AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE OF AFRICAN MUSIC ARTICULATED IN ɔMPƐ MUSIC OF THE EFFUTU

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Abstract

Traditionally, the aesthetics of music is concentrated on the quality and study of the beauty and enjoyment of music. Through the writing of Kant, the ancient term aesthetics (sensory perception) received its present day connotation. The paper discusses the notion of aesthetic experience in an African context without overlooking the western concept of the beautiful and the sublime. The paper also suggests the utility of aesthetics in the classroom. The purpose of this paper is to explore the aesthetic experience in ɔmpɛ as an analytical tool. It looks at the choices or preferences that are exercised by music makers and music users and the ideas behind them. Data for the study was collected using observations, oral interviews and informal interactions. The research question that directs the discussions in this paper is: how does the ɔmpɛ music maker and user interpret the music in aesthetic terms. Findings indicate that the enjoyment and appreciation of music is conveyed diversely, and aesthetic experiences in music are tied to people's values and tastes.

Introduction

The aesthetics of ɔmpɛ (its sensual dimensions) shed light on the role of the individual in the cultivation of traditional moralities, values and an epistemology that carries over from the confines of society into the domains of everyday life including music making. The individual, after listening or watching a musical phenomenon, becomes an active agent and a vehicle for the establishing and maintaining moral and musical tastes. Aesthetic practices and experiences become the primary means through which ideologies are cultivated in the bodies of participants in the communities of practice.

In embodied practices of one such community in Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana, Nkwantanan, musical audience becomes a means for fashioning societal expectations.ɔmpɛ is a dance music performed by the Effutu people of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. ɔmpɛ is performed for entertainment, pleasure or recreation although it is performed at funerals and festivals. The ability to perceive, feel and respond emotionally, spiritually and intellectually to music is by no means confined to societies that verbalize the aesthetic dimension of their music or make it a subject of inquiry. It is widely shared and thus makes it possible, when cultivated, for the outsiders of a musical tradition to gain access to that tradition..

ɔmpɛ music of Winneba is performed by a recognized group, but community members who are familiar with the music and dance normally join the performance during social events in the community. In view of this, Chernnoff (1979) opines that it is a mistake to listen to African music because it is not set apart from its social and cultural context. The same view is articulated in Roberts (1972) that the concept of music as purely aesthetic experience is foreign to Africa. We are confronted with the problem of the status of aesthetics in African music and how it is expressed since it is difficult to disengage the study of aesthetics from Western assumptions.

Contrary to earlier views of some scholars such as Roberts and Chernoff, Akin Euba (1988) presents a persuasive argument against the notion that contemplative listening is foreign to Africa. His arguments are based on the study of Yoruba music in which he points out that some types of traditional music such as those associated with religion and chieftaincy are designed for listening and which fulfill the same role in art music of both Western and other cultures. Euba continues to argue that traditional music possesses aesthetic qualities similar to those found in contemplative music of the West. This is contentious because the process of composition, the media for performance, the intricate analytical systems, the cultural and social values of the Western performers and audience and a lot more aspects may not make the same impression on the African ear as European classical music would make on the European. This is not to write off the existence of aesthetics in African music.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to explore aesthetic experience in ɔmpɛ as an analytical tool - a way of looking at the choices or preferences that are exercised by music makers and music users and ideas or concepts behind them. Observations from this study may be applied to the musical aesthetics of other Ghanaian or African societies whose music is cultivated by oral tradition. Such ideas may be significant to other researchers since the ideas and orientations of music makers and music users provide important sources of information on the "state of the art" and the basis of investigation.

The research question that directs the discussions in this paper therefore is how does ɔmpɛ music maker and user interpret the music in aesthetic terms. Observation is the methodology for the study while oral interviews and informal interactions have been exploited for collecting data for the study.

In spite of uncertainties that surround the area of aesthetics (Nketia, 2005) its behavior is more widespread than it is generally recognized. Aesthetics is seen as a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of beauty, art and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty. It is sometimes referred to as judgments of sentiments and taste or as the science of sensory cognition. More broadly, scholars (Kant 1790, 1987; Holm, 2006; Danto, 2003) in the field define aesthetics as critical reflection on art, culture and nature. In the first definition, we note that beauty constitutes the focus of aesthetic inquiry. In the second and third the field has been broadened to other competing points of focus such as the aesthetic sublime, musical taste or a phenomenological approach to the study of aesthetic perception as legitimate perspectives.

Maquet (1979) asserts that when viewed fundamentally, in relation to perception and values, aesthetics is more 'universal' than the concept of art for art's sake. In like manner, Scruton (1974) observes that "there is such a thing as aesthetic interest", for "aesthetic is a roughly integral realm of human experience". The importance of perception as a cognitive frame for distilling musical arts, sense and data stem from the psychological necessity of first, having to identify the musical phenomenon before placing any form of sense experience on it. The identification of the musical phenomenon follows upon sensory impressions occurring in the form of sensation - which is an act of perception distinct from the sensation of hearing, tasting, seeing, feeling, and etc.

Several scholars, with keen interest, who carried out studies in the field of aesthetics in the last few decades include Merriam (1964) who sets out some (six) criteria against which he examined the presence or absence of aesthetics among the Flathead and the Basongye. Various other authors contributed to a publication edited by d'Azevedo (1975) in which Merriam (1975) presents the problem of aesthetics among the Bala musicians while Sieber (1975) examines the problem of definitions and the nature of aesthetic response. Also, Nketia (1984) argued a case for pursuing the study of aesthetics as 'a theory of art' and as 'a sensuously and cognitively perceived phenomenon.'

In another study, Gyekye (1996) discusses the nature of aesthetic values among the Akanspeaking societies of Ghana, highlighting important facts that characterize African aesthetic values and depict peculiarities associated with performative-art forms of dance, music, poetry and storytelling. He believes that African art is conceived in purely aesthetic as well as functional terms which are considered as pleasurable as they are

practical. In a more recent work Fiagbedzi (2005) gives an account of the notion of the aesthetics within the framework of the African musical arts viewed as a complex of performative-art forms. He focuses on the musical arts of the Ewe of Ghana that is phenomenologically created and articulated as individual events. He suggests that, musically considered, the aesthetic is normally discriminated in terms of various levels and kinds of responses: sensuously, cognitively and emotionally. It is inferred from the two latter works that the concept of musical aesthetics is couched in terms of functionality, symbolic significance and the purely aesthetic sense.

Aesthetics in Ethnographic Approach

Contemporary usage of the word aesthetics is embedded in Greek antiquity where it sprang from the tragic drama. Notwithstanding Plato's reserve about art making, (he deemed it to be 'dangerous') Aristotle held that art mimics life in that it represents human affairs by simulating human events. Through these imitations, Bathurst (2006) asserts, audiences could not only be educated, they could also experience catharsis and by responding emotionally to the story (musical performance in this instance) their psyche would be purified. For the Greeks art was a way of projecting the difficulties of daily existence onto the dramatic form, thereby transforming even the ugliest disasters into themes for a high delight (ibid). It could be deduced from the above that the centrality of the dramatic theatre to Greek life enabled a reflexive cathartic experience. It is this belief that an immediate sensate response could enable the audience to interpolate their life experience that lies behind the root word aesthetics which can be translated as perception. Therefore within the Greek context, aesthetics involved both an emotional, sensate reaction to the work of art, and perceptual associations with daily existence.

In music the word rehearsal implies reiteration where a work, or a passage in a piece, is continually revisited to refine performance such as the case in ɔmpɛ. There is nothing hidden in ɔmpɛ as the musical canon and contexts are well established. Nevertheless, there is distinction with each iteration, offering a unique and sometimes transcendent experience. In spite of the continual replication during rehearsal and organized performance sessions all witnessed by audience, ɔmpɛ traditional music performances create a vehicle through which individuals experience the sublime.

While there is a measure of agreement as to the subject matter of aesthetics, we find opposing methods of approaching it, which distinctly color all parts of the doctrine arrived at, and these impose different limitations to the boundaries of the subject. In

Frith (2004) three broad approaches to aesthetics are identified, each distinguished by the types of questions it treats as foremost: a) the study of aesthetic concepts, often specifically through the examination of uses of aesthetic language; b) the study of the states of mind-responses, attitudes, emotions-held to involved in aesthetic experience and c) the study of objects deemed aesthetically interesting with the view to determining what about them that makes them so. It must not be supposed, however, that any of the methods is customarily pursued in complete independence of the other.

One area of inquiry in aesthetics involves discussions regarding the nature of the art and the way in which perceivers interpret and attribute meaning to specific works. On other hand, the spotlight of this paper, aesthetic experience, in ethnography is concerned with the logic of sensation, (Bathurst, 2006) and it is a way of understanding day-to-day experiences within our communities. It is an endeavor which attempts to ground aesthetics in the context of everyday life especially in rural and traditional instances. In a traditional society such as the one in which ɔmpɛ was studied, aesthetics play a role in social networks and relationships and could be said that aesthetic experience in traditional musical arts is a viable resource for social action within the community. By the method, the researchers would have to bracket their research sites so that the relationship between aesthetics in the community and hegemonic forces outside it is not engaged.

A typical example of aesthetic study in ethnographic approach is Posterman's study of everyday aesthetics associated with festivals and fairs in the American Midwest (Posterman, 1995). She spent three years documenting major ceremonial events in the life of small communities. She went from region to region, town to town, café to café and from farm to farm for in-depth and formal interviews with participants. The result is a thorough description of the criteria used to produce goods for county fairs with a clear demonstration as to how these criteria also facilitate social life by providing a basis of evaluation and a set of rules for personal interaction.

Although challenging, the researcher is tasked to present a comprehensive account of aesthetic experience of music. This can be produced from critical observations and the reactions of both performers and audience to a musical piece proceeded by verbal interactions. Musical sounds do not have fixed meanings but there seem to be some enduring meaning assigned by the audience which attracts them to the art and generates reactions of various forms. Cognition and emotion are closely linked in music. This is marked in the interplay between expectations and the sounded events, which can be hypothesized to play a central role in creating musical tension or relaxation. In regards to the foregoing, Krumhans (2002) observes that listening to music is an

example of a stimulus that influences the perceiver's arousal level and mood, which can affect performance on a variety of cognitive tasks. We may then state that musical sound may evoke moods or images, may suggest yearnings, loss, or surprise, but these interpretations are far more subjective and open ended.

Aesthetic Experience in ɔmpɛ

According to Schwadron (1967:8) some form of communication occurs whenever there is contact with a musical event. To him the descriptions of such events are often quite vague and the derived "values" are usually explained on the basis of some non-artistic idea. Contrary to this view, I suggest that it is just in place to describe individual responses to a musical work they experienced subjectively in relation to mood generated by the musical work. The engagement of musical terminologies for such descriptions would render the exercise in the sphere of music criticism. But it should be noted that everyone does not have the technical language for such an endeavor. Hamblet (1988) indicates that aesthetic inquiry involves talk about art. In other words it is an examination of what is said about work of art. Accordingly, aesthetic inquiry consists of an examination of the nature of art and why individuals respond to art as they do based on what they say, that is, the meanings they give to art.

Aesthetic experience occurs as a result of an interaction between a particular subject who is the listener for example, and a given object, which is the particular musical work. During this interaction musical beliefs and understandings are applied, enjoyable moments and disappointments are noted, and critical judgments are voiced. An empirical account of one of the instance in aesthetic experience of traditional music will illuminate the line of thought in this paper. A subject, Ante Abena Dansowaa who was in her house at Nkwantanan, a suburb of Winneba while the ɔmpɛ group was having their rehearsal for a trip to *Kumasi* recounted her aesthetic experience to me when I visited her after the session. I had decided to interview her because I saw her dancing skillfully to some of the songs the group performed as she went about her household chores that evening. When I requested her to tell me the secret of her bliss that evening, she explained that the music from both the instruments and chorus was so captivating and soothing and that some of the songs she heard the group singing were the exact reflection of the feelings, perception and ideas she had about her adolescent children. As I spoke with her, she sent for one of her teenage daughters to come and listen to our conversation. She said that particular girl was the reason she was singing and dancing. When I asked her, which of the songs applied to the character of her daughter, she started to sing.

Mpre bɛba nkwan bɔwew	By the time you return the soup will dry up
ɔbaa basia edwamanba ei	You woman harlot
Mpre bɛba nkwan bɔwew	By the time you return the soup will dry up
ɔbaa basia sii siennie	You worthless woman
Mpre bɛba nkwan bɔwew	By the time you return the soup will dry up
ɔyɛmi nɔɔ nɔɔ nɔɔ ɔyɛmi nɔɔ	I am disgusted
Edwen dɛ mena huno wo dɛ	You think I have not seen that
Ahata wo amoansi	You have dried your loin cloth
ɔyɛmi nɔɔ	I am disgusted
ɔbaa suankyi kurɔnbɔn.	You woman, bed wetter.

I asked her what was wrong about the girl that called for this song. She replied: the girl was influenced by peer pressure and youthful exuberance to the neglect of her domestic chores that would mould her into womanhood. The mother narrated the occasion when she entrusted the household under the care of the girl one market day while away on her normal business activities. After school the girl left her siblings to famish and joined her peers. The mother of this girl, according to a neighbor, had tried her best to give her the necessary counsel for a girl growing up but she remained recalcitrant. This reiterates Meyer's position in Krumhans (2002) on the role of expectation in musical emotion. It is clear from the text of the song above that some points in the music engender strong expectations for continuity of societal values, or create a sense of tension and instability. On the other hand, there may be other sections of a musical piece which may fulfill expatiations, and hence, such units are perceived as closed off and completed.

Another subject who came to show appreciation to the cantor for his brilliant performance and choice of songs, Maame Suunaba, also recalled the situation in which a cousin, now her dependant, in their youthful days traveled outside the country without her parents' approval. She returned home after several years with a lot of wealth only to meet the demise of her beloved parents. Such was a typical example that called for this song, because her parents who were the soup or the backbone in her life had dried out or perished.

On the other hand, Ante Abena Dansowaa's daughter claimed that even though she has been watching ɔmpɛ performances which she enjoys and though she sings some of their songs she has not paid keen attention to their meaning. She then regretted her waywardness and promised to live a moral and upright life, after I had explained to her the values and responsibilities of a female adolescent. Thus, it was her understanding of her mother's aesthetic experience that stimulated the need for character reformation. It is thus quite interesting that many of the audience and participants of ɔmpɛ music and dance including Ante Abena Dansowaa have also reported, with remarkable consistency, that music and dance arouse feelings and emotions.

Succinctly stated, there may be an assumption that the aesthetic experience is a complex affair involving more than the search for the soothing musical moment. The fact that musical backgrounds, worldviews, beliefs and attitudes vary, introduces the problems of diversity of views all offering explanation of the aesthetic experience. During a particular musical performance, for instance, the experience of the lead singer/cantor may differ somewhat from the experience of the chorus and other performers or the listening audience. There are also a variety of experiences from performer to performer or from listener to listener.

This diversity of responses, which are sometimes difficult to make meaningful, need not introduce frustrating reactions. Reliance on information from diverse fields would therefore become essential. This is because, even when the text of a song is in plain there abounds plurality of responses. This would guide us to postulate that aesthetic judgments seem often to be at least partly intellectual and interpretative. It is what a thing means or symbolizes for us that is often what we are judging.

Considering the case of Ante Abena Dansowaa and her daughter, we would agree that the mother showed evidence of particular attention to the musical event, hence the interaction, which produced that reaction. On the other hand, her daughter heard the group rehearsing their music but was not bothered to pay attention. The girl, as a result of that attitude did not have any interaction with the event. It is therefore inferred from the ongoing discussion that aesthetic experience requires a concentrated direction of attention centered on the musical object. That is to say, the listener must be in total communication with the musical event, as well as the particular occasion. Attitude is therefore a primary characteristic of the aesthetic experience and deserves further attention.

When one gets into contact with a musical event, some interaction goes on which produces emotional response. Although very little is known about this emotional response and its relation to the stimulus, there is substantial evidence that it exists.

Evidence that it exists at all is based largely upon the introspective reports of listeners and the testimony of composers, performers and critics. Other evidence about the existence of emotional response to music is based upon the behavior of performers and evidences and upon the physiological changes that accompany musical perception. Among the performers themselves a musical piece is considered too fast or slow; too low or high in pitch; a distorted time line from the bamboo player; a good/lively chorus response; a sweet voice by the cantor, etc.

A cross section of the audience interviewed reported of having some emotional feelings during the performance. Sometimes they had excitement and other times a feeling of grief. They also spoke of the music drawing them into the dancing arena to express their feelings. Although the volume and intercultural character of this evidence compels us to believe that an emotional response to music does take place, it tells us nothing about the nature of the response or about the causal connection between the musical stimulus and the affective response it evokes in the audience.

The difficulty with this evidence is that it yields no precise knowledge of the stimulus, which created the emotional response. Because music flows through time, the audiences are generally unable to pinpoint the particular musical process, which evoked the affective response that they describe. They are prone, therefore, to characterize a whole song, passage or section. In such cases, the response might be made to those elements of the musical organization, which tend to be constant, like tempo, general range, dynamic level, instrumentation, and texture. What these elements characterize are those aspects of mental life that are so relatively stable and persistent, namely, moods and associations.

The performance of ɔmpɛ music and dance provides an opportunity for dealing in the dimensions of time and space. It creates an event where through active participation within a group, one may contemplate and reflect upon one's particular life situation. In a sense, the singing of ɔmpɛ songs, and dancing to the music is a type of "slow motion" communication. Time avails itself whereby participants use the opportunity to see complex parts of an action, analyze it and then make their own decisions as to its particular application.

In order to grasp the aesthetic experience, we shall identify briefly three major areas that integrate and interact within the overall performance of ɔmpɛ music and dance. The three dimensions are the affective, cognitive and behavioral. These three dimensions do not exist in isolation from one another. Rather, they are mutually interrelated and mutually influential.

Briefly, the affective dimension includes a person's attitude which may be either positive or negative toward undertaking a given action consistent with beliefs in a particular set of circumstances. It functions within the full arena of emotions and feelings toward a decision or action. The affective dimension was evident at Apam, a fishing community in the Central Region of Ghana during a funeral reception for guests and sympathizers where I interviewed 26 spectators and participants. In the middle of the performance, the master drummer requested that the bamboo player be changed due to rhythmic inconsistency. From the standpoint of the ɔmpɛ instrumentalists, the bamboo and castanet provide the time lines for all other instruments and the chorus, hence any rhythmic inaccuracy from them could be chaotic for the performance. According to the master drummer, he was struggling to execute his regular patterns since the time line provided by the bamboo player did not permit him to make the right entries.

The cognitive dimension, on the other hand incorporates a person's main storehouse of facts and knowledge including "those things that people hold to be true with respect to a given subject matter or action" King (1989, p.210). In another instance, to demonstrate the cognitive dimension, the dexterity of the master drummer whose instrument has the image of a woman's breast, won the admiration of many who flooded him with gifts as they danced to the music. Impressions sampled from twelve of those participant observers about the figure indicated that it represents a woman as an agent of peace and love in society. Others remarked that women are crucial to the enjoyment of a social activity, while another school of thought has it that the image of a woman on the drum represents fertility, beauty and excitement. Also, a middle aged woman joined the dancers to express the emotions evoked in her when the song *"Mɔhwe wo"* (lit. I will take care of you) was being performed. Her reaction to the song was very emotional. Interacting with her later, she recounted her ordeal now for giving up her dreams of becoming a nurse due to her father's death despite assurances from relatives during the funeral. Contrarily, two young women among the respondents claimed although they enjoyed the music because it was "cool" or "*bɔkɔɔ*" (moderate in speed) they felt shy in the dance arena when they sited the sculptured figure. This buttresses Meyer's proposition quoted in Krumhans (2002) that expectations play a central psychological role in musical emotions. It is likely that music acquires its emotional meaning by association with consequential events. Particular pieces of music are often connected to significant personal memories as indicated in the two accounts earlier.

The final dimension, the behavioral dimension, deals with the intention of a person to act upon the attitudes and beliefs under consideration within a communication event. Many sympathizers at Agona Swedru also in the Central Region of Ghana articulated their impressions about ɔmpɛ music. I had the opportunity to interact with eighteen

audience-participants. One remarkable instance to illustrate the behavioral aspect was that one elderly man danced to the admiration of the audience to a song that touched on moral issues. The lyrics with the English translation are as follows:

Esiaba nana, Esiaba nana	Esiaba's grand daughter
ɔbaa yi maafa no o	I have had sex with this woman
Pɔn enum	Five pounds
Onyi hɔa	If she is not around
No kun mbɛgye, ɔmpɛfo e	Her husband should come for it; ɔmpɛ group members
Ei! Ama Esiabae	Ei Ama Esiaba
ɔba yi maafa no	I have had sex with this woman
Pɔn enum	Five pounds
Ayifar nokun mbɛgye.	As compensation, her husband should come for it.

His non-verbal articulation of the aesthetic values in ɔmpɛ was obvious. He attracted gifts and other forms of appreciation from the audience. He later came to present a bottle of gin to the ɔmpɛ group for their thrilling and classic performance. For his perception about ɔmpɛ music he said to me: "I was moved by their choice of songs. The lyrics are educative and philosophical; and their cantor has a sweet voice. My daughter, they made me happy."

The issue becomes multifarious when discussing aesthetic experience and attitude to a musical event. Nonetheless, there is the need to distinguish between two different actions. There is first of all one's attitude toward the music sound itself and secondly to its various components such as text, costume, dance, and other visual forms. In ɔmpɛ these can be measured by one's willingness to participate in the actual production of the music and dance event since the three dimensions under discussion are interrelated and influence each other. More so, the ɔmpɛ music maker seems to have constituted some qualitative properties of music which are worked into the musical art form in its articulation. The performer therefore interprets and conveys these properties in his musical communication to the audience or other participants for judgment or response to the event. It is evident here that aesthetic judgment in ɔmpɛ rests on philosophical principles tested by life experiences.

Among the three dimensions, the most readily recognized area where music and dance exert influence is in the affective dimension. The strong suit of music as found in song and instrumentation, and dance remain initially in this dimension where general yet profound emotions are elicited and attitudes are shaped. The ability of song and

instrumental music to influence participants in this affective dimension is certainly true in ɔmpɛ music. The response to ɔmpɛ music especially, in a song form is almost immediate and spontaneous in several instances. A typical example occurred when former President J.A. Kuffour, during the sod-cutting ceremony at Winneba junction in April, 2003 unfolded the intention of the then government for the people of Winneba in terms of development.

To register their gratefulness and delight on behalf of the Effutu, the cantor of the group raised the song "Yɔɔ, yɔɔ yɔɔ, yɔɔ" as the president ended his speech and paced towards the podium for his seat. Everyone participated spontaneously and enthusiastically as the sound of percussion instruments augmented the applause. The atmosphere turned electric. One would wonder how it was that the group members as well as some audience responded so instantly and overwhelmingly. The response to the presentation was more than resounding. The Effutus are so positive toward music and that a positive attitude is more readily observed in their response and willingness to participate in the event.

It is obvious in the above situation that music is used to demonstrate a reaction to an object (the speech). It is evident from the foregoing that aesthetics examines our affective domain responses to an object or phenomenon. Although everyone at the ceremony has his/her taste and understanding of the 'good news' for the community and the cantor could not impose his judgment on any one, the beauty of the musical response attracted the audience. While music can be appreciated in terms of beauty it can also be used to appreciate other phenomena.

Aesthetic Judgment

Several aesthetic theories have been propounded over the years. Among these are the theories of beauty approached in metaphorical terms, theories of meaning, aesthetics of emotion just to mention a few (Nketia, 2005). The most popular among them is the theory of beauty which is widely accepted and often quoted definition of aesthetics because it is believed that auditory and visual models of perception lead to a form of aesthetic appreciation that is more structured and descriptive than perception through other senses (Scruton, 1974). Contrary to this view some scholars (Dahlhaus, 1982 cited in Nketia, 2005) think that "beauty was not the starting point for the discipline of aesthetics, but rather a piece of evidence in an argument aimed at justifying the emancipation of sensuous perception.

Nketia (2005) tries to explain approaches to aesthetics as "theory of works of art" by citing Apel (1964) as stating that "music may be aesthetically satisfying without being beautiful. This is the aesthetic experience about which Ante Abena Dansowaa reports in her contact with ɔmpɛ music and dance. Although there were no costume and props she was emotionally satisfied. Her words "ndwom no kaa m'akoma" (the song touched my heart) indicate her sensuous interaction (feeling) with the music of ɔmpɛ. This inference was taken from Nketia (2005) who follows a similar line of reasoning earlier advocated by Kauffman (1969) and Kaeppler (1969) as they were concerned that aesthetics should not be approached only in visual terms as "beautiful in music", but also in terms of tactility and indeed the interaction of all senses. Consequently, Kaeppler (ibid) comes out clearly to suggest that for the purposes of ethnomusicology, aesthetics should be considered as "ways of thinking about art"- art in her terms being "the cultural forms that result from creative processes which manipulate movement, sound or materials".

The performance of ɔmpɛ music contains visual and movement aspects in the form of costume, props, dance gestures and some forms of orderly presentation. ɔmpɛ performance can then be described as beautiful when these aspects dominate or form the focus of an observer's attention. In consonance with earlier advocates for the interaction of all senses, I suggest that attention should not be focused on apparent surface structures only, but also on the impact the music makes on the individual through such structures or the intensity of feeling it generates.

Looking at aesthetic experience among the Effutu in western terms of the beautiful, the Effutu or the Fante, like the Akan studied by Nketia (1984) and the Ewe studied by Fiagbedzi (2005), draw on the sense of sight to describe visual components of art works. In this regard, dance gestures performed by an ɔmpɛ dancer can be referred to as fɛw (beautiful) in Effutu and Fante. Nevertheless, they distinguish between aesthetic responses to the eye and to the ear. In this regard, a melodious song by the cantor received a comment like ɔyɛ dɛw (it is sweet); ɔyɛ asowa mu dɛw (it is pleasant to the ear) while a good dance movement attracted remarks such as ɔyɛ fɛw (it is beautiful or nice/ good or pleasant) ɔyɛ enyiwa do fɛw (it is pleasant to the eye).

It is observed from the foregoing that if a musical component of the musical arts event is singled out for aesthetic comment, the descriptive expression used would draw on the sense of taste, and not on the sense of sight. For instance a melodious song in Fante/ Effutu is dɛw (sweet) referring to what the English man would term "beautiful". The term 'beautiful' is considered discriminatory and limiting among some ethnic groups. The term 'beautiful' in some Ghanaian cultures such as the Ewe, refers to a feminine appraisal: a good looking woman is beautiful (edze tugbe) while a good looking man

is handsome (edze deka) (ibid). The Effutu/Fante, nevertheless, use the term fɛw for a thing pleasant to the eye. Since music produces sound and appeals to the ear, the Effutu/Fante vocabulary draws on the sense of taste, dɛw (sweet) to give judgment to musical sound. The cantor's good or melodious voice was described as *ndze dɛɛdɛw* (sweet voice) by a spectator to one of ɔmpɛ performances.

Although the aesthetic quality of musical sounds may not involve the physical manipulation of other senses of touch and sight directly, the very same senses are indirectly appropriated at the perceptual level, including the senses of hearing, movement and balancing. Speed levels are described in terms of fast (ntsɛm) such as edze ndwom no rutu mbirika (you are running with the song) or slow (bɔkɔɔ) as in iri twintwan do (you are dragging it)

It is inferred from the ongoing discussion that the word fɛw refers to only things that can be seen. Therefore fɛw is restricted in application. Nevertheless, it is the word fɛw being extended from the visual to accommodate behavior and character among the Akans of Ghana (Nketia, 1984, 2005) as well as the Fante. The word fɛw is therefore applicable to visual components of a performance or what we see physically and to aural phenomenon, dɛw. Such limitations posed by the language usage can be surmounted if ethnomusicologists can broaden the basis of aesthetic rationalization. We should therefore be thinking of the vocabulary we use to discuss our art forms and not the senses.

Considering the languages in Ghana to be specific, we will admit that certain theories will not apply in the African approach in aesthetics. Theories based on beauty to be precise, cannot be applied to African senses, since certain words (terms) we normally use have different connotation. An example is the term bɔkɔɔ/brɛw used for both speed (slow) and dynamic (soft) levels in Fante/ Effutu. A performance steady in tempo, gentle and restrained in energy level is described as bɔkɔɔ/brɛw, and the same word is used to connote the intensity of volume which means soft to touch in English referring to something else other than music. The time is long overdue for ethnomusicologists to explore and fall on our languages to pick up vocabularies that fit the description of ways of aesthetic response in order to present ideas and theories adequately.

Aesthetic judgments usually go beyond sensory discrimination which is linked to one's capacity for pleasure. Viewer interpretations of beauty possess two concepts of value: aesthetics (the philosophical notion of beauty) and taste (the result of an education process and awareness of elite cultural values learned through exposure to mass culture). According to Kant (1987), beauty is objective and universal. Thus certain things are beautiful to everyone. On the other hand delicacy of taste is not merely "the ability

to detect all the ingredients in a composition", Hume (1987), but also "our sensibility to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind".

Hence, in musical aesthetic inquiry, statements on a performance are examined as to their logical and rational truth and their persuasive power. An analysis of one's experiences, a study of what aestheticians have said, and an examination of different cultural definitions of arts are undertaken for the purposes of developing aesthetic and perceptual acuity and, hence, aesthetic experiences (Broudy, 1986; Greene, 1986). Since the aesthetic experience occurs within the audience to a musical objects and is not literally in the object itself, the individual must have the ability to respond aesthetically in a variety of musical contexts.

Aesthetic Value of Music

The aesthetic value of music cannot be underestimated anywhere including Africa. There are attributes that make a musical performance "good", and these attributes are culturally constructed. An earlier observation has been made in this regard that music does not have the slightest aesthetic worth if it is not socially true (Adorno, 1962:197; Silberman, 1963:68). Some scholars in contemporary times have also argued that any particular kind of music can only be understood in terms of the group or society which makes and appreciated that music (Shepherd et al: 1977). In view of this, we need to recognize that the extent to which the internal structures of music articulate the wider social context in which it is composed and performed is problematic due to culture specifics.

Sensory discrimination is linked to capacity for pleasure. Thus, the value of beauty and taste is manifest in the aesthetic response demonstrated by Ante Abena Dansowaa. She was not the only one in the neighborhood who heard the sound of ɔmpɛ music, but her reaction to the music was outstanding because everyone has his/her own (sense of) taste as a result of cultural exposure. Her attention, according to her, was attracted by the sweet penetrating voice of the cantor that rendered the call, the lively chorus and the soothing instrumental music. She then listened for the words which are familiar to her and evoked in her emotions she could not explain. Although she could not talk about other elements of the song her taste was the melody of that particular song which mirrored the parental trauma that confronts her. It can therefore be said that our view of beauty is not based on innate qualities only, but also on cultural specifics and individual interpretations.

Utilizing Music Aesthetics in the Classroom

This criterion refers to the usefulness of music aesthetics to music students and teachers. Music education generally focuses on music as an aspect of the national culture. Its aim, according to Flolu and Amuah (2003), is to develop in the future generation the productive, perceptual and reflective abilities in art, through the medium of music. With regards to the use of aesthetics in education, Garretson (1988) states that, one of the principal justifications for the inclusion of music in the school curriculum is its aesthetic values. Music in the basic classroom should provide opportunities for all children to be exposed to a variety of musical experiences and should be encouraged to talk about musical performances. This can be successfully achieved through the acquisition of vocabulary for appreciating music. Regardless of the difficulty in talking about a musical work, children need to be exposed to the basic elements of music and dance which are the focus of attention in aesthetics.

A musical performance may have visual and movement aspects which can be described as beautiful when they dominate the focus of attention of the observer, but without such visual emphasis music is not normally appraised in terms of its apparent surface structures. This follows the line of reasoning by Nketia (2005) in his assertion that music is appraised in terms of the impact it makes through such structures or the intensity of feeling it generates. Students of music also need to know the constituents of a beautiful musical performance in terms of sonic, sensual and visual qualities. Teachers may have to draw on their local philosophy to systematically deal with aesthetic concepts in the classroom.

The capacity to say whether a piece of music is low in pitch, fast in tempo, soft in terms of dynamics, is crucial to aesthetic judgment. In consonance with the assumption held by Nketia (2005) for approaching aesthetics as an analytical tool, teachers must endeavor to help learners look at preferences that are exercised by music makers and users and the ideas behind them. This can provide a scope for making critical statements of a different order beyond descriptions of structure and elements of structure. Listening and observing, a vital pivotal cord for music aesthetics, is already given prominence in the music syllabus for basic schools in Ghana. It is therefore incumbent on teachers to help learners understand the elements of a music and dance event.

Teachers must, above all, provide opportunities for listening and watching musical performances either on video, audio or live performances which serve as outlets for appreciating and responding to the art. Learners will then be asked to say why they responded to the music in the manner exhibited in class. Another approach is by

having group or individual performances in class after which questions, comments and contributions will be invited from the members of the class for aesthetic judgment. In this type of lesson children could be asked to play various instruments simultaneously or individually and then asked to describe the quality of sound using words such as low, high, light, heavy and so on. Also, an organized visit to a local festival could expose learners to all aspects of the cultural aesthetic components of a traditional music event. An oral session to discuss the musical event will promote the children's ability to appreciate music in linguistic terms. Thus the study of aesthetics in music could be an extension of the investigation into different aspects of music and its socio-cultural context.

Conclusion

The paper has discussed the controversy of aesthetics in African music and looked at how the Effutu music maker and user appreciate and interpret their music. Among the Effutu people, music is always seen as inseparable from human existence in that it carries long traditions and values that are associated with the people and represents part of their identity. Findings are that, the Effutu society has her criteria or scale to judge a good ɔmpɛ performance in totality, while individual performers also can be singled out for appraisal as in the case of an excellent master drummer versus a castanet player who is not steady on his patterns. In spite of societal musical attributes based on reason, personal tastes and emotions cannot be ruled out. It is also observed that people's preferences, values and tastes are tied to cultural factors such as worldview, gender, age, family, moral and economic situations.

Another important observation is that the Effutu (African) people show their enjoyment and appreciation of music quite differently from West Europeans. Audiences appreciate music in Africa by participating in it or through many interactive means. We however argue that, what we call aesthetics in music in terms of beauty and the sublime belong to music criticism while aesthetic study is a matter of inquiry about an individual's response to a musical work, not responses elicited by a musical work or performance. Aesthetics is an activity in which one engages and this is experienced in a work of art. From the elucidation of the paper it could be said that musical works, or art can provide unique, intense experiences that entail perception of visual and aural qualities integral to the musical phenomenon being experienced.

From the foregoing exposition, it has been noted that every language has beauty but when it comes to aesthetic response the Effutu use other terms. With regards to the issue of musical emotion we could postulate that music is something to be felt (Nketia,

2005). For instance, feeling in terms of music is different from feeling in the sense of bodily feeling. It was also found from the accounts of the two women that meanings congruous to those preferred by the dominant culture are articulated within the experience; and the consciousness of a smothered social group may be brought to the surface and transform the original discourse. For its utility in the classroom suggested activities are outlined for the teacher while being cautious of children's creative abilities.

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