

Traditional Beliefs and Practices in Masquerading: Effutu Context

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Abstract. The study elevates the masquerading culture of Effutu masquerade and examines its functionalism of the traditional beliefs and practices associated with the masquerading culture in Winneba, Central Region of Ghana. The study employed a descriptive research tool under the qualitative research approach through ethnographic inquiry, which aimed at collecting data to unearth these traditional beliefs and practices of the Effutu masquerade. The study used unstructured interviews, photographs, and direct observation as the form of instrumentations to elicit information from the federation, some members, and leaders of the various masquerade groups in Winneba. The data was analyzed using descriptive and interpretative phenomenological (IPA) analysis tools. It was revealed that the Effutu masquerade culture possessed traditional beliefs and practices that were shrouded in religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic contexts. Functionalism in Effutu masquerade culture was seen as a repository for a critical reflection of the visual culture that promotes Ghana's tradition and cultural values. The study concludes that the Effutu masquerade, irrespective of its distrust, contains elements of cultural richness and important traditional values that demonstrate a degree of philosophical urgency.

Keywords: *Effutu, Functionalism, Masquerades, Traditional Beliefs and Practices, Visual Culture.*

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1 Introduction

Masquerade has been a traditional and religious event involving the wearing of masks. Miller (2006) explains that in masquerading, the mask is part of a set of rituals, including a concealing costume, pulsating music and drum beats, flickering firelight, violent movement, and the reaction from the audience. Cultural celebrations, like masquerade ceremonies across Africa, contribute to preserving cultural cohesiveness and folklore. Modern masquerade ceremonies in Africa combine music, dance and masks to tell stories of past, present and future ways of life. The narratives associated with masquerade ceremonies are highlighted by theme performances and themes of cultural importance. The use of the mask in African culture goes far beyond the era of recorded or even oral history, with records indicating the use of masks in rituals and ceremonies

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before the Paleolithic era, where some scholars attempted to trace the historical beginnings of the masquerade culture. However, well before recorded history, Africans used masks more pluralistically. The secret societies were using masks to prevent people from identifying them in the discharge of their duties and at meetings, in most instances, female societies who were into initiations had their faces covered (Akubor, 2016; Dallas Museum of Art, 2017; Walker, 2010; Miller, 2006; Ukaegbu, 1996).

In addition, Miller (2006) supports the assertion that the ultimate African cultural object is likely to be the mask. This statement proves how well the mask has been displayed in nearly all museums worldwide. In Africa, people in secret cults wear masks. In indigenous African environments, masks are believed to carry spirits and are used for rituals to protect the wearer. It is believed that masquerade probably began in Africa since all these secret societies existed well before the emergence of Whiteman on the shores of Africa. From a critical perspective, masquerade activities intersect most cultures with similar characteristics, and the idea of universality does not imply similarity in most of its sociocultural relevance. In Africa, a masquerade is an aid and medium to evoke the presence of a spiritual deity and provides an opportunity for rituals and dance for people's expression, socially uniting them in a common belief ceremony (Namboothiri & Puthumana, 2021; Aderibigbe, 2015; Acquah, 2011; Walker, 2010; Underwood, 1964).

The modern expressions and meanings of secret societies and masquerades in Africa cannot be ignored for their functionalism. Masquerades conceal secret societies' identities and also serve as means of expediting members' activities in the societies. With African secret societies, Kanu (2018) cited Miller (2015) and Wikipedia (2008) that:

Abakuá is a secret society specially meant for men. They play a great role in the initiation rites of adolescents into adulthood. It is also at this time that adolescents are initiated into the society. It originated from fraternal associations in the Cross River region of Southeastern Nigeria and Southwestern Cameroun. It is found in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast. The members are known as *Ñáñigos*, and are believed to be able to turn into leopards to attack their enemies. They had masquerades for the society and initiated the young into hunting. *Ekpe* is a secret society that is flourishing chiefly among the *Efiks* of Cross River state. Members are also found in Akwa Ibom State, Arochukwu of Abia state, as well as in Cuba and Brazil. *Sande* is a women's secret society very popular in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast. They play a lot of roles during the initiation of girls into adulthood. They were known to perform rituals for female genital mutilation. It is alleged to confer fertility, instill notions of morality and proper sexual comportment, and to maintain an interest in the well-being of its members throughout their lives. This society also champions women's social and political interests and promotes their solidarity. They have a masquerade clothed with a wooden face, which is controlled by them (p. 44-45).

De Jong (2007) describes that:

The masquerade is the public face of the secret society. In the past, numerous examples could be given of West African secret societies that operated masks. One of the questions raised in the research on these secret societies is how these secret societies related to public political structures. The intricacies of the debate focused on the extent of the competition between, or interdependence of, these structures. The *Poro* society, undoubtedly the best researched secret society in West Africa, intervenes in many spheres of life, and its intricate political organisation (p. 128-152).

In reacting to Kanu (2018) and De Jong (2007) arguments, the Effutu people of Winneba have engaged in masquerade culture over the years to increase their traditional beliefs through conscientious practices as the climax of their grand festival celebrations. The masquerade culture has also been a yearly event celebrated on Christmas by the people (Effutu) of Winneba in the Central region of Ghana. The Effutu people have celebrated the feast of masquerading and the Aboakyer festival for decades since its establishment in the land of Winneba (Effutustate, 2018; Micah, 2014).

Masquerade, known in the local parlance of the people of Winneba and its environs in the Central Region of Ghana as “Kakamotobi” literally scary mask, came to stay. The people of Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana have a similar practice, but under the name, “Ankos” (Masquerading). This culture adds up to the Christmas festivities to make it aesthetically appealing. Christmas is always colorful and graceful in places such as Winneba, Sekondi-Takoradi, and some other areas because of masquerades. This masquerade culture is associated with the population of Winneba and other Ghanaian cities and has also been seen across most cultures around the world. Winneba masquerades show off in masks purchased in stores or made from metal mesh that has been created to fit the face and then painted as desired. Masquerade dancers add hats, gloves and other garments to make every costume unique. An old man, a ship captain, a dancer on stilts and animals like a dog, a monkey, and a bird are characters of the “Fancy Dress” masquerades. The masquerade culture comes with a brass band that was likely borrowed from the European styles of the 1700s and 1800s. The masquerades actively dance to the sound of the brass band amidst the cheers and chants of the audience. The masquerade groups in Winneba namely Nobles (No.1), Egyaa (No.2), Tumus (No.3) and Red Cross (No.4) constitute the federation of Effutu masquerade culture (Wikipedia contributors, 2021; World Festivals, 2021; Micot, 2014; Micah, 2014; Brown, 2005).

From a functionalism point of view, Mack (2000) looks at the modern-day uses of masquerading for politics, social control and dealing with the dead. Also, it helps to cure disease, to initiate the young or for pure entertainment. The mask bearer emerges from a special hut where he has been dressed to disguise his human identity and the decoration and costume depict the spirit evoked in the mask. Many traditional beliefs and practices are associated with the Effutu masquerade in a

pluralistic sense. This event of the Effutu was mainly shrouded in secrecy and covered with Christian (religious) activities (Akyeampong & Yankholmes, 2016; Kumadoh & A Rocha Ghana, 2016).

In addition to the Aboakyer festival celebrations, the Effutu celebrates the masquerade annually during the Christmas celebrations. The masquerade culture has brought Winneba and its environs to life since the early 1990s. Although there has been some scholarly attention to the fancy dress (costume) of the Effutu masquerades, in this study, it is important to unearth the functionalism of traditional beliefs and practices among the Effutu people in Winneba, Ghana. The study, therefore, sought to elevate the visualizing culture of the Effutu masquerade and examine its functionalism in the traditional beliefs and practices associated with the masquerade in Winneba, Central Region of Ghana. Masquerade plays a significant role in the religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic contexts of the festival celebrations by the Effutu people. The significance of this study focuses on the functionalism gap between the Effutu masquerade and their traditional beliefs and practices. The functionalism gap is understood from the Effutu perspective and the functioning of their art forms embedded in the masquerade performance.

2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the functionalist perspective theory, also called functionalism, by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) as one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology in the context of the elementary form of the religious life of the Effutu people in Winneba, Central Region of Ghana. As such, the test of this theory focuses on the macro-level of social structure in the masquerade culture of the Effutu where the purpose of social order is emphasized on religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic contexts, rather than the micro-level of everyday life of the Effutu people. Notable theorists on functionalism include Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton (Crossman, 2020; Gómez-Diago, 2020). To Spencer (1896, vol III, 3), "Functionalism is to understand how an organization originated and developed; it is requisite to understand the need subserved at the outset and afterward". Durkheim (1893, 79-80) believes that "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or creative consciousness."

In this context, functionalism in beliefs and practices of the Effutu masquerade is seen as the different parts of the cultural epitome of the Effutu festival celebrations that are primarily composed of social institutions, each designed to fill different needs. Religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic are important to understanding this theory and the core institutions that define sociology. These social institutions in the masquerade play a vital role in the functioning of the Effutu society. In the Effutu society, the masquerade culture provides entertainment and revenue

through tourism for the people in the community. In the sociocultural gathering of the Effutu masquerade, religious value relies on the ritual dances and ceremonies elaborated by the masquerades. On the other hand, socioeconomic value influences the human development through the income, level of education and social status in the community while the aesthetic value exerts a stronger influence on the perception and understanding of beauty embedded in the display of artifacts such as costumes, hats, boots, stilts, fly whisks, bells, whistles and others. From the functionalist perspective, all the values in the Effutu masquerade culture go well to produce order, stability, and productivity (Crossman, 2020; Dellorfan, 2019; Femi, 2015).

3 Method

The study used the descriptive research tool under the qualitative research approach as the research design. Descriptive research design is used to describe systematically and accurately the fact and characteristics of a given population or area of interest (Dulock, 1993:154). As pointed out, the observation method, which constituted descriptive research methods, allowed data to be gathered on behaviors and phenomena without having to rely on the honesty and accuracy of respondents (McCombes, 2020). The federation (Masquerade Groups), some members and leaders of the Effutu Municipal Assembly constituted the population of the study. One (1) member from each of the four (4) masquerade groups in Winneba, namely Nobles, Egyaa, Tumus and Red Cross was purposively sampled for the study. This is because the sampling criteria and strategy for selecting these groups included the formation of their groups, the nature of the groups and the groups' ability to preserve the ideologies of this masquerade culture from generation to generation. In addition, ten (10) traditional leaders and members were selected from the community. In all, fourteen (14) members and leaders were sampled using the expert-type of purposive and simple random sampling techniques.

Unstructured interviews and direct observation formed the research instrumentations used for data collection. With respondents' consent, the face-to-face or direct interview was done using the audio-tape, videos, and photographs for transcription. The direct observation was based on the physical and visual contents of traditional beliefs and practices of the Effutu masquerade culture. Content and interpretative phenomenological (IPA) analyses were the data analysis methods used. Content analysis was useful by describing visual material taken from the study. It relied on the videos and photographs for a systematic examination of the contents of visual materials taken to identify patterns or themes in the discussion and interpretation of the findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) approach was used to develop one-on-one unstructured interviews for the study. This approach helped to develop detailed descriptions and understanding of participant's experiences. The phenomenon under study was focused on the Effutu masquerade culture of Winneba (Fade, 2004). Pringle et al. (2011) support that IPA emphasizes the importance of individual accountability.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 The Antecedent of Masquerading Culture of the Effutu

The historical framework of the masquerade culture of the people of Winneba started with the Dutch and British traders at the Winneba Sea. They began the festival tradition in the 19th century. Respondent 1 (personal communication, May 15, 2019) shared his experience and thought on opinion leadership skills in masquerade culture. In his opinion, masqueraders dressed in varieties of masks and danced and drank at foreign-owned bars to celebrate Christmas. Janka Abraham, who hailed from Saltpond, in the Central Region, also worked as a bar attendant at one of the foreign-owned bars. He incorporated the tradition of masquerade as a festival with the local custom.

In this context, the masquerade group 'Nobles' was formed. This started with A. K. Yamoah, a pharmacist and friend of the respondent, in the Alata Kokwado, a neighborhood circa 1923. Individuals who played for A. K. Yamoah's football club and domestic matches joined the masquerade group. Membership required proficiency in English. Originally, when the masquerade culture was formed, the members of the Nobles met before dawn on Christmas day. The members disguise themselves as doctors, nurses, teachers, ministers, farmers, fishermen, prostitutes, pastors, drivers, cowboys, sailors, angels, or even imitating the white colonial masters. The idea was to emulate the diverse professions of Winneba and to parody the Europeans. The masquerade group took to the streets of Winneba, with the support of Adaha music/Odaha Odaho music (Traditional music ensemble) and would continue throughout the day until late evening.

The cultivation of the groups with its participants known as masquerades had a different name given to it. They adopted the name 'Fancy Dress' (Masquerade). This is because the Egyaa group, composed of fishers, who did not speak English, found it difficult to pronounce the word 'Fancy Dress' and said 'Fanti dress'. The Nobles Group opened its membership to all Winneba residents. As a result of its increase in members, the activities of the Nobles in 1926 propelled the supreme ruler of Winneba, Nana Kow Sackey (Ayirebi Acquah III), and his friends to form the Egyaa group (a second group) at Aboadze, a fishing community in Winneba. The inhabitants called the Nobles 'Number One' and the Egyaa 'Number Two'.

Over time, the membership of each group increased, and it was necessary to form a third group. In 1930, members of the Gyateh Royal family, did not support the formation of the Egyaa group by Kow Sackey. Rather, the members formed another group in the Gyateh area of Donkoyemu called Tumbo rusu (pronounced tumus)—which translates to the sound of the blacksmith's anvil—the group was led by Gyateh's family member Arkoful (a blacksmith), Kweku Akom, and Inkabi. The third group attracted young Catholics with little education from local fishing communities, and nearby Winneba Catholic Church members. European priests paid for new

European costumes and masks every year and funded the group so well that it became the most popular Fancy Dress Company. One of the group members was associated with the character of Robin Hood, but he accidentally shot into a priest's nephew's eye with a missed arrow on Christmas Day 1930. This tragic incident led the groups to ban portrayal of this character in the Fancy Dress celebrations by anyone under the age of seven.

It is an empirical fact that the number kept increasing, they faced the challenge of increasing the number of groups, resulting in the formation of the fourth group. One of the siblings of A. K. Yamoah's brothers, A. W. Yamoah moved the fourth group to Abasraba, a suburb of Winneba, in 1933. A merchant by trade, he imported masks and brass instruments and founded a Fancy Dress group known as Red Cross or Number Four. This group was mainly composed of the town's elites, including high school and college youth; prospective members had to pass entrance exams in English and Ghanaian cultural studies. Adult members who can afford to pay monthly dues have financed the import of Halloween costumes and masks from abroad by the end of the year. Children under eight years of age and children from poor families did not pay, although they had to accept the dress the adult members chose for them.

The brass band music was made to assist the masquerades in the activities they exhibited as a masquerade group. It was shared that establishing that music for all groups during the festival was traditional 'Adaha' music in the early years. European missionaries and military groups had been brought into the area and introduced brass band music in the 1880s. In 1934, Catholic priests introduced brass band music to the festival by bringing an orchestra trained as Presbyterian missionaries to the nearby town of Swedru Bibiani. The band was not skilled and it knew only one 'Fanti' song 'Abaawa begye wo letter kema Wowuraba' (Maid servant gives this letter to your Madam), which it played throughout the day. Reacting to individual emotions on hearing a song played over and over again, A. W. Yamoah organized training sessions on fanfare instrumentation for some members of his family. This brought dynamism to the brass band. The Nobles group also formed a brass band. However, because most members of these bands preferred masquerade to play in a band. Brass bands were generally recruited from outside the local bands for the festival.

As the various groups were formed from a parent stock of the number one group, the other groups practically took on the structure and other practices of the parent group. All groups are in the same hierarchy. In charge of the group is the group father, previously often a nobleman but now most likely to be a well-educated man, who manages the finances and places and the well-being of its members in general. Under the group is the conductor or leader, who organizes rehearsals and teaches the music, the Fancy Dress leader takes care of the choreography and questions prospective new members. The group's mother, who handles the food, settles the differences. Group members treat her as a biological mother as well. Members dressed like cowboys were the very strong ones and fit for the masquerade activities. Members are responsible to the Fancy Dress

leader and deal with general members. Then there are scouts, stilt walkers, and general members under the control of the cowboys. The group scout moves ahead and solicits money for the group from observers during the festivities.

In addition to the historical antecedent of the Effutu masquerade, Respondent 2 (personal communication, June 11, 2019) justifies how these masquerade groups were formed. The respondent stated that the famous Effutu masquerade culture known as “Fancy dress” started with the Guan-Effutu of Winneba before 1911. Before that, there was no festival celebrated on Christmas and the New Year holidays. People were used to the dances and music provided by different groups or bands in the various neighborhood of the community. The ‘Kreols’ (Ensemble group and settlers at Winneba) produced and performed dances to serve their interest and possibly the few natives in and around their homes. Regardless of the entertainment context, it was indicated that other bands at the time performed the entertainment and they were ‘Ommpe’ (Ensemble group) located at ‘Dɔnkɔnyanmu’ (A suburb in Winneba). This ensemble group could not express the name of the Effutu expression ‘Dɔnkɔ Nyantɔ’, meaning ‘Dɔnkɔ’s farm.’ Within the fishing community, some of the bands that performed were ‘Osoode’ dance meaning “asɔ wo dɛ mu” (Sweetened you), ‘Adaha’ dance means “ɔda ha na ɔda hɔ” (Throwing weights) ‘Konkonba’, ‘Ashewa’, ‘Adankum’ or ‘Adzewa’ (Ensemble groups). These ensemble groups were all presented within specific boundaries of Winneba. Audiences who could afford paid these groups to perform in their neighborhoods. Food was served without charge in abundance at the cultural exhibitions. Christians particularly were challenged with night watch services, inaugurating the New Year’s Eve. A comic group called “Ndoba-Ndoba” (Ensemble group) frequently intercepted the services with hilarious jokes. The audience praised the ensemble groups’ appearance. Sometimes, the groups met at the Church and cried out their intermit jokes to cut in the pastor’s sermon. The celebrations seemed almost boring on all these activities for some residents who had settled in Winneba.

It is demonstrated that the historical context of the Winneba masquerade culture was well established by Respondents 1 and 2. In another instance, the masquerade culture was originally believed to be initiated by the people of Winneba. Again, other African countries were already practising the masquerade culture. All signs point to the Dutch or European settlers in the cities of the Central Region along the coastal belt of Ghana to be the originators. The inception of the masquerade culture in Winneba indicates that it was originally copied from these settlers. The people in Winneba have effectively enhanced the culture to benefit both people within and outside Winneba.

4.2 Functionalism in Traditional Beliefs and Practices of Effutu Masquerade

The functionalism theory of the study was based on the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the Effutu masquerade culture and their societal forms with an understanding of how the masquerade culture originated and developed (Durkheim, 1893, p.79-80; Spencer, 1896, vol. III, p. 3). The workability of this theory explains the conservative force and a positive function of Effutu masquerading as a tradition that promotes stability and contributes to preserving the status quo by visualizing its culture as a religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic function. This study, therefore, takes a functionalist perspective on the thoughts of Herbert Spencer and Émile Durkheim. They portray culture as an interrelated whole and not as an isolated set of traits (Lumen learning, 2019). Considering functionalism in the traditional beliefs and practices of Effutu traditional society, it has continued to be an integral part of the life and lifestyle of the traditional people of Winneba. One cannot overemphasize the festivities in the Effutu traditional area through these contexts; religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic values.

Religious

The Effutu masquerade was derived from the Europeans who only did it for entertainment on Christmas days. The Effutu people of Winneba have gone through times and situations and have embraced and nurtured them based on their traditional beliefs and practices. The Effutu, amongst other African tribes, has a long history written before the arrival of the Europeans. They cling to their traditional African beliefs as one of them was the religious belief in Spiritualism. The Effutu believes that everything happens for a reason and that there is a spiritual connotation to everything that happens. In this context, one needs protection by fortifying oneself spiritually from evil spirits and against all expectations. This masquerade culture of Effutu religious traditions in the contexts of their origins, beliefs, doctrines, and practices influences their different aspects of life (World Festivals, 2021; Aderibigbe, 2015; Underwood, 1964).

It is a fact that these general beliefs to an extent, have influenced the thinking, behavior and organization of Winneba's various masquerade groups. The formation of "Tumus" masquerade group Number 3, founded in 1932, has its name comes from "Atombo resu" the reverberation of the anvil, which, according to the research, at a time when the three groups merged in a place in Winneba called "Nkwanta anan", confusion always emerges and ends in fighting. These masquerade leaders sought rituals that directed them to use of an anvil and hammer. As further experienced, they hit the hammer on the anvil each time there was a fight, and then other groups could do nothing but run away. At one point also, the leaders continued to die mysteriously, and some suddenly became blind. Many other superstitious events induced the masquerade group and its leaders to consider protecting themselves and their members. However, all these actions were kept silent by the public. It is established that having met these group leaders, practically their involvement with Spiritualism or gods as part of their dealings when it came to the well-being of the groups. It is believed that the masquerade group has spiritual gods they worship and use,

eventually when they are about to prepare their performance for the year. Other masquerade groups had their protection. This practice has been the function of traditional beliefs since forming of these groups. The group does not protect its members, but the members would do it themselves.

This idea was supported by an ardent masquerade who saw the significance of protection as a key to masquerading. In his opinion, the religious aspect of functionalism was determined by the use of spiritual deities in their formation and preservation to protect the masquerade groups (Respondent 3, personal communication, August 10, 2019). As it was told, this was not an open secret to only group leaders and very close associates of the masquerade groups. This practice has been shrouded in secrecy and kept away from most members and the public. Also, it was stated that the groups had developed a style in which they invite pastors to pray for them. After their encounter with the pastor, they secretly consult their gods to protect the group before they depart to the park to perform the masquerade. In addition, this explanation attests to the fact that these gods protect members from all spiritual attacks from the other groups. This practice has been a rite from time immemorial. These traditional beliefs and practices became competitive among the masquerade groups, which led to the undermining and sabotage of the groups. It began from the training periods until competition day.

There are many beliefs and practices associated with the Effutu masquerade culture. It is believed that these beliefs and practices have gone a long way in promoting the masquerade culture and ensuring its safety over the years (Respondent 4, personal communication, August 13, 2019). A particular belief of group members was to go swimming in the sea and not to wipe themselves before wearing their dresses. This practice served as a means of neutralizing the spiritual attacks that awaited the groups and their members. In some cases, members had their way of protecting themselves from spiritual attacks. Some of the groups were unable to stop these spiritual attacks. This claim was supported by a masquerade group trainer, a designer and a coordinator whose responsibilities are to oversee the sewing of the group's masquerade costumes/dresses. It was expressed that no one outside the group was allowed to see the various masquerade costumes sown before the day of the performance. And because of that, the tailors had to camp for days in an undisclosed location/place to make the seam (Respondent 5, personal communication, October 04, 2019). This was done to prevent others from seeing the group's color scheme, style, and treatment of the surfaces of the costumes. They hid in bushes and remote places to train. In another instance, without knowing it, during a training session, the members were being spied on by another masquerade group. The masquerade group copied their style of dance in rehearsal. Unfortunately, the group which went to spy was called upon to perform first among the other groups. As a result, they had performed all the styles from another group. The group who had been copied ended up losing. The group had nothing to perform and suddenly left the park.

Considering the spiritualism context, a stilt dancer developed his personal experience about the participation of 'Juju' (Traditional medicine) in the masquerade culture as illustrated in Figures 1

and 2. Although leaders demystify it and say it is only a perception, the practice of 'Juju' in the masquerade culture is real (Respondent 6, personal communication, October 05, 2019). The respondent stated that he could stand on stilts 15 feet or more with larger buses running through his legs. This practice is about the competency of the respondent in the spiritual realm. At the end of the 1980s, masquerade members performed for free in the station park (performance grounds). The respondent at that time got one of his stilts broken. He reiterated that the moment was not an ordinary day. He believed that a cast spell befell him that caused his stick to break. He was the showman in the group. For that matter, his broken stilt got the group to lose the masquerade competition. This situation affected the respondent spiritually to the extent that he nearly stopped standing on the stilts. The respondent also protected himself when he stood on the stilts, but on that faithful day, he believed that the 'Juju' used on him was too strong. However, none of these masquerade groups can publicly state that it has used 'juju' to protect or fight their detractors. This practice is shrouded in secrecy while other practices have continued for years. It is believed that some of these practices add up to sustain the culture and make the culture competitive.



Figure 1. A masquerade on stilts doing the slow dance (Blues) (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 2. A masquerade performing “Jaju” as a fetish priest (Source: Eyalitours, 2019).

The masquerades make sure that the groups have the same costume design in terms of style, color, and other accessories that make the group complete. When the group meets at the park for the performance, they are organized to post everything they have for inspection before the actual performance begins. A total of marks (grades) are assigned to groups for design, appearance and conduct. The groups go through four shows where the match pass is the first to be performed. At this point, the groups put up their best. Colorful costumes with masks and hats are worn and displayed for the audience’s admiration. The aptitude of the groups and their creations is shown in Figures 3 to 5.

This match pass is done quite slowly with the help of the bandsmen. This show is done not only by masquerades on foot but also by those who stand on stilts. The bandsmen assist the masquerades to do the High-life song, then the 'Atwem' (fastest dance) as a freestyle for the masquerades to exhibit. The masquerades do the fastest dance to show off their dance skills that have been acquired over the years through practice and dedication. This dance is very rigorous and requires a great deal of energy.



Figure 3. Masquerades in smaller groups within the parent group (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 4. Group leader riding on a horse (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 5. Another group leader with the torch of flame (Source: Micah, 2014).

Socioeconomic

Art forms and performing arts play a significant role in the socioeconomic life of each cultural society worldwide (Namboothiri & Puthumana, 2021). The masquerade culture has grown to be part of Effutu society. In the context of the socioeconomic background, the masquerade culture has changed the human aspects of culture over the years, especially the economic characteristics. While the masquerade began with only social importance over time, it developed to cover an economic dimension that boosted the culture. The frantic efforts were made by the group leaders, the federation and the people who patronize it. Until recently, tourists take pictures free of charge while making extensive coverage in the video. For several years, the right to take pictures and make video coverage is sold to individuals or companies that sublet or sell some of their rights to tourists to formally document for research or personal use. Respondent 7 (personal communication, March 11, 2020) strongly supports the assertion that this was a very good decision made by the organizers to sell the coverage right to persons or companies to take both video and photos of the masquerade. Years ago, everyone could enter the masquerade grounds take pictures, make videos and sell them. This action created a lot of economic problems for the sponsors who practically operate it. Now it is just the one with the right that takes videos and pictures and has the right to sell too. It rationalized the activities of tourists who initially paid something to the federation; at least now, the federation gets something from the sale of rights. Although the ticket sale has been made for a very long time, the federation (an individual or a cooperative body) buys the park. They are eligible to sell all tickets that allow an individual to participate in the show. The people of Winneba are made economically better by the masquerade activities they perform on the day of the show.

In this sense, people come to sell edibles and other objects at the masquerade celebration. Acquiring the park for masquerading activities is currently a good business. In the past, obtaining the park was like saving with the midget. One can lose massively due to the unsecured park where people enter without paying to watch the show. People make extra illegal tickets and sell them alongside the original ones. Respondent 8 (personal communication, March 15, 2020) supports that he once had the opportunity to acquire the park. It is believed to be a good business and need to be reserved for the only native that stays in the town. It is one of the sources of employment for some young people who previously had no source of income. Activities like selling ice water on New Year's Day are part of the respondent's income generation. On the day of the show, some taxi drivers do not work. They join the celebration as members of the masquerade groups. Because of this, the few who work on that day charge mostly high fares. On such occasions, taxi drivers make a lot of money. In this limelight, the socioeconomic relevance of the Effutu masquerade, as shared by respondents, helps solve many social and economic problems facing young people in Winneba and all other people living in and around Winneba.

Aesthetic

The aesthetic functionality among the visual art forms such as masks, costumes, hats, boots, stilts, flywhisks, bells, whistles, and others are displayed in the Effutu masquerade culture. Philosophically, aesthetics in Effutu masquerade is seen in a mix of styles, both from the European and African perspectives. Leaders in masquerades groups conceptualize these ideas. Costumes as a significant visual art form are held in high esteem. The artifacts are the physical force required to balance the community in all spheres of human endeavor. When it comes to good governance, masquerades display magnificent performances that affect both the family and the community. The display of individual costumes as a visual language has been an important issue concerning the role and responsibilities of masquerades, as shown in Figures 6 to 10. These aesthetic features embody the masquerade culture. The masquerades are artists, designers or tailors who bring this creativity to the limelight.

The aesthetic display of Effutu masquerade culture is seen where the dancers on stilts with colorful and fanciful costumes perform on two thin sticks 15 feet high, as shown in Figure 1. In some cases, children aged 10 years or younger take courage and skill to walk on the sticks. They are given a chance to stand on shorter stilts. The stilt dancers perform on these thin planks of essentially spherical shape with their feet tied with a rope. The parts of their feet are carefully covered with a cloth. It is designed to be part of the costume. In addition, the stilt dancers who are part of the masquerade groups usually wear their costumes, with many patterns as other masquerade performers do. They wear no mask to cover their entire face as other masquerade members do. The reason is that they might fall once they do not see the wearing of a mask. The creativity with aesthetics is rejuvenated during the masquerade culture. Masquerades are well appreciated and respected in the community. This feat is recognized by the wearing of masks, hats, and costumes, as well as their skills in stilt dance. The practice is skilful as it is demonstrated through their movements. The antics of Effutu masquerade make some masquerades go to the extent of carrying babies and dressing them on stilts.



Figure 6. Group members performed their dance styles (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 7. Different group members displayed their dance skills (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 8. Different group members displayed their dance skills (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 9. Masquerades performed the slow dance (Source: Micah, 2014).



Figure 10. Group members arranged for inspection at the masquerade park (Source: Micah, 2014).

5 Conclusion

Traditionally, the visual culture of the Effutu masquerade in Winneba in the Central region of Ghana on contemporary cultural issues has received little scholarly attention when it comes to cultural anthropology. In this regard, Effutu masquerade culture over the years has been enjoyed by many people worldwide. Significantly, the masquerading culture of Effutu brought functionalism to traditional beliefs and practices through religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic contexts. The various masquerade groups and their activities were obsessed with fetishism and spiritualism. These masquerade groups prevent the audience from seeing their spiritual dealings in their performances. These beliefs and practices were because most of their performances were surrounded by secrecy. Even the group member are sometimes not involved in the spiritual dealings, except their leaders. Therefore, their performance activities have provided nothing but mysticism. Notably, that these spiritual beliefs and practices appear to provide and protect the masquerade groups and their performance. Before festivities of the year, masquerades perform incantations with prayers as some of the groups pour libation to summon the ancestors for protection and success for the year and years to come. This practice takes place in the homes where the groups were trained. The masquerades during their rehearsals stay late in the night just to keep others from witnessing what style they perform. These actions are not seen publicly, so the audience always believes that something very awkward is happening other than rehearsals. It is evident that the Effutu masquerade, irrespective of its distrust, contains elements of cultural richness and important traditional values that demonstrate a degree of philosophical urgency.

The implication of traditional beliefs and practices among the Effutu masquerade groups speaks volumes about the traditional meaning of Winneba. This culture makes it mandatory for the individual masquerade groups to protect themselves in the spiritual cadence and to project the

hidden culture among their contemporaries into the world. Telling the epic story of the Effutu masquerade, the struggle between masquerade cultures and modernity continues to weigh heavily on the people of Winneba and their hybrid descendants. The functionality in the quest for traditional values and proponents is witnessed, especially in their everyday sphere of life. Functionalism in Effutu's traditional beliefs and practices of a masquerade was found in their religious, socioeconomic and aesthetic development. Therefore, it is obvious that the masquerade groups' commitment was devoted to secrecy and mysticism, and the groups tend to establish strong beliefs and practices between them. Clearly, in support of the Effutu masquerade through its visualizing culture, the functionalism in Effutu masquerade culture was seen as a repository for a critical reflection of the visual culture that promotes Ghana's tradition and cultural values.

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