is always in the form of cantor and chorus with few pitches mostly between the four and seven-note scale. The cantor who leads the singing often improvises, with the chorus serving as a refrain. Within the performance, there are several counter singings interspersed with the lead vocal presenting an interlocking melodic and harmonic texture. The overlapping textures serve as ornamentations to the music where the singer shows off his or her vocal dexterity. In the ritual, every

sound is considered important for healing since it is believed to have been inspired by God. Performers and worshipers do not consider certain sounds ideal for healing, but adepts have described the *mfoba* as the instrument used to invoke spirits for healing. The *mfoba* sounds when it is shaken while the *dondo* sounds when the membrane of the drum is struck with a curved stick. Both instruments provide ostinato rhythms throughout the ritual. The *dondo* is held in the armpit and the strings are squeezed to produce a high sound and released to produce low sounds. These sonic structures and behavioural gestures constitute the healing ritual.

Gender and music in the Twelve Apostles Church

In Ghana, the participation of males and females in musical performances is characterised by the worldview of the Akan people. The Akan worldview refers to the indigenous conception, interpretation and understanding of themselves and their environment. I use Akan generically as the larger socio-cultural group, comprising different subgroups including the Asante, Fante and Bono. They share common worldviews. There is the belief in spirits (the supreme spirit and lesser gods) and that offending spirits can cause serious problems to the individual and the community at large. It is also believed that bad spirits such as witches and wizards are malicious and can cause illnesses. Some humans serve as intermediaries between the gods and the community. The gods are said to protect the people from malicious spirits, calamities and illnesses. The gods are invoked through musical performances. Agordoh (2010) describes the gods as music-loving and they are worshipped through sounds such as singing and the playing of specific instruments.

African scholars have argued on biological grounds (Burns 2009), on creative and artistic grounds (Ampene 2005; Anku 2009) and religious grounds (Aluede 2005; Friedson 1996) as far as gender and music in Ghana are concerned. For the Akan, the distribution of musical roles, musicianship, the playing of instruments, the ability to compose songs and general performance techniques, are gendered (Nketia 1974). Ampene (2005) elaborates on the musical roles of males (instrumentalists) and females (singers) in the Akan *Nnwonkorɔ* ensemble. This relationship “holds the key for understanding sexual identities and corresponding roles”, particularly within a ritual (Sanday 1981, 57). In the TAC, the contributions of males and females are seen as equally important to advancing the ritual experience. Even though musical performances in some ritual contexts are not balanced in terms of gender, the musical responsibilities in the healing rituals of the TAC are often complementary. The musical contributions from both males and females in the rituals of the TAC serve as a link between the natural and the supernatural. The contributions of males and females are equally important. This way of life characterises every aspect of Akan society.

The healing ritual is held together mainly by the prophet-healer who normally serves as the chief musician. Healers are either males or females and they serve as prophets and prophetesses in the church. In the “garden”, the prophet or prophetess leads every activity in the healing ritual and serves as an intermediary between spirits

and humans. It is interesting to note that the foundation of the church is built on the leadership of Grace Tani and John Nackabah, (Breidenbach 1978). Grace Tani, a traditional priestess, and John Nackabah, a traditional priest, were both healers using indigenous means through the help of their *abosom* (gods). The two “elders” carried out Harris’ practices when they finally established the TAC in 1914. Due to the focus on gender in this article, it is important to comment on Harris’ approach to healing.

Harris had two wives who were with him throughout his stay in Ghana. He mostly preached to the people about the “one true supreme God” and converted them by casting out evil spirits and baptising them. While engaging in this exercise, his wives provided the music – singing and playing rattles – to invoke the holy spirit (Krabill 1990). In the congregations with prophetesses as healers, they have their husbands and adult male children as drummers whereas those congregations with prophets as healers have their wives and adult female children as lead singers.

The concept of spirits is an important aspect of the healing rituals of the TAC. The church believes in spirits (the spirit of God and bad spirits). The church believes that the Christian God that manifests Himself as the Holy Spirit is more powerful than other spirits or gods. In the healing ritual, bad and evil spirits and the spirit of God are made to coexist with music. Spirit possessions are an integral part of the ritual. Illnesses are attributed to evil spirits and the TAC believes that the spirit of God takes control and drives away the spirit of affliction (evil spirit). These two types of spirits manifest themselves through music. Through heightened and continuous musical performances with repetitive rhythms of the *mfoba*, spirit possessions take place. In my observations, I realised that spirit possession was not exclusive to only healers and their patients. Possessions occasionally extended to many of the worshippers. Females were more susceptible to spirit possessions than males in all the healing rituals I witnessed. There were more female patients and healers than their male counterparts.

Gender roles in the healing ritual

The TAC defines and makes use of gender differentiation in diverse ways during the healing ritual. In the TAC, illnesses are categorised into various forms. The one basic to the worldview of the TAC is the *sunsum yar’ba* (spiritual illness) even though there are some illnesses believed to be treatable in hospitals (Breidenbach 1978). The TAC believes that evil spirits are responsible for certain kinds of illnesses. They claim that these illnesses cannot be treated in hospitals with modern medicine but only through specific rituals. The TAC believes that God is involved in every church activity, including healing. To call God through songs and invoke spirits with instruments indicates the important role of music during the healing ritual. Musical performances provide an insight into this God-man-spirit relationship.

The responses from the interviews indicate that gender roles in the musical performances of the healing rituals in the TAC are very important. Certain musical roles are exclusively assigned to females while others are for males. Yet, the musical roles of both males and females in the TAC are equally audible and visible. These

gendered roles are defined within certain cultural and religious systems. In most religious institutions in Ghana, males are at the forefront of leadership. Cultural and ritual notions that constrain females from performing certain musical roles contribute to the lack of leadership positions for females. For example, menstruation is believed to be destructive as far as female musical performances in a ritual context are concerned. Aluede (2005, 58) argued that “females are not expected to be at the forefront in religious matters.” However, in the TAC, most of the “gardens” are led and managed by females (prophetesses). Prophetesses are revered leaders of the TAC. I witnessed several situations where male congregants had to lie prostrate or bow as a sign of respect to such female leaders. The notion that females are restricted from religious roles because of their menstrual flow and are seen as “unclean” is not a major issue in the TAC.

Females may have to step aside when they are in their menstrual period but this does not prevent them from leadership roles. In the same vein, males who are drunkards are not allowed to occupy any leadership positions. Males who drink excessively are seen as people who can bring the name of the church into disrepute and are not assigned leadership roles. Ortner (1974) asserts that female subordination is a universal phenomenon. This is not the case with the TAC in Ghana even though male and female differentiations exist. For the TAC in Ghana, male and female differentiation in a musical sense is not about subordination but a ritual experience where gender roles are equally valued. For Koskoff (2014, 47), females’ musical roles in a ritual context position them as “both in and between the everyday world” and therefore to mediate is to intercede and negotiate. The mediation (interceding and negotiation) is mostly through songs that are largely initiated by females. In this sense, gender is looked at “both in and around music as expressive of a society’s arrangements as to power and authority” (Shapiro 1991, 8), where roles for both genders are expected to be fulfilled.

In describing the leadership approach of the TAC, spouses and children of the prophet-healer assume major musical roles which can be understood within the context of the Akan inheritance system. The Akan operate within a traditional social structure with a lineage group called *abusua* (a descent group with a common ancestor) which is related by and through blood. The *abusua* presents a matrilineal system of inheritance (Fortes 1950). In Akan families, “all rights to property, home, and common burial grounds are reckoned by descent through females” (Breidenbach 1979, 590). Nackabah acknowledged Grace Tani as the leader of the church even though he put the organisational structures together and gave the church its political framework. In this regard, the works of Grace Tani and John Nackabah were complementary. Even if the TAC is not based on kinship or the *abusua* system, it was and has been operating as if it is. In the TAC, children of prophet-healers largely take over from their parents and assume leadership of the church. They take on roles as healers and music leaders in the church. Even though a prophet’s son can take over from his father as a leader at the local level, it is different at the national level. At the national headquarters of the church, the main leader is chosen from the matrilineal line of Grace Tani and has always been a male. This means that the national leader’s children cannot be chosen as national

leaders even though they can have their own “gardens.” Instead, the nephews of the national leaders are eligible to occupy national leadership positions. This has been the leadership style as far as the national affairs of the TAC are concerned.

In Akan cosmology, many musical instruments assume supernatural status, which is determined mainly by the materials used in their construction. Certain drums are believed to be the hosts of spirits because of the wood and the animal skin used in their construction (Nketiah 1974; Wacksmann 1965). It is believed that the spirit of the animal and wood, mostly known as nature spirits, stays with the drum, so females are not allowed to play it in religious contexts, especially during their menstrual period. In the TAC, females are not allowed to play the *mfoba* during their menstrual period. Whereas drumming is exclusively played by males, the *mfoba* is played by males and females even though females dominate in the playing of the *mfoba*. In the practices of Prophet Harris, “his wives played on the rattles and sang songs to invoke the holy spirit” (Breidenbach 1974, 584).

Throughout my observations, I only saw females carry the *mfoba* (even though males played it, they never carried it) and men carry the *dondo*. I also did not see any woman carry the drum. Singing is mostly led by females with males occasionally initiating songs. Females sing about illnesses by creating new songs that address current issues regarding the healing ritual. Ululation and dancing are predominantly performed by females. Even though males are seldom leaders of songs and rarely engage in ululation and dancing, and females are seldom drummers, males and females do not express any regrets regarding such musically gendered roles. People take up musical authority through well-defined social roles giving them the authority to produce music.

The literature on possession and trance is expansive and, in most cases, intertwined even though they present different realities. Halperin argues that in a northern Brazilian dance ritual, trance and possession are not synonymous, but they all occur with some form of altered state of consciousness. Trance occurs when there is some form of psycho-physiological transformation of the body and a diminished self-awareness of the physical presence. Possession goes beyond psycho-physiological transformation and deals with “cultural religious conceptions defined via shared ritual practices and belief systems” (1996, 34). Despite this differentiation, trance and possession have been used interchangeably in different studies. For example, Bourguignon (1976) offers valuable insight when dealing with the issues of trance and possession. For Bourguignon, trance deals with a behavioural change whereas possession dwells on belief systems, while Rouget (1985) argues that possession is a religious experience in which spirits are prime elements. He explains how music is an essential element in this process but insists this reality is experienced with different components coming together. Stoller (1992) categorises possession in five forms, namely, functionalist, psychoanalytic, physiological, symbolic and theatrical. The connecting factor in all of these is the central argument that “the body is the focus of the possession phenomenon” (Stoller 1992, 56). It is within the possessed body of a medium that the socio-cultural space and the physical and symbolic changes of the spirit medium are understood.

Nketia (1957, 5) argued that “possession can be quickly induced and sustained through the use of special music closely correlated with specific forms of bodily actions.” For Nketia, possession could be experienced even outside the ritual context or in private. This is possible in most traditional Akan contexts, however, in the TAC, possessions are not privately experienced. Instead, possessions occur during organised public activities and rituals integrated with music and dance. The TAC that I studied specifically speak in terms of spirit possessions which are evident in their expressions. For example, they use expressions such as *sunsum afa’n* (taken over by a spirit) or *sunsum aba no do* (spirit or a medium). In the healing rituals of the TAC, possessions are encounters with spirits and the display of authority by healers through the spirit of God. Spirit possession is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is a source of knowing the cause of an illness, and a means to the provision of health and well-being. Spirit possessions become part of group dynamics and are functional, thereby reinforcing or undermining the idea of gender stereotypes in the TAC.

There is a belief that females are more susceptible to spirit possessions with few cases related to males (Ferber 2009; Igreja 2018; Spring 1978). Ferber (2009) gives an account of Nancy Caciola’s writing in the medieval era that postulates that male bodies were less attacked by evil spirits and represented the image of God and further says that females’ bodies were aligned to the devil hence the vulnerability of females towards spirit possessions. These are stereotypical observations. In spirit possessions within the healing rituals of the TAC, the personal identity of the possessed is taken over by spirits. In this case, the prophet-healer is possessed by the spirit of God and the patient is possessed by the spirit of affliction (bad spirit). In both possessions, the spirits take over the physical identity of the hosts and operate within their bodies. This is the socio-cultural understanding of spirit possessions in the TAC, where spirit possessions are only possible when the *mfoba* is played.

Conclusion

Gender dynamics within the TAC is a learned phenomenon based on interpretations and concepts about femininity and masculinity. Within the TAC, differentiations are centred on physical attributes such as reproductive functions, and the division of musical labour. These differentiations help the individual to process and assimilate information and draw meaningful conclusions. Gender differences affect the musical roles of males and females and performances within the TAC. These culturally-constructed gender roles are rooted in the Akan belief system that females are not supposed to perform on certain musical instruments. Members of the church learn these attributes as members of society and link them to the expectations around their sex. For the TAC, these present deeper cultural meanings that the contributions of males and females in the healing rituals are complementary.

The categorisation of males and females in terms of musical performances in the TAC is developed based on interactions between members of society. The gender schema evident in the TAC is based on their musical culture which is deeply based on

Akan belief systems. These musical practices of the TAC become gender schematic because it is based on a social context that becomes the central point of reference. Within this social context are institutions, norms, values and taboos that define a group of people and their behaviours. The gender schema theory largely deals with the cognitive process as a useful framework upon which knowledge about gender is framed. This means the schematic process deals with mental categorizations of gender that an individual develops and interprets. While the gender schema theory provides this useful framework, it fails to take into consideration other factors such as biological and religious influences that impact gender development. Processing and organizing information relating to gender in the mind alone becomes difficult to measure. This means that the biological understanding and religious frames of gender in addition to the cognitive argument related to the gender schema theory may offer a more nuanced perspective. Bem's gender schema theory fails to deal with issues around gender ambivalence that demonstrates the multidimensionality of the gender discourse. Thus, the conformity to female gender roles, attributes and expectations when the opposite male gender attributes are given greater social values. In the same way, males may see their roles ascribed to them in the society problematic. Bem does not address how an individual whether male or female develops a schema of the gender he or she is not to foster intergender relationships.

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