

Semiology in the Costumes of Ekpo Performance in Ibibioland

Stephen Asuquo Umoh

Department of Performing Arts

Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa

stephenumoh001@gmail.com 08132780173

Abstract

Civilization has sponsored a great shift in interest and patronage of African Ritual Drama. Thus, it suffers gradual extinction, especially as the advent of education and technology pervades the globe in diverse and interesting ways. Presently, the custodian and operations of ritual theatres are perhaps limited to very few faithful of African traditions who are still active and consistent in the practice. Many ritualistic theatres are gradually losing lofty patronage as it used to be in the early milieu of pantheon worship. This paper recognizes that the shift in interest is not far from the modern dynamics and social change which also regulates the 21st century religious practices. Adopting a qualitative research approach, this study makes use of personal interviews, direct and participatory observation to source and analyze data. The findings of this study suggest that African Heritage can achieve social relevance when it consistently finds strong presence in human consciousness. Additionally, the appearance of a masked character is figurative to a given cultural symbol as communicated by the entire costume construction, ranging from the mask, coverings, props, makeup and other accessories thus enabling a wider understanding of the traditions, rituals and norms of these performances.

Key Words: Costume, Ekpo Society, Mask, Rituals, Symbols

Introduction

Ekpo society is an influential society still active and practiced in Ibibio, Annang and few other ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State. It is often rated as one of the most influential and secretive traditional cult by historians perhaps due to the strong ritualistic practices, myth and mystiques involved. The production processes of Ekpo performance involves many relevant aspects put together through intensive rehearsal, ritual performances, musical rendition and all the necessary considerations in the pre-production process. However, these preparatory arrangements cannot put up a successful performance without a deep consideration in the area of costumes. In other words, the entire production process of a typical enactment of masquerade performance may amount to total futility without a genuine incorporation and intensive preparation of costumes.

The unusual and frightening appearance of a masked character is prominently achieved and presented through the costume design. Thus, all ancestral connotations are channeled through the necessary design elements displayed on the costumes.

As observed in a collection of some materials published on a related subject, only a few costume materials such as machetes, mask, raffia, gung, leaves, baskets etc which are common and almost peculiar to African masquerading performance system are referenced. The subject matter often discussed on Ibibio masquerade activities are; the

social responsibilities of Ekpo society in the pre-colonial and post-colonial era, ritualistic practices, mythology, ancestrality, relevance of mask and masking activities, the Ibibio cosmology, the ancestral bond, codes and dances however, only a few public material give little descriptive attempt on the costume patterns of each of these masquerades and their respective cultural symbols and connotations. Ideologically, the ancestral validity and cultural potency of Ekpo performance depends on the communication power and the total comprehension of the audience.

This paper will look at a good number of Ibibio masquerades, their patterns of mask, costume design, make-up and props on the basis of the cultural symbols express through costumes.

Mask and Masquerading in Ibibio Society

Mask and masquerading though may be used relatively, are terms answerable to different concepts and applications. Mask can be referred to as an artistic object or a cultural artifact used for the purpose of masking while masquerading is a process of utilizing mask in a way to hide ones true identity and emotion. Mask as a strong component of costume design is diverse in forms and types. Some of these types include the fashion mask which is more likely used to accompany or complement costumes in carnivals and other ceremonious events, surgery mask used by medical practitioners in clinics and hospitals, diving mask used by swimmers, punitive mask meant for persecutions and welding mask used by welders and plasmids. There are other forms of mask worn primarily for disguise. These types of masks include cultural mask such as mask for masquerading performances, robbery mask used by armed rubbers oriental mask often worn by clowns. It may also be ideal to note that facial painting is another form of masking. Anyebe confirms this opinion submitting that “Mask is seen from the premise as a device designed to be used for hiding the personality of the wearer” (79).

The importance of mask in African masquerading performances can be relatively observed in the opinion of Fedigan who claims that “The important varieties of masked plays in south eastern Nigeria are the Ibo and Ibibio ghost plays. They are prominently enacted by dancers wearing true mask right on their faces and elaborate costumes. The masks have conventional meanings. Some are represented as masculine, some are feminine, some are fierce, some comic and some beautiful. The comic mask amused by clowning whereas the fierce ones are made to frighten (5).

Ebong remarkable classifies Ekpo mask as “Artistic embodiment of a tradition, the accumulated heritage of a peoples cosmology and primeval, a symbolic cultural expression of the psycho-physical bond which exist between the society as a corporate entity and innumerable ancestors, gods, and other cosmological or mythological presence and beings” (2). It is through the process of masking that people can celebrate, reaffirm and guarantee the community of an order that is consecrated by tradition. Ekweariri relatively opines that “mask is a tool of impersonation, at once hiding the face of the performer to that of a spirit which according to traditional beliefs is found in nature and in humans and animals” (75).

However, it may be agreeable to say that masks in Ibibio are carved and designed symbolic to spirits of the ancestors. In such cultural displays, a masked dancer is no longer himself but a spirit he particularly represents. Ebong sees Ekpo mask as far beyond a mere facial covering but also as “an embodiment cosmological Paradox, force vital with awesome metaphysical and socio aesthetic irradiation about it.”

Masquerading involves the process of hiding ones identity to replicate another character belonging to a spiritual world. Masks for masquerading in Ibibio are designed mainly in human forms. Only few Ibibio masks are made in animal forms. Mask in Ibibio are more often represented in more uglier forms than beautiful on the belief that masquerades are epiphany creatures of their departed ancestors who invest their interest in resolving communal issues and rendering justice to people who violate the norms of the community. According to Udo, “Ekpo masquerade is generally understood in Ibibio as ghost or spirit of people who died in the world and transit into the underworld’ this is the more reason its masks are built in a way it can heighten the sense of fear in the minds of non-initiates” (127). It is in the light of these facts that Akwang confirms that Ibibio Masquerade is a virtual contemplation often chemical and the stupendous. Its forms and styles are an intensification of grotesque ugliness that can generate emotions of fear, terribleness, distance and power” (42). John messenger also makes his observations on the concept of Ibibio Mask design adding that “a deceased person who had led a good moral life is represented by a beautiful mask when he re-visits his family and one who had led an evil life is impersonated by an ugly mask” (102). This is to say that the masks designed for Ibibio masquerading are constructed towards the idea of moralities. The relevance of mask to the socio-cultural and religious aspects of Ekpo performance in Ibibio cannot be under emphasized even in our present civilized era because they are purely repositories of history and culture. Like every traditional society in West Africa, the Ibibio have a robust tradition of masking activities that are diverse in forms and culturally manifested through occultic organizations. The masks are diverse in forms and in categories. These masks are often wooden and very few masquerades in Ibibio go without wooden mask. Masks just like costumes are perhaps indispensable element of masquerading performances in the interpretation of symbolic statements expressed in the performance

Historical Review of Ekpo Nyoyoho Society in Ibibioland

Though some writers are of the opinion that the origin of Ekpo society is shrouded in mystery, the emergence of this secret society and its traditions have been indicated in the works of many other writers. Masquerade tradition is perhaps man’s greatest artistic invention prominently conceived as an artistic expression of his tradition. In Ibibio, Ekpo society aroused out of the necessity for communities to provide a means of enforcing their norms and having people conform to it. Ekpo society was founded on the belief of life after death; regarded as souls of ancestors returning to the land of the living to share with their kinsmen. This was steamed on the belief of maintaining a spiritual connection between the human world and that of the ancestors. Udo submits that “law enforcement agencies in pre-colonial era were secret societies. Nothing was more characteristics of the Ibibioland that the institution of secret societies” (65). The word Ekpo in English means ‘Ghost’ and it is generally believed that all ancestors are invincible rulers of every community in Africa.

Hence, their attention is inevitably needed in every human activity in the community. Umanah also adds that “the spirit of the dead ancestors particularly house heads are very much involved in the activities of their living descendant. They are believed also to control their fortunes, afflict those who fail to give that offering or violate the norms of kingships” (67). It is in the belief system of Ibibio tradition that ancestors are vested with mystical powers and authorities. Although dead, they still retain a functional role in the world of the living, rewarding obedience and punishing the deserved. In order to maintain these communal sanity and discipline, Ekpo society was created. Esen contributively suggest that, “the position of the ancestors in the community, motivated the elders to establish Ekpo society in order to enforce norms on their behalf” (98). Thus, it is believable that Ekpo society was founded as a judicial agent on the basis of enforcing laws and orders in their various communities and its mask were carved mainly symbolic to justice and fear. Udo re-affirms this suggestion adding that “Ekpo masks are usually carved to resemble specific individuals between the ages of 50 and 60 who has a reputation for upholding orders, justice and principles but also tough and uncompromising. Men with courage to fight social deviance with the limits of traditional rules” (12). Ekpo society was not only used to regulate laws and justice but also provided an outlet for youths to channel their energies into activities more beneficial to their communities. Akpan adds that, “the ability of Ekpo to exact obedience from men and women stems from the violent way in which the mask characters impersonating the ancestors are licensed to behave” (27). Ekpo Ibibio could descend irresistibly upon any individual or group bold enough to disobey the orders of the community. Sacred forests were set aside for these masquerades and these forests were believed to be inhabited by spirits of the ancestors and other people were not allowed to go close to such forests. Penalties following such violations were death. Every village was a subject to its adjudications during the masquerade season. However only members participated in their rituals and secret practices which prepared them fully for their role. Secrets were made expressible in non-verbal codes beseeched to protect the new initiates. Only secrets appropriate to the ranks are revealed and the new initiates are made to swear an oath of secrecy to it. It is after this initiation that these new members learn the mode of communication and also partake in their secret activities. It is observed in some related accounts that the initiation into the higher ranks is highly secretive and cannot be disclosed to a non-initiate except in cases of initiation into any of these ranks. Secret societies are structured on the basis of initiation and secrets. Secrecy is the driving force of every secret society in the world and this is the reason why no member of any secret society dares to divulge their secrets to a non-member.

Dance and Orchestra

The Dance Movements of Ekpo Nyoho are artistically arranged to conform to the rhythm of the orchestra. Akwang maintains that, “Ekpo masquerade always display a variety of adroitly devised dances that also includes satirical revues, intricate foot pattern and body movement perfection are harmonized and realized through series of sustained rehearsals.” (41). Ibibio Masquerades are usually accompanied by an energetic instrumentation evinced from a rich set of musical ensemble. Dance and music play a major role in Ekpo performance. The music that accompanies Ekpo performance derives from an

orchestra of traditional musical instruments that is incomplete without the inclusion of Eka Ibid (a large skin drum) and Ikon Ikpa (a set of small drums tuned to rhythm of pentatonic scales). These are the most significant instruments which manipulate the rhythmic sounds used to enable the dance movement of these masquerades. A particular sound of drumming introduces a very different form of dance step. Since masquerades do not use human speeches, their mode of communication is channeled through this instrumentation. The audience members partake and share in this understanding. In a situation where a very frightened masquerade is about to perform, such signals are programmed through a change in drumming and rhythm and a non-initiate upon hearing this development vacates the premises knowing the emerging masquerade. The recent introduction of Ikon Eto into the orchestra of EkpoNyoho in few Ibibio communities today is purposed to harmonize and enrich the rhythmic tunes of Ikon Ikpa in the entire instrumentation. The drumming equipments most likely to be found in the orchestra of EkpoNyoho includes, Eka Ibid (large skin drum), Ikon Ikpa (a set of small drum tuned to the rhythm of pentatonic scales), Ekpud (a wooden rattle), Ntakrok (wooden gong), Ekere (short-iron gong), Nwkong (long iron gong), Nkanika (bell) and Nsak (rattle). Ikon Ikpa is perhaps the most characteristics of Ekpo Nyoho orchestra. These are sets of not less than 17 short drums ensemble usually used in the production of pentatonic rhythm. It is also called Nkrong in few other Ibibio communities. Ekpo dance is designed to suit the description of a dance Akpabot refers to as “the leap and the stride dance” (74). In this dance form, there are lots of arm and leg movement with occasional somersaulting involving masculinity and ability. The music is mortal by rhythms. The varying tones and pitches of drums arranged closely together could be mistaken by an unfamiliar ear for the sound of battle due to the heavy manner of play.

Costume Design and Makeup

Since Ekpo is believed to be an invoked spirits of the dead in Ibibio, their costumes are deliberately designed very uncommon and unusual to interpret to this belief. They are designed weird and gonzo in a manner it can arouse fear. Esen concurs saying that, “EkpoNyoho masquerades are usually dressed in strange terrifying ways so that a mere sight of them frightens the non-initiates and women” (91). This fact is agreeable to the opinion of Udo who says that “this sort of appearance is liable to create a psychological state of mind among the non-members and scare them away from the masquerade” (96). Costumes and make-up are interwoven aspects of design in every dramatic performance just like in the case of dance and instrumentation. Every masquerade is identified with a particular style and pattern of outfit, props, accessories and different manner of make up more likely to give an unusual look. The masks are designed sternly symbolic because it is believed that the facial expression of a person tells his inner mind. It may not be wrong to add that Ekpo mask is made in a way it reflects the trait of the masked personality impersonated. For instance, a mask made with very large obvious eye ball and heavy projected teeth is likely to represent a very strict and disciplined spirit. Offiong confirms that “the spirits of ancestors are purely represented through different mask, thus, the spiritual purpose of every mask also lies in its ability to convey the desired ideas and meanings” (77). Ekpo Nyoho costumes are designed with varieties of materials such as raffia, machetes, whips, arrows and bows, gongs, brooms leaves from various plants and

lots of other materials. The legs and arms are painted with charcoal and some decorated along with white clay. No two masquerades belonging to different grades are given similar design because they are believed to be representatives of different spiritual beings. This is to say that mask made for a masquerade representing very strict and disciplined spirits are not same in design with that made for reward. The materials and props peculiar in the construction of costumes for Ekpo Nyoho performance at different ranks of masquerades will include;

1. Aboonikang (a local made riffle)
2. Afid (machete)
3. Afia Ndom (white clay)
4. Akobo (heavy curved machete)
5. Akpin (fresh palm frond)
6. Bokid (head gear)
7. Ediam (African potato leave)
8. Mkpataad (slender club moss)
9. Ekiko Unen (cock)
10. Ekpam Ndam (sack bag)
11. Idang (bow and arrow)
12. Iduod (red clay)
13. Ikpa (a long whip)
14. Isik (a piece of netlike material)
15. Isim Ndak Ukot (half palm leave)
16. Iyoro (short sizes of sticks)
17. Iso Ekpo (different forms of mask)
18. Mkpam Etim (
19. Ndam Ukot (Dyed palm frond)
20. Ndam Isip Eyop (dyed coconut frond)
21. Ndom (white clay)
22. Nkang (Charcoal)
23. Nkanika (Iron bell)
24. Nyok (leg bead)
25. Uto utoAfang (a red piece of ribbon)

Theoretical Framework

In this paper, symbolism being a relevant considerations in costume design will be analyzed through the critical intractimist theory which relates to symbolic interaction theory developed in the fields of sociology and social psychology. This will be the theoretical frame work that this work is structured. The theory is broad set of premises about how an individual self is defined when costumed or how society is defined relatively to the dramatic characters presented. The theory holds that individuals create their own social reality through collective artifacts and individuals action, and how the actor or dancer understands the role by interpreting its role in relation to the social reality. Herbert Blumer believes that what create society itself are people engaging philosophies and social interaction. He added that social reality only exists in the context of human creation.

Herbert Blumer's theory on symbolic interaction as believed by other experts relates to a theoretical framework based on the significance of meaning and interaction between individual and group of people. Therefore, actors or dancers regulate their action or behaviour based on the meaning they attribute to the costumes and symbols in their relevant situation. Blumer's theory of assigning meanings to costumes is an ongoing two folded processes. First, in the identification of the costumes that has situational meaning. Secondly, in the process of internal communication to decide which costumes will be meaningful and capable of responding to human emotions. Blumer argues that "the complex interaction between meanings, costumes and behavioural responses to the costumes is a unique human process because it requires behavioural responses based on the interpretation of symbols, rather than behaviour responses based on environmental stimuli" (73). Blumer's insists that "a value playing upon a pre-existing attitude gives rise to new attitude, or an attitude playing upon a pre-existing value gives rise to a new value. With terms that are uncertain and not clearly defunctive the presumed causal relation becomes suspected" (24). In response to Blumer's theory, Golfman maintains that,

People attempt to control the impression others get. This, they do by carefully playing out interactional rules that limits the kinds of things that can be done in interactional situations. He believes that people performing singularly or in terms (in the stage scene) that make use of setting and props; of actors on stage (98).

The outcome of the performance is an imputation by the audience of a particular kind of self to the individual. This imputation is not simply the result of the substantive element of the performance but depends as much on the expressive, ritualistic or ceremonial element in the performance. Blumer and Golfman both agree that norms and role are only framed work within which human interaction occurs and its determinant.

The symbolism style in an interactional theory is used because it is through symbols that meanings motifs and attributes are conveyed in dramatic work. Thus, understanding symbols can help in understanding the meaning conveyed by actors involved in the interaction situation. To some degree, meanings are created, develop and changed within interactive situation rather than being fixed and performed. Meanings are the result of interpretative procedures employed by actors within interactions, contest by taking the role of actors and interpreting the meanings and intentions of others. The methodology of symbolic interactions as advocated by Herbert Blumer's demands that the costumier must immerse himself/herself in the area of life that he seeks to investigate so as to create a realistic character on stage. The costumier must attempts to grasp the actor's view of social reality. Since action is directed by the actor's meaning, the costumiers must catch the process of interpretation through which the actors contract the actions. This means, he must take the role of the character whose behaviour he studies. This is in response to Bogdar and Taylor's assertion that,

People are constantly in a process of interpretation and definition as they move from one situation to another ...a situation has meaning only through people's interpretation and deviation of its. Their action, in turn stems from this meaning. Thus, this process of interpretation acts as the intermediary between any predisposition to act, and the action itself (15).

Thus, makeup artists define situations in different ways depending on their life experiences and perspective.

This research sees symbolic interaction theory in the perspective of African Masquerade costuming narrowing it down to the Ibibio ancestral cosmology. Thus, the essence of this theory is based on the ideological stance that the Ibibio system of belief captures that the Ibibio ancestral cosmo which is dramatically portrayed in EkpoNyoho performance comprises different kinds of spirits; the good and the bad, beautiful and ugly, kind and wicked, careless and coordinated, rude and polite people and many other tendencies. In this view, Ibibio masquerade is a human object that attempts to dramatize the essence of ancestors through adaptable convincing appearances that could possibly express the desired facts. The interpretation and expression of these facts cannot be regularized without the necessary costumes.

Connotative Symbols in the Costume Design of Ekpo Performance

As earlier observed, it is traditionally believed that humans, most especially eminent people who had lived in the mortal world join their ancestors when they die. In this systematic belief, the ancestral world comprises different kinds of spirits, the good and evil, beautiful and ugly, kind and wicked, careless and coordinated, rude and polite, simpler and strict, ill and healthy people who had parted the human world. Varieties of other creatures like animals, insects and birds are also believed to be a part of this cosmology. Since masquerade performance is a direct attempt to dramatize these beliefs, the mask and costumes are purposely constructed to suit this representation. Based on this cultural perspective, a peaceful loving ancestor is transformed in this pattern good and peaceful represented with very colourful masks and costume design. Accessories for such grades are made in pearl colours and the mask impersonators play a peaceful role as they don't attack nor harm anybody. Evil characters are being represented with weird terrifying mask. Their outfits are completely made in a manner it stimulates fear.

The table below gives an analytical breakdown of the costumes, colour, cultural relevance, botanical equivalent and props peculiar in the costume design of Ekpo Nyoho performance.

AYARA EKPO: Represents the Bravest Male Ancestral Beings

AYARA EKPO: Representing

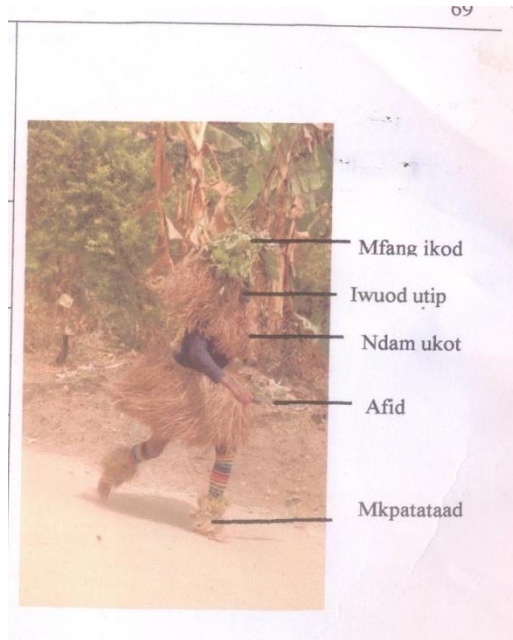
Materials for Design	Category of Design	English Names	Botanical Name Description	Colours	Connotations	Relevance
Iso Nkubia	Mask	Mask of a real man		Black	Bravery	Communicates his strict principles
NdamUkot	Costume	Dyed palm frond	Segiquinensis	Black	Spiritual presence	Enhances his weird and daring appearance
IsimNdakEyop	Costume	Fresh palm frond	Segiquinensis	Green	Fortification	Vindication from any form of spiritual attack by other spiritual forces.
Okobo Iso Afid	Prop	Curved edged machete		Black	Cruel attack	Enables him carry out attack
Nnuk	Mask	Two bended horns		Black	Agility	Expresses its full masculinity
Nkang	Make up	charcoal		Black	Nature of a ghost	Aids his spiritual characteristics
Iduod	Make up	Red painting on the mask		Red	Danger	Interprets his wicked tendency
EkikoUnen	Prop	Cock		Red and black	Marine relationship	Registers his connection with marine kingdom



OBIDIOM IKIM EBOD

ObidiomIkimEbod

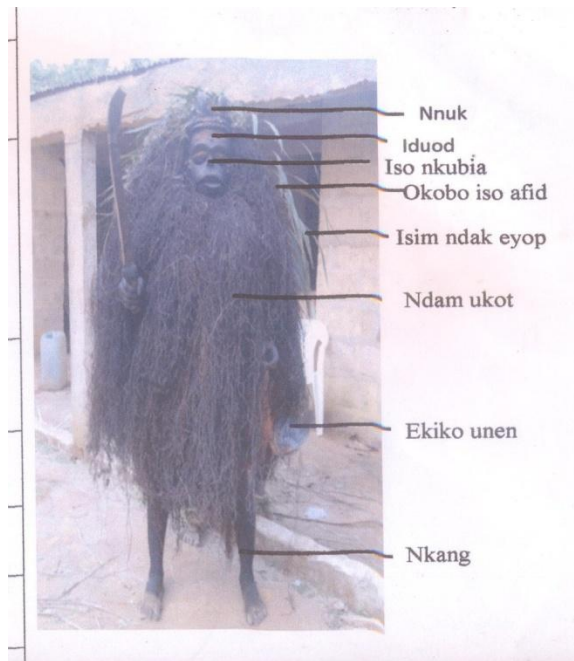
Category	English name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Costume	Palm frond	Segiquinensis	Brown	Spiritual presence	Enhance his weird appearance
Accessory	Leaves of plants		Yellowish green	Reward	Interprets the essence of his coming
Accessory	Slender club moss	Selaginella scenders	Green	Destruction	Interprets his destructive tendency
Make up	Charcoal		Black	Nature of a ghost	Aids his spiritual appearance
Mask	Face reward		Black	Reward	Interprets his spiritual assignment
Prop	Machete		Black	Justice	Enable him attack



MBAAD EKPO

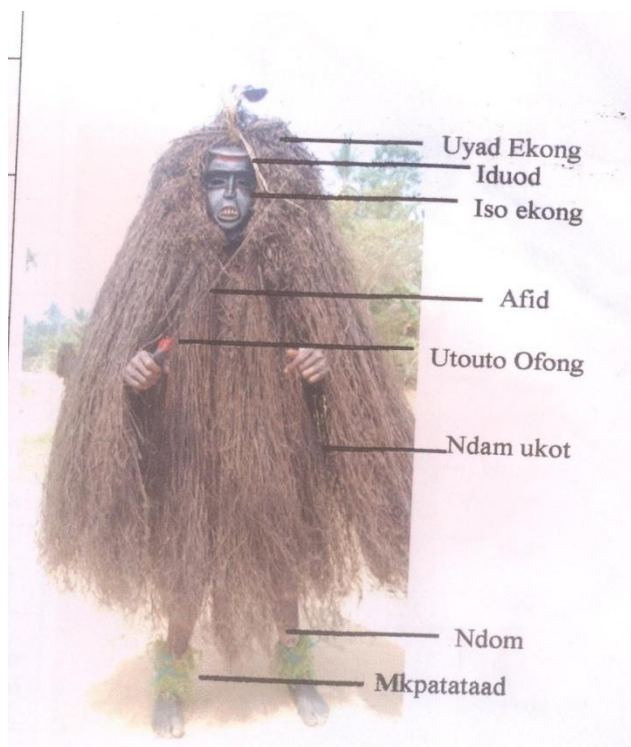
MbaadEkpo

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
NdamUkot	Costume	Dyed wine palm frond	Segiquinensis	Black	Spiritual presence	Enhance his weird and dirty appearance
Iso Mbubid	Mask	Mask of the blacks		Brownish	Total uncleanliness	Represents his unclean manner
Nkang	Make up	Charcoal		Black	Nature of a ghost	Aids his spiritual presence
Mkpatataad	Accessory	Slender club moss	Selaginella	Yellowish green	Destruction	Interprets his manner of destruction
Ekere	Prop	Local gong		Brown	Signal	Enables him make a signal to his coming
Ndom	Makeup	Clay		White	Spiritual presence	Aid his spiritual appearance



	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso Ekong	Mask	Face of war		Black	Violence	Interprets his warlike mood
Iduod	Makeup	Red lines painted on the mask		Red	Appetite for blood	Denotes his hunger for blood
UyadEkong	Costume	Mantle of war		Brown	Ego and fury	Expresses his warlike ability
NdamUkot	Costume	Palm frond	Seguinensis	Black	Spiritual presence	Enhances his spiritual appearance
Afid	Prop	Machete		Black	Cruel attack	To enable him carry out attack
UtoutoOfong	Costume	Red ribbon		Red	Distinctive destruction	Expresses his sense of destruction
Ndom	Makeup	Clay		White	Nature of a ghost	Aids his spiritual characteristics
Mkpatataad	Accessory	Slender club moss	Selaginella scenders	Yellowish green	Destruction	Reveals his sense of destruction

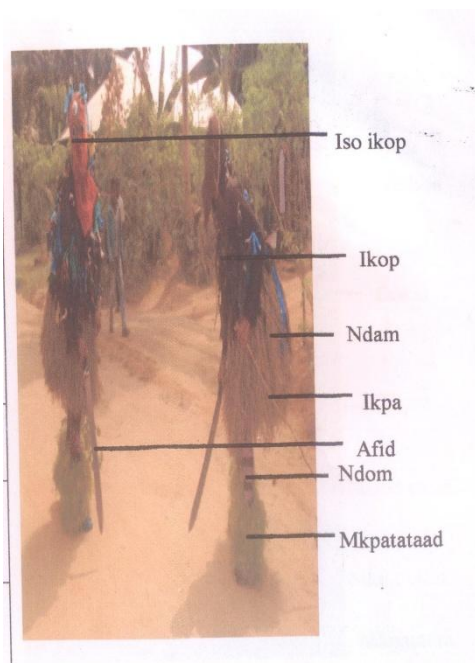
EKONG EKPO
EkongEkpo



IKOP EKPO

IkopEkpo

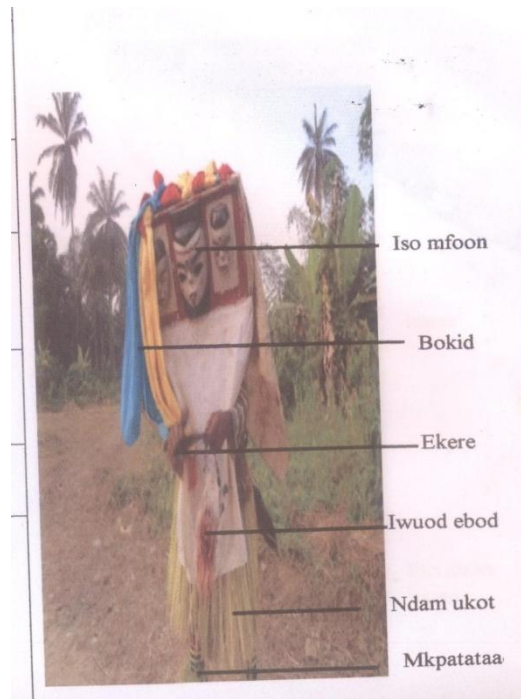
		English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso Ikop	Mask		Face of tick	Multi colours	Disregard	Reveals their disregard and insolence to order spiritual beings
NdamUkot	Costume	Palm frond	Segiquinnensis	Black	Spiritual presence	Enhance his spiritual presence
Mkpataaad	Accessory	Slender club moss	Selaginella	Yellowish green	Destruction	Express their wicked state of mind.
Afid	Prop	Machete		Black	Attack	To enable them carry out attack
Ikpa	Prop	Whip		Green	Distraction	Enable them cause any kind of distraction.
Ndom	Makeup	Clay		White	Spiritual presence	Aids their spiritual appearance
Ikop	Costume	Ticks		Black	Infection	Expresses their body infection



MFOON EKPO

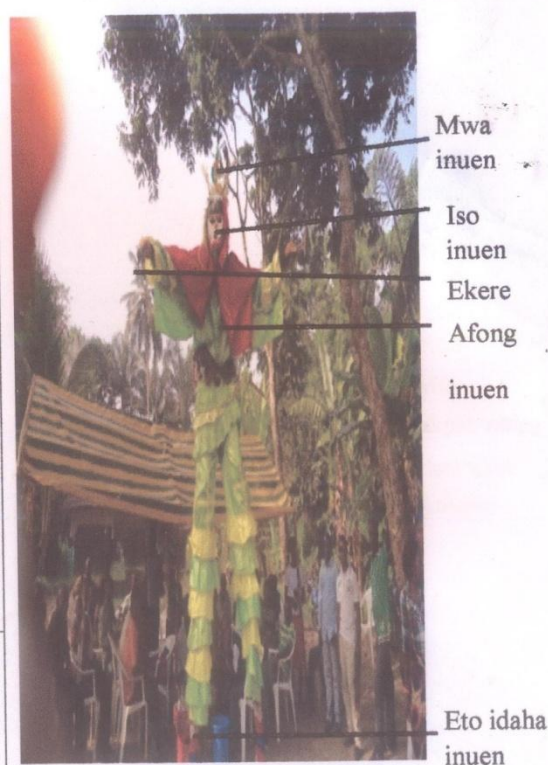
	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso mfoon	Mask	Beautiful faces		Red, white, blue, yellow, green.	Celebration	Enhance their attractive nature
Bokid	Costume	Scarf		Multi colours	Fun happiness	Explains their spirit of celebration
Mkpatataad	Accessory	Slender club moss	Selaginella	Yellowish green	Destruction	Exposes the little spirit of destruction in them
NdamUkot	Costume	Palm frond	Seguinensis	Black	Spiritual presence	Enhance their spiritual nature
Iwuod Ebod	Prop	Goat head		White	Sacrifice	Serves as a sacrificial offer
Ekere	Prop	Local gong		Brown	Signal	Enables them make a signal sound for their coming

MfoonEkpo



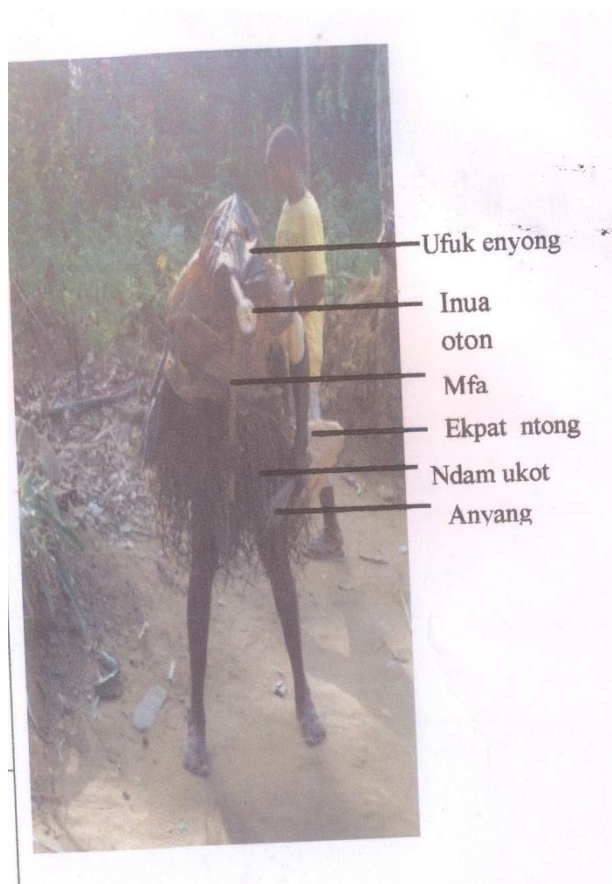
	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso Inuen	Mask	Face of a bird		Multi colours	Flying creatures of the spiritual world	Classifies its flying habitat
AfongInuen	Costume	Dress of a bird		Multi colours	Flying ability	Enhance his wide spread wings
MwaInuen	Accessory	Feathers		Multi colours	Symbolic to other beautiful birds of the spiritual world.	Reveals the other beautiful birds in the ancestral cosmo
EtoIdahaInuen	Costume	A very high walking heel		Multi colours	Symbolic to the long tiny legs of a bird	Enhance his pulsating movement
Ekere	Prop	Local gong		Brown	Signal	Enables him give a signal for

INUEN EKPO InuenEkpo



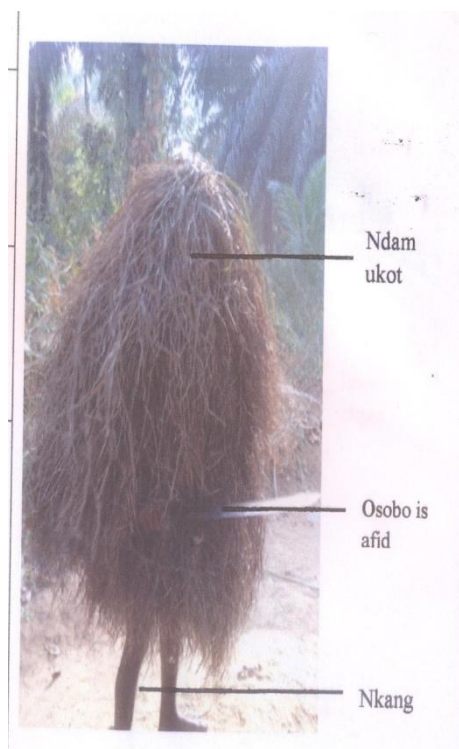
OTON EKPO or EKPOTON

OTON EKPO Costume Design	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
InuaOton	Mask	Mouth of a stick		Brown	Abnormality	Enhance deformity
NdamUkot	Costume	Palm frond		Black	Uncordination	Enhances his spiritual presence
UfukEnyong	Costume	Upper covering		Multi colours	ill condition	Expresses his poverty stricken nature
EkpatNtong	Prop	Bag of dust		Grey	Symbolic to his tragic condition	Enables him carry along his duct
Anyang	Prop	Broom		Brown	Wretchedness	Express his wretched nature
Mfa	Prop	A “Y” shaped stick		Green	Symbolic to his weak body function	To aid his long protruded mouth



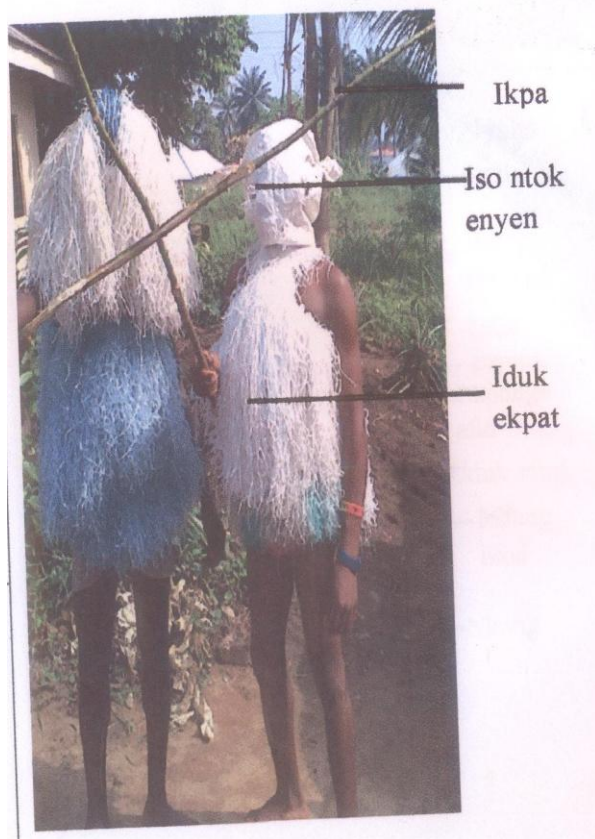
ATAAT EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
NdamUkot	Costume	Palm		Black	Spiritual presence	To enhance its spiritual appearance
Nkang	Makeup	Charcoal		Black	Spiritual presence	Enhance the nature of a ghost
Osobo Iso Afid	Prop	Sharp edged machete		Black	Attack	To carryout attack on the wicked people he exposes



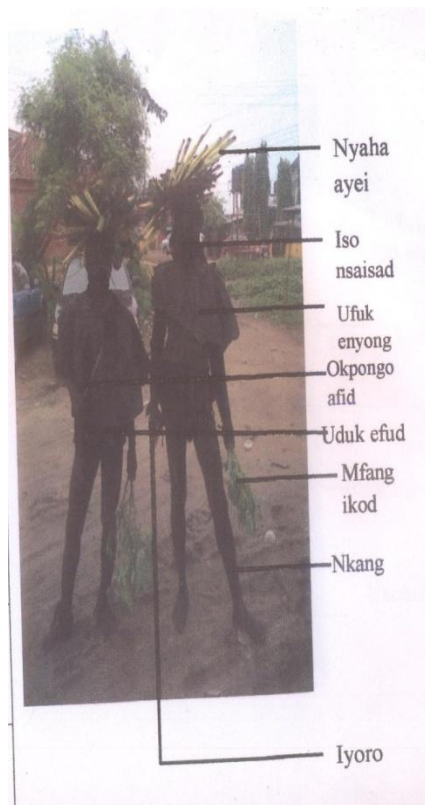
EKPO NTOK ENYEN

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso NtokEnyen	Mask	Infantry mask		White	Innocence	Expresses tenderliness in them
IdukEkpat	Costume	Fibres from sag bag		Pearl colours like blue, white, red, green, etc.	Infantry	Portrays their harmless spiritual nature
Ikpa	Prop	A long whip		Brown	Symbolic to other playful mood	To instigate the spiritual entertainment in the children who may celebrate their presence



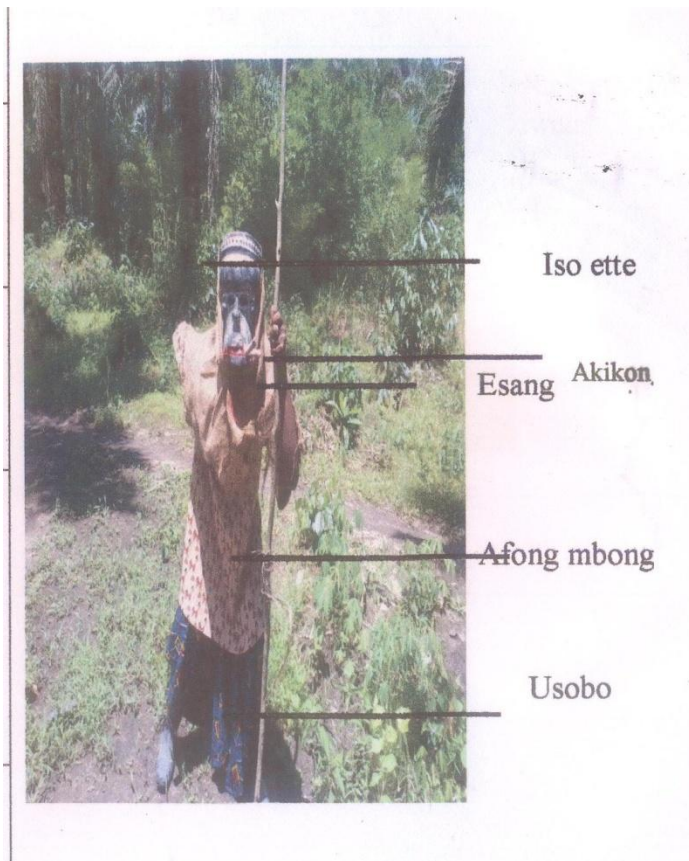
NSAISAD EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso nsaisad	Mask	Mask of the confused		Black	Confusion	Express their perplexed state of mind
NyahaAyei	Accessory	Plaited fern		Yellowish green	Perplex mood	Reveals their high level of confusion
OkpongoAfid	Prop	Blunt machete		Black	Unusual attack	Aids the unusual attack
UfukEnyong	Costume	Upper covering		Black	Mind set	Reveals their mental disorder
UdukEfud	Costume			Black	Sense of humor	Reveals their level of thinking
Nkang	Makeup	Charcoal		Black	Spiritual tendency	Explains their spiritual nature
Iyoro	Prop	Short seized sticks		Brown	Symbolic to their unpredictable nature	To carry out their unpredicted attack



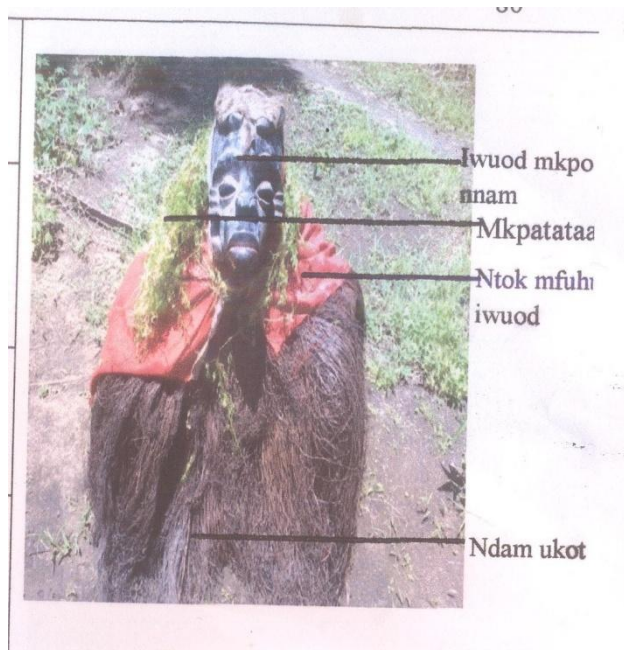
ETTE EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso Ette	Mask	An elderly face		Grey	Responsibility	Enhance his old looking face
AfongMbong	Costume	Chieftaincy		Black	Advancement in age	Enables him distinguished from other grades
Usobo	Costume	An Ibibio wrapper		Brown	Advancement in age	Enables him look older than other grades
Esang	Prop	Starf		Brown	Weakness due to age	Enables a gentle and weak movement peculiar to that of an elderly man
Akikong	Accessory	Native cigarette		Brown	Symbolic to his smoking addictivity	Express the smoking habit of elderly men in Ibibio



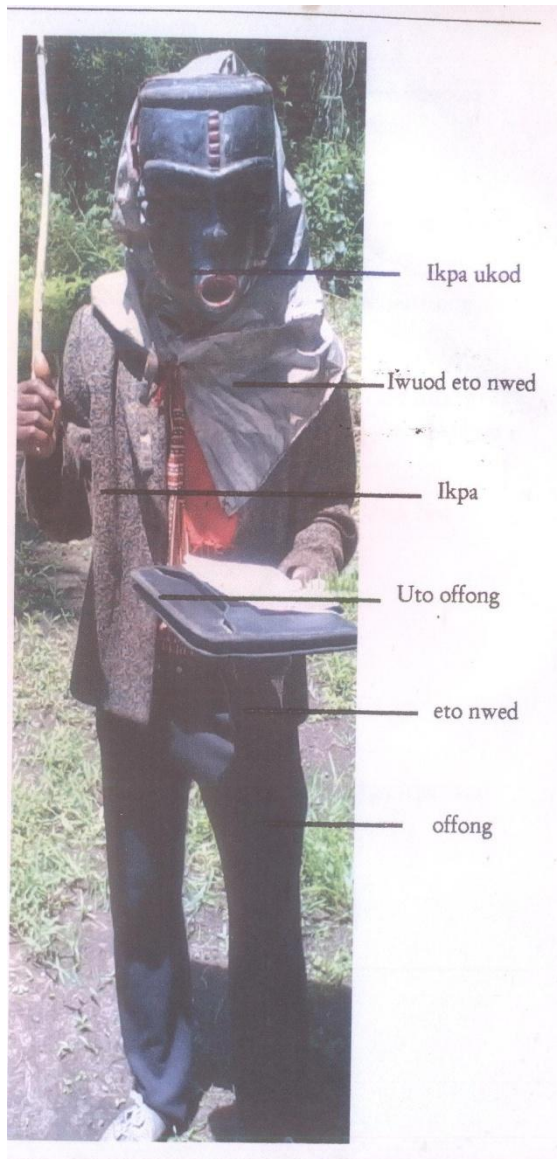
IYOON EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
IwuodMkpoNnam	Mask	Face of the physically challenged		Grey	Penury	Express pity and sympathy
NdamUkot	Costume	Palm frond	Segiquinensis	Brownish black	Challenging nature	Maintains his spiritual presence
NtokMfuhuIwuod	Costume	Over head covering		Red	Danger	Suggests his sense of wickedness
Mkpatataad	Accessory	Slender club moss	Selaginella	Yellowish green	Destruction	Determines his sense of destruction



ATITIA EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
IwuodEtoNwed	Mask	Academic mask		Grey	Brain capacity	Communicate his wide sense of knowledge
UbopItong	Costume	Long tie		Red	Exposure	Expresses his orientation in the western world
UtoOffongye OffongUkod	Costume	Jacket on a trouser		Grey on black	Orientation	Reveals his western orientation
Ikpa		Cane		Brown	Discipline	To enable him carry out of discipline
EtoNwed		Writing pad			Academic pedigree	Communicates his desire to boost the moralistic tendency in Ibibio people
IkpaUkod		A pair of shoes		Black		



Ikpa ukod

Iwuod eto nwed

Ikpa

Uto offong

eto nwed

offong

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso Akoikpa	Mask	Mask of the ladies		Pearl colours such a red, pink, blue, white and green	Beauty	Confirms the beautiful nature of an Ibibio woman
Idet	Makeup	Plaited hair		Brown	Attraction	Spices up the sense of attraction in Ibibio
NkwaItong		Beads		Multi colours	Gorgeousness	Express the beautiful world of an Ibibio woman
ItongOffongye UfukIfed	Costume	Blouse and a long skirt		White on pink	Decency	Expresses the high level of decency in the dressing of Ibibio women
AyanIkpaUkod	Costume	Healy shoe		Red	Gorgeousness	Ensures the beautiful and attractive nature of an Ibibio women
Ekipad idemiban	Prop	Hand bag		Multi colours	Sense of style	To complement her style of dressing
AfongIwuod	Costume	Hair tie		White	Decency	To express the modified manner of dressing Ibibio women

ABOIKPA EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso umuian	Mask	Mask of blood		Black	Extreme wickedness	Reveals his outstanding level of wickedness
Iyip	Makeup	Blood (dropping from the teeth)		Red	Human blood	Expresses his quest for human blood
Edetumuian	Mask	Obvious set of teeth		Red	Blood tastiness	Expresses his quest for blood
Ndamukot	Costume	Palm frond	Segiquinensis	Brown	Spiritual wretchedness	Maintains his wretched nature
Imukafid	Prop	Short machete		Black	Wickedness	Enables him aim his target
Ikim	Prop	Calabash		Brown	Demand for blood	Enables him fetch human blood
Nkang	Makeup	Charcoal		Black	Spiritual presence	Enhances his nature of ghost
Iduod	Makeup	Red lines of the mask		Red	Danger	Shows his state of mind



UMUIAN EKPO

	Category	English Name	Botanical equivalent	Colour	Denotation	Relevance
Iso Akpan Ekpo	Mask	Mask of first make		Black	Justice	Expresses the idea of equity and fairness
Isik	Accessory	Net		White	Marine engagement	Exposes his connection to the marine world
Usiin	Costume			Purple	Hierarchy	Confirms his superiority and power
Akaangkang	Prop	Sword		Golden	Justice	Explains his sense of justice
Awaadnkang	Prop	Stern of palm frond construction to enable a steady flow of smoke		Black	Sanity	Enables him perform communal cleansing from all forms of evil indulgence.
Mfuerong	Costume	Traditional turban		Red	Leadership	Confirms his leadership role among other grades

AKPAN EKPO

CONCLUSION

This paper submits that costumes are viable necessities in African Masquerade performance. The paper also readdress the issue of the less attention paid in the area of costumes in some previous materials published seeking for a re-approached on this area in subsequent published works.

This paper lays emphasis on the idea of mask designed for Masquerading performances in Ibibio noting that Ibibio masks are much more oriented towards the idea of characterization. That is to say that masks for Ibibio masquerade performances are made to conform to character identification and cultural implications. After a brief insight on the historical development of EkpoNyoho society in Ibibio, it has been realized in essence that though Ekpo was not only founded as a judicial institution to undertake the regulation of laws and orders in Ibibio communities of the pre-colonial era, it was also established to ensure a strong spiritual bond between the cosmology of man and that of his fore bares. The recent development in the costume design of EkpoNtokEnyin in some Ibibio communities is gradually deviating from its original tradition. Due recommendation regarding this development has been made in this paper.

Finally, this work has given an insight to the style of costumes worn by masquerades in EkpoNyoho performance in Ibibioland, X-raying these styles and their place in the belief system of the Ibibio people. This study has given an in-depth analysis on the symbolic representations communicated through the costumes of Ekpo Nyoho with references to accessories, props, makeup and colours.

Recommendations

This paper recommends that;

- i. Cultural Heritage can only achieve social relevance when it consistently finds strong presence in human consciousness. African Masquerade theatres are strong cultural identity with the African cosmology. Thus, this tradition should be zealously protected against future extinction.
- ii. The area of costumes is perhaps indispensable in African masquerading performances. Consequently, this area should test a wider discussion by writers who attempt this subject in their materials. Giving less attention in area of costumes in Ekpo performance as a subject perhaps attracts some sense of incompleteness of such discourse based on the fact the nterpretative validity and performance efficacy almost completely depends on the communicative power it captures through the constructed costumes presented.

- iii. Secondly, every component that make up the costume of Ekpo Nyoho such as mask, raffia, props and colours duely combine to directly impersonate and ancestral character. Therefore, the design materials used in creating such characters is conventional. In recent times, more irrelevant materials in the likes of colourful fabrics like stockings, hand bands, very weird and frightening mask forms etc have been incorporated into the costume design of Ekpo Ntok Enyin as observed in today's performance of this grade of masquerades.

These aesthetic innovations perhaps do not only disarrange the ancestral ideology of this grade but contrast with the cultural representation from the historical point of view. Therefore, costumes and masks design should be totally dependent on the conventional and traditional implication of the ancestral characters.

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