

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH MASQUERADING  
CULTURE IN WINNEBA, GHANA



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CULTURE IN WINNEBA, GHANA

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June, 2014

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I VICTOR KWEKU BONDZIE MICAH declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE.....



### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of the thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

PROFESSOR MARY DZANSI MCPALM

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

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Finally, my gratitude to God for His favour.

V.K.B.M.

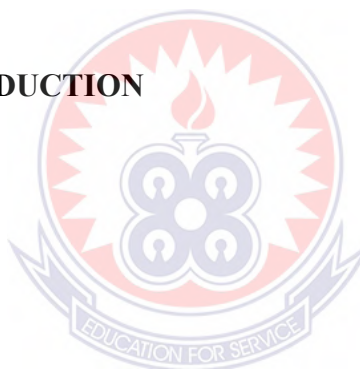
## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved wife Mrs. Ekua Nyamekye Micah, and children, Adwoa Takyiwa Micah, Kwamina Ayi Bondzie Micah, Ekua Borstiewa Ansah-Micah.



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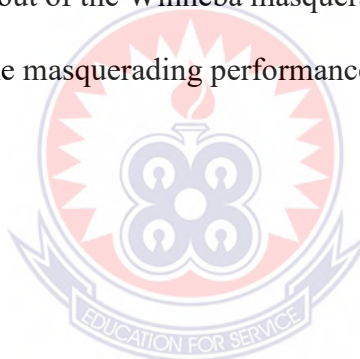
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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate and examine the historical background of masquerading in Winneba and from this, find out the traditional beliefs and practices associated with masquerading and the motivation to observe the masquerading event.

Also the Socio-economic significance of masquerading was looked at extensively as various questions were put to those who engage in economic activities in and around the park where the masquerading event takes place. Data was also collected from the Federation, some members and leaders of the various groups and some key informant.

Analysis was made of the interviews and the conversation that took place between the researcher and the participants. The findings proved there were beliefs and practices associated with the culture and pointed to the fact that the masquerade was an European culture. Based on this recommendations were made to help sustain the culture. This research is therefore to help attract and promote both local and foreign tourism in the Effutu traditional area, and thereby help create income for the socio-economic development of the people of Winneba and Ghana as a whole.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Since the settlement of the Effutus on the Winneba land, the people of Winneba have celebrated the *Aboakyir* festival for decades. Masquerading culture has also over the years been a yearly event celebrated on Christmas by the people of Winneba and they are the only indigenous people mostly accredited with the popular masquerading culture. This event as with the Aboakyir festival has come to stay and it is now on the festival calendar of the people of Winneba and adhered to religiously. The masquerade events attract a lot of foreigners, dignitaries and indigenes who are out of Winneba. They use this occasion to come home to visit relatives and reconcile with their past. This event has earned a lot of revenue for the individuals, the assembly and the state. Although this culture is celebrated annually the earnings survive a lot of homes. Though a major platform for politicians to campaign and give promises there is no formal policy guiding the masquerading culture. Miller (2006) in her quest to explaining masquerading said, We must remember that the mask is part of a set of rituals, which includes a concealing costume, pulsating music and drumbeats, flickering firelight, violent movement, and the reaction of the audience.

Although the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba has always been known to be for entertainment it has been used to solve other social issues in the society which mostly are economic. In another instance Visona (2008) made mention of how the *Vabo* masquerades use the culture to punish anti-social behaviour and chase away criminals, and went on to say individual names given to each male *vadomask* underscore their

aggressive qualities. Other uses of masks may be based on the need of the society and its beliefs.

No formal institutional structures guide the culture. Important questions have emerged concerning the sustainability of the masquerading culture as time and situations are changing. Do masquerades in Ghana, especially that of the Effutu's adequately prepare to meet the demands of the society? From observation, Ghana's inability to take advantage of its large youth population to build or strengthen its human capital base for economic development has made the masquerading culture a suspect in the face of a weak economy and stiff competition from other events organized on Christmas. This may lead to the extinction of the masquerading event.

Masquerading, known in local parlance of the people of Winneba and its environs in the Central Region of Ghana as "kakamotobi" has come to stay in Ghana. The people of Western Region of Ghana precisely Takoradi have a similar practice but under the name "*Ankors*" and this culture adds up to the Christmas festivities to make it aesthetically appealing. In places like Winneba, Sekondi Takoradi, and a few others, Christmas is always made colourful and graceful by the inclusion of the masquerades. This masquerading culture is not only associated with the people of Winneba and other towns in Ghana but has been observed to cut across most cultures in the world.

Masquerades in Winneba exhibit themselves in masks bought from stores or made from wire screen that has been moulded to fit the face and then painted as desired. Masquerade dancers add hats, gloves or other garments to make each costume unique. The characters in "Fancy Dress" or masquerades include an old man, a ship captain, stilts dancer and animals like dog, monkey, and bird. This is accompanied with a brass band which was borrowed from the European styles of the 1700s and 1800s as made

mention by the Rev. Kobina Taylor. The masquerades dance actively to the tune of brass band amidst cheers and chanting from on lookers.

Mack (2000) looked at the modern day uses of masquerading, saying, contemporary masquerades may be used for politics, social control, to deal with the dead, to cure disease, to initiate the young or for pure entertainment.

Hench (2011) had this to say, that cultural celebrations, such as masquerading ceremonies throughout Africa, are instrumental in the preservation of cultural cohesiveness and folklore. Modern-day masquerading ceremonies in Africa combine music, dance and masks to tell stories of past, present and future lifestyles. The storytelling associated with masquerading ceremonies is highlighted by thematic performances and culturally significant themes. Bethney Foster, a contributor to [www.eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com) on March 27, 2012, stated that 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 ritual and ceremony before the Paleolithic era. These writers were in their bid trying to trace the historical beginnings of the masquerade culture.

However, long before recorded history, Africans were using masks in diverse ways. 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. Furthermore, Miller J. (2006) opines that the quintessential African cultural object is probably the mask. This assertion of the writer is due to how well the mask has been displayed in almost every museum the world over. In Africa, masks are worn by people in particular cult. In indigenous African settings, masks are believed to be carrying spirits and so rituals are performed to protect the wearer. All these can attest to the fact that masquerading probably started in Africa, as

all these secret societies existed long before the emergence of the Whiteman on the shores of Africa.

Furthermore other socio-cultural benefits and religious undertones that have been made part of the event will be looked at. All these and others will be brought to bear, as a very comprehensive documentation will be made, as much does not exist on masquerading in Winneba and by extension Ghana especially in the area of its historical background.

From the above review, it became clear to the researcher that masquerade activities cut across most cultures having similar features, but the idea of universality does not imply commonality in most of its socio-cultural relevance.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Underwood (1964) states that in Africa, masquerade is an aid and medium to evoke the presence of a spirit deity, and also provides an opportunity for rituals and dance for expression of people, bringing them together socially in the ceremony of common belief. The masker emerges from a special hut in which he has been dressed to conceal his human identity but rather its decoration and costume is a representation of the spirit evoked by it.

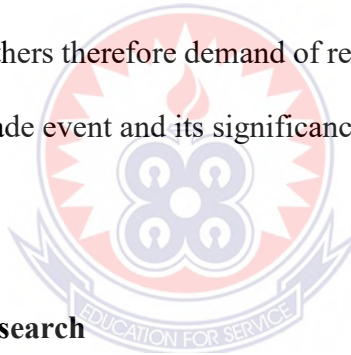
According to the people of Winneba, it is believed that there are quite a number of beliefs and traditional practices associated with the masquerading events of the people of Winneba and this has been mostly shrouded in secrecy and covering it up with Christian religion. This research seeks to unearth these beliefs and practices. The motivation to watch the event has always been with the indigenes and people staying in and around Winneba and this need to change to attract a lot more people than it is



happening now. Also, the socio-economic relevance of the masquerading culture has not been tapped into or explored the more because the researcher thinks the culture can be a major source of income to the masquerades, the Federation and the indigenes and non indigenes alike who patronize the culture.

In addition, the interpretations of the aesthetic content of the masquerades and their costumes have not been well explored. These masquerades over the years have exhibited great talent in the design and execution of their costumes and other related items that are needed to celebrate the culture. The aesthetic content need to be critically looked at and explored to the benefit of the masquerades, the culture, and its sustainability.

The above problem and others therefore demand of researchers to conduct this research to document the masquerade event and its significance.



### **1.3 Objectives of this Research**

1. To trace and examine the historical background of masquerading in Winneba and find out
  - i. Traditional beliefs and practices associated with masquerading.
  - ii. Motivation to observe the masquerading event.
2. Socio-economic significance of masquerading
3. Identify and interpret the aesthetic content of different masquerades

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- What is the perception of masquerading in Winneba?
- What beliefs are associated with the masquerading?
- How is the masquerading culture influenced by foreign practices?
- To what extent is the Winneba masquerading culture an extension or progression of the African secret society?
- What impact does masquerading culture have on job creation on the people in Winneba?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

First, it will ensure that data generated through systematic research and analysis is available to guide important decisions in cultural events. This would help Ghana Tourist Board to implement research based decision on investigative review. Decisions making and planning at Ministry of Chieftaincy and Culture and Ministry of Tourism which plays supervisory role on such cultural practices and events would occur against an informed background of relevant information and data through the findings of this study.

Secondly, the findings would be useful to cultural policy makers and administrators who wish to identify areas where support in terms of money, policies, human resources or materials are needed to ensure successful implementation of cultural development.

It is not enough to make masquerade cultures in these areas more widely available; the quality of masquerade display and exhibition also need to be improved so that the gains in the culture and the events will be safe guarded. This research explored the conceptual

perception of masquerading among the Effutus. Also, it examines the traditional beliefs and practices associated with the event and explore the religious significance of masquerading event. The research sheds light on job creation, aesthetic content, masquerading phobia and what motivate people to observe the masquerading event. Therefore the findings will bring to fore, the economic and the socio-cultural gains to individuals, the masquerades, the Municipal assembly, and the nation as a whole. This will serve as favourable guidelines to the relevant bodies that will make policies and guidelines to streamline the masquerade culture, sustain it and make it more relevant at this time and age.

Another advantage of this research is, once it was conducted in my country of origin and precisely where I come from, I will have the opportunity to further work on this research for future publications. Emerging issues and questions I could not address currently in this research will be addressed in the future and new directions and performances in making the masquerade culture attractive and indigenous.

### **1.6 Delimitation**

The scope of the study was basically on the masquerades of Effutus of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. The content was limited to Religious beliefs and practices, socio-economic significance of masquerading, foreign influence and the aesthetic content of masquerading.

### **1.7 Limitation**

This research was greatly hindered by not gaining access to the required information especially in connection with spirituality of the masquerading culture. The leaders of the various masquerade groups seemed not to be ready to divulge information about what traditional or African spiritual practices are done before, in the course of and after the culture. They seemed to be covering it up with Christian religion by claiming to be praying to God Almighty before and after the event.

In addition, visiting their rehearsal section was always a problem as some of the leaders thought there will be reporting to the other groups their style and that could lead to them loosing as their style might be performed better than they will be doing at the competition. In this, gaining their trust was always a problem as many times as I did visit them, I had to do a lot of explanation before gaining access to their training grounds. Because time was not on my side, I could not meet with all participants but made it a point to meet the leaders of the groups or the people in the homes where these groups were formed.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

Literatures' relating to the subject was reviewed extensively in chapter two, and chapter three explains the methodology. In chapter four, the historical background of masquerading in Ghana with specific reference to Winneba was traced. Also, the traditional beliefs and practices associated with the event were looked into. Finally, the aesthetic content of the masquerades was examined. Chapter five analysed the findings from the research. The sixth chapter which is the final chapter looked at summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Overview

Literature on documentation in general is inadequate. Books on this matter are rare and no detailed work on this is available. Even most 21<sup>st</sup> century dictionaries and encyclopaedias do not give any detailed discussion or information on it. Although there are not definite titles that expressly address themselves to the exact study on “beliefs and practices associated with masquerading culture in Winneba, Ghana”, there is however, some related literature which is relevant to the title. Hence, this chapter provides the review of various definitions of documentation as well as visual arts, the structure of visual arts, aesthetics and art criticism.

This chapter is devoted to the review of related literature. The following, are the headings under which the review has been captured.

1. Masquerading
  - a. *Masks*
  - b. *Types of masks*
  - c. *Materials used*
2. Historical background and Origin of masquerading
3. Religious significance of masquerading
4. Socio-economic significance and the attraction to masquerading
5. Aesthetic nature of masquerading
6. Beliefs and Practices associated with masquerading

## **Masquerading**

According to Zarris (2010) Masquerades are the human repositories of the ancestral spirits and gods of West African cosmology. These representatives of the divine, as well as their performance of song, ritual dance and dramatization of spiritual or ethical issues, are known altogether as masquerades. The essential task of the performers of the masquerades is to temporarily manifest or channel the spirits that they call upon to acquire information (via divination), or to affirm to the living their eternal presence. According to Uzo (1997) the term masquerade can refer to a masking performance, a masked performer, or the character embodied by the mask itself.

According to Bravmann (1979) in the late 1880s Richard Austin Freeman, a member of the Gold Coast Boundary Commission, recorded for posterity an unusual and exciting masquerade which he witnessed in the *Bron* Town of *Odumase*, approximately 160 kilometres northwest of the Ashanti capital of Kumasi in 1967. He went on further to say that Masquerades are not now, and probably were never, products of Akan societies. Rather, they represent the historical presence of *Gur* and Mande peoples within Ghana's frontiers

Bravmann (1979) emphasized that despite the apparently infertile environment for the mask among the Akan, there are instances where one encounters masquerades. The oldest record of a masquerade among the Akan of Ghana is, of course, Freeman's account of the "*Sakrobundi*" tradition.

Furthermore Bravmann (1979) opined that "*Sakrobundi*" may then be seen as the earliest documented instance of the impact of a *Gur* culture and the masquerade upon the Akan. Although there were no precise formal equivalents to the two known "*Sakrobundi*" masks from the Cercle de Bondoukou within the broad range of *Senufo*

mask types, the “Sakrobundi” carvings present several aspects that place them stylistically within *Gur* masking traditions

According to Widjaja (2011) Masquerades (Mmanwu) are held in accordance with the community native calendars during festivals, annual festivities, burial rites and other social gatherings.

Bravmann (1979) indicated that at the southern end of this masking quadrant of Ghana, to the south and west of the bend of the Black Volta, one encounters a cluster of highly varied and impressive masquerades. These are the *Do*, *Gbain*, and *Bedu*, three masking traditions brought into the region by the immigrant *Mande-Dyula*, *Ligbi*, and *Numu*, and the *Gur-Nafana*. The three traditions operate among Muslims and traditionalists and reveal the importance of the mask in both socio-religious domains. Visona, Poynor and Cole (2008), added to the uses of the masquerading as indicating that, *Vabo* masquerades punish anti-social behaviour and chase away criminals, and individual names given to each male *vabo* mask underscores their aggressive qualities. He went on to state that there is also an element of playful banter and male solidarity in some *vabo* performances. They went to assert that both *Chamba* and *Mumuye* masks bring dangerous animals from the wilderness into the community, and both appear at funerals.

In his opinion Widjaja (2011) said in the past, masquerades were regarded as the means for maintaining peace and order and were primarily used as law enforcement agents. In Igbo culture, the masquerade embodies the spirit and human worlds. The mystique surrounding the masquerade is one of the key components of the Igbo culture that survived Western influences. It is generally believed in the Igbo land that the masquerade is a spirit which springs from the soil and that is how Akhenaten a

contributor to [www.amarna.com](http://www.amarna.com) explains masquerading. Depending on your point of view, it may be true or only a myth.

Akhenaten went on further to opine that masquerades are classified into categories based on specialization. Each masquerade possesses particular attributes (warrior-like prowess, mystical powers, youthfulness, and old age) and specializes in one or more skills (dancing skills, acrobatics, and other ritual manifestations).

Akhenaten further enumerated that masquerading may involve one person team or a team made up of instrument players, vocalists, dancers, masquerade advisers, and the masquerade itself. The masquerade appears during traditional celebrations such as funerals and festivals (new yam festival). The level of apprehension and the noise that await the appearance of a masquerade will vary, depending on the type of the masquerade, and the size and make-up of the audience. Widjaja (2011) went on to say that the identity of the masquerade is a well-kept secret and performed exclusively by men in referring to a masquerade practice in the Igbo land.

Peggy Harper, a contributor to [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com) categorised Masquerade dancers as a feature of religious societies in many areas. Four main types of masquerade are identified by the roles they play: those who embody deities or nature spirits and to whom sacrifice is made to assure the fertility of land and people, those who embody the ancestral spirits, those who placate the spirits through their dance, and those who perform principally as entertainers.

Davies (2010) describes masquerading culture as 'both artistic and anthropological' they are only a more strident embodiment of rituals that feature heavily in Africa. Celebrations are to give thanks for sunshine, fertility and prosperity; to banish the threatening forces against the society; to make fun at authority figures - celebrate their



harvest festivals, and entertain members of the society. Masquerading in the various societies in Africa is made for a purpose and it is strictly adhered to as they are to solve particular situational need of the society.

Akhenaten a contributor to [www.amarna.com](http://www.amarna.com) in his quest to further break down on the types of masquerades used the Igbo masquerading and said Most of the Masquerades in Igbo land represent spirits but Adamma as much as it foretells the maiden spirit has no spiritual value like most Masquerades. Clarke (undated) referred to the Masquerades of the Mende Sande society in a picture as one which organizes female initiation and circumcision, as that type of masquerading is used by the women in the society for initiation and circumcision. Bravmann (1979) as the elders of Wen-chi and Nsawkaw indicated, a masquerade cannot operate fully in the open. Visona, Poynor and Cole (2008) opined that in some southern Mande-speaking areas, these huge animal masquerades are considered secret, and may not be viewed by Women. Subsequently they asserted that usually, however, female singers in the audience provide important verbal, visual, and musical accompaniment. Mack (2000) looked at the modern day uses of masquerading by saying; contemporary masquerades may be used for politics, social control, to deal with the dead, to cure disease, to initiate the young or for pure entertainment.

Widjaja (2011) asserts that with colonisation in the 20th century, masquerades became more relevant as an institution for cultural entertainment. Nowadays, they are used more for tourist attractions when they come out in colourful robes accompanied by traditional dancers and music.

According to Hench (2011) Masquerading ceremonies throughout Africa are dramatic in nature. The combination of masks, dance and music creates a performance that is both symbolic and cultural

Lamp (1996:249) in talking about the uses of masks referred to one of the masquerade event of the people of Baga Sitemu as the masquerade that was invented and performed in order to ease the tension between devout Muslims and the “traditionalists” of the Sitemu Village.

### *Masks*

Hench (2011) opines that the visual highlight of African masquerading is the masks worn by participants. Ranging from simplistic to elaborate in design and appearance, African masks lie at the centre of masquerading ceremonies. Masks are crafted to represent spirits, people, places and dreams. The spiritual act of masquerading ceremonies is highlighted by the masks used throughout the performance. Brightly coloured and elaborately decorated masks bring an added element of reverence to masquerading ceremonies celebrating past and present spiritual entities. The masks, and associated costumes, worn by performers are chosen to provide a visual representation.

Mellor (1992) referred to the fact that it is not well known, however, that masks never physically resemble or embody spirits but rather represent characteristics of the spirits such as aggression. Masks can also induce emotional responses such as fear and anxiety in the audience. Instead, it is the masker himself that is transformed into the supernatural spirit. Bravmann (1979) said the mask, as a part of Ghana's artistic heritage, is surrounded by a curious silence, for to my knowledge, with the exception of Freeman's observations only two other brief accounts exist. Bravmann (1979) went on to say that the very way these masks are employed, that is, their functional dimension, is also

remarkably constant. *Simma* and *Sikilen* are generally dry-season phenomena, which are called upon to perform in honor of important members of the community who have died. In the states of *Gonja* and *Wa*, *Simma* masks publicly honor not only their *Gur* owners but also people of the ruling estate and Muslims who may have had nothing to do with the masking organization itself.

According to Widjaja (2011) masks used by masquerades are determined by local tradition and beliefs. Hench (2011) said the Ewe tribe, now located in Ghana, performs masquerading ceremonies depicting the tribe's movement into Ghana by focusing on birds in flight. Masks crafted of bright feathers help tell the story of the Ewe people's relocation.

Bethney Foster, a contributor to [www.eHow.com](http://www.eHow.com) on March 27, 2012. stated that, 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 ritual and ceremony before the Paleolithic era. Miller (2006) in her bid to trace the use of mask by the *Bete* people of southwest Ivory Coast said they adapted the use of masks from their *We* neighbours not earlier than the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He further made it known that the Dogon Mask of the people of Mali can be traced way back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In tracing the historical background of masks, Visonà, Poyner, Cole (2008) made it clear that while some sculpture of the West Atlantic forests can be dated to the sixteenth century, masks are not mentioned in European accounts until the seventeenth century. According to Lamp (1996) in her attempt to tracing the history of masks said very few masks have been collected with documentation, but most are recognised principally by the BagaKoba, whose ritual use ended in the early twentieth century.

Shashank Nakate on Buzzle.com a Publication on 2/2/2010 indicated that the world's famous painter Picasso came across an African mask in the year 1907 and was amazed by the design and meaning associated with it. This can easily suggest that these and other artist who came across some of these masks redeveloped it and sent it back to Africa for our consumption. And this can easily be detected from the similarities that exist between some of the masks worn by both Africans and the Europeans.

A Publication on 5/26/2011 by Mukta Gaikwad on Buzzle.com was suggesting that the history of these masks started with the grand carnival in Italy. Known as the Carnevale di Venezia, the carnival allowed people from various classes of the society to come together without anyone being judgmental. It became a way of stealing kisses from women and getting political information from the noblemen during the festivities. This the researcher cannot agree, as the research conducted so far on masquerading and masks have not been able to state definitely the originators of these activities.

Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) in talking about the present day influence in the type of masks used by masquerades especially by the Dogons, said, some Islamicized communities have ceased *drama* rituals altogether. But masking is still strong and will continue to be buoyed up by Dogon cultural pride. They further retreated that new masks forms representing such characters as learned Muslim, Mossi horseman, and white man have appeared, reflecting forceful outside influences. This has been the case of the Winneba masquerades where almost all the masks worn by these masquerades are European centred as the masks rather showcase ideals and principle of the Western, with current Western movie characters strongly projected. Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) in reemphasizing their point pointed to the fact that masking and other art forms of the Dogon have been highly affected by the encroachments of Christianity and Islam, of course, as well as truncated drastically in “authentic” entertainments performed many

times a year for tourists in Dogon villages. Before the Dutch were to settle at the shores of Ghana, the people of Winneba had a way of entertaining themselves. With the coming in of the Whites to the shores of Ghana, traditional ways of entertainments virtually ceased. With the introduction of Christmas by Christians they were compelled to adapt to whatever comes with Christmas. Hence, the introduction of the masquerading culture.

### *Types of masks*

Furthermore, Miller (2006) opines that the quintessential African cultural object is probably the mask. This assertion of the writer is due to how well the mask has been displayed in almost every museum the world over. African masks are considered amongst the finest creations in the art world and are highly sought after by art collectors. Many of the pieces' replicas can be viewed in museums and art galleries in many parts of the world. Masking ceremonies in Africa have great cultural and traditional significance. Latest developments and understanding of aesthetic principles, religious and ceremonial values have brought about a greater insight into the ideas and moral values that African artists express in their art.

Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) opined Ci Wara masks are crest masks or dance crests, for they sit on top of the dancer's head. Both the head and much of the body of the dancer are usually hidden by costume. Willet (2002) gave a very good example of a face mask of the Segu substyle of the Bambara (Bamana). He went on further to say that such masks are worn by uncircumcised boys, all of whom are members of the *Ntomo* society which prepares them for circumcision and membership of the *Tyiwara* society.

Miller (2006) believes that virtually all materials culture produced in traditional societies is connected in one way or the other to the spirit world via the means of ritual and ceremony. This therefore informs the producers of the masks as to how the materials to be used should be handled before, in the course of production and after production. This is done not to incur the wrath of the spirits believed to be dwelling in the materials.

Miller (2006) on the Bwa of Burkina Faso, believe that these masks become inhabited by supernatural clan spirits, who protect the owner's family from harm. Amenuke, *et al.* made it clear how well the African believe in spiritism by saying, "God has given special powers to animals, plants, and objects like stones and metals". These powers, the writer thinks can be used by man through rituals, rites and ceremonies. This therefore guides the makers of the masks and the wearer alike as the spirits can inflict pains on the producer if not well handled and vice-versa if well handled. On the other hand the wearer might find its spirit not in consonant with the spirit of the material. In this wise, it is always proper to be guided by these philosophies associated with the making and wearing of masks.

In the making of the masks, what informs its design is the purpose to which the masks will be put to and what informed the creation of the masks. In the traditional settings traditional carvers or craftsmen are commissioned to produce the masks based on mythology and the spiritual need of the society. After the production, incantation and invocation of spirit are made to imbue the spirits into the masks, this makes the masks wearer become possessed when it is used. The possessed wearer now acts differently from his real life as he now behaves according to the dictates of the spirit in the masks. Although some of the masks are worn for performance most have spiritual under currents which informs its make, material and its use.

According to Akhenaten a contributor to [www.amarna.com](http://www.amarna.com), most masquerades are covered from head to toe with some pieces of clothing or/and bamboo rafters. Finally, a wooden mask is worn over the face. The mask will vary depending on the type of masquerade and the place of origin within the Igbo land. Some masks are designed to be beautiful, intimidating or downright sinister. Most masquerades claim to have some mystical powers and are constantly competing to see which one has the most mystical powers, whenever they appear together especially at village squares or funerals.

During celebrations, initiations, crop harvesting, war preparation, peace and trouble times, African masks are worn by a chosen or initiated dancer. It can be worn in three different ways: vertically covering the face as helmets, encasing the entire head and as crest, resting upon the head which was commonly covered by material as part of the disguise. African masks often represent a spirit and it is strongly believed that the spirit of the ancestors possesses the wearer.

According to Willett (2002) Masks from the Basongye, whose word for mask, *kifwefe*, is commonly applied by collectors to this type of masks. These male masks embody the power of sorcery and perform spectacular feats to induce fear in the spectators. He went on further to say *mayambaa* mask is worn by men conducting initiation ceremonies among the *Basosso* a Bakongo sub-group.

Miller (2006) in looking at the uses of masks had this to say; administration of law and order, execution, divination, and the fight against illness and witchcraft involved the use of masks and charms to frighten or harness supernatural spirits.

Visona (2008:89) had this to say about the uses of masks: *Vabo* masquerades punish anti-social behaviour and chase away criminals and individual names given to each

male *vadomask* underscore their aggressive qualities. Other uses of masks may be based on the need of the society and its beliefs.

Wilett (2002:90) talks also about the uses of masks as *AgbogboMmwo*, a Maiden spirit mask from the Igbo worn with an elaborate appliqué costume by the middle grade of the men's society at funerals and festivals in which the masquerade mimics women's activities. Furthermore Wilett (2002:165) had this to say about *Otobo* masks; *Otobo* masks are used by the *Ekine* society among the *KalabarIjo* to represent a water spirit with human and hippopotamus features.

Ritual ceremonies that involves the masks generally depict deities, spirits of ancestors, mythological beings, good and or evil, the dead, animal spirits, and other beings believed to have power over humanity. Masks of human ancestors or totem ancestors (beings or animals to which a clan or family traces its ancestry) are often objects of family pride. When they are regarded as the dwelling of the spirit they represent, the masks may be honoured with ceremonies and gifts.

During the mask ceremony the dancer goes into deep trance, and during this state of mind he "communicates" with his ancestors. A wise man or translator sometimes accompanies the wearer of the mask during the ritual. The dancer brings forth messages of wisdom from his ancestors. Often the messages are grunted utterances and the translator will accurately decrypt the meaning of the message. Rituals and ceremonies are always accompanied with song, dance and music, played with traditional African musical instruments.

There is a huge variety of mask types found in Africa which makes classifying them a difficult task. This type of African art ranges from very detailed and accurate figures to the very abstract. African masks can be classified into the following basic types.



- Face masks – They are the most common mask type. They are used throughout Africa. They can be secured to the face in several ways. These methods include a band or string put through holes on each side of the mask, held on by a wig, or secured by a scarf.
- Headdress masks – They are actually masks set on a base which sits on top of the wearers head. The Bambara (Bamana), who are the largest ethnic group in Mali, are famous for this type of mask.
- Shoulder masks – They are usually large and heavy and rest on the wearer's shoulders.
- Helmet masks – They fit over the wearer's entire head and are usually carved from a section of tree trunk.
- Helmet crests - Unlike the helmet masks these masks do not fit over the wearer's entire head but rather is worn like a hat, leaving the face exposed.
- Cap crests (forehead masks) - This type of mask is worn on the forehead leaving the wearer's face exposed.

### *Materials used*

Clarke (n.d.) talked about some of the materials used in making masks by referring to a dancing masquerade in a costume of leaves, fiber and feathers from the Bwa region in Burkina Faso. Visona, Poynor and Cole (2008) talked about the materials used in the making of the Ci Wara masks by saying, beads, leather, and metal attachments may be added to embellish the masquerade. In how the masks are made, they said, as in all Ci Wara dance crests, a variety of textures masks each section of the sculpture, softening the austerity of the overall form.

Bravmann (1979) stipulates that their costumes are composed of local and imported garments, the raiment's of the living and not the occult grasses that dress the Gbain. Exquisitely carved, re-fined and polished surfaces are hall-marks of Do masks for, as a local observer remarked, they must be fresh and young. Gbain, in contrast, are rough hewn and large featured. Although the Ligbi perform the Do in the state of Banda and elsewhere, all people are invited to see it for its performances are regarded as a binding element between the Ligbi and his neighbors.

At [buzzle.com](http://buzzle.com) an article published by Shashank Nakate on 2/2/2010, Africa masks and its use can be traced back to well past Paleolithic times. African masks have cultural and traditional significance. African masks denote a rich history filled with meaningful symbols and traditions. These art objects were, and are still made of various materials including bronze, copper, wood, leather, straw, feathers, hair and cloth. Each African mask has great importance attached to it. With expressions that range from benign to terrifying, each African mask usually possesses tribal significance and its uses cut across tribes, villages and various settlements, and there are a lot of similarities in its uses, materials used, style and those who wear them.

According to Miller (2006) *Cokwe* masks are made from a variety of materials, depending on the type of mask. The female *pwo* dance masks are carved in wood or gourd with long black thrummed fibre wig. It symbolises an adult mother, and is carved with cicatrices tattoos. She went on further saying that one of such tattoo incorporates a cross motif, assimilated from the symbolism of Portuguese monks of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) talked extensively about the masquerading culture of the Senufo and made mention of the fact that these people use brass in making their masks, and mostly these masks are worn for performances at funerals. Masks used in

the masquerading culture of Winneba are mostly imported and are made from very light weight materials like rubber, with a few made of mesh locally. All these masks are used for the masquerade event on Christmas with the exception of when a masquerade member dies where the masquerades go to perform at the funeral. Even with this, it is purely for entertainment.

Making of the masks is a well thought out thing which therefore informs the kind of material to be used as the material has effect on the ritual to be performed and the wearer. Some of the materials chosen are made in connection with what the gods are associated with.

### **Historical Background and Origin of Masquerading**

In tracing the historical beginnings of masquerading, MS Encarta Encyclopaedia (2005) points out to 14<sup>th</sup> century Oyo kingdom in south-eastern Nigeria, where *Alarinjo*, a court masquerade was common.

Bravmann (1979) indicated that masques were apparently documented first in the northern portions of the West Atlantic forests. The following shows a brief survey of regional West Atlantic masquerades which begins in the north and moves southwards.

Bravmann (1979) emphasized that despite the apparently infertile environment for the mask among the Akan, there are instances where one encounters masquerades. The oldest record of a masquerade among the Akans of Ghana is, of course, Freeman's account of the "Sakrobundi" tradition.

Furthermore Bravmann (1979) opined that "Sakrobundi" may then be seen as the earliest documented instance of the impact of a Gur culture and the masquerade upon

the Akans. Although there were no precise formal equivalents to the two known “Sakrobundi” masks from the Cercle de Bondoukou within the broad range of Senoufo mask types, the “Sakrobundi” carvings present several aspects that place them stylistically within Gur masking traditions.

Bravmann (1979) traced the history of masquerading by giving two further instances of obvious mask borrowing by Akan peoples recorded in the mid-1960s. may be cited. Striking bush cow horizontal masks, with open maws and bared teeth were recorded by Roy Sieber among the Aowins.

Bravmann (1979) also indicated that our search for masks and masquerades in Ghana invariably forces us to go beyond the limits of Akan artistry and to consider as already mentioned, the impact of Gur and Mande peoples. The distribution of known masquerades suggests that we must look to the area north and west of the Akan forest and specifically to that region between the Ivory Coast border and the White Volta River. Masquerades occur in this north-west quadrant of the country beginning as far south as the edge of the forest and extending north to the Upper Volta frontier.

Further insight was given by Bravmann (1979) indicating that the Sikilen masquerade has been contributed by the Sisala, while the Sigma or Simma of Gonja state can be credited to the Vagala and Tapolensi. The Mossi-speaking Nome, Wala, and Batige also share in the Simma, but their oral traditions suggest that they inherited this masquerade from their Grusi neighbors. It is interesting to note that within Ghana's borders it has invariably been the Grusi and not members of the Mossi family of peoples who have contributed to the mask. Thus, it is not surprising to find the complete absence of masks east of the White Volta where Mossi-speaking populations such as the Builsa, Mamprussi, and Dagomba dominate. Masquerades also exist in the southern portion of

this quadrant, having been introduced by members of Manding civilization, specifically the Ligbi, Dyula, and the blacksmithing Numu. Arriving in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they settled throughout the area of the bend of the Black Volta and have formed a prominent part of the historical and cultural patterns of the zone ever since. It is to the incoming Mande that the impressive masquerades of the Do and Gbain must be credited.

Visona, *et al* alluded to the fact that a photograph from the early twentieth century shows a *CiWara* masquerade in the fields of which a vivid description was given to how the masquerades were performed. Masquerading is the act of concealing ones identity for various reasons.

Masquerading has a long history in Africa. Long before the Europeans arrived, the tradition had criss-crossed the continent, giving birth to endless variations and this is how Davies (2010) put it on her web page.

Mack (2000) trace the history of masquerading indicating that although widely distributed around the world, it is masquerade that is often considered as the most quintessentially African of art forms. A masquerade in performance seems to be depicted in a Tassili rock-painting from Sahara some time before the second millennium BC indicating the relevance of the masquerading culture and how long it has been with the people of Africa.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) traced the history of masquerading as apparently being first documented in the northern portions of the West Atlantic forest. They went on further to say that in the last years of the seventeenth century, a European traveller named Froger reported seeing a “circumcised” man wearing a horned headdress in the town of Barra, on the banks of Gambia River.

Although the writers above have not exactly said or stated that masquerading started in Africa, one can believe that masquerading has its route in Africa. And this was well indicated in the rock-paintings from the Sahara which existed long before history was written.

Rampersad (1972) also states that the masquerade originated from a pagan custom during the pre-Christian period of saturnalia, a custom which was modified by the church to become a two-day festival before ash Wednesday, when converts were permitted to 'pay farewell' to the devil, vanity and lust of the flesh before entering upon the period of fasting and repentance during the forty days of lent.

In the Caribbean, it is believed to have developed out of the slave culture with a feeling of joyous freedom from bondage. Curran on a web page [www.caribbeanchoice.com](http://www.caribbeanchoice.com) observes that in the Caribbean, masquerade is a dynamic blend of African rhythms, colour and sensuous movement sometimes with European religious connotation combined with Caribbean entertainment.

Ododo (2001) in taking a closer look at how some of the masquerading societies started and said there are few accounts of how the festival started. However, the differences in these accounts are not fundamental. Generally, Ireba Eku (masquerade cult) was believed to have been formed under the divine instruction of God to check the excesses of women, apart from serving as ancestor worship. Myth has it that after creating man and woman as husband and wife, one day God sent for the man but he was too busy to honour the call. Instead, he requested his wife to heed God's call on His behalf. God gave her Irakwo (an egg-like object that contains the secrets of life and has the capacity to manifest supernatural powers) for her husband. Having discovered its contents and being fascinated by them, she hid it in her uterus and later swallowed it without giving

it to her husband. She thereafter became quite powerful, performing supernatural feats as turning into any animal and changing back to a human being. She could instantly grow wings to fly around in astral travels. She also became capable of all sorts of mysterious transformations. Her husband became envious of her powers. In sympathy, God enabled the husband to create the Eku masquerade cult from which women membership is strongly discouraged as a counterforce to the powers the women possess. On the other hand the masquerades of Winneba were copied from a notable source which cannot be denied and it has been said over and over again that it is from the Dutch who settled on the coast of Ghana. The source was using the culture to entertain themselves and onlookers who wanted to enjoy Christmas. The masquerading culture of Winneba does no spiritual invocation and has no spirits imbedded in the masks that are worn as majority of the masks are even produced by people other than the masquerades and its related agents.

Cole (1989) observes that in Africa, masquerade is characterized by performance art, revealing arena for expression of dramatic opposition, images of male and female that tend towards formal rigidity in shrine sculpture becomes animated as fuller personalities. Mostly the masquerades in Africa do a lot of performances which are very artistic in nature and enthusiastic.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) posit that in the 1930's, Papel initiates dressed as enormous sea snails were photographed wearing models of sailing ships on their heads. Other photographs of the sea show Papel and Manjaka youths wearing constructions in shape of airplanes. Today these people no longer have such elaborate age-grade ceremonies, but create wonderfully inventive masquerades for Guinea Bissau's Carnival celebrations. Carnival in Bissau, the capital of Guinea Bissau, is linked to

celebrations in the Cape Verde Islands and Brazil. Although inspired by Christian calendar, the festival has a distinctly secular focus.

Bravmann (1979) said in the late 1880s, Richard Austin Freeman, a member of the Gold Coast Boundary Commission, recorded for posterity an unusual and exciting masquerade which he witnessed in the Bron Town of Odumase, approximately 160 kilometers northwest of the Ashanti capital of Kumasi.

Bravmann(1979) went on to opine that, Masquerades are not now, and probably were never, products of Akan societies. Rather, they represent the historical presence of Gur and Manding peoples within Ghana's frontier. With all these and other supporting evidence that masquerading culture was featured in Ghana, that of the people of Winneba was rather copied from Europeans who once settled on the coast of Ghana.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) emphatically stated that “generally the centralized Akan kingdoms of Ghana do not engage in masquerading at all,” but went on further to reveal that the appeal of the “Do” mysterious males maskers of Baule, Cote D’ivoire which was so strong that they have been danced by a Fante military association (Asafo) in the town of Cape Coast was the only one that existed in the Fante Kingdoms.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) made mention of the fact that as the Ghanaian Akan channel great aesthetic energy into regalia and the festivals that make them visible, the Baule in contrast seem to focus much of theirs in an array of masquerades.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) referred to one of these spectacular masked forms, robed in imported cloth, as dance for the group of youths known as Kaka society.

From the above historical background brought to bear by the various writers which indicate that masquerading existed long ago as was indicated in the rock paintings as



made mentioned earlier in the write-up, conclusion would thus be that masquerading started in Africa and later repackaged for Africans. This can be supported by the fact that Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008:173) made it clear that while some sculpture of the West Atlantic forests can be dated to the sixteenth century, masks are not mentioned in European accounts until the seventeenth century and while masks has been the major component in the masquerading culture one will just have to conclude that it was repackaged for Africans.

An account given to the history of Masquerading in Ghana by Davies (2010) says in Ghana the tradition began as a party. From the late 19th century Europeans living in the port of Winneba would celebrate New Year by donning masks and dancing at the town's bars. In the early 1920s two local men, Abraham and Yamoah, annoyed at not being invited, created a rival masquerade of their own. They called themselves the Nobles, and made comical costumes that satirised religious figures and local bureaucrats. Such was their success that rival groups were formed, some boasting hundreds of members. By the 1950s Ghana's masquerade had become a national, annual competition. For a week from Boxing Day clusters of outlandish figures march together through the streets all over the country, in costumes that have taken up to a year to create. African masking generally invokes deities, nature spirits and ancestors.

Another account by Uncle Korsah (personal communication, 01/04/2011, 17:00) an ardent masquerade opines that masquerades in Ghana look like a direct replica of the European type. This suggests that they might have copied directly from the Europeans although over the years there has been some changes and modifications. Korsah further stated that Masquerading in the Central Region first started in Saltpond, then later to Elmina where it migrated to Cape Coast. He went on further to say that history has it that on the 13th of February in 1919 which was a Thursday saw the masquerade of the

Effutu people inaugurated by the help of those from Cape Coast. There is not much information on how it went to western region but it is believed they all started from Saltpond.

### **Beliefs and Practices Associated with Masquerading**

Underwood (1964) states that in Africa masquerade is an aid and medium to evoke the presence of a spirit deity, and also provides an opportunity for rituals and dance for expression of people, bringing them together socially in the ceremony of common belief. The masker emerges from a special hut in which he has been dressed to conceal his human identity but rather its decoration and costume is a representation of the spirit evoked by it.

Mellor (1992) opined that, most African religions contain a broad and hierarchical pantheon of spirits often referred to as bush, water, and ancestral spirits. Within a community, these spirits can be reached through elaborate masquerades, within shrines or during annual ceremonies. Clarke (n.d.) also notes that in some Niger Delta *kalabari* performers, the masks worn are totally concealed from the spectators. It is rather turned upwards to face the gods. Miller (2006) stipulated that, according to the people of Yuroba, Masks are used in three main cults: the Egungun, to celebrate ancestors; Epa, which honour family and history; and Gelede, which venerates women for motherhood and witchcraft.

With reference to Ekuechi Masquerade Ensemble of the Ebira People in Nigeria, Ododo (2001) indicated that traditionally, like everything else of any importance, masquerading and its secrets are the prerogatives of the men-and initiates at that.

Women have been excluded from sharing in the secrets for they are weak and fickle and are therefore not fit to take part in them. They are also mysterious and sometimes unclean. They cannot therefore approach these ancestral manifestations, whose characters are diametrically opposed to their own. Any meeting between them would have adverse effects on both parties. Much harm would come to the women and masquerades would lose something of their virtue. Apart from this fear, there is the desire to avert the wrath of these spirits whose condescension to visit mankind in the form of masquerades is a great honour, which must not be abused. They are mindful of the fact that ancestral spirits are superior to mere mortals and constitute an unusual phenomenon when they assume physical forms

Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) opined that the masks of Bwa people embody “the spirit of growth,” dwarf spirits, or other supernatural forces not readily apparent visually. Traditionally, masks in the various societies are put to various uses depending on the spiritual and societal needs of the people at that point in time. Due to the beliefs of these societies in Africa, the masquerading of which brings about the wearing of the masks has become part of the life of most of the people. This is used to solve a lot of the spiritual problems confronting the people and their activities like farming, harvesting, fertility, veneration, and a host of others.

According to Ododo (2001) Ekuechi Masquerades spy on each other’s artistic and organizational strategies, try through diabolical means to render each other redundant and invalid during the performance while also fortifying themselves against such diabolic effects. The weaker ones will always succumb. The support of other neighboring communities is also sought to further bolster their competitive stands. Herein lies the politics of the performance.

Ododo (2001) further stated that three stages of rehearsals can easily be identified. The first stage starts about six months to the festival period with the custodian of the singing masquerades and the anchormen only rehearsing on a regular basis for about three months. This restriction is placed to enable the anchormen give their blessings to all the songs before they become commodities for a wider audience. The aim is to avoid satiric songs that could generate crises within the clan and the community at large. This means that the anchormen have the power to censor any song that is considered offensive in whatever manner.

Ododo (2001) went on to say that apart from the songs, no other aspects of the performance are rehearsed, not even dance and drumming. Given the dexterity, with which dances, music and other displays are done with artistic symmetry during this performance, it is difficult to acknowledge them as unrehearsed pieces. This is very impressive, providing yet another dynamic element in the performance.

According to Ododo (2001) Ekuechi Masquerade, as a night performance, the need for proper illumination for the stage and the venue has always been given careful attention. ...*Opomo* was the main source of domestic lighting during a period. This further concretises the now obvious fact that the festival has been undergoing changes as dictated by societal development.

Ododo (2001) went on to say Anchormen are usually costumed in uniform bright coloured apparel. The style varies every year. Fabrics are freely chosen too. The same thing happens to the Club Members. Their own costumes are chosen on age grade basis, all in contrast to one another and that of the anchormen. The security men are often costumed in Khaki overall and hard boots. Other spectators freely costume themselves as in a carnival. Some look weird and grotesque while others are just unique in simplicity. Some also wear hunter's costumes and special attire inherited from their

great grandfathers. These are treasures because: Old cloths kept and handed down from ancestors are associated with past beliefs and practices. Their value is derived from this connection with the past and with the number of individuals previously associated with these cloths.

The above views suggest clearly that there are diverse connotations to the masquerade festivities, the concepts being largely based on societal differences and philosophies to life, therefore a study of the masquerades in Ghana should also be able to tell us what informs their practice. The masquerade culture of the people of Winneba has also featured heavily bright coloured dresses which turn to let the masquerades stand out in their performances.

### **Religious Significance of Masquerading**

According to Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) the use of soft fresh verdant plant material in Do's costume directly evokes its function of regeneration. In wooden masks, on the other hand, a more abstract form of symbolism prevails. Bwa wooden masks embody nature spirits, who imparted rules for the proper conduct of the community life and who are invoked in masquerades to benefit humankind and the natural forces on which life depends. Bravmann (1979) says among the most impressively scaled masks in sub-Saharan Africa, they serve to actually rid communities of disease or to insure against possible sickness. They also are called upon to avert an agricultural disaster, human infertility, and severe drought. Bedu appearances are also public, although the ritual activation of the masks can be witnessed only by members of the cult. The emphasis of the masquerade, however, is upon its performance before the community. It assures the living of their protection from the evils of life and encourages those who

behold it to vocalize their apprehensions and fears publicly. At certain pivotal moments during the masquerade performance, tradition dictates that people vent their feelings and negative thoughts by speaking directly to the mask.

In looking at the religious attachment of masquerading, Zarris (2010) said, in fact, throughout the whole of sub-Saharan West Africa, traditional pre-colonial religions uphold that the ancestors of the living in the unseen spirit world strongly influence the fabric of the living world for good or ill – anything from the weather to human relationships. Any occasion of ceremonial worship or celebration in West African culture is strongly underpinned by this sense of spirituality – in fact, traditional civic life was once thoroughly infused with it. The theatrical narratives or rituals performed by masquerades on these occasions symbolically bridge the earthly and spiritual worlds, as the masquerades become divine emissaries. This is why they are feared and revered, as well as loved and respected in the traditional communities. Zarris (2010) further stated that the masquerades can also act as mouth pieces of the ancestral spirits or the gods, and this often holds more sway over community decisions than what the village elders may say. In fact, whatever a spirit says through a masquerade may override decisions made by the village leaders in unusually serious matters, such as whether or not to embark on a war with a neighbouring clan.

They are often used in dance ceremonies to make the connection between the human world and the spirit world. Masquerades carry great religious and cultural significance for participants including the enthralled and connected audience and this is how [www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-masks.html](http://www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-masks.html) put it. Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia had this to say; amongst the Yoruba, the annual ceremonies in honor of the dead serve as a means of assuring their ancestors a place among the living. They believe the ancestors have the responsibility to compel the living to uphold the ethical

standards of the past generations of their clan, town or family. The Egungun is celebrated in festivals, known as **Odun Egungun**, and in family ritual through the masquerade custom. Wikipedia further made mention of the fact that the Egungun spiritually clean the community; through the dramatic acting and miming of the robed priests, they demonstrate both ethical and amoral behavior that have occurred since their last visit. In this way, they expose the strengths and weaknesses of the community to encourage behavior more befitting of their descendants. When this performance is completed, the performers as Egungun give messages, warnings and blessings to the assembled spectators.

Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) made reference to the fact that masquerades have religion mostly attached to it. Even the ones that are for entertainment have a bit of religious undertone in it. Reference was typically made by the writer that “recent masquerades in this area are often associated with Islam. They suggested that the Mossi masks embody spirit powers, nature or ancestral spirits of the sort found among many farming peoples. In some regions masks are housed within ancestral shrines during periods when they are not being danced, to be augmented by powers that control the earth and productivity, all in the service of the well-being of the people and their natural environment.

According to Ganyi, Inyabri & Okpiliya (2013) Yorubas, Ibibios and Binis, apart from masking for entertainment purposes, believe that the masquerade is a physical representation of ancestral spirits come to life. The masquerade is, therefore, believed to be endowed with spiritual or supernatural powers meant for the execution of certain communal duties for the enhancement of societal cohesion. The Igbo, on the other hand, believe, instead, that the masquerader, when he wears the mask, undergoes a transformation which gives him the power to have influence over spirits though he

himself remains human. The mask becomes a physical mechanism which manifests the inner transformation of the wearer. The Ekpe or Mgbe masquerade among the Efiks and Ejagham is a physical representation of “Mgbe”, the leopard from whom the masquerader derives strength and authority which serve for adjudication and maintenance of order and harmony in society.

According to Kojo Lawson through Personal communication, the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba has no religious undertone with the exception of the opening and closing of the group for the year. Apart from this the culture is purely for entertainment. Until recently there was nothing like even an economical twist to the culture, all the forebears seek to do was to entertain the people of Winneba with the masquerading culture.

### **Aesthetic Nature of Masquerading**

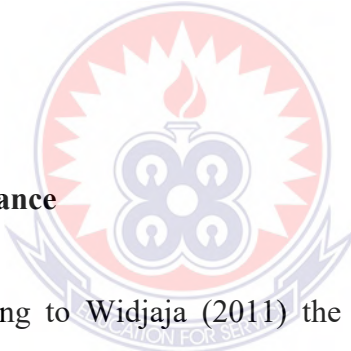
Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) say today the Bidjogo people no longer have such elaborate age-grade ceremonies, but create wonderfully inventive masquerades for Guinea Bissau’s Carnival celebrations. In another breath Visona, Poynor, and Cole (2008) re-emphasized that Poro masquerades are not always frightening. In many Kono and Mano communities of North-eastern Liberia and Southernmost Guinea, the guardian of Poro initiation is a beautiful female masquerade honoured as the mother of all other masked spirits who appear to boys as they enter the Poro enclosure.

According to Ganyi, Inyabri & Okpiliya, (2013) the Yorubas’ Culture constitutes the unique experiences of a people who exist within a particular geographical location. Masquerading thus becomes a unique means for the communal expression of culture. The masks and masquerades in their different designs, forms, patterns and colours



represent the communal essence of the different peoples who occupy various regions of Africa, while at the same time reflecting their unity in diversity. They went on to say that In Africa today, masks and masquerades have assumed very important places with the development of tourism which has suddenly elevated the status of mask carvers particularly in Cross River and neighboring Akwa Ibom states of Nigeria. With the development of the Calabar Carnival in Cross River State, certain components of the Carnival incorporate beautiful masks while many other festivals in different parts of the country are specifically designed for the display of masquerades especially in Igbo land of South Eastern Nigeria where “mmonwu” festival is specifically designated for the appearance of all kinds of masquerades who engage in colorful displays of acrobatic skills and dances

### **Socio-Economic Significance**



In the Igbo land according to Widjaja (2011) the masquerades while entertaining through dances and exhibiting extra-human feats, would walk up to certain individuals and loudly expose any bad habits, crimes or misbehaviour of that person. As people would always take corrections from these exposures, the masquerades were effective in keeping up with traditional norms and values in the communities.

Bravmann (1979) intimately associated with the Muslim calendar, it performs at key moments during the festival year. Its masks, which range from depictions of small animals to important human characters, reaffirm the essential social and beneficent dimensions of the individual. “Do” performances are meant to bring members of a community together in song and dance.

Hench (2011) had this to say that cultural celebrations, such as masquerading ceremonies throughout Africa, are instrumental in the preservation of cultural cohesiveness and folklore. Modern-day masquerading ceremonies in Africa combine music, dance and masks to tell stories of past, present and future lifestyles. The storytelling associated with masquerading ceremonies is highlighted by thematic performances and culturally significant themes.

According to Ododo (2001) the songs that are sang at these events have been used to talk about negative economic issues, and this is how he puts it.

The following songs rendered by *Achewuru Anavehi Idoji* and *Arijenu Kuroko* are used to contextualize our claim.

(1) Ya va sogu yin du'ya báyi húa vo nì 2x

Ajaokuta/Itakpe òhíkú áyì òhé yò 2x

Énévétúyì úyà yásìrì 2x

Àhì'ìjova kí yerì údì onì suvo za? 2x

Izá kukoro Èbìrá éyín vo tuo 2x

Àáva'nìbò yonì, èné yáné sì moniré ènóví?

Àáva'nì Gambari, èné yáné sì moniré ènóví?

Àáva'nì Yoba yò, èné yáné sì moniré ènóví?

Ebira vi jevú Nigeria 2x

Counterfit èkèhì anávàha. 2x

(Achewuru Anavehi, 1986: vol. I)

(Translation)

Having found wealth our suffering deepens

Our forefathers found Ajaokuta/Itakpe

What is our lot but suffering?

Ask Government what is our ranking in the project?

Ebiras have no say in the project sited in their land

If sited in Iboland, who can try it?

If sited in Hausaland, who can try it?

If sited in Yorubaland, who can try it?

Ebira is a counterfeited coin of Nigeria

Counterfeit, worthless money rejected.

He analyzed the song to mean that Ajaokuta Steel Company and Iron Ore Mining Company and Itakpe are two giant federal government projects situated in Ebiraland because of the large deposit of good quality iron ore found in the area. These projects are the bedrock of Nigeria's industrialization. Since the projects were established around 1978, most sensitive positions are often occupied by non-indigenes despite the fact that there are several Ebira people qualified to occupy such positions. The demand is not that all sensitive positions must be given to Ebira indigenes but a fair sharing formula may be observed so that the people can have a sense of belonging. This way, they can adequately monitor the progress of the project.

He went on to say that The Ebira and the Niger Delta people are minority tribes in Nigeria. The minorities in Nigeria are often neglected, while the three major tribes of Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba receive fair treatment. This is why Achewuru has intoned that if the steel projects were situated in the land of any of these three tribes, managerial attitude would have been on a more cautious side. The above song expresses the mind of an average Ebira person while exposing the attitude of Nigerian Government (often headed by the major tribes) to minority tribes and their God-given wealth. The song therefore, has both local and national relevance.

Ododo (2001) opined that other songs sang at the masquerading event also probe into the essence of human existence while extrapolating the inevitable encounter with death, the ultimate indiscriminate leveler of all human souls. He further indicated that in some instances emphasis is placed on the relevance of sound health to good living and long life.

The aesthetic qualities of these songs lie in their free-flowing poetic contents and vibrant philosophical dimensions. Each song is capable of provoking multiplitious interpretations, recoverable often times long after performance. Therefore, in the bid to ensure that many of these songs are understood, at least contextually, songs are repeated several times during the performance

According to Ododo (2001) in the Ekuechi Masquerade apart from classified groups of supporters, there are other spectators who come from far and near to witness and seek entertainment from the festival. He went on further to say that to be entertained thoroughly means getting actively involved in a way because the entertainment values of the performance are best felt in effective audience participation. Thus, most members of the audience are easily integrated into the performance proper because of the dynamic nature of the performance, which has communal disposition that always leaves a vacuum to be creatively filled by any partaker in the artistic experience. This is also true of most Nigerian communal celebrations as expressed by Gumucio-Dagron (1994).

Ododo (2001) says for every Eku raconteur, the following levels of organized supporters are mandatorily present:

- (a) Anchormen
- (b) Security men
- (c) Club members
- (d) Active and passive spectators

*“Anchormen:* These are men with a lot of spiritual strength acquired through sorcery and herbal art. They serve as the henchmen of *Ekurahu*. They are usually six in number. They give protective cover to the *Ekurahu* against any spiritual attack from another *Ekurahu*, witches and other demonic forces that are believed to hover around the scene of performance in this night of ancestor worship.

...All the other members of the supporting troupe, from the security men to spectators, take instructions from them either directly or through their acolytes and votives.

(b) *Security Men:* These are able-bodied men, often retired soldiers, hunters or men otherwise tested in warfare. They are also said to have metaphysical powers, which confer supernatural vision on them. In action, their presence can send fright down the spine of non-initiates. Their main duty is to maintain law and order, protect and defend all participants and spectators, attack and eject from the scene of performance any foreign or obstructing elements. It is forbidden to incur the wrath of these men

(c) *Club Members:* The club system was primarily instituted to bring together all key participants (very small size) responsible for the organisation of the *Ekurahu* performances. It started as an informal gathering committed to ensuring a successful outing for the *Ekurahu*. They serve mainly as chorus groups strategically positioned within the performance venue to help echo all songs. They are organised according to their age grades.

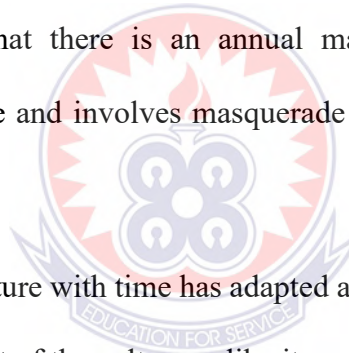
(d) *Active and Passive Spectators:* Spectating during this performance is a matter of choice. Active and passive involvement usually overlaps without

clear distinction. The active engagement of spectators in the performance is usually impulsive and spontaneous as guided by the mood of the festivity and the invigorating nature of the performance itself. What one finds is constant action and constant relaxation. As some spectators cease to perform actions ranging from frenzied dancing to vivacious display of excitement, others pick up.”

Bravmann (1979) says that to gaze upon a Do mask brings pleasure, not the pain and fear accompanying the spectacle of a Gbain. These small Do masks are things of beauty and joy, elaborated in a human sense through the use of cosmetic paints and occasional pieces of jewellery

Widjaja (2011) stated that there is an annual masquerade festival in November organised by Enugu State and involves masquerade groups from various parts of the state.

Winneba masquerade culture with time has adapted a lot of strategies that seek to build the socio-economic aspect of the culture unlike it used to be.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

Qualitative research generally includes research methods that rely heavily upon extensive observations and in-depth interviews that result in non-numerical data (Baumgartner, Strong and Hensley, 2002).

To be able to delve deep into the beliefs and practices associated with masquerading in Winneba among the Effutus, and for the research to yield an in-depth result in description and interpretation, I chose to work with the ethnographical approach which is in the qualitative research area. Qualitative research is often conducted in a natural setting and does not attempt to control the context or conditions surrounding the research settings (Baumgartner, Strong and Hensley, 2002).

The following issues are outlined in this chapter: a definition given to ethnography and why I have chosen ethnography for this research, description of the settings including the participants, and the procedure I used in the selection.

#### Ethnography

Ethnography research is a longitudinal research based on complete or partial integration of the researcher into the subjects of study in order to share experience, which will help the researcher to better understand the system as an insider (Alhassan, 2007).

Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture. Given (2008) in

ethnographic research the ethnographer enters the field with an open mind, not with an empty head. In ethnography the ethnographer begins with a problem, a theory or model, a research design, specific data collection techniques, tools for analysis, and a specific writing style. A series of quality controls, such as triangulation, contextualization, and a nonjudgmental orientation, place a check on the negative influence of bias.

Given, (2008) went on further to opine that the ethnographer is interested in understanding and describing a social and cultural scene from the emic or insider's perspective. The ethnographer is both storyteller and scientist; the closer the readers of ethnography come to understanding the native's point of view, the better the story and the better the science.

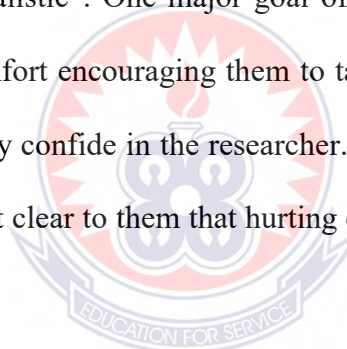
Vockell, Asher (1995) states that the ethnographer's task is to describe, interpret, and understand in considerable depth people and the cultural scenes in which they exist. Vockell, Asher (1995) further affirms that ethnographers help make us far more conscious of our own behavioral patterns.

It has been identified by scholars in ethnographic study that there are three characteristics of ethnographic research. It first focuses on how human behaves, by bringing to our attention the extraordinary variability of cultural behavior, ethnography helps make us far more conscious of our own behavioral patterns. It is a science aimed at understanding the diversity of human cultures according to Vockell, Asher (1995).

Furthermore, the second characteristic of ethnographic study is what a researcher focuses on the emic or insider perspective of members of a particular culture. In this wise it dwells more on describing the culture as members see it. Given, (2008) went on further to say that the ethnographer is interested in understanding and describing a social and cultural scene from the emic or insider's perspective. Alhassan (2006) asserts that the complete or partial integration of the researcher into the subjects of study in order



to share the experience, which will help the researcher to better understand the system as an insider. As much as a researcher enters the field as an outsider, the ethnographer's purpose is to understand what the people in the community think. In this wise all the analysis from the experience must be based on their concepts, not that of the researcher. The third characteristic of the ethnographic researcher relates to the study of natural setting in which the culture is manifested. In studying a setting, the researcher pays attention to all aspects of it in order to identify the cultural patterns. The ethnographic researcher goes to the participants and spends a lot of time with them in their territory: the school, the playground, the homes and the communities. Vockell, Asher (1995) says "Ethnographies are analytic descriptions of intact cultural scenes" "Ethnographies are both empirical and naturalistic". One major goal of the researcher is to increase the participant's level of comfort encouraging them to talk about issues the way it is and has been and to eventually confide in the researcher. The researcher in turn, will have to build trust by making it clear to them that hurting or demean issues will not be used against them.



### **Why Ethnography**

I am convinced that ethnographic research is one of the most suitable method of research for my topic and the problem under investigation. It allows me to be part of the experiences of the masquerading festival of the people of Winneba. It also makes me relate naturally not because I am from the area, but with my participants in a holistic and intuitive manner as well as produce an in-depth account.

"The most important concepts that guide ethnographers in their fieldwork include culture, a holistic perspective, contextualization, an emic perspective and multiple

realities, an etic perspective, nonjudgmental orientation, inter- and intracultural diversity, and symbol and ritual” (Given, 2008).

Collection of data in connection with the historical beginnings of masquerading in the Effutu land of Winneba in itself is a project but it was the bases on which the subject matter was researched into. In conducting a research into the beliefs and practices associated with masquerading to help readers have a better understanding of masquerading in the Effutu land, it is necessary for the researcher to be familiar with ethnographical fieldwork.

In recent times when thinking of research in ethnographic area a lot of attention is placed on the ways the researcher’s presence and interactions with the participants of a study serve to shape research outcomes (Clifford & Marcus, Bresler & Wasser, 1996). The new vision of anthropology also enabled me to approach this study using multiple perspectives on my part as a researcher and on the part of my participants. The new vision in ethnographic research also urged me place greater value on the entire process of the study as ethnography, rather than simply identifying the written product at the end (Denzin, 1997).

Ethnography also offered me interpretive sufficiency by “taking seriously lives that are loaded with multiple interpretations and grounded in cultural complexity.” In other words, interpreting ethnographic accounts “should possess that amount of the depth, detail, emotionality, nuance, and coherence that will permit a critical consciousness to be formed by the reader” (Denzin, 1997). Despite the fact that I am a Ghanaian and specifically come from Winneba and an Effutu which makes me an insider, I entered the field as an outsider based on the many questions I had in the course of this fieldwork. I was able to capture the practices, beliefs and historical background and inclination through questions, observation and to some extent participating in the masquerading

culture. In the same vein attention was on individuals within and without of the group and the various groups themselves during my fieldwork.

Throughout my research, I was interested in learning about the beliefs and practices associated with some masquerading cultures, I was also interested in the leading out of different beliefs and practices in terms of values, attitudes, beliefs, social systems, institutions and structures, and how they are linked to the beliefs and practices associated with masquerading. As I researched into the beliefs and practices associated with masquerading in Winneba among the Effutus in other to give an informed account on these and other relevant information to help trace its originality and well documented fact about the masquerading culture in Winneba, ethnographic inquiry was one of the most appropriate for the research.

### **General Introduction to Winneba.**

Winneba is a coastal town traditionally known as Simpa. It is a well-known historically as a fishing town in Ghana in the Central Region. It lies west of Accra the capital of Ghana [35miles (56km)] and [90miles (140 km)] east of Cape Coast the Regional Capital of the Central Region. “Simpafo” or “Effutufo” is how the inhabitants are called. The people of Winneba speak the Effutu language. The people of Winneba are Guans from the parent stock in the Gonjaland. It has one of the best if not the best shore lines in Ghana.

Administratively, Winneba is a municipal with an assembly headed by a chief executive officer. Traditionally Winneba is headed by a chief who is called “Nenyi” under him are sub chiefs who head the various suburbs and villages under the Effutu state.

Winneba happens to have a University (University of Education Winneba) with three campuses, of which initially the south campus used to be an ideological institute for the

first president Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah (Dr). This after some years was converted into a Specialist Training Colleges as it had three different campuses each specialised in an area of education. This was how they were called, Advanced Teacher Training College (ATTC), National Academy of Music (NAM), and Specialist Training College (STC). All these institutions were brought together to form a University which houses various faculties and departments. Aside the University, Winneba has six Senior High Schools and numerous Junior High Schools and primary education institutions. Talking of technical education, Winneba has a Technical Education Institute and other numerous apprenticeship training centres in the town, with training in various disciplines. All these institutes as stated above have helped a lot in reducing the illiteracy level in Winneba and its surrounding towns and villages and made a lot more of the employable in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

Winneba since the early part of the 1900's was well noted for the celebration of the masquerading at the end of every year. This over the years has come to stay and to be developed. The masquerades compete at the end of every year in four groups. Although they have similar dress codes, instruments and style they have different practices and beliefs.

### **Preliminary Study and Gaining Access**

In doing qualitative research, specifically ethnographic research one need to gain access to the field or intended research grounds or area. This in fact is a problem. According to Leedy (2005) gaining access to a site, and having to go through a gatekeeper, a person who can provide a smooth entrance into the area is very important. As a result, the researcher must establish trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with

participants. With the present study, access was aided considerably by the preliminary studies I had conducted in December 2010 and January 2011 for 2 weeks on the masquerading culture. I then established contact with my setting and my participants and indicated I would be continuing the project in September 2011 and January 2012 as the event is an annual one. I also identified my gate keeper, an old member and a tailor to the masquerades. In August 2012 I personally notified the various groups with the help of Mr. Kojo Lawson and followed up in September 2012. When I went back in the first week in September 2012 participants were very happy to see me because of the rapport and trust I established with them during the previous meetings.

As far as some of the groups were concerned, going to the various groups' homes with Mr. Kojo Lawson was a bit of a problem as they thought he was to spy on them and tell his parent group as to what happens in the other groups. This initially hindered my progress in getting the required information needed from some of the groups. With this and other issues coming up I had to release my aid and be visiting the groups by myself as he had initially introduced me to the leaders. Now being with them without Mr. Kojo Lawson I had to describe the project to them in detail. Before introducing myself for the second time explaining the project into details to them I had to present 1 bottle of schnapps and Gh¢100 to each of the group leaders to announce my presence and to be received and given the needed assistance.

### **Time Line and Sources**

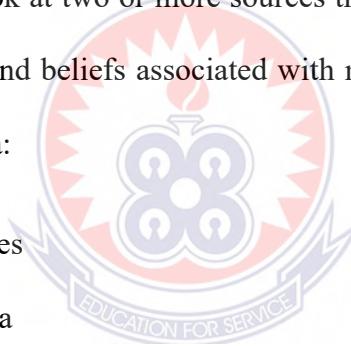
The time line given to the study was five months, the festival or the event itself is in January but the preparation starts from between August and September of the preceding year. In the latter part of August I went to remind the group leaders of the impending

task. From Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> which was a Sunday all in August 2012. I met all the heads to confirm my meeting times that has previously been agreed on. The actual field work began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2012. This is how time was allocated to each of the groups based on when they are opening the group for the year's task.

### **Introduction to the Members of the Masquerading Group**

For me to have a rich data to inform my study I chose to use both the leaders and some of the members of the group. In this wise I was introduced to the group members in order to be identified and identify the group and its leaders in the process of collecting data. Also I wanted to look at two or more sources that will shape and inform me and readers on the practices and beliefs associated with masquerading in Winneba. These are the sources of my data:

1. Group No 1. Nobles
2. Group No 2. Egyaa
3. Group No 3. Tumus
4. Group No 4. Red Cross



In all the above stated groups I took information from both their leaders and members and in some instances from people living in the homes where the groups were formed. All the names of the masquerading Groups in this research are their real names as known by the town folks, with the other participants and key informants their names were not used.

### ***Winneba and the Masquerading Groups***

The rationale for selecting the masquerading groups in Winneba for this research is because of the nature of the groups and the ability of the groups to restrict themselves to only four groups and the healthy competition that exists between them. In addition, the restrictive nature of the various groups made me believe that there are beliefs and practices associated with them that kept them intact despite frantic effort by others to break them into smaller groups. Finally to see whether although the parent group has been broken into four groups, the practices and beliefs have changed with time.

Winneba is a town with a cultural heritage which has been kept quite well despite a protracted chieftaincy dispute. Predominantly, Winneba is a fishing community that uses canoes in fishing, the major work of the women in Winneba is fish preservation. With a tertiary institution in the locality for decades, little or no influence have affected these cultures. Adversely the University has brought a lot of job opportunities to the inhabitants. Examples of such rich cultures include the masquerading festival “Kakamotobi”, “akomase”, “aboakyer”, puberty rite “kunde”, and a host of others. Winneba is gradually growing into a cosmopolitan area with its effect equally taking a toll on the citizenry. The town used to be confounded to the beach area but with time it has grown to a large proportion.

The fisher folks use to dominate in the masquerading groups and as the reopening of the group falls at the beginning of the bumper season in the fishing expedition, they easily make money to pay their dues and start pairing up for the making of the costume for the years display or the competition. With time other people who are not fisher folks but from Winneba and are educated who might have taken over from their parent or who might be coming from the various homes that the groups are coming from.

Mostly from the first week of September to its end the various groups in the

masquerading fraternity open the group for meetings, reorganization, acceptance of new entrants and preparation for the year's event. At such reopening for the year pairings are made for the sub-groups in the parent group as they will display their dresses, dancing and matching skills in three and four pairing in their display on the day of the event. What has kept the groups together for these years is what has fascinated the researcher and makes him feel there is something in terms of beliefs and practices keeping them within those numbers and group.

### **Participants in the Study**

In the previous years I had observed masquerades display within Winneba Township from December to January in a well treated outfit with music and excitement. All I thought of was just about the group; unknown to me, there is a larger participant that makes the show come to fruition. Apart from the various groups, namely: Nobles, Egyaa, Tumus, and Red Cross, there are others who are the very backbone from which the groups get their strength. Aside these, (the above mentioned participants) the inhabitants of the town are also partakers and adds up to the celebration as their cheers and jeers urge the masquerades on in their displays.

Winneba masquerade groups are well administered institutions and can boast of excellent leadership although not formally trained and educated. The various heads are accorded the most of respect that whatever the age of the leader he takes decision for and on their behalf. These leaders are not formally paid and whatever incentives they receive are not taken all year through. Mostly, their incentives are from how well they manage the finances of the group in terms of dues and fines placed on members and sponsorship packages that get to them during their celebration. Also in some instances



the groups are invited to perform and by this they are rewarded. Apart from this members and the leaders of the groups sponsor themselves.

The groups are sought after for their excellent display of dancing and matching skills amidst brass band and cheers. Also the marvellous display by the stilt dancers is worth mentioning as these and other creative things have made the masquerade group much popular as the years go by. The dances and other displays do not come in a vacuum, but by hard work, respect for their leaders and constant rehearsals by the group members which take long weeks and sleepless nights, because of fear of the other group members peeping on their style or formation.

Significantly every group has a unique dress style and code which is won by group of three and four within the various groups. It has been the norm that some of the leaders or trainers are made to wear individual dress code and style to (kind of) see to the movement and control and monitor the group's interest. The members use to wear wire mesh mask and a hat well decorated to fit the dress or the personality being imitated, as some of their dress codes are representational of individuals, groups and or a subject matter.

With time the wire mesh mask has changed more into imported rubber masks made to symbolise various animals, personalities and characters. Also the hat over the period is reducing in size and design as the cost of materials used in the making of the hat keeps on rising in price. Notwithstanding, the beauty of the hat and the dresses have not changed so much as the best dress for the occasion help bring the group up and are admired by onlookers who are the unofficial judges for the event.

Right from the opening of the groups to rehearsals, the final day and the three days that follow the final day, they exhibit their dresses and hats to the full glare of the public and

to some extent mix up with the public to really have a feel of how it feels and the real make of the costume. As early as eight a.m in the morning of the first of January (in the New Year) people gather at the park to get a good location to have a look at the masquerades and their displays. This proves a point as to how well esteemed the culture is held.

As I was earlier on introduced to my participants I started strategizing whom to start with and where to start from as I have to cover all the groups and the other participants within the anticipated time, as the events was just about a week into the New Year. With this in mind I then decided to start with the first group which is number 1 Nobles at their opening day and continued with the other groups.

Just after the opening of the groups meetings they have to strategise as to how they will win and what dancing formation or choreographic style will help them catch the eyes of the judges and onlookers. Also they then look out for whom to train and lead the group as the trainer should have a very good track record of leading the group into victory. Then based on the strength and experience, they pair or group themselves into smaller groups to train. The training is normally done in hidden or isolated areas so as to prevent the other group mates from seeing what they intend doing on the final day. At times they train late into the night as that keeps them unseen by others in the other groups. Mostly training periods start at three in the evening and last mostly for three hours. This is mostly without the bands men at the early stages of training but getting to the latter part of the training they are introduced. The times and meeting hours differ from group to group but are quite similar as the groups have a lot of things in common.

The groups are trained in four main areas of the dance style as they compete in those dance style areas. First of all, during the training they do formation dance first since that

type of dance is very tedious and hard to learn. From this they do “Atwe mu” dance where the dancers are taught to paddle their leg mostly in the process of dance. This “atwe mu” and slow dance are the areas that mostly determine the strength of the groups as it involves a lot of skills and strength. Although matching is part of the dancing stages in the competition it always attracts less attention from both the groups and the judges.

At such training sections members are reminded of the dues due the group and the design verbally illustrated to the leaders to make sure the right design is made for the group members. Fortunately, most of the groups have their people who do the sowing and this makes the work easier and faster.

### **Selecting Individual Participants for Interviews**

Because I needed to get a better understanding of the masquerading groups I decided to alternate the groups than following one group to get the needed information from the groups. On some of the days I tried as much as possible to visit two or more groups in a day to get a better understanding of the groups and what they do and for some instances compare them to see how well they are related. After visiting the groups for the first week I got to know much about the participants and saw those who are ready to easily give information in the areas I needed as they treat and keep their beliefs and some of their practices sacred.

In the subsequent weeks I audio taped and in some cases videotaped interviews (based on the interviewee’s consent) with the participants. Some of the leaders were first interviewed as individuals and others in pairs to be sure I am getting the right information. The other members of the groups were randomly picked at rehearsals and interviewed. Also the non-members who stay close by the homes of the groups were

also randomly picked for interview as it was realised that they had a lot of information based on what they see in the homes. With the leaders in the process of the performance of some of the practices, I happen to discuss why those things are done.

### **Data Analysis**

I began to arrange my notes, interview transcripts, and conversational materials the moment I entered the field (Leedy, 2005). In order to increase my understanding and to triangulate my stories from group to group and participant to participant, I started to categorize my data immediately from the field. Any time I visited a group or participants for observation, I made sure I was there before the group starts meeting or having the rehearsals and made it a point to leave after they have dispersed to help me arrange my notes before going home and to make sure my notes are intact.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January which was a day after the final day for collection of data I took time to read through my data and arranged words, phrases, patterns of practices, participants' thinking and events that had been repeated and stood out and then categorized them with my research objective and research questions in mind as follows:

#### **Objectives of this research**

1. To trace and examine the historical background of masquerading in Winneba and find out
  - i. Traditional beliefs and practices associated with masquerading.
  - ii. Motivation to observe the masquerading event.
2. Socio-economic significance of masquerading
3. Identify and interpret the aesthetic content of different masquerades

## Research questions

- What is the perception of masquerading in Winneba?
- What beliefs are associated with the masquerading?
- How is the masquerading culture influenced by foreign practices?
- To what extent is the Winneba masquerading culture an extension or progression of the African secret society?
- What impact does masquerading culture have on job creation on the people in Winneba?

With the research objectives and questions in mind the researcher used the descriptive coding to arrange the papers and results from the field and then did categorisation based on the research question for the analysis.



## Ethical Issues

Although it was very important for me to gather data for my research, most importantly, I went into the field to learn from my participants and share their beliefs, practices and historical background to the masquerading culture. In the process, I made every effort to maintain trustworthiness, triangulation and member checking.

Aside the values and beliefs held onto by my participants, I also went into the field with my own values and beliefs. I went both as an insider and as an outsider; therefore, I had my own opinions about some of the practices and performances. I was surprised by some of the practices I saw as that had never occurred to me. For example, pouring of libation at the opening of the groups, mostly by the eldest man in the house where the masquerade group was formed. A typical example is in one of the houses where the

eldest male was out; they had to wait for him for several hours. Although time has changed and technology has taken major part of our livelihood, the masquerades of Winneba have stucked so much to the traditions of their fore bearers as they practiced it to the letter. A typical example is where they meet as they do not change that meeting place no matter what the situation is; they go as far as contributing to pay for the electricity bill of the homes. It is very obvious that the masquerades are not allowing themselves to be influenced by the exposures in these modern times, the mass media and the cosmopolitan influences as Winneba has and is seriously growing with time and space.

Obviously, I had the wrong idea that I was going to document and help preserve some of the beliefs and practices by the masquerades. This was due to the fact that I thought time and event have had a toll on some of their beliefs and practices, which included the mass media and other contaminants. And this was the perception I took into the field. In addition I discovered that the knowledge acquisition process in the groups goes beyond acquisition of the required skills, but the “what” and “how” are also very important in their performances and beliefs and practices. This is because they as partakers should be interested in what goes on within and without their groups. And also to keep them in check and not to over step their boundaries.

The initial days of my data collections were not quite successful because the group members were a bit hesitant as they did not feel good giving out all they do as a group. Normally, they do their own thing without a visitor being in their midst. The most senior members and even their leaders felt it was unacceptable to see me among them with the available gadgets (tape, video recorders) ready to observe them. I realized with time they were impressing upon themselves to feel free and do what they do best at their meetings and rehearsals. Initially, when they were not fully cooperating as I imagined,

I started getting frustrated and disappointed but it did not last due to the reasons given above. My presence in the subsequent weeks at their meetings and rehearsals gave them the assurance that I was part of them and very interested in what they do and they therefore started opening up and interacting well with me. It was not like I was just interested in what they were doing but I was not familiar with what they were doing, I went on further to interrogate them about some of the stories I have heard over the period about some of the things they do as masquerades. To show that I was an insider as well as an outsider, I requested from them some of the performances and practices that interest me most and wish to record and interrogate about. Unfortunately they did not like the idea of my probe into doings things as an outsider.

Once I gained the trust of my participants and explained why I was researching into their world of performance, they co-operated with me as a learner. As I became part of their world through my daily observations, interviews, and conversations in their natural settings, they no longer considered me as an intruder, but a learner and a friend. In reciprocating, I learned to do some of their performances and try introducing a different style to almost all the groups I visited. From the preliminary studies conducted among the groups it came to light that the masquerades would like to identify with the researcher because they saw the need for the research.

Baumgartner, Strong and Hensley (2002) argue that as researchers we must also concern ourselves with the ethics of the research and the rights and well-being of the participants. The researcher then needed to allow for the possibility of recurring ethical dilemmas and problems in the field as to what should be disclosed in the final report and how much to omit. Another crucial decision was how to present the information that best captured the social setting yet would not compromise or harm any member of the study. This was well catered for by maintaining the anonymity of participants except

those who wanted their identity to be disclosed.

One of the advantages of this research is, once it was conducted in my country of origin and precisely where I come from, I will have the opportunity to further work on this research for future publications. Emerging issues and questions I could not address currently in this research will be addressed in the future, and new directions and performances in making the masquerade culture attractive and indigenous. Another advantage of this research is that I have selected multiple data sources that cross-checked information from setting and from participant to participant. I looked for points of corroboration between all data sources, about the same topics and themes throughout my fieldwork. I also made conscious efforts to look for counter positions about interpretations concerning performances and practices in informal settings among participants. For example the interpretations to their dance styles if any and prayers said as in libation when the groups are re-opening for the year.

Member checking was an important part of the procedure. For example, as I transcribed and analysed my interview notes, I went back to my interviewees from the different data settings and showed them the transcripts so that they could comment on what they had originally told me. Because time was not on my side, I could not meet with all participants but made it a point to meet the leaders of the groups or the people in the homes where these groups were formed. In most cases they were very happy to listen to what I had compiled and further gave insightful comments to what I had earlier on received from them. Having to revisit my interviewees and participants was very insightful as they added points that hitherto did not feature in the original interviews. In some cases corrections were made to notions I had misunderstood or misinterpreted. A classic example was when I met Mr. Korsah the chairman of the Group No 1. also known as Nobles to show him the notes and transcription of his interview. He explained



further their reason for pouring libation on the opening day of the group as not to mean fetish as I had somehow indicated. I therefore tried to probe further but he emphatically declared that although he is a Christian it has been the norm and belief that the gods they pray to have been protecting the group from time past so they do it to keep tradition going and that his religious beliefs should not hinder the progress of the group.

Would you want to include anything or take out anything that I misunderstood or misinterpreted? Did I omit something? Did I get this right? These were very common questions I asked my interviewees during member checking. Member checking also enabled me to triangulate stories from setting to setting. In some instances I had to play the video documentary I did alongside and there were a lot of excitement as well as criticisms of each other. This section was full of smiles as what they did mostly unplanned was being shown to them. At this time members of the masquerading groups were trying to identify themselves in the video and passing various comments about their action and inactions. In the same vein this granted me the opportunity to go over the conversation and their actions as a technique of triangulation. Unfortunately I was not permitted to show the video of the other groups to the others to corroborate what each group does as that will mean betraying or giving out the secrets of the groups as there is some kind of rivalry among the groups. Almost all the participants had the chance to pass comment on others performances and it was full of excitement as they criticized their own behaviours in the video.

### **Methodological Issues**

Upon entering the field various design decisions were made. A typical example had to

do with making a change in some of the days and time of observation as some of the groups thought they were being spied on by the other groups. Although this brought a lot of pressure on me I had to bear with it. In one instance I had to observe two groups in two hours on the same day. I had to adjust my observation and interview schedules on three occasions due to disagreements among group leaders as to what and where I could observe, as some of the activities are seen not to be made public.

At the first meetings with the groups especially Group No 3. also called Tumus, members viewed me as an intruder. This prevented them to work in my presence effectively. However, when they finally acknowledged me as part of their world and as keen learner who was interested in their world of masquerading we worked together very well. I worked toward winning their acceptance, not as an end, but it gave me the chance to pursue my research goals. I could tell they accepted and trusted me from their willingness to answer my questions, and they even volunteered some information I did not request during our conversations. Not only did we develop trust for one another, but we were willing to share some dancing formation together. A typical example is when I was expecting some well known dance style danced in the 1990's. In the course of our conversation I started talking much about the dance styles and dresses which were very common in the 1990's. They were so amazed at that and they asked me to demonstrate some of them, which I gladly did. Although I could not perhaps perfectly do them they realised that times and things have changed, as most of the dances have been either modified or abandoned.

Almost all the leaders in the various groups did not have a problem with my presence or me using a video camera. As I stated earlier it was only with some of the leaders in the Group No 3 also called Tumus who had their doubts about visitors, especially intruders who might send out the goings on in their group to the other group leaders.

Although I had conducted a preliminary study with all the groups including the said group I realised I was initially being monitored.

It was always difficult to take notes and observe at the same time. When I was caught in an exciting dance style and or discussion, I always found it difficult to write at the same time. This was where video or audio taping was invaluable.

Another problem was transcribing my tapes. Almost all the interviews conducted were recorded in the Ghanaian languages and I had to translate them. Mostly both the leaders and members of the various groups could not express themselves in English, but did express themselves in Akan and the Effutu languages and I had to translate their conversation.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF WINNEBA MASQUERADING

#### 4.1 Introduction

The researcher studied the history of Winneba so as to draw a link between Winneba and the masquerading culture as to whether the culture was originally started by the people of Winneba or they might have copied it during their journey down south.

Winneba is a coastal town traditionally known as Simpa. It is a well-known historically as a fishing town in the Central Region of Ghana and it still is. It lies west of Accra the capital of Ghana (35miles /56km) and 90miles (140 km) east of Cape Coast the Regional Capital of the Central Region. Simpafo or Effutufo is how the inhabitants are called. The people of Winneba speak the Effutu language. The people of Winneba are Guanans from (the parent stock) the Gonjaland. It has one of the best, if not the best shore lines in Ghana, unfortunately this has not been explored to the fullest in terms transforming the shore line into a harbor as it used to be in the 1930's.

The indigenes of Winneba or the Effutu people speak the Effutu dialect but with the town growing there are languages being spoken but predominantly among them is the Fante language. This language has been largely influenced by the Fante town that surrounds it. The people of Winneba have strong cultural practices which have been well kept over the years and developed. The concept of Masquerading is one that cannot be kept unspoken about.

Winneba for decades has been battling with chieftaincy issues and this has gone a long way to distort some aspect of the historical values of its people. Various names made m

ention of in the history of the Winneba people is always associated with a one of the two families laying claim to the stool as kings. This has over the years affected the history being written about the people of Winneba and their historical background. These histories, be it oral or written are skewed towards the writers involvement or relationship with one of the families laying claim to the stool just to project that family and their claims. The researcher wants to totally avoid involving himself in this grand scheme.

From Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia sorts to call Winneba a town of the Ghartey's which is very controversial as another faction exists by name the Ayirebi Acquah's. Both families have on two or more occasions been chiefs in Winneba as they both have backing to the fact that they should be chiefs. In this wise the researcher would not want to meddle in the chieftaincy affairs of Winneba but will stick to what was told and will avoid talking more about the Chiefs and the families involved.

According to Mr. R. N. Mensah, Kwame Ampene the founder of the Guan historical Society gave an account indicating that at an unspecified date, the founding ancestors separated from the parent-stock in Gonjaland which is the nuclear Guan area of dispersion, providing fairly convincing proof that since time immemorial, their dialect has been Awutu a related spoken language within the Guan family.

Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication Wednesday 13/03/13 16:30 ) opined that the ancestral founders of Winneba trekked south-wards and eventually settled in the domain of and under Akramansa, King of Fetu on the coast. In fact, Fetu was of importance in antiquity. In the course of time, due to political upheaval in the region, the ancestral founders revolted against the Fetu King and sojourned sometime with the Amanful people of Ogua a related ethnic group.

Mr. R. N. Mensah went on to refer to Mr. Kwame Ampene the founder of the Guan Hi

historical Society saying that it is noteworthy that the Cape Coast and Elmina handbook published in 1995 states on page 21 that "the traditions of origin of the indigenous inhabitants of Cape Coast assert that the Fetu state of which Ogua is the principal town, was founded by Guans". The story adds that at Amanfroro-Oguaa their ancestors were under the leadership of Bondzi Ebi I, the son of Gyarteh Sisi, the originator of the Efutu Empire which is now "Simpa" or "Winneba". However, this period of eminence was relatively brief as they decided to secure their independence by settling on a secluded land. By extension Mr. Kwame Ampene sort to imply that Cape Coast and its surrounding towns were originally created by Guans who were looking for a place to settle.

In his narration, he asserted that it is an accepted fact that King Bondzi Anyinam the son of Bondzi Esi I led them to the east side along the coast till they got to a point now known as Mumford (Dwemba) where they stayed for a substantial period of time. At a point they realized that apart from the persistent shortage of water, where they were, was not well-located enough to accommodate all of them. This according to him prompted King Bondzi Ayinam I who then organized the No. 2 Asafo Company (Dentsifo) and went with them to look for a better place with greener pastures to well accommodate them. With this movement in place he left behind the No. 2 Asafo Company (Tuafo) under the Captainship of Adwe, to be at the rear in case the main body was attacked on the way.

In corroborating the above narration, Kweku Takyi Bondzie (personal communication Monday 03/06/13 09:30) an indigene of Winneba gave a similar narration confirming the names of the leaders and added that as they journeyed they subdued the people of "Apa" including their most important fetish, the "Sakum Apa".

Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication Wednesday 13/03

/13 16:30) went on further to say that they continued the journey till they discovered a lagoon which was salty so they named in “Ibonie” meaning “it’s hard” to taste (in the Awutu language) which has now been corrupted into “Boni” the group stayed there for some time as the land was fertile and suitable for farming. At a point in their stay there they resorted to fishing. The fishing activities were not all that favorable as the tides were so strong for them. Because of this and other reasons the King dispatched his favorite hunter called Osimpa with specific instructions to locate a land suitable for farming with streams flowing on the land; this is the location of the present day Winneba.

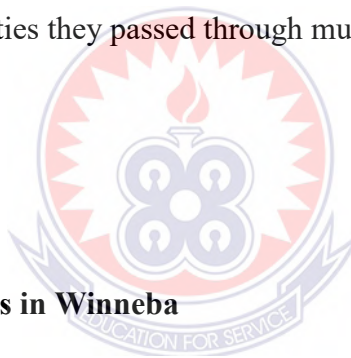
He went on to say that upon the return of Osimpa to inform the King about his discovery, the King subsequently instructed the priest of Penkye Otu in the person of Akrama to confirm the discovery of Osimpa and perform the necessary rituals to enable them occupy the new site.

Kweku Takyi Bondzie (personal communication Monday 03/06/13 09:30) also confirmed the story and added that after the rituals had been performed to the satisfaction of the gods of the land they all followed the King to settle permanently and build the present Winneba which was named after the eponymous founder, OSIMPA and by extension was corrupted to SIMPA.

It was opined further by Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication Wednesday 13/03/13 16:30) that the King subsequently sent numerous messages to Capt. Edwe at Mumford urging him to come with the other group to join the parent body at Simpa, but all these invitations fell on deaf ears as he turned down all the invitation insisting he would prefer staying with the Tuafo group. So Mumford became known as Dwemba as it was Adwe’s town. This saw to the creation of another Tuafo No. 2 Asafo Company to replace the defiant Asafo No. 2 Company. Mumford therefore re

remained without a constitutional head until King Ghartey IV went there in person and installed a Chief there. This assertion was vehemently opposed to by most of the people I interviewed while a few others were in support. I realized at this point that a bit of factionalism in the chieftaincy lineage was surfacing and as this was not actually going to affect my research I discontinued in that direction.

From the various interviews conducted it all pointed to the fact that the Effutu people of Winneba migrated from up north from the Gonja Land where the parent stock was and went through current Cape Coast, stayed for some time and finally moved on to settle in Winneba. Although it was not stated, the researcher believes this journey must have contributed to the rich cultural heritage of the people of Winneba. In this wise as they moved on the communities they passed through must have had a bit of influence on their cultural practices.



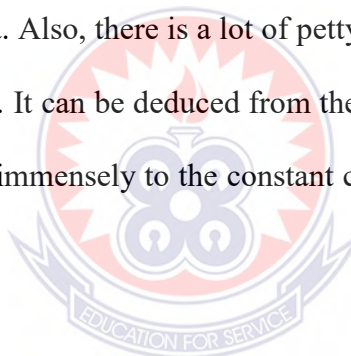
#### **4.2 Trading Activities in Winneba**

Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication, Wednesday 13/03/13 16:30) indicated that, Winneba with its unique shore line, drew the attention of the Europeans who were doing Trade in the then Gold Coast. After a lot of exploration, the coast of Winneba was identified as a suitable shore line that can be turned into a Harbor. In the 1930's therefore these Europeans turned the shore of Winneba into a harbor which drew companies like United Africa Company (UAC), Swanzy and other prominent trading companies and merchants to its side. Winneba in a short while became a major harbor in the early part of the 1930's for United Africa Company (UAC), Swanzy and host of other trading Companies. In the early part of 1940's with the construction of the Takoradi and Tema Harbors, Winneba saw its harbor collapsing with these big t



trading companies leaving the shores of Winneba. These trading activities that took place in Winneba around this period really opened up Winneba in terms of infrastructural development. Till date some of these buildings put up by those Companies exist and are still being used by families who took over after the Whites had left. These trading activities went on to improve the livelihood of its inhabitants. It is even as a result of these trading activities that the people of Winneba have the masquerading culture which is celebrated during Christmas.

Apart from what has been stated above Winneba currently do a lot of trading in fishing, where the fishes are processed either by smoking or salting for sale at markets out and within Winneba. This industry is viable among other reasons including the location of a University in Winneba. Also, there is a lot of petty trading in Winneba because of the University community. It can be deduced from the above that the trade activities in the town has contributed immensely to the constant celebration of the various cultural activities.



#### **4.3 Educational Activities in Winneba**

Central region has always been acclaimed as the hub of education because of the numerous educational institutions Winneba, has its fair share of these educational institutions. Winneba can boast of having accommodated the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute which later was changed to Advance Teacher Training College. It also had the National Academy of Music, Specialist Training College and National Sports College. With time these institutions were brought together to form the University of Education, Winneba with these former institutions becoming North, South and Central campuses.

Winneba also has other second cycle institutions. All these institutions have gone a long

way in making the town attractive and help the indigenes do a good celebration of their cultures. It has been through these institutions that the marketing of the cultures are made and have helped improve its celebration over the years. Through these institutions the Effutus can boast of a lot of scholars who benefited from the institution directly or indirectly. Finally, the educational Institution has improved the livelihood of the Effutus and has positively affected the infrastructural development of the town.

#### **4.4 Cultural Festivals Celebrated By the People of Winneba**

Winneba has a lot of rich cultural festivals that are celebrated. The most accepted ones are Aboakyer (Dear hunting) and Fancy dress (Masquerading). These festivals draw a lot of people, visitors and indigene alike to the coastal town of Winneba during the celebrations. The Aboakyer festival of the people of Winneba has placed them effectively on the Tourist map of Ghana and it is known the world over about how the people of Winneba catch a live dear and present it to the chief god Penkye Otu for its yearly ritual.

At 20:34 22/03/2014 on a web page GhanaNation.com it was made mention that, the Aboakyere festival is one of the commonest and important festivals celebrated in the Central Region of Ghana. It is usually celebrated in the month of May. Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication 13/03/13 16:30) further opined and supported the above web page publication, that historically this festival is believed to have originated about three hundred years ago when the Efutu people occupied their present home along the Coast. It is again believed that the people were able to establish their present settlement through the instrumentality of their god, Penkye Otu. According to the beliefs of the people, Penkye Otu still helps and protects

the people of Winneba, hence the people hold the festival to express their gratitude to him.

Initially, human beings from the royal family were used for the sacrifice for Penkye Otu. Noting that the royal family is dying out, they pleaded with Penkye Otu to accept a live leopard instead of human beings. The god agreed and for some time, live leopard were caught and offered to the god. However, the live leopards still claimed the life of human beings and many people were heavily wounded. In view of this, the people had to appeal to the god to accept a deer as a substitute for the leopard. It is explained that Penkye Otu accepted the deer because its stripped skin looks like that of the Leopard. Others believed that, the deer was accepted as a substitute for the Leopard because its blood and that of leopard, is similar to that of a man. The festival involves the two Asafo companies, Dentsifo and Tuafo in Winneba who compete among themselves to catch their deer first.

Both Kweku Takyi Bondzie (personal communication 03/06/13 09:30) and Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication 13/03/13 16:30) gave the same account of how the people of Winneba celebrate the Aboakyer festival. They said the festival begins mostly in the evening around 7pm with a march through the major streets of Winneba accompanied by a brass band. It is followed by an entertainment in the night like singing and dancing. On the next day, rituals are performed. Libation is poured, prayers said and guns fired. The officials and men of the two Asafo companies go to the beach to purify themselves by bathing in the sea. Penkye Otu is smeared with special oil and covered with new pieces of Calico. The priests shave their hair and also smear themselves with some of the oil used in smearing Penkye Otu. During the beginning of the deer hunt, members of each Asafo company offer sacrifices to the ancestral spirits to help them in their deer hunt the next day. In the morning the

following day, all the members of the Asafo Companies march to Penkye Otu's residence for a mixture of roots and herbs to be sprinkled on them. This is to ensure their safe return from the hunt. Members in the group smear themselves with clay, wear charms and amulets. After seeing the Omanhene, they set off to hunt for the deer. The first group to go is the Tuafo Company since their field of operation is far away than the other group. No weapons are used except clubs. The company that makes the first catch rushes back home with war songs and shouts of victory. The deer is presented to the Omanhene who places his bare right foot three times on it. He bids the group well done and retires to his seat to wait for the others. Distinguished guests sit at Humphrey's Park to witness the return of the companies with their deers. Besides, the deer is lifted up and carried through the principal streets of the town with singing and dancing, to the shrine of Penkye Otu. Custom however forces the Omanhene and his elders to remain seated at Humphrey's Park till the last person has safely returned. The Omanhene joins the procession after all the people involved have returned.

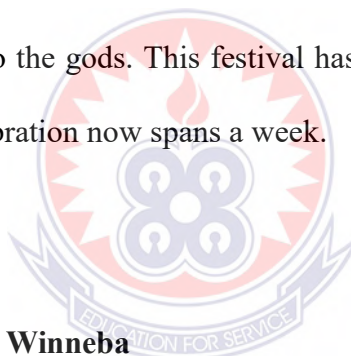
The members of the two Asafo Companies dress up with the winners in front and march through the main "streets of the town, singing and dancing, whilst the Omanhene sits in the Palanquin and follows at the rear. They are usually joined by their women in such a joyous mood.

On the last day, the two Asafo Companies come together before Penkye Otu and the deer is sacrificed to the god. Divination is also performed to know what lies in store for the town in the year ahead. Finally, the people of the Efutu believe that, if Number one (No. 1) Company that is; Tuafo group wins the contest, then there will be peace and prosperity in the coming year but if Number two (No. 2) wins, that is Dantsifo then the

coming year will be a year of famine and war. It is of interest to note that, the priest of Penkye Otu stays in the shrine till it rains. For that ensures the successful end of the festival.

This narration was authenticated by Mr. R. N. Mensah a teacher by profession (personal communication Wednesday 13/03/13 16:30) and Kweku Takyi Bondzie (personal communication Monday 03/06/13 09:30) and they both were able to trace the historical background of the Aboakyer festival stressing more on the benefits derived from these celebrations and other festivals in Winneba.

They further opined that with time the celebration has changed where the celebration now takes about a week and it is done with a lot of activities, like merry making and a lot of rituals performed to the gods. This festival has witnessed a lot of improvement over the years as the celebration now spans a week.



#### **4.5 Masquerading in Winneba**

Aside the Aboakyer festival, Winneba also has a Masquerading culture which is celebrated annually by the Effutus of Winneba making the Christmas celebrations complete. This masquerading culture brings life to Winneba and its environs and it has been so since the early 90's. Although there has been no problem with the culture, there have been various historical backings to the culture which this research will address adequately.

Kofi Bortsie an opinion leader (personal communication) on 15/05/2013 at 16:30 had this to say in connection with the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba. It was said that the Dutch and British traders at the Winneba seaport began the tradition

of the festival in the 19th century. Wearing assorted masks, they danced and drank in white-owned bars celebrating Christmas. Janka Abraham, who hailed from Saltpond, also in the Central region, and worked as a bar attendant at one of these bars, thought of incorporating the masquerade tradition and festival with local custom.

He went on further to say that he founded the troop known as Nobles with his friend, pharmacist A.K. Yamoah, in the Alata Kokwado neighbourhood around 1923 or 1924. People who belonged to A.K. Yamoah's football club and indoor games groups joined. Membership required the ability to speak the English language.

Initially when the masquerading culture was formed members of the Nobles would gather before dawn on Christmas Day, dressed up in costumes, such as garb of doctors, nurses, teachers, ministers, farmers, fishermen, prostitutes, pastors, drivers, cowboys, sailors, angels, or even the white colonial masters. The idea was to imitate the various professions in Winneba and parody the Europeans. The masquerade group would then parade through the streets of Winneba, backed by *adaha* music (odaha odaho music), and would continue all day into the evening.

The masquerading culture with its participants called masquerades had a different name given to it. They adopted the name “Fancy Dress”. It was used because the Egyaa group, which was made up of fishermen who spoke no English, had a hard time pronouncing the word “masquerade.” Instead, they used the term “Fancy Dress,” which they pronounced “fanti dress.”

Kofi Bortsie at 16:30 went on to say that after some years, membership in the Nobles was opened to all residents of Winneba. This led to an increase in the membership. Based on the activities of the Nobles, in 1926 the paramount chief of Winneba, Nana Kow Sackey (Ayirebi Acquah III), and his friends formed Egyaa, a second group, at

Aboadze, a fishing community. The town folks referred to the Nobles as “Number One” and Egyaa as “Number Two”.

With time as the number in each group increases, there was the need for the formation of Number Three group. In 1930, members of the Gyateh royal family, who did not approve of Kow Sackey’s support for the Egyaa group, formed another group in the Gyateh area of Donkoyemu called Tumbo rusu (pronounced *tumus*)—which translates as the sound of the blacksmith’s anvil—the group was led by Gyateh family member Arkoful, a blacksmith, Kweku Akom, and Inkabi. It drew its membership from Catholic youths with little education from local fishing communities, and members of the nearby Winneba Catholic Church. The European priests paid for new costumes each year and for European masks and funding the group so well that it became the most highly esteemed Fancy Dress Company. One of the groups’ members was enamoured of the character of Robin Hood, but accidentally shot the nephew of a priest in the eye with a stray arrow on Christmas Day in 1930. This tragic mishap led the groups to ban portrayal of that character in the Fancy Dress celebrations by anyone above the age of seven.

Kofi Bortsie an opinion leader (personal communication) opined that as the number kept on increasing they were faced with the challenge of increasing the number of the groups and this resulted in the formation of Number Four. One of A.K. Yamoah’s brothers, A.W. Yamoah, moved to Abasraba, a suburb of Winneba, in 1933. A merchant by profession, he imported masks and brass instruments and founded a Fancy Dress group called Red Cross or Number Four. This group was composed mainly of the town elites including high school and college youth; prospective members had to pass entrance exams in English language and Ghanaian cultural studies. Adult members who

have the means paid monthly dues, which funded the importing of costumes and Halloween masks from abroad by the end of the year. Children below eight years of age and from poor families did not pay, although they had to accept the attire that paying members chose for them.

Brass band music was made to assist the masquerades in the displays they exhibited as a masquerading group. Kofi Bortsie, an opinion leader (personal communication) opined that in its early years, the music for all groups during the festival was traditional *adaha* music. Brass band music had been introduced to the region in 1880s by European missionaries and military groups. In 1934, Catholic priests introduced brass band music into the festival by bringing in a band that had received training from Presbyterian missionaries in the nearby town of Swedru Bibiani. The band was not skilled and it knew only one song (“Abaawa Begye Wo Letter Kema Woewuraba”; in English “Maid servant, This is a Letter for Your Madam”), which it played throughout the day. In reaction to the annoyance of hearing one song played continuously, A.W. Yamoah arranged to provide training in brass band instruments for some of his family members. The resulting new band was more skilled than the one from Swedru Bibiani. The Nobles group also formed a brass band. However, because most members of these bands preferred masquerading over playing in a band, for festival days bands typically are recruited from outside the local groups.

As the various groups were formed from a parent stock of the number one group, the other groups virtually took from the structure and other practices of the parent group. All groups have a common hierarchy: in charge is the group father, previously often a noble but now most likely to be a well-educated male, who manages the finances and venues as well as the welfare of members in general. Under him are the band leader,



who organizes rehearsals and teaches the music, the Fancy Dress leader, who looks after choreography and interviews potential new members, and the group mother, who looks after food and settles disputes. She is also treated as a biological mother by group members. Cowboys are fit and strong members who are answerable to the Fancy Dress leader and look after general members. Then there are scouts, stilts walkers, and general members under the cowboys' control. Scouts move ahead and solicit money from onlookers for the group.

On the other hand Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) gave an account of how the masquerade groups were formed. He said, the now renowned masquerade culture popularly known as Fancy dress was unknown in Guan-Effutu of Winneba before 1911. Before then there was no festival observed to grace the Christmas and the New Year holidays. All that the people became accustomed with were the dances and music provided by different bands spotted at various quarters of the town. For example at the quarters called "Ogyae", a name corrupted from the chorus of a song of the *Kreols* sang "O Yee, O Yee, O Yee" the residents, mainly *Kreols* (Namuniyoo) produced and performed dances to serve the interest of themselves, and perhaps the few natives in and around their homes.

Aside the above entertainment, Rev. Kobena Taylor (main informant) indicated that there were other bands at the time that did the entertainment and they were *Ommpe* who could be located at *Dɔnkɔnyanmu* (the name was corrupted Effutu expression: *Dɔnkɔ Nyantɔ* meaning *Dɔnkɔ's* farm. Within the fishing community some of the bands that performed were: *Osoode* meaning "asɔ wo de mu" or it has sweetened you. *Adaha* meaning "ɔda ha na ɔda hɔ" or throwing weights about. *Konkonba* meaning "konn-konn Band", *Ashewa*, *Adankum* or *Adzewa* ensemble all featured within specific boundaries. A

ll these groups were patronized at their quarters by spectators who could afford perambulation. At such displays food is freely served in abundance.

He further opined that Christians especially were contended with the watch night services ushering in the new years. The services were often intercepted with hilarious jokes by a group of jokers called *Ndoba-Ndoba*. The very sight of their appearance chanted Hillary. They always congregated without the Church house and intermittently shouted their jokes to cut in the sermons of the Pastors. Upon all those activities, the celebrations still seemed virtually boring to some residents who had come to settle at Winneba from elsewhere.

Abraham, a native of Cape Coast who was dissatisfied with the celebration in Winneba although he was not a native of Winneba was with a relative called Kofi Katu Addison a cashier with the Elder Dempster Lines at Winneba. Mr. Abraham a Photographer suggested to Mr. Ketu that they should form a Masquerader club in Winneba to boost the merriment of Winnebarians as those existing there were very stale. They found it a festival dictating scenes that commanded beauty; beauty that transcended the beauty of any of the local ones. The excitement thereof was worth catching. Another relative from Cape Coast but domiciled at Winneba, Papa Akese alias Papa Arthur, an employee of the Elder Dempster Lines and importer of masks agreed to the proposal and readily offered masks for the club members.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) opines that the original home of the festival in the then Gold Coast was Saltpond. It was then sent to Cape Coast. He went on further to say that by 1918; Mr. Abraham had made friends with some natives of Winneba and discussed with them his plans and the possibility of enlisting them as members. They welcomed the decision and offered their membership. They also assured him of any assistance

ce he might need. They spent the Christmas of 1918, and the New Year of 1919 at Cape Coast after that they invited the Cape Coast club to help them inaugurate theirs. They fixed Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 1919 for the arrival and Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> for inauguration .

According to him the club arrived from Cape Coast as arranged. They were warmly received by Messrs. Abraham, Addison, Aikins and other family members amid thunderous shouts of joy and applause. Early Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> news flashed around town that the society was going to be outdoored and inaugurated.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) went on further to say that during the outdooing, children and even adults observing the festival for the first time went helter-skelter down the streets but soon returned running for dear lives. Some even shut themselves up in their rooms, very much afraid and weeping. Most of the figures and masks appeared very frightful. Yet they could not avoid watching. Some of the frightened kept their windows ajar to watch the scene. However, it took veils to convince the natives that those wearing the masks were their own kins- children and husbands. At some stages the masqueraders had to partially unmask to prove their identity to convince the doubting Thomas's that they were their own people.

They disguised themselves in the form of trades men like carpenters, masons and fitters. Also like professionals as doctors, judges, teachers, the clergy and others as, street sweepers, sanitary officers, market sellers, soldiers, police, nurses, etc. In some instances, they teased nature by enlarging or elongating some human parts, for example the head, the mouth, the nose, etc. these indeed frightened children and even some adults.

According to Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) the situation afforded parents a means to discipline their children who were stubborn. Children who practiced truancy, hooligan

nism and other vices were halted, whilst noisy children were kept mute or silenced upon hearing the word “Kaakaambatombi”. So eventually this became their name and the word was corrupted of three different words of two Languages. “Kaakaa” is corrupted of the Akan word “Keka” meaning to frighten. “Mbatoa” is corrupted of “Mbawtoa mu” meaning armpits. “Mbi” An Effutu word meaning children, in short to “frighten children carried in the armpits”.

Their dresses were sown in multi colours, studded with mirrors cut into different sizes and other reflective materials, topped with gloves. With this dressing by the masquerades they armed themselves with canes and whistles and woe betides anyone who reveals the identity of a masked person or mentioned the name. It was also unwell for a girl or woman to mistakenly cross any masquerader if she had refused to give in to his advances. Victims of any of the above misgivings were severely canned with impunity. They also battled spectators who obstructed their paths with the canes. They even spoke disguising their voices as if they were choked. They used the whistles to summon members and for assistance in times of danger. These masquerades danced rigorously, wriggling the body all over and this has continued till date.

Also, these masquerades were accompanied by the stilts dancers popularly called “sakra abodu” by the natives a word corrupted from the statement in Akan “Sakra-abo-ndua” meaning “stones scattering sticks”. These stilts were introduced into the masquerades performance in 1930, but was effectively used from 1936.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) made mention of the fact that:

“it is worth noticing here that the planting of the festival in Winneba was first attempted in 1911 by one Kwesi Arkoful, the father of the No. 3 Club Mr. Arkoful, a fisherman and a

boatman and an illiterate lacked the experience in giving publicity to his innovation. The natives therefore, could not patronize and give it the due recognition.”

Rev. Kobena Taylor (main informant) gave a detailed account as to how all the various groups were formed. According to him after the outing and the outdoorings of the club, the club members, spectators and members of Mr. Abraham’s family met at Domeabra in the family house. There the club was officially inaugurated on the same day with a membership of eleven. They were later joined by one Ato Kwamena who took his father Kofi Gyansa’s post as treasurer upon the father’s demise. Ato Kwamena also made masks for the club. They had the following as cooks and mothers of the club as well:

1. Ama Egyirba
2. Iyi-na-oye
3. Ekua Tomfowa



According to Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) brass band was unknown in Winneba at the time of formation. The band used in the outdoorings was a school band using flutes or fifes. It was in 1925 when Mr. A. M Yamoah imported Brass band instruments into the town and this changed the situation. Brass band is the main instrumentation used by the masquerades in their performances. With time masquerades have added other local drums as complements to make the instrumentation better. Club members started hiring the brass band. Mr. Yamoah’s effort was complemented by one Mr. Acquah living at *Abasraba*.

In addition, according to Rev. Kobena Taylor, the introduction of the band made the *Domeabra*-Winneba masquerade club became very popular in the Guan-Effutu, Winneba

a. Their performance indeed graced the Christmas festivities of the town to the extent that most neighboring towns including Agona Swedru, Agona Nsaba, and Agona Nyakrom copied the culture.

As it gained fame many prominent indigenes applied to take up membership, and among them was the Paramount Chief of Winneba in the person of Nana Ayerebi Acquah I II. He joined and brought in people from Nnomabo Egyaa to also take up membership. Nana being a member of the club gave cause for the club to be called “Nobles”. Mr. Kofi Katu Addison a cashier with Dempster Lines and responsible for the purchase and paying for palm kernels along the coast who was a member was transferred barely three years after the inauguration of the club to Togoland. He did not return until the day a black and white men arrived by boat from Togo waving white handkerchief. These people came along with assorted drinks to report of the demise of Mr. Addison.

Furthermore, after the death of Mr. Addison there was the need for replacement, the choice of a successor led to the split of the “Nobles” club into two or more groups. Nana Ayerebi Acquah III using his prerogatives as the Omanhen of the Effutu State demanded to be made the next leader, but the family of Katu would not allow, explaining that the club was not of the state but a private organization from a Domeabra house. This resulted in a brawl with the Chief keeping some of the members in his cells.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) went on to say that the Paramount Chief who always acted as a female during their outings was opprobriously treated by some members of the club especially the youths. Who became furious with him. Because of this the family of Mr. Addison made Frank Abraham the penultimate to Nana Ayerebi Acquah III over the leadership of the club. Nana not satisfied with the decision of the executive relinquished his membership and severed links with the “nobles”. Upon the death of Mr. A

braham, Mr. Kweku Aful alias “Annye-Annye” was made the next leader of the club by the family. He became blind not long after becoming the leader, a situation that hampered his administration and active participation in controlling the affairs of the club. He died in 1990 giving out the throne to a new organizer called Korsa Brown, the first member who was not a family member. Mr. Brown served in that capacity for eight years before “Annye-Annye’s” death and continued ten years on till the year 2000.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) asserted that the club Egyaa was formed in 1924 by Nana Ayerebi Acquah III and named it after his palace. It was also in commemoration of the Egyaa citizens who united with him to form the club. He continued to dress as a lady during their outings. From the onset, Nana teamed up with people of his domain of which some were Charles Swatson who succeeded Nana Panyin Enyinnda, later succeeded Swatson upon his demise. The care of feeding the members during their outings rested in the hands of the mothers: Efua Akyere, Ama Mensima and Aba Bondzewa. The club is now housed at Mburabamu. Nana popularized his club and drew crowds during their outings by dishing out to the spectators tray-full of toffee and coins

According to Rev. Kobena Taylor another group came into being named “Tummuz” after the band used in their outings. As already stated, it was started by one Kwamena Arkoful in 1940, but because of his business, as a boatman (works in the boat) he did not have the time to organize it. The club therefore remained dormant till 1958 when it was revived through the efforts of one Mr. Kwesi-Kwodwo Mensah, a relative of Kwame na Arkoful an accountant with the Elder Dempster Lines. Mr. Mensah had been a member of the Kru masquerading club but was proscribed. That afforded him the opportunity to revive the Tummuz club with the complete outfits he had bought from the Kru people. He had one Kwesi Kwansa (Quansah) as his secretary and another executive member called Papa Kakraba. The women class was led by Madam Ama Arkoful. The cl

ub was housed in Kwesi-Kodwo Mensah's Premises, directly opposite Roman Catholic Church at Dɔnkɔnyanmu.

He went on further to say that the Red Cross club, the 4<sup>th</sup> club, was started in 1942 and had Abasraba as their home, but it became known in 1944. The originator of the club, Mr. J. C. Yamoah, a nephew of a merchant called Erskin was the custodian of the uncle's brass band which the Masquerade clubs in and outside town rented for their outings. Mr. Erskin's merchandise included masks, kites and paper lanterns. Most of the masks were sold through Mr. Yamoah, who took advantage of the availability of the masks and the band at his disposal and formed another club. His team members included Messers. Onnso Mitchual (Carpenter/sculptor), James Emmanuel Paintsil, Kpakpo and Eminentful who works at Winneba Shell Petrol Dump. Mr Korsah Acheampong was the women actor and James Emmanuel Paintsil, acted as the sanitary inspector with a ladder in hand. They named the club RED CROSS.

It was a copy of the name of the ship which had been sending Mr. Erskin's merchandise to Winneba called M.V. RED CROSS. In addition, Mr. Onnso Mitchual was commissioned by the club to construct a wooden ship with the M.V. RED CROSS printed on it, which they always displayed in their outings. It was in recognition of the ship's Captain's services that the group was named Red Cross. He was even invited to witness the out dooring of the craft.

In 1944, the "Red Cross" in their kente outfit took the first position and were awarded a Silver Cup. They rode on a truck with the trophy through the town of Winneba, singing "Red ooo, No.4, o, o, o," they consecutively won the first position for four years (1944 to 1947).

According to Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) a fifth group reared up their head and th



ey called themselves the “Chinese”. The membership was made up of *Real Kreol*, and Liberia based Ghanaian citizens. They operated from the Kru Yard, near the New Winneba Market behind the Methodist Bishop’s Residence. They showed up once on a Christmas day and never again. They were banned from displaying themselves as a masquerade group by the concerted decision of the senior clubs; because of the ornate nature of their dresses’ out brighten the brightness of the others. Indeed, their outfit excelled greatly, out beautifying the beauty of the other clubs. They introduced the “mirror-stuck and reflective dresses”. They also dished out dollars to win or induce the experts or fine actors from the senior clubs as well as the judges. They sold whatever items that was for the club in their camp to Mr. Kwesi-Kodwo Mensah, the resuscitator of No. 3 Tumu club.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (main informant) went on to say that the idea of organizing the clubs developed to the extent that each area “quarters” should have one. Some of the clubs started but soon died off. The groups that survived, during their outings gathered at “Nkwantanan” Old Market Square and danced for some period and dispersed to their respective homes. The groups often grouped, mixed up and at the climax of their merriment, fighting flared up resulting in injuries. Howbeit, someone anticipated that the competition in a fenced space would ward off the troubles, and it would also generate funds by collecting gate fees from tourists and spectators.

In 1957, therefore, upon the initiation of Mr. C. C Mills Robertson of the Egyaa No. 2 club, a Federation was formed with four members from each group. Membership was eight in number. In addition, they had two elders backing them, they were Messrs. Kwodwo Muoko, alias Kodwo Wulesie and Appiah. They were to plan the viability of the proposal and the fencing of the park.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) went on to say that the venue for the competition was subjected to rotation. Major Humphrey's Park was first chosen but after two or three visits it was considered a distance from town and was abandoned. Cadbury and Fry was chosen as the next venue; the place was also found unsuitable as traffic jam became rampant. The next venue chosen was the Methodist Boy's School Park and after a short use, it was also abandoned for lack of space. "1920" U.A.C. Yard became the fourth choice. That place was also found to be inadequate to accommodate the large spectators, thereby always causing traffic jam. A revert to Humphrey's Park was effected. Major Humphrey's Park was an open space and had to be fenced. The money for the fencing was estimated at £10. They had to go borrowing and to obtain a loan of £10 with interest of £5, all totaling £15. With the money in hand, the fencing was completed in no time.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) went on further to say, the club members were expected to march to the park in an orderly form. At the park, they were to march past the dais, dancing, displaying and acrobatics. To avoid confusion, they had to be invited one after the other. In this case balloting therefore took place. The result after balloting stood as it is today: No.1 Nobles, No.2 Egyaa, No.3 Tummuz, and No.4 Red Cross.

Rev. Kobena Taylor (informant) opined that tickets were printed locally by the Federation and distributed among the leaders of the clubs to sell to their members and the public. The sellers proved very faithful in the first year and handsome profit was made. The organizers found the proposal lucrative. As the years went by, sellers began to display untruthful behavior.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2000 the Winneba Masquerading Federation had a constitution accepted by its members and executives. By this constitution in 2000, members agreed

to be guided in principle by the document for the democratic, economic and efficient management of the masquerade group in Winneba. Uncle Korsah (personal communication, 01/04/2011, 17:00) an ardent masquerade, opined that masquerade in Winneba looks like a direct replica of the European type as it was copied from the Europeans. Although over the years there have been some changes and modifications, there has been a lot of traces to the origin of the European type. Korsah further stated that Masquerading in the central region first started in Saltpond, then later to Elmina where it migrate to Cape Coast. He went on further to say that history has it that on the 13th of February in 1919 which was a Thursday, the masquerade of the Effutu people was inaugurated by the help of those from Cape Coast. There is not much information on how it went to western region but it is believed they all started from Saltpond.

In fact at no point did Uncle Korsah (personal communication, 01/04/2011, 17:00) refute any of the revelations given by Rev. Kobena Taylor as he had a good documentation of the culture. Unfortunately, he emphatically stated that the story seem to have some fact in it especially with some of the names and places made mention of. There seems to be a lot of inaccuracies in the historical background that was given by Wikipedia as I told him what others had to say about the culture. He had a bit of a problem where and how the culture started as he believed Rev. Kobena Taylor was giving a lot more accurate information.

With the above information gathered, the researcher tried probing further into what others have to say about the culture. With this in mind the researcher met Mr. Kojo Lawson (Personal Communication, 08/04/2011, 18:05) a masquerade himself who had this to say; the showcasing of these masquerades is believed to have been introduced by the Dutch as a Christian festivity in the colonial period. This coincided with a Dutch festival that falls on the first Thursday of January. Due to this, the coastal people who

adopted this festival also held the events during Easter, Christmas and New Year. Over the years the masquerades held the masquerading events on the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> of January of every New Year although they exhibit the previous dresses during Christmas awaiting the New Year. As the conversation progressed it became evident that Mr. Kojo Lawson was corroborating the views of Rev. Kobena Taylor but seems not to confirm or otherwise what Wikipedia was presenting as Mr. Kojo Lawson claim there were a lot of truth in their story.

Mr. Kojo Lawson (Personal Communication, 08/04/2011, 18:05) at a point felt that Rev. Kobena Taylor was not being fair to those who formed the Federation, as some prominent people who played very crucial role in the formation of the federation had their names taken off with the name of only Mr. C. C Mills Robertson of the Egyaa No.2 made mention of as the initiator. Upon this, I questioned his authority and requested he gave me the other names he knew, but he could not than to make mention of only Master Kwesi Mensah which he claim was the only name he remembers. From that point I realized there was the need to contact Master Kwesi Mensah, of which I did. To my surprise he did not want to contest why his name was left out although he was emphatic that he was so much involved with the formation of the Federation. All he said was “how unfortunate”. I tried probing further and all he said was that “yes it is true Mr. C. C Mills Robertson of the Egyaa No. 2 was quite instrumental but he and others were part of the formation of the Federation. In fact he confirmed the historical presentation given out by Rev. Kobena Taylor

According to Mr. Fiifi Enimful (personal communication) the secretary to the federation currently, the statement as to how the Egyaa No. 2 masquerade group was formed by Rev. Kobena Taylor lacked something worthy of mention,

“the founders of the Egyaa No. 2 were Opanyin Eyinnda,

Opanyin Sadwee and Opanyin Ambrado. They were good friends and carpenters. They were encouraged to form Egyaa due to the uniformity in their dresses. And that it was formed around 1923.”

He went on further to say that, “they were named after the house “Egyaa Fie” in which their meetings were held, and the venue was given to them by Nana Ayiribi Acquah IV the King of Winneba and the Patron of the group.”

In Mr. Fiifi Enimful narration he did not agree to the presentation given by Rev. Kobena Taylor that the group was formed by Nana Ayiribi Acquah IV the King of Winneba but insisted, as made mention of earlier, that Nana Ayiribi Acquah IV became their patron after he had formed it. With the general formation of the group Nana Ayiribi Acquah IV did not have anything against it as he claimed he grew to hear the same story.

According to Mr. Fiifi Enimful (personal communication) there has been vast improvement over the years as the competition is done in stages among the groups in slow dance, high life (freestyle), and chorography.

An elder in the home of the No. 3 Tumus refuted the date given by Rev. Kobena Taylor as the year the group was formed. According to her the year of the formation is when she was born, “Tumus (Atombo resu) number 3 was founded in 1932. The name comes from “Atombo resu” the resounding of the “anvil”. She went on to say that as at that time all the three groups merged at a place called “Nkwanta anan” where confusions ended in fighting so the leaders went for some sort of ritual which directed them to use the anvil and hammer. With that, any time there was a fight they strike the hammer on the anvil then other groups cannot do anything than to run away. This goes to support th

the assertion by Wikipedia although their story of the formation was not supported by this elder.

An interview with Mr. Painstil, (personal communication) the current president of the federation and the leader of the No. 4 Red Cross were quite insightful. He corroborated the story of Rev. Kobena Taylor and confirmed the years, names and other facts enumerated earlier on.

From the various information gathered, how the Tumuz club was formed, as narrated by Rev. Kobina Taylor seems different from what Wikipedia gave out. It was confirmed by an elder of the Tumuz that truly the narration by Kofi Bortsie is what actually happened as the anvil was used to disable the group that was violent. With the names made mention of by both narrations by Kofi Bortsie and Rev. Kobina Taylor was confirmed by Untie Esi an elder the researcher talked to at the Tumuz house.

From the entire accounts one could say that Wikipedia was not wrong with the dates of the formation but, in fact that was how it started in 1911 by Kwesi Arkoful, but it did not work until in 1919 when it materialized. From the various information gathered, how Tumuz was formed as narrated by Rev. Kobina Taylor seemed different from what Wikipedia gave out. It was confirmed by an elder of the Tumuz that truly the narration by Wikipedia was what actually happened as the anvil was used to disable the group that was violent. With the names made mention of by both narrations that is Wikipedia and Rev. Kobina Taylor was confirmed by this elder I talked to at the Tumuz house.

From all the accounts given from the above and other interviews conducted on the historical background of the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba, mention was not made of whether the masquerade culture was originally started by the people of Winneba, or even from any of the African countries that already practised the masquerade

ing culture. Rather all points to the Dutch or Europeans who settled in the Central Regional towns along the Coastal region of Ghana. As much as the historical background to inception of masquerading culture in Winneba indicates that it was originally copied from these settlers, the people of Winneba have effectively enhanced the culture and its associated benefits to both people within and without Winneba and its environs.

#### **4.6 Traditional Beliefs and Practices Associated With Masquerading**

Religion has been and is still an integral part of the way of life of the African and this cannot be overlooked. Although it has become quite evident that the masquerading culture was copied from the Europeans who were just doing it for entertainment on Christmas days, the Effutu people of Winneba have gone through times and situations and have adopted and nurtured it to suit their beliefs and practices. Africans in general and Ghanaians in particular, of which the people of Winneba are no exception, have long before recorded history or before the arrival of the Whites have held on to traditional African beliefs, one of which is the belief in spiritism. They have the belief that everything happens for a reason and there is a spiritual connotation to everything that happens, in this wise one needs to protect one's self from bad spirit as in fortifying oneself against all odds spiritually.

These general beliefs have gone a long way to affect the thinking, behaviour and the organization of the various masquerade groups. With reference to the formation of "Tumus (Atombo resu) number 3 which was founded in 1932, the name came from "Atombo resu" the resounding of the "anvil" which according to research at a point in time when all the three groups merged at a place called "Nkwanta anan" where

confusions emerge and end in fighting, the leaders went for some sort of ritual which directed them to use the anvil and hammer. With that, any time there was a fight they strike the hammer on the anvil and then other groups cannot do anything than to run away. At a point in time also, leaders kept on dying mysteriously and some going blind suddenly, this and many other superstitious events prompted the masquerade group and its leaders thinking of protecting themselves and the group members although it is hardly made public.

Conversation with all the group leaders never revealed their involvement with a god or spiritism as in the dealings of the groups. I happen to have talked to a member of the number three masquerading group known as Tumus in the person of “Sunsum” on this subject of spiritism and all he said was the groups have gods they worship and resort to, when they are about going to prepare for the year’s performance. He went on further to say that the various groups need to protect themselves and this has been so since the formation of the various groups. He said even if the group does not look for means of protecting its members, the members would do it themselves.

According to Kojo Lawson, an ardent masquerade, the use of gods in the formation, preservation, and protection of the masquerade groups is an open secret to the group leaders and very close associate of the groups, but has been shrouded in secrecy and kept away from most members and the general public. He further said that rather, the groups have developed a style where they invite pastors, especially with the Tumus (the number three group) after they have secretly consulted their gods to pray for the group before they depart to the park where they are going to perform.

Also, he made the point clear that these gods according to the leaders protected the members from all attacks spiritually from the other groups; this has been so since time



immemorial. He explained that as the culture became competitive others looked for means of undermining and or sabotaging the other groups. This started right from the training periods to the day of the competition. With this in mind the groups needed to protect themselves from harm.

Bondzie Sey (personal communication) a leader with the number four masquerading group confirmed there are a lot of beliefs associated with the masquerading culture and has the belief that these practices have gone a long way in promoting the culture and safe guarding the culture over the years. Bondzie Sey specifically made mention of the fact that one particular belief of the group members especially of his group, was to go and wash themselves in the sea and not wiping themselves before wearing their dresses as that served as a means of neutralizing whatever spiritual attacks that would be meant for the groups and their members. In some instances he said, members had their own way of protecting themselves from any attack and the groups could not stop them.

Sunsum “spirit” (personal communication) who is a trainer, a designer and co-ordinate the sewing of most of his groups dress had this to say:

“Nobody outside the group is allowed to see the various dresses being sown before the day of display and because of this the tailors have to be camped for days in an unsuspected place to do the sewing. It is done so to prevent others from seeing our colour scheme, style and treatment of the surfaces of the dresses.”

He went on to say that,

Could you believe we have to be hiding in bushes and far away places to train? A particular point in time not

knowing at one of a training session we were being spied on and they copied our dance style. Unfortunately that group in question was called to perform before us and they did all our style. We ended up losing massively as there was nothing left for us to do on the park.

Kow Atta (personal communication), a stilts dancer, threw a bit of light on his personal experience on the involvement of “juju” (traditional medicine) in the masquerading culture. He said, “Whenever mention is made of the use of “juju” in the

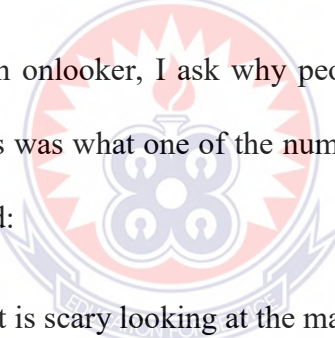
culture the leaders will debunk that and say it is just a perception, I personally could stand on stilts as high as about fifteen feet or more and ask Neoplan bus to pass in between my legs. This is to talk about how skilful I have been. In the late 80’s when we performed free on the station park I got one of my stilts breaking and I can say it was not for nothing; a spell was cast on me that caused my stick to break. I was the show man and for my stick to break we were going to lose. This affected me spiritually to the point that I almost was stopped from standing on the stilts. I also protect myself when I am to stand on the stilts but I think that day the “juju” used on me was too powerful. But none of us can come out publicly to say we use this and that to protect or fight our detractors”

These and other practices have been going on for all these years and they believe that some of these add up to sustain the culture and making the culture competitive, unfortunately it is never made public but kept under the carpet.

#### 4.7 Motivation to Observe the Masquerading Event.

The masquerading culture of the people of Winneba has for the past years been made part of the life style of the people of Winneba during Christmas festivities, and with time it has spread all over the towns that surround the Effutu state. The people of Winneba encounter these masquerades from the latter part of December to the first five days after Christmas. The masquerades also enter into an eventful period right from September where they open the year's activity till after Christmas, which is about a week into the New Year. One would ask why the attraction? Who has caused the attraction? And what in particular does the attraction bring?

From the perspective of an onlooker, I ask why people are so much attracted to the masquerading culture. This was what one of the numerous people I interviewed in the person of Esi Bentuma said:



“Although it is scary looking at the masquerades they seem in the same way attractive with the other accessories that accompany the masks that most of the times look scary. When you take a cursory look at the way they organize themselves and the unique nature of their costume you cannot but watch them display.”

Most of the times the masks used by these masquerades are very scary yet attractive with its accompanying costumes. Attraction to the masquerade culture is so much that people travel far and near to witness it and some families take advantage of it and organize get-togethers or family meetings to reunite members.

One would ask why the attraction? This million cedi question keeps on recurring in my head as a researcher. I keep on pondering over that as to what is attracting people to the masquerade culture and its displays. Master Kwesi Mensah a follower of the masquerading culture recounted saying he believes the attractiveness of the culture is due to the fact that the organizers of the culture do well to put good plans in place to make the annual culture attractive. An example he gave was making sure the event on the 1<sup>st</sup> December of every year is celebrated, come what may. In addition he said new designs and styles are always exhibited as onlookers know for a fact that there wouldn't be anything like repetition of costume or style in dancing. The federation according to Master Kwesi Mensah has gone a long way to draw a lot of attraction to the culture by drawing sponsors who in their small way give cash donations to the participating masquerading groups and awards to the deserving groups. Also, he said the federation has been adequately helped to provide space for the groups to perform, with sitting places that are shaded to prevent people from direct sunshine.

Master Kwesi Mensah went on to say:

“the group leaders with me I will say have played a very vital role in attracting a lot of people to the masquerading culture. They always make sure they supervise the costume that the members wear and make sure these costumes are catchy and worn by corresponding groups of four and three within the parent group itself. I think uniformity in the design of their costume and the style they do on the day of competition has gone a long way to attract people to the culture”.

Who and what has caused these attractions? These were questions I was always asking myself when I first went into the field. Although I am from Winneba I have not had the chance to draw closer to the masquerades and its set up. At the beginning of this research, seeing the masquerade group, I wondered how their organisational set up was. Whether these leaders or organisers are formally educated or not and this was due to their sterling performances and their organisational capabilities.

Ekua Takyiwa a citizen of Winneba and an enthusiastic follower of the masquerade culture had this to say:

“I don’t know exactly what draws me to watching “fancy dress” or motivate me to never miss watching them on yearly bases. I have followed the fancy dress (masquerades) since my childhood days, as long as I can remember when I was about six years old. Although I was always beaten by my parents for following them and the masquerades for following them as a child I still have followed them till date in my seventies. To be honest I cannot say exactly what causes the attraction I have for the “fancy dress” but I believe the delivery in terms of performance, costume, brass band and the organization of the various groups does the magic”.

Aba Kooba an ardent follower of the masquerading culture in Winneba, confessed,

“I cannot say who and what exactly make me not to miss “Kakamotobi”. Virtually it has become part

of my Christmas celebration as Christmas is made complete with masquerading displays. I have always since my childhood been making sure a new dress is prepared for me to send to the park to witness the masquerade groups put up a performance. I am now thirty nine and I still cannot stop watching the masquerades display amidst cheers and brass band music.”

Emefa Gbedie who is not a native of Winneba but happened to have stayed in Winneba for the past fifteen years had this to say:

“Being in Winneba on Christmas makes your Christmas complete as you are entertained by these masquerades who almost visit every home in Winneba. Coming from a town with no attachment to the Christmas celebration I am thrilled by their performances amidst brass band music and so much attracted to their brightly coloured dresses and frightening masks. I am almost compelled to think of their commitment level to the masquerading culture and how they organize themselves.”

From the above and other conversation the researcher had with followers of the masquerade groups the researcher believes the attraction is caused by the commitment of the masquerades to the culture, the performance the masquerades put up on their outings, the organizational skills exhibited by the masquerades and their group leaders who make sure they control affairs of the groups all year round. Their brightly coloured dresses with uniquely crafted masks to match draw a lot of attention to the culture.



**Plate 1. Masquerades in smaller groups within the parent group.**

The masquerades painstakingly make sure that the smaller groups of four and five have the same design of costume, in terms of style, colour, design and other accessories that make the group complete.



**Plate 2a. Group on display.**



**Plate 2b. Group on display.**

When the group assemble at the park for the performance they arrange themselves so well showcasing all they have for inspection before the actual performance begins. In all these, marks are awarded to the groups for the design, appearance and comporment.



**Plate 3a. Performance by the group.**





**Plate 3b. Performance by the group**



**Plate 3c. Performance by the group**

The groups go through four performances of which the match pass is the first. At this point the groups put up the best of everything especially hats to the admiration of onlookers. The hat is mostly exhibited at this time because the task at this time is not so rigorous so big hats are worn to show off the ability of the groups and their creations.



**Plate 4.** A group performing *slow dance*





**Plate 5. A masquerade on stilts doing the slow dance (*Blues*)**

I call it the warming up period as it is one of the first performances put up by the groups and as the name conotes the dance is done quite slow with the help of the bands men. This is not only done by the masquerades on foot but also by those standing on the stilts. The bands men further aides them to do the *high life*, then the *Atwem* (the fastest dance) also known as free style as the masquerades exhibit their personal dance styles which have been acquired over the years through practice and dedication. This dance is very rigorous and one needs a lot of energy to perform that.



#### **Plate 6. Performances by the brass band**

Also the bands men who put up sterling performances with the brass band make the display complete as the masquerades mostly perform with brass band music. As the bands men play amidst cheers and boom from the followers, this in turn encourages the masquerades to display very well. From this, one can deduce that the onlookers have and still play a very prominent role in the creation of attraction for the culture as the masquerades depend on them for encouragement.

Finally, one can say the answer to why, who, what, cause people to be attracted to the masquerade culture of the people of Winneba is multiple in nature and as such one cannot point to a particular individual group or reason for the attraction. From the researcher, the masquerades and their performances, the leaders of the masquerade groups, and the bands men create the attention and on the other hand the followers cheer them on encouraging them to put up their best.

#### 4.7 Socio-Economic Significance of Masquerading

The masquerading culture of the people of Winneba has grown to be part of the very fibre of the society and it's always been nurtured to fit into time and situation. When you take a careful look at the historical background of the masquerading culture one could see that over the years there has been a great change in all aspects of the culture especially the economic features. Although they started with only the social significance in mind with time it has grown to encompass an economic dimension which has been a boost to the culture which is made of the masquerades, group leaders, the federation and the people who patronize it.

Until recently, foreigners mostly tourists took pictures free of charge and did extensive coverage of the culture in video. For some years now the right to take pictures and do video coverage are sold out absolutely to individuals or companies who then sublet or sell a portion of their right to these tourists to officially document for either research or personal use. Mention was made by K. O. (personal communication) of the fact that it was a very good decision made by the organizers to have sold the right to a person to take both video and photos on the park.

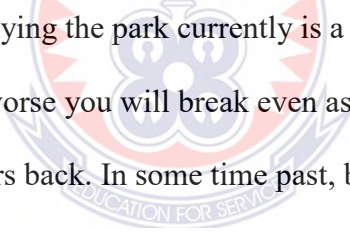
He went on to say,

“Some years back everybody could enter the park and take videos and still shots and sell. This created a lot of problems economically to the camera men as you virtually operate at a loss with a lot of such videos on the market and with the federation not making any money. Now it is only the one with the right who take videos and photos and has the right to also sell. This has streamlined the

activities of the tourists too who initially paid nothing to the federation; at least now, the federation will get something from the sale of right”.

Although the sale of ticket have been going on for a very long time by the federation, in recent times an individual or a co-operate body buys the grounds and they are entitled to the sale of all the tickets that grant an individual permit to the program. Also the people of Winneba are made economically enhanced through the activities of the culture as they ply their economic activities on the day of the display. In addition the sale of eatables and other items that come with the celebration of the Christmas festivities has come to stay.

According to Yakubu a follower of the masquerading culture and a buyer of the park,



“Buying the park currently is a good business because at worse you will break even as it was not so some few years back. In some time past, buying the park was like making savings with the dwarf, where one is expected to lose massively and this was due to unsecured park where the brave one enters without paying and people making extra tickets that are illegal and selling them alongside the rightful ones”.

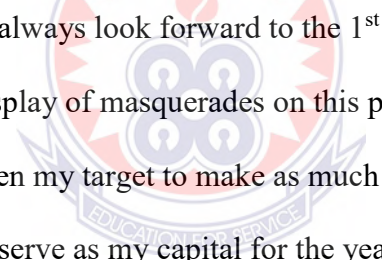
He continued,

“Buying the park has become a very lucrative venture and I think the few cedis I make if well invested will see me through the year. With this in mind I impressed upon the federation and the assembly to do proper fencing

and fortunately this vision has materialised. Looking forward I think I should be given the mandate to buy the park and its surroundings so that I will be in charge of the things that are sold in and around the park.”

The above statement was supported by Richmond Mensah (personal communication) who once had the opportunity to buy the park. He reiterated that it’s a good business and need to be reserved for only indigenes that stay in the town as it is one of the major sources of employment for some of the youth who hitherto have no source of income or will serve as an additional source of income.

Selling “ice water” on New Year’s Day has been part of me, which is how Untie Ceci, an indigene of Winneba started her story.



“I always look forward to the 1<sup>st</sup> of January for the display of masquerades on this park. It is and has been my target to make as much money as possible to serve as my capital for the year I just stepped in. Getting capital to sell petty items in the course of the year has always been a problem to me and on every first of January what I make here is what I use as my capital to trade so I do not ever miss trading on the first”.

This is not the story of only Untie Ceci but most of the sellers I spoke to on the park had almost the same story to share as the park creates a very conducive economic platform for great economic breakthrough for these petty traders. Most of the women doing these petty trading confirmed that most of them selling water are able to sell a lot more bags of water on that day as mostly around that time of the year the weather is hot

so much that you definitely need water to replenish the one being lost due to the weather condition.

The researcher spoke with a lot of these traders and had similar responses. It also came to light that on the day of display a lot of the Taxi drivers that ply the town do not work as they join in the celebration or they are members of the masquerading groups and because of this the few that work on that day charge mostly high fares and make a lot of money in return. In a nutshell the social and the economic relevance of the culture should be looked at critically as it could help solve a lot of the social and economic problems that is confronting the youth of Winneba and all other people living in and around Winneba

#### **4.8 The Aesthetic Content of the Masquerades**

The creation of the masquerade visual forms from the inception of the culture in Ghana has been a matter of strict philosophical discourse especially within the conceptualization of forms in a blend of mostly European and a little from African perspectives. The masquerade artists and the masquerade leaders of Winneba have till date remained in the blend of both European and African frames of conceptualizing their ideas and costumes which are held in high esteem for the physical force needed to balance the community in all spheres of human endeavour, psychologically, spiritually, religiously, economically, socially, morally and in matters of good governance by the masquerades which affect both the family level and that of the community. The rendering of their costumes as a visual language has been a matter of importance in relation to the role and responsibilities of the masquerades. Like the Egyptian philosophy of form that gives much prominence to the Kings followed by the Queens



and down to the Subjects and Slaves in their compositions, the masquerade artist, the masquerades, the masquerade leaders and federation who are behind these visual histories followed these Philosophies of Personality where the federation have a lot of power to control what the groups have to do.

In trying to identifying, examining, analyzing and interpreting the aesthetic content of the masquerades and the costume the researcher had a closer relationship with the designers, the actualizers or implementers who mostly are the designers and the masquerades themselves. This interrogation of the aesthetical content of the masquerade first took me to a stilts dancer. It's fascinating to see them perform on these two lanky sticks as high as fifteen feet. It takes bravery and mastery of the skills of walking on these sticks. In some instances children at the age of about ten or less are given the chance to stand on a shorter stilts.

The stilts dancers stand on two lanky planks of wood mostly spherical in shape with a platform of a foot size on which the feet rest and it is tied with a rope. Another piece of wood is extended from just below the foot area up just about two feet depending on the height of the person and tied to the legs also with a rope. This portion is neatly covered with a cloth which is carefully crafted to be part of the costume.

In addition, the stilts dancer once part of the masquerade group also designs and create a costume to match but mostly does that in isolation and not in pairs. As exhibited the stilts dancers do not normally wear so much of a detailed dress or dress with a lot of designs as done by the other masquerading groups. In most instances they do not wear any mask to cover their entire face as done by the masquerade members, and this is due to the fact that they might fall once they do not see properly with the masks on. Also wearing of the hat which mostly is at the peak of the masquerades costume is on most

occasions ignored by these stilts dancers as they prefer wearing wigs or anything that could just cover their heads.

Stilts dancers are well known for their skilful display of very skilful movements and antics as some go to the extent of carrying babies, dressing up on the stilts as was displayed in plate 8 with a stilt dancer wearing a traditional cloth on the stilt and also some are able to bend back ward so much to the admiration of the onlookers. With all these displays and mastery, they are not able to stand at a particular place for a very long time so are made to move about to prevent falling off the stilts.



a.

b.

**Plate 7. Children at the age of between ten and twelve standing on the stilts**



**Plate 8. A performance by stilts dancer.**

The stilts dancers do a lot of performances defying the dangers the stilts might pose to them and viewers. The stilts dancer shown in plate 8 is putting on a traditional cloth while standing on the stilts, this and other skilful but apparently dangerous performances are the order of the day as they all want to display their capabilities as far as the stilts are concerned. Aesthetically the performance and the costume worn by these masquerades are breath taking as one might ask the level of education and training that these masquerades have acquired.

#### **4.9 Symbolism of the Masquerade Costume**

The stilts dancers, although are not so very particular about their dress as compared to the other masquerade members, they still put up their best dresses. Kofi Atta (personal communication)

“Why should I waste time on the dress I will wear, all I need is a decent dress to match what the group is wearing. You see, the dress does not really matter as people will be more interested in the displays and the height of the stilts and I perfectly have all those qualities”.

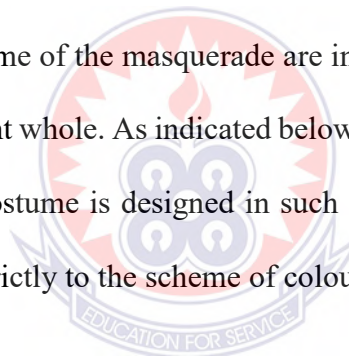
The stilts dancers carefully decorate their stilts either by wrapping of the stilts with cloth that match the dress or paint it with enamel paints. Also they choose colours that are

gay or bright in nature as it is their belief that they need to be conspicuous enough. The stilts dancers could not explain exactly the reason for the colours they choose but the researcher deduced that by using bright colours they will stand out among other groups. Also it further came out that because of the height, they might not even be noticed so by wearing the bright coloured costume onlookers will be drawn to them and be noticed.

Although the stilts dancers are not familiar with the symbolism under pinning reason for choosing the colours they use in the making of their costume they enjoy it so much and will go all out each year to improve upon the previous year's.

Other masquerade members equally do a lot of consultation to choose costume for them, which takes into consideration the colour, design and members of the smaller groups of four and three. The costume of the masquerade are into various components that come together to form a coherent whole. As indicated below is a typical example of a costume for a masquerade. The costume is designed in such a way that colour scheme is very important as they stick strictly to the scheme of colours decided on.

The masquerade is very particular about his or her hat as that helps in concealing their identity and further enhancing their beauty to draw people to them.





**Plate 9. Some of the hats used by the masquerades**

According to most of the masquerades the researcher spoke to, they normally prepare two hats for the culture especially the leaders as the hat you wear for matching and inspection are different from the one you wear for dancing. For the inspection the hat needs to be imposing to showcase the design capabilities of the group, while the simple hat is needed to do a better dancing as expected of the masquerades. These extra hats are mostly carried by the women in the group to the park until it is needed. The masquerades carefully craft the size of the head with clay and painstakingly apply pieces of paper with starch to a point and introduce sticks and cane to get the height right. They further wrap the hat with papers and the starch till the desired result is achieved. It is at this stage that fanciful wrappers are applied to the masterpieces; this process varies with every style that is being made. Some of the masquerades also buy already made hat for use.



**Plate 10. Examples of masks based on movie characters and imported**



Plate 11. Example of masks based on animal characters and are imported



Plate 12. Examples of masks made by the local artisans and based on the human character.



The imported masks are produced from a very flexible material presumed to be from rubber. On the other hand, the local artisans use wire mesh which is modeled on a prototyped human face then painted to match the costume. At a point in the history of masquerading in Winneba, the researcher was made to understand that the use of imported mask was not popular as it was not affordable so that led to the creation of the wire mesh mask that was painted according to the desire of the masquerade. They apply foam in the mask to make it comfortable when being worn. These masks represent a lot of characters including politicians, extract from movies, animals, other important characters in the society and finally some are done just to represent the human face. Most at times the masks produced are very frightening but yet appealing to watch. The main purpose of the mask is to cover the face of the masquerades to prevent people from recognizing the members of the group.

According to Kojo Lawson (personal communication)

” the most important thing for the masquerade is to be seen or draw attention to himself. So this informs the decision taken in the making of a costume. You see times are changing and it has affected the kind of costumes that are made, for example in time past masquerades specifically dress as cowboys, cowgirls, red Indians, Robin hood and others that do not follow the trends mentioned above but still in bright coloured costume. In current times masquerades do not specifically follow that but merge them or create dresses based on the existing styles and what will appeal to onlookers.”

As indicated the characters in these movies or situations are replicated in the costumes but are enhanced to suit the masquerades.



**Plate 13. An example of the shirt from the cow boys style worn by the masquerades**

The shirts mostly vary in style, as the kind of costume agreed on by the group determines the kind of shirt to be worn by its members. This shirt serves as a covering on the upper part of the body and it is the main component of the costume and that is where most of the design in the costume is made. Masquerades have the perception that as much as the whole costume is important, they learn to place emphasis on some part of the body and they think it should be that part. These masquerades and or the designers painstakingly either stitch or glue the ribbons and laces on to the costume to create those intricate designs seen on the costume. This is done so as to avoid being able to actualize the design as controlling the machine to sow such complex designs is not easy.



**Plate 14. Waist band, worn by the cow boys.**

The waist band is worn by the cowboys who have their guns and other things needed in guiding the cows firmly placed in. This part of the costume hangs loosely on the buttock of the masquerades. Also, they put toy guns and whips in them to check on the passersby who need to be checked to pave way for the masquerades during their display. Aside the above stated uses, it adds up to the costume to make it a whole.



**Plate 15. Sample of trousers worn by masquerades.**

Unlike normal trousers worn, the masquerades distinctively decorate the trousers to conform to the designed pattern in the main dress. This portion of the costume covers the under part of the masquerade and is also decorated to be part of the costume.



**Plate 16. “Depos” foot covering worn by the masquerades**

The masquerades craft their costumes in such a way that almost every portion of the body needs to be covered. In this wise the shoe to be worn by the masquerade is covered to prevent onlookers from seeing their feet. This has always received a lot of attention from the masquerades and those who understand “fancy dress” and have been following

it. The designers put a lot of effort into the making of the “Depos” so that they do a lot of balancing by emphasizing on the shirt or the top area and the feet area so that the mid portion is made a bit less eventful. The making of the “depos” need a lot of tactfulness because if not well made it will go off in the process of dancing.

The process involved is this; the masquerade gets an “easy-to-wear” pair of canvases to it, which they add, various materials. At the end of the day one cannot detect there is any canvas on which these things are attached.



**Plate 17. An example of cow girls.**

This, male masquerades are dressed as women going to take care of cows. Both men and women are allowed to dress like that and you could see how elaborate the “depos” or the feet coverings are, leaving the legs untended and making the eyes finally resting on the upper part of the body. The researcher could deduce that although they are mostly

illiterates they have good sense of bringing into play the principles and elements of design effectively.



**Plate 18. Example of female masquerades dressed up as “cow girls”**

If you take a closer look at the costumes of the various masquerade groups, you will be tempted to ask what especially influences the choice of colour.



**Plate 19. A group of four masquerades.**



**Plate 20. Group of young boys in groups of three.**



**Plate 21. Group of four cow boys in horrific masks**

The pairings are mostly done in groups of two to five depending on the choreography that the group intends to do. The masquerades perfectly combine the suitable colours and direct attention to where they think appropriate. Kojo Lawson (personal communication) said,

“You see, about thirty percent of the members have no formal education while just about thirty percent with primary education, thirty percent have done up to J.H.S, while some few constituting about six percent having tertiary education and the rest having up to S.H.S level. Even this condition I bet you can see



better creation than if it had been left with the formally educated designers. In effect almost all our designers are not educated up to J.H.S level yet they have sustained the groups with their marvelous designs to date”.

Although they cannot effectively explain the reason behind their design, they could do so well in terms of their creation. They believe they were handed this culture and should at all cost try to maintain and develop it. That is all they are striving to do.

The complexity of the masquerading costumes and its other attachment is one fact that is undeniable with the masquerades artistic creations. Most of the forms that parade on the costume of masquerades have little complexity, twists and turns. Most forms are pictured in straight, complex, smooth and round forms that deviate from normal design, but engage in super fluidity of superficial rendition. Laces and ribbons are carefully interwoven onto the surfaces of the costumes with adhesives, hand stitches and machine stitches. Unlike the costumes of the traditional masquerading known to the Africans, the creations of the masquerades of Winneba have a similar response to the masquerading display exhibited by the Europeans. The Winneba masquerading costumes have most of the design concentrated on the upper part of the costume leaving the leg area less elaborate on, and finally, placing a lot more concentration on the feet as the masquerades do a lot of maneuvering with the feet. The various homes associated with these masquerading groups and their creation have remained so to date, as these homes are revered when it comes to the masquerading culture to the extent that, meeting about the groups are always held in these homes with the exception of the training by the group. Even with this, they at times do the training in their parent homes. The masquerade artist does not consider over reliance on local material as the means of

creating the needed costumes for themselves. Instead, the masquerade artists depended mostly on the use of imported materials in the production of the costume. In some instances rather, they buy the finished goods and make them part of the costume. A classical example is the masks. On the contrary, the designers of the masquerade costume incorporate the use of geometric shapes as a measure of providing decorations on the costume. These decorations that are formed on the walls of the materials used produce a break of the monotony that existed from the flow of the plain smooth surface of the material. Invariably these designs that provide another level of aesthetic uniqueness to these masquerades could be related to some of the African masquerade costumes but Europeanised, making it look more foreign than African. The masquerade artists manage to inform the community through the individual wearing the costume and the costume itself about forgetting the past and bracing the New Year with all certainty as they dance around and make merry as if there is nothing to be scared of in the unknown future. They combined these individual forms to create the very masquerade stories that the members and citizenry expect from them as they celebrate Christmas.

The collections of forms that constitute the design in the costume and the performance by the masquerade are made to represent the community's wealth (in strength, money character, attitude and what have you) and the social and economic services needed to foresee the continuity of the community. These masquerade costumes that are of cultural 'master pieces' are community oriented. The indigenes of Winneba accept and associate wholly with the culture, which comprises of the social, economic, and religious benefits associated with it. It has become obvious that historians and cultural researchers who wish to take snap shots of these cultural 'master pieces' are deemed as

encroachers on the cultural heritage of the Effutu people of Winneba. The community and its people jealously guard against these treasures.

It could be said that the masquerade artist and their prestigious European connoisseurs and all elite indigenes that were involved in the promulgation of Western education and culture through the Colonial machinery indoctrinated the people of Winneba into second class Europeans. This affected the quality of the culture practiced by the people of Winneba. The strict mixture of the cultures, concepts and techniques of production during the era promoted a type of artistic revelation that until date has become the landmark of the indigenes.

The injunction of the Contemporary African Arts into the indigenes' artistic tray affirmed the inter-cultural relationship of the Effutus and their European counterpart in the promotion and exploitation of the masquerading culture which some people have believed to have come from Africa but has been proven otherwise by this research.

With this masquerading culture coming up as a result of Christmas festivity, certain Biblical themes are made part of the masquerade costume collection. The occurrence of the biblical images, political images and other social images as part of the historical album is something that cannot be overlooked. These figures, which are mostly represented as Europeans, acknowledged them as the originators of the masquerading culture. It is understandable that the masquerade artists are able to fuse Christianity, social issues and political representation into the masquerade culture to create a type of culture that brings into line a perfect marriage between the characters stated above to create a perfect situation to witness on Christmas. At the period of the creation of these groups and their costumes, some sketches could be made from among the characters made mention of above. One cannot refuse to notice that the European originators of

this masquerading culture used quite a totally different costume and because they were doing the culture for fun they did not so much concentrate on the costume in totality than to cover their faces to prevent people from recognising them. They abided to that religiously and made Christmas and Easter fun to be watched.

It is agreeable that at a time in history, the Effutus of Winneba copied the masquerading culture either directly or indirectly specifically from the Europeans who settled by the coast of Ghana in the colonial times. This caught up with the people of Winneba who embraced it and made it part of their life style by celebrating it on Christmas and New Year's days. These account for the number of indigenes of Winneba who clinche to the masquerading culture. It is noted that the leaders of the first group went through a lot to spread the culture in and around Winneba. At a point in time the leaders had to journey to some parts of the country to seek for spiritual influence and fortification to influence the activities and actions of some of the masquerade groups. This was due to how some of the masquerade groups fought among themselves. The leaders needed to do something, so they went for consultation and had to buy an anvil and hit it whenever they meet at the four junction and they tend to fight among themselves. This actually worked and your guess is as good as mine what the other group will be doing when they have a problem. They definitely will also consult the fetish priests.

The aesthetic qualities of the costume and the masquerading culture in its entirety are the uniqueness that exists amongst the individual group members and the various groups that is projected as part of their historic language. Variations in the individual structure and the aesthetic content that prevail in these groups allow for originality and freedom of expression to stretch events and situations to their fullest. Winneba masquerade artists ensured the uniqueness that was demanded of them as the spirits and the works of their predecessors might have inspired them to design and perform accordingly. The

artist in all his intent duly put together the various cultures which are different but forms the basis of the masquerades history of yesteryears in today's situation.

In conclusion, what one could deduced from the various contributors is that although there are few misrepresentations in terms of the dates and names, the story line seems to be the same with the exception of the contribution from Kofi Bortse about how the group was formed. The masquerade culture over the years has developed so much that it has become very competitive in terms of their dressing, dancing style and even the bands men as they all come together to make the culture worth patronizing. The formation of the federation has come a long way to streamline the doings of the various groups as they are the regulating body.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

An attempt at dissecting into the masquerading culture of the Effutu's of Winneba, and African indigenous masquerading cultures makes it difficult for one to decide as to whether it's really African. One may deem masquerading as a culture in which remarkable achievements have been made in its technological development and its conceptualization. In Africa, and Winneba to be precise, in recent times masquerade culture is a subject of no more than passing a comment or desultory study at most. The people of Winneba have developed and are advanced in the masquerade culture and its aesthetic conceptualisation and accompanying economic activities. At the initial stages of the development of the masquerading culture, "wire masks" were worn and with less economic activities, they looked more at it as a source of entertainment to the inhabitants of Winneba. With less economic activities attached to the culture, financing the masquerades in the subsequent year's costume always became a problem. Also the masks always needed to be reconstructed as the wire mesh used in making the mask rust or is defaced. Although this masquerading culture sort to merely entertain onlookers, there has been after some time a spiritual undertone attached to it as nothing exists with no reason in the African context. They also sought to communicate the real life events to the present and the future. A masquerade turns to portray what is, has, and will likely happen politically, and in some instances other social and spiritual happenings. Indirectly one will say the masquerade culture and their related activities act as a ware house of socio-cultural or religious events as they actualise these events. It is undeniable that the Effutu masquerades of Winneba honour their culture so much

that they constantly stick to the activities associated with the culture and will go every mile to go out on New Year.

Following the long tradition of the European stay on the coast, the masquerades dress and perform just as it is done by Europeans. They wear brightly coloured costumes with their masks to match, that make them attractive and imposing as they emerge from the various corners of the town streets.

These masquerading activities are used to express the joy of Christmas, the identity of the various groups and what they can offer as well as for national development. Therefore, the need for the realization, exploration and preservation of these national heritages become paramount. Indigenes resort to messages and stimulate a new way of making masquerading costumes that identifies them with their traditions or groups.

Political ideologies and values of emerging new African Leaders of the late 1950's and early 1960's resorted to injecting into the indigenes the sense of belongingness and inward looking to their cultural values and tenets as opposed to that of their European past. Indigenes reverted to the use of their customary names, graphical symbols, messages and traditional fashion. Other indigenous objects of importance were put on high nationalistic dais. But masquerade as was brought to the Effutu's by the Europeans did not change as expected and indicated by Dogbe (1995) but maintained and improved what has been given to them by the Europeans:

the re-enactment of the three major philosophical concept of Negritude, African Personality and Pan Africanism as the major tool for the affirmation of African cultural and spiritual values that revere the living heroes, the dead heroes and the maintenance of spiritual balance in the African society. This is a concept of the

retrieval of African cultural essence and the need for all people of African cultural decent to benefit from the rich skills and knowledge obtained by the elite Africans of Western training”.

Dogbe (1995).

These concepts unfortunately did not affect the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba as they rather looked more into designs from the European perspective as they saw the emergence of “Robin Hood” “Cow boy and Cow girl” and other European personalities in the way they dressed. This practice has continued till date as masks worn these days are masks of personalities and characters of European origin.

With the growing interest in the masquerading event and its related art forms that have become evident in the culture over the period in Ghana, it makes it necessary and imperative for the researcher to provide a critique of the traditional beliefs and practices associated with masquerading, and critically examine the motivation to observe the masquerading event and also to evaluate the socio-economic significance of masquerading as well as to identify, examine, analyze and interpret the aesthetic content of different masquerades

These masquerading groups, despite their rendition, may not be able to free themselves from the traces of European styles that have been adapted over the years to bring in a bit of African conceptualism. It is equally evident that although the culture was blessed by the European touch, they are of slight deviations from classical European masquerading culture that is mostly referred to as street carnival. They were somehow naturalistic or realistic or both. Possibly, the Egyptian significance or importance was fully employed in the sizing of various body parts that are important to the masquerades in the human figures. One cannot take away from the indigene sculptors their high skill



of realism in the representation of the faces used in the making of the masks worn. The creation by the indigenous artists who design and manufacture the costumes of the masquerade, from the hat to the boot is a clear manifestation of the classical skills that abounds in the Indigenes. It is noticeable that in times past the African could produce very high standard headdresses and other parts of the figure. Products that were synonymous with the Ibo, Benin and Egyptian people.

Hassan, recounts that:

colonialism in Africa disrupted cultures rich in visual arts, religions, oral traditions, social as well as political formation. Yet despite its extensiveness, this disruption was not complete, especially, in the artistic and creative domain.

Perhaps, it may be true that the Winneba's encounter with the Portuguese and the Dutch made them more complex in thoughts and deeds than were perceived previously. Hence, the adoption of the European materials, styles, techniques, forms and thoughts in the masquerade creations which made the Indigenous artists quite selective and conceptual in their presentation and creation of the costumes. Christian themes, political themes, and social themes and other forms were not spared in the creation of costumes for masquerades. Initially, there was nothing like masquerading culture in Winneba. Christians worshiped on Christmas to usher in the New Year. This was replaced by masquerade culture that was performed by just a hand full of people who did it in the open to entertain the people of Winneba. This progressed from one to four groups and then to what is now seen as the magnificent super structure of the privileged masquerade group. With all these graduations, the medicine mound of the masquerade groups was none existent. These medicines or gods were placed where the leaders and members of

the groups derive their spiritual and psychological superfluity to do and undo things mostly that will be the home where the group was formed. These spiritual spots served as the meeting place of the various group members as well as their recreational centres. The various masquerade groups as existed in Winneba had their individual spiritual centres upon which they acted in accordance with the masquerade traditions and norms. In addition, these spiritual spots and centers served as the shrines upon which the shrines and ancestors of the various groups could be invoked for action of defence, protection or attack. These homes became and are still the very remarkable souls of the various masquerade groups. The late 1950's saw a paradigm shift in the presentation of some of these masquerade groups as the groups now compete against each other on the bases of costume style and dance styles. From this season emerged the introduction of massive costume styles which involve the evolution of various hat styles to go with the costumes. These costume styles had a striking artistic representation that formed parts of the culture and have come to stay. It really brought to bear the indigenes masterly handling of certain European materials, skills and technology in the rendition of the artful costumes that stood for the concept of the masquerading groups. Colours as well as certain style of identification were heavily represented in these masquerading costumes. As a mark of cultural documentation, the various activities of these groups and persons of great importance to the groups were not left unmentioned as part of these indigenes identifications. Possibly, one could propose that most of these documentation in the various homes where the groups were formed and especially the account by Rev. Kobina Taylor were used to glorify the very leaders that formed the groups. In the account by Rev. Kobina Taylor, he spelt out the names of the founders and all who played critical roles in the formation of the various groups. Although the culture was from the Europeans, the people of Winneba were able to fuse it into an African ensemble

which mostly played African music and dance. The Elephants, Lions, Monkey, Horses, Dogs and other animals that are heard of in our day to day life and that had a great symbolic influence as such appeared as part of the figurative representation of these groups. These are animals that were used mostly just to conceal the identity of the group members and to frighten onlookers. There masquerades added especially the “cow boys” canes to discipline those who misbehaved at their performances. In addition, other objects that the group see important to make their performance attractive could be added. It is obvious that mention be made of the wisdom and masterly presentation of the skills and knowledge of the designers or Indigenous artists who contributed to these very costumes that are masterpieces of the masquerades of the Effutus.

Contrary to the exterior manifestation of the marriages that existed between the various costumes, the wearer has an African philosophy of storing the costumes as part of the living wealthy processions of the masquerades. This then is used the following year before the New Year where a new costume is exhibited, until recently costumes were well kept for posterity and changed or advanced in style.

In addition, the addition of the stilts dancers who displayed on two lanky sticks making it look quite dangerous and fascinating, has become an integral part of this masquerading culture. The fact still remains that the masquerade groups and the culture have become an edifice that exists today in the various homes where they were created and streets of Winneba on Christmas, New Year and other occasions where their services are needed to entertain the audience. The masquerading groups who have kept the culture all these years have been able to retain only the first four groups that were started with at the beginning of the culture. For the purposes of this research, much emphasis will be placed on tracing and examining the historical background of masquerades in Winneba and find out the Traditional beliefs and practices associated

with masquerading. To look into what has been the motivation to observe the masquerading event. Also the socio-economic significance of masquerading culture will be looked at extensively and identify and interpret the aesthetic content of masquerades costume.

This masquerade culture has many adopted masquerade cultural icon and artistic components put into a single whole and this is but an indigenes initiative. The volume of impressions, that stems to make the masquerade culture of the Effutus great, is attributed to the various group leaders from the formation period of the masquerade culture to the federation period. The forebears of the cultures contributed immensely to their financial and moral commitment on the raising up of their aspirations, visions, and philosophies from the dust to a level which this very culture exists today. Winneba as at today can pride itself of four well placed masquerade groups that stretch the thoughts and imaginations of its founding fathers, leaders and the members as well. These are the Group No 1. Nobles, Group No 2. Egyaa, Group No 3. Tumus and Group No 4. Red Cross, their numbering indicates which group was first established to the last group and they have their various homes where they were established. They have over the years kept to these homes and the families that brought about the various groups.

## **5.2 Discussion of Findings**

### **Introduction**

Historic facts hold empiric view that the Winneba Masquerade culture is the key object in the dispensation of the masquerade lineage of the people of Ghana. The masquerade culture of the people of Winneba has remained as the seat of authority in terms of designs, creativity, organization and performance of the masquerade groups since their

creation in Winneba. The masquerade homes and the federation are the centres or institutions where decision making and their implementation and monitoring take place. Like the castles of the colonial era, these homes where the masquerade groups were formed and the federation assumed the custodianship of traditional political power and places where members could be sanctioned or apprehended for wrong doing as well as for non-compliance of the custom and tradition of these masquerade groups. Masquerade activities and decisions were always initiated from these Homes and the federation therefore making them the highest masquerade bodies and decision making bodies of the individual masquerade groups. The homes are also the official headquarters of the very masquerade group who host these magnificent culture as well as those masquerade groups who still maintain their heritage. It has been established that any masquerade group that makes no claim to any home as its converging point cannot be recognized as such. It is therefore revealing that the masquerade groups attach much importance to their homes as a source of traditional authority and power.

Visual records have been adjudged as one of the media through which all cultures of the world have used to preserve their past and present events, activities and achievements for tomorrow's generation. Fashion and textile trends, sculpture, painting and also graphical presentations have been some of the major channels through which information and education have been transferred to other generations and cultures. In Ghana today, the masquerade culture have become some of the cultural relics that cannot be brushed aside with ease. These cultural icons have part of the repositories through which the masquerade culture has been well captured by the artists of the era. They also serve as part of the major exhibits of Winneba's relationship with her European partners as well as the various Europeans who preyed Winneba as a semi vassal state that they acquired psychologically but not militarily. Historically, these

masquerade homes and the culture itself also express Winneba's relationship with its neighbouring towns that were the Fanti states. There is no doubt that the masquerade culture has become the living records of the Winneba people and their past traditions, exploits and achievements.

The masquerades of Winneba, in their quest to become the repositories of their history, also became the storehouses of the various masquerade style and events which were or are associated with the various masquerade groups. Most, if not all, the masquerade groups have gods they pray to but are kept unmentioned to even its members. It therefore makes it possible for them to be invoked and or pacified at all times. Additionally, the masquerade homes by themselves serve as shrine houses for their members and officials as libations are mostly poured when the group is opening for the year. Leaders of the various groups can therefore visit these homes by virtue of the fact that they serve as link between the home and other group members. These homes, to the researcher, are therefore viewed as shrines. It is therefore forbidden for people to visit and perform certain unaccustomed activities that may be deemed as taboos to the masquerades and or the groups. These homes of the masquerades have spaces created to store some of the dresses worn over the years which serve as an inspiration to up and coming group members. Aside the homes some other members also keep these old dresses for posterity. These in effect prevent their loss and also the wrongful possession and bequeathing of masquerade properties to dependants. As the cultural relics of the masquerade group members, the masquerade homes and individual masquerade homes have become sources through which the activities of the masquerade groups are transferred to other generations. Information on the activities of the masquerade groups is registered audio-visually making it possible for visitors, masquerades, researchers and others to access. Additionally, the documentation act as a medium through which

the society is educated on the exploits, achievements and experiences of the various masquerading groups. The culture and its documentation also act as store of knowledge from the groups to historians, archaeologists and other researchers who partake in the culture for academic reasons or purposes. Also the culture and their adjoin artistic representation communicate effectively to the on looking public about the masquerading culture. Skills mentoring, talents nurturing and mastering could be obtained through the masquerades and the culture as a whole.

The masquerade home, act indirectly as the shrines and the storehouses for the masquerade groups and its members. These homes give members of the group the opportunity to seek for spiritual fortification from their homes in the form of protection, insurance and prosperity investment in their trade and vocation as masquerades. Rituals are performed during the opening of the group at the beginning of the year according to the masquerade calendar. The death of a group member may call for certain funeral rites that are exclusive of that particular group. In addition to the spiritual fortification of the members, certain pacifications are made for continuity of life and survival of members and their dependants. Also, certain rituals are required of certain masquerade group leaders in times of the masquerade festivals. Even some of the members are not aware of this.

Spiritual fortification is one of the critical manifestations of the masquerade's exploits, achievements and experiences in their relations with their neighbours and European partners. It came up at a point in the research that in the history of masquerading in Winneba, group leaders were fortified and at times imbued with charms that made it necessary for them to perform their leadership roles to the best of their ability and be protected from their detractors and other evil spirits. It was an opened secret that the creation of some of the masquerade group required the planting of a medicine mound

underneath, and that sought to provide them with the necessary spiritual potency needed to make them spiritually alive for the running and maintenance of the group. The masquerading culture in the past did not thrive on magic, charms and sorcery, as it was purely for entertainment and no competition existed between them. As things changed and competition was introduced into the culture, charms, magic and sorcery crept into the culture. Choreography and physical fitness are some activities that were pursued by the masquerades. These physical exercises when well practiced make the members mentally and physically active and strong for all the activities arranged for the culture. Most masquerade activities require the necessary fitness to see them through the necessary physical activities. By going through these fitness tests, the members become physically strong to pursue other economic and commercial functions that go to improve the financial well-being of the members. This makes it possible for members to have enough resources to undertake educational and wealth creation pursuits. Life and time philosophy professes good health and maximum medical attention for all mankind. The Winneba masquerade culture, usually perform the role of health posts where members of the groups are put on fitness exercise for about four or three month before the event proper. In effect it is prudent to say that, the masquerade federation and its members have the interest and welfare of the group members and their investment at heart by providing them with the necessary security and assurance to good health, longevity of one's life, prosperity and the continuity of the survival of the masquerading groups.

Economic exploits have remained one of the major activities of the masquerades and the federation. It was long established that their involvement in the economic marriage with the early Europeans made it possible for the Europeans to pitch camp with them. The masquerade culture of the people of Winneba have unofficially become part of the man-made cultural edifices that for some time have attracted a high level of cultural



tourism among the locals and foreigners who make vocational (Christmas), educational, and commercial trips to Winneba and its environs. Economically, persons who make such visits to Winneba to witness this masquerade culture for personal or institutional documentation may be illegally cashed upon by certain locals. These locals who may unduly harass visitors may take undue advantage of their ignorance to create some financial gains for themselves but to the detriment and deprivation of the federation and the masquerades. The masquerading culture is economically self-sustaining, in that their proper regularization into the tourism bracket could enable them to generate the needed financial gains that are tripling into private pockets. This could turn the masquerading culture into a major source of job creation in Winneba and its environ. Each group could have some of their members who do not perform in the year offered adequate professional training in the area of tour guarding and tour management. Such trained tour professionals will be able to inform, educate and assist tourists on the activities of the individual masquerade group. Such formalized institutions and personalities may be able to help document the masquerades activities as well as offer assistance to both local and foreign researchers who may wish to research on the masquerade culture and their related issues. Maintenance on this masquerading culture may require the services of designers, tailors, painters, carpenters, sculptors and other artisans who may either be indigenes or inhabitants of Winneba. Such persons may make some financial gains from helping to maintain the culture. Such gains may go a long way to support the federation, the leaders, masquerades, artisans and their dependants. Additionally, masquerade members who command great skills in masquerade performances could be made to stage masquerade dance styles to organized groups of tourists at specific or regular intervals on their homes within the year. Also members and the federation could be commissioned to replicate the culture at places

where they have no idea as to what goes on in Winneba on Christmas. Productions such as video clips, postcards, stamps, photographs, posters could be made from the masquerade for sale. Although this is going on, a chunk of the profit goes into individual's pockets so it needs to be looked at properly. Additionally, the costumes created by the masquerades like hats, caps, headgears, shirts, shorts, masks and 'dipos' could be produced for display or for sale to visitors as souvenirs. These souvenirs could be put on display in the various masquerade homes or with the federation. These economic activities will be able to create employment for the indigenes and members of the individual masquerade groups. More so, the various masquerade groups could occasionally stage artistic performances of their previous years costume and their performances at the masquerading event. These could include saving the physical inspection of their costume, slow dance style, high life dance, and other choreographic displays to exhibit what they all have to offer as masquerades. They can also stage performances such as going through town dancing, and ably supported by the bands men.

The masquerades of Winneba are noted for their inspiring artistic performances that generate energy for social, economic, and political activities, Winneba masquerades are required by tradition to provide entertainment and performance on occasions where their member is being ordained or celebrating birth, marriage and death rites. Individual masquerade members have certain traditional processes that deceased members are taken through before their burial. This process calls for some artistic performances some of which may re-enact the deceased's position and role played during his or her life time. Member groups could perform art forms for the entertainment of members of the community. Masquerade performances and entertainment included dances, singing, yelling, stilts displays matching and other choreographic performances. Masquerade

choreographic performances, matching, schematics and other rendezvous require energy and high intake of alcohol with some of the masquerades.

Today, the Winneba masquerade and their performances demand appreciation, admiration, adoration, acclamation and allegiance from the people of Winneba and its environs, looking at the improvement in the culture over the years.

### **5.3 Winneba Masquerade in Transition: Past, Present and Future**

Winneba Masquerade culture from the days of Mr. Kofi Katu Addison, Mr. Abraham Papa Akese alias Papa Arthur, and Messrs. Abraham, Addison, Aikins (originators of the masquerading culture in Winneba) had played a major socio-political role in the development of the culture in Winneba. As mentoring and monitoring personalities, of the masquerade society they did not only develop their own leadership and communicative skills, they also pursued a strict human resource and community development through the protégée of these originators and successive leaders of the various masquerade groups that emerged. These cultural characteristics saw the development of physical structures, economic policies, intellectual capacities, psychological, social, emotional, spiritual and holistic symbolism of the way that the masquerade groups existed in Winneba. An attempt at building up the event, spiritual and leadership possibilities of the masquerade concept in Winneba, homes, groups and its associated leaderships and the federation were put in place to forestall the achievements of their heroes and other forces that they required of their protection and services in all times. The present day Winneba masquerade culture prides in four effective groups; magnificent organisational and leadership structures which speak greatly of the cultural exploits, achievements and language of the very masquerade

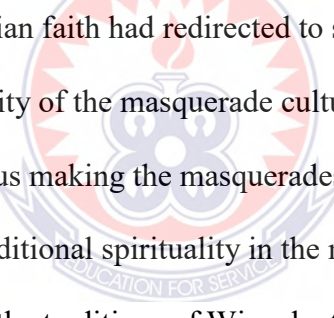
group in question. In the recent past and till date, most of the masquerade groups are attempting to put up similar magnificent organisational, leadership performance structures to be able to exhibit and market the past glory and history visually and physically in the present. Thanks to the Federation that has been very responsible in organizing the groups and their leaders; the members of the masquerading groups and the bands men who have been and are committed to the course of the culture all these years; the Municipal Assembly and the various Members of Parliament who have been very instrumental in the celebration of the culture; the viewers who have always been there to cheer up the masquerades in their performance and edge them on; and finally, the sponsors who in recent past have been supporting the masquerades through the Federation. In recent past, the homes of the masquerades acted as the spiritual spots through which the various spiritual and religious rituals were performed and kept. These homes have assumed monumental religious and spiritual stature through the minds of the society and its members. One dares not approach these homes with items of abomination and spiritual insanity that show no purification to the homes and the group's ideology. The homes of the masquerade groups therefore become a 'no go' area for all persons who have no spiritual and physical connection with the masquerade groups and the members when the year begins where masquerade activities start. As such the spiritual and physical potency of these homes and the masquerade groups were very much perceived and assumed by all masquerade faithfuls, indigenes of Winneba and all people who reside in and around Winneba. Kojo Lawson stated that:

“The homes of the masquerade groups are assumed to be spiritually fortified that in times past, their leaders do consultations and or pour libation and in some instances pray there on behalf of the masquerades as the year for

the culture opens and the possibility of the group winning and other needs”

Positive reliance on the assumed spiritual potency of these homes helped promote a continuous survival and growth of the culture and the masquerade generations. It is therefore remarkable that spirituality among the people of Winneba had grown to a height measurable to nothing. The existence of Christianity is another spiritual force that helped shape the spiritual beings of the Winneba people and the masquerade on both sides of its standing. Christianity might have introduced a critical faith that moved the hearts of the masquerades home and the masquerade traditions.

Kojo Lawson reiterates that:



“The Christian faith had redirected to some extent the spirituality of the masquerade culture into oblivion, thus making the masquerades lose their steam of traditional spirituality in the masquerade culture and the traditions of Winneba that centers on good moral standards, good neighbourliness, the spirit of self-support and support for one another and communal development.”

In present times, traditional spirituality in the masquerading culture has virtually been relegated to the background. Rather the social and economic development of the people of Winneba traditional area is enhanced through masquerading. Today, the spirituality in masquerade culture is reduced to mainly cosmetic ceremonial, traditional politics and traditional religious practices as most of the masquerade groups have resorted to Christian prayers in public and the other spirituality in secrecy. Spiritual significances

attached to this masquerade culture in Winneba are gradually losing up to darkness. To the people of Winneba, their religion constituted their soul. Perhaps, the masquerades and associates of Winneba today need some traditional help and inspirations to stay focus on what made their ancestors the spiritual icons of social order and balance.

Trivial factional conflicts and misunderstanding among groups and even within the group almost lead to destruction and disintegration of the number one group where they created the Korsah and the Kokroko factions within the group, but for the timely intervention of the Federation other elders of the town there would have been a break away and the insistence on creation of the fifth group.

The masquerade groups of Winneba profess the future prospects of becoming prominent masquerading establishment for showcasing the masquerading culture and paraphernalia that establishes their involvement with the Europeans, their individual creativity and their leadership exploits with some masquerade groups in and out of Winneba. Elevating the masquerade homes into Museum status could make them attractive for research purposes, formal tourism calendar and to make the Winneba masquerade activities known to Ghana and rest of the world. This move could help and or encourage those groups who do not possess presentable homes to adequately make their homes presentable and provide good leaders. Winneba masquerade homes as Mini Museums would help educate and inform the society and students about their achievements and exploits. It will also serve as a store house where the principles, norms, customs and taboos of the masquerade groups could be attained. This will help uphold and inculcate into the Winneba children and youth of today and tomorrow lessons about their forbearers' treasures. Most youth of today in these masquerade homes are not held responsible for the care and maintenance of the cultural standards

of the culture and that of the various homes. Undoubtedly, due to perceived neglect for or the swing of the level of spirituality among the youth, about these cultures, the youth cannot phantom the need to revere them as before. This therefore makes it possible for the youth to prefer this culture for pure entertainment and as remedy for boredom.

Aside the neglect for or the swing of the level of spirituality among the youth of Winneba in the masquerade culture, they have been able to develop the culture adequately in terms of design of costume, leadership exploits, and its attractiveness to the general public. It is evident that modern trends have highly influenced the development of the culture in all aspects which in a way has been very positive affecting the social and the economic existence of the people of Winneba and its environs.

#### **5.4 Modernity and Masquerading**

Social and economic empowerments have been recognized as part of the major turning points of man's life. As a matter of unusual change, people of previous traditions may have become extremely disassociated with modern ways of affecting issues of religion and traditions. They may be inclined to their past practices. Unique and innovative methods of attacking comparable situations have become a matter of social and emotional conflict. The youth of today's Ghana are virtually loosing up to what is termed "craze" or "modern". Some schools of thought deem this term as a strict or blind copying of foreign cultures, specifically Western. These may be preferred to the basic traditional principles of the community. Though it is agreeable that no particular culture can exist without any other cultural intrusion or infusion, it may be noted that the heavy dependence on Western culture over that of Winneba may be very unacceptable. The partial disregards for cultural practices, norms, costumes and others

associated with traditional African principles are one issue that cannot be relaxed with people of deep traditional bearing. The need for social support services, good neighbourliness and the love for spiritual balance for the society informed the people of Winneba to originally choose the African traditional principles as a major mark of moral standards. Elders in the community could apprehend all those who disregard the cultural principles that were imbedded in the celebration of Christmas even before the coming into being of the masquerading culture irrespective of their parental lineage, social background and influence. Modernity as a new principle in the lives of the youth and people of Winneba has taken a new dimension and proportion on the activities involving the Winneba masquerades and its related activities. Modernity has affected the traditional ways by which the forebears of the masquerade culture communicated with the gods and ask for protection for themselves and the other group members. Over the period this has changed with the leaders now publicly going in for Pastors or associating themselves with churches but consulting these gods their forebears were dealing with in secret. This is negatively teaching the up and coming generation to serve two masters which the Holy Book frown on as it breeds insincerity. This projects the present Winneba indigenes negative attitudes towards the sustainability and marketing of the masquerade culture. This also showcases their weak spiritual attitude and appreciation to one spiritual being. Their quest for deviation and non-adoption of the spiritual traits and interests of the initiators of the culture reigns supreme. The Winneba youth do not necessarily uphold the masquerade principle of religious concentration, spirituality and emotional fulfilment that are derived from the homes where the masquerading groups evolved. Winneba masquerading cultures and principles inform, transform and educate the society. The peak of Winneba masquerading practices saw the society being free from vices such as lazing about, lack



of skills acquisition and family and social irresponsibility. In the recent past Winneba practiced the typical extended family system; an African family support system that saw to support the have not. In the recent past, the quest for Western nuclear family type is in vogue. This does not encourage love for the weak, support for the needy and passion for the dying. Modern principles do give concentration to oneself rather than on community. This averted poverty among the have not's. The haves therefore prefer lavishing what they have on themselves rather than on the community. A modern social order permeates the Masquerade culture, thus creating abandonment and neglect for the social fiber of the masquerade system. Modernity as a measure of social acceptability for the people of Winneba and Ghana as a whole might have contributed to the development of knowledge and information about the Effutu community and that of the masquerade groups and their formation. Scientific development and modernity have not eroded the co-operate systems of today. Therefore emphasizing the marketability of the Winneba masquerading culture is crucial. Production of Winneba masquerade performances into play backs and on videos and audio tapes and clips could help promote and also transfer the masquerade system to the youth of today both in Winneba and elsewhere. Yesteryear's technology affected the make and marketing of these cultural creations. Today's technology has another level of influencing the physique and outlook of the masquerade culture that are undergoing reformation and transformation. Although in the past, Winneba abounded in energetic people who were capable of forming new groups, they kept their ancestral direction of maintaining only four groups. The masquerade regime had passed through appreciable stages, thus the graduation of the initial number one group known as Nobles, adding on the number two which is Egyaa. As time passed by, the creation of the number three group Tumus came into being. Number four known as Red Cross was added on to the group.

As if it has ended, Chinese, a proposed number five almost became a reality but unfortunately they could not survive the tides and died off. At a point, a grudge between Kokroko and Korsah almost saw the number one group split into two, but by the timely intervention of opinion leaders and the Federation calmed and forestalled what is now the magnificent masquerade of all times. In recent time, science and technology has impacted heavily on the indigenous structural performance and the transformation of the Winneba masquerading.

### **5.5 Urbanization and Masquerading**

Urbiculture, has in recent past been part of the major factors that has engulfed developing states such as Ghana. In the past, Winneba was a major town where social, commercial and economic activities prevailed vigorously. This attracted various types of persons and trades to the place. In recent times, due to the search for wealth, financial recognition and social standing, neighbouring villages and towns are migrating to Winneba to practice the fishing trade and adjoining specialization. This requires the provision of some social services and infrastructure; housing, sanitation, portable water, health, financial houses and communication services that will meet the appropriate living standards. Urbanization, as a global fibre, generates certain unanswered questions and vices that may be contrary to cultural proponents and sustainability within the traditional set of the Winneba communities. Winneba in central region which falls within Ghana's poorest regions could not be cut from such underdevelopment and social and economic deprivation accompanying them. Urbanization as a social problem exposes prostitution and crime. It also introduces insanitation and its related health problems. This creates proportion of illness that ends up making the people poor. It makes the society experience early death leading to the breeding of orphans, school

dropouts and finally introducing social misfits, deviants, lawlessness and rise in crime. Non-indigenes of Winneba have migrated into the town. They are not educated about the tradition, norms and customs of Winneba and her institutions. Hence, the non-compliance and its corresponding lack of respect for the masquerading culture as was in some time past. Strangers living in the town do not contribute to the running and maintenance of this masquerade culture and do not also revere them as cultural substance of great importance. Urbanization and infrastructural development in Winneba has affected the rehearsal grounds for the masquerades as they have to move far away from town, to the outskirts to practice, as the other groups might be watching. Urbanization saw the majority of the Winneba indigenes drift to other regional capitals in search of greener pastures. The financial gains expected from these indigenes as dues and other contributions or donations could not be obtained from them. This therefore contributes to the neglect of the maintenance of some of the homes from where the masquerades developed.

The Winneba masquerade Federation is one institution that has arrogated to itself the responsibility of supervising the masquerade cultural upgrading, especially in the maintenance and provision of needed amenities. In addition, this body see to the provision of certain social and commercial services that are of great value to the masquerade groups and their individual members. The Federation's wish is to help keep up all existing four masquerading groups and sustain them in terms of managerial practices that are needed by the groups and their leaders. It is remarkable to include that this cultural institution has done extremely well in sourcing for funding from individuals and institutions alike for the upliftment of the masquerade groups and the culture that will also go a long way to educate, inform and preserve the masquerade Culture of the Winneba People. This Federation, sought to the creation and

maintenance of a permanent place for the display by the masquerades. It also sought to maintain peace and order among the groups as they mostly fight among themselves from the least provocation from one another. Lots of such initiatives are welcome since they will help register the history of the Winneba people and the masquerade culture in stone. Due to infrastructural development and beautification of the Winneba Township as a result of urbanisation, the existing standards of the masquerade groups need to be brought to the highest level. In some time past masquerades did exhibit the previous year's dress for at least two to three weeks before the actual festival where a newer dress is worn. Due to urbanisation these masquerades rather travel out of Winneba more than they do in Winneba to display these dresses and in turn ask for alms to support themselves in the sowing of the new dresses.

### **5.6 Masquerading and Traditional Representation**

Winneba, the land of the Effutus can boast of a whole lot of traditional practices that have been part of the very social fiber of the community and this is what has kept the community till date. These traditional practices can be seen in the cloth that is worn by its members and how they are worn until now tend to communicate to the onlooker. A typical example of how the women wear their cloth is when a woman puts, on a different piece of cloth on the main cloth she is wearing signifies that she is not married and that she is searching for a husband. Also the architectural representation of the indigenes speaks volumes, as it represents their beliefs and costumes. They normally build compound houses, with a big court in the middle where the males in the house sleep most of the time signifying the protection they offer their females. In the same vein the father in his father's house leaves his room to sleep outside for the first son if he marries, indirectly showing how irresponsible the father is for not putting up his own house.

Winneba people like to buy a lot of cloth for all occasions denying themselves of other things that are very important in his or her life and that of the children. The first child taking after the father in especially his trade, has been followed religiously by the people of Winneba, there by affecting the education of most youth in Winneba, as the main occupation is fishing.

Unfortunately these and other traditional practices have not so much affected the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba. All about the culture has been so much Europeanized to the extent that you hardly see anything traditional about the culture with the exception of some of the performances that are put up that looks a bit traditional and the stilts dancers who mostly dress like priests and priestesses. Even with this it is taken that those who dress that way do not have money to buy those expensive materials that are mostly worn by the masquerades.



**Plate 22. Masquerade dressed traditionally Plate**



### 23. Stilts dancer dressed traditionally

Bravmann (1979), states that their costumes are composed of local and imported garments. The raiment's of the living, and not the occult grasses that dress the Gbain. Exquisitely carved, re-fined and polished surfaces are hall-marks of Do masks for, as a local observer remarked, they must be fresh and young. Gbain, in contrast, are rough-hewn and large featured.

This has not been so with the masquerades in Winneba and virtually everything right from the top to the down of the masquerade is imported with the exception of the few fractions which will not even be up to one out of forty who dress in traditional costumes. Although the brass band aspect of the culture was directly copied from the Europeans, the people of Winneba have effectively incorporated the use of the drums previously used by the *Ompe* and the *Adaha* groups respectively in the ensemble, giving it a unique flavour. These drums are well noted for their sound and a lot of strength and skill is needed to play these drums.

Winneba traditionally as a fishing community has been greatly influenced by the happenings around them. Because of the vastness of the sea, the fisher folks do paint their canoes with bright colours so as to be seen well at sea, in the same vein they wear bright coloured dress to be well conspicuous at sea. This has been translated into the way they dress out to sea. Fisher folks out of sea still want to be seen. As they have a large number joining the masquerading groups, this has affected the choice of colour for their costumes. Unfortunately, the masquerades could not explain why they choose such brightly coloured materials for their costume. It is their belief that they are creative and that has amounted to the choices they make to their colours. This choices have

affected them so much so that if they are to choose even black in the making of their costume they have to choose shining black for them so as to stand out among their peers.

### 5.7 European Influence on Winneba Masquerading

The people of Winneba led by their chiefs and other opinion leaders had their own socio-political role in the life of the indigenes which permeated all other activities that go on throughout the year. The indigenes had a lot of cultures and activities that were used especially during Christmas to entertain themselves and keep each other busy. All that the people became accustomed with were the dances and music provided by different bands spotted at various quarters of the town. For example, at the quarters called “Ogyae”, a name corrupted from the chorus of a song of the *Kreols* sang “O Yee, O Yee, O Yee” the residents, mainly *Kreols* (Namuniyoo) produced and performed dances to serve the interest of themselves, and perhaps the few natives in and around their homes.

Aside the above entertainment, there were other bands at the time that did the entertainment. This was the *Ommpe* group that could be located at *Dɔnkɔnyanmu*. (the name was corrupted from the Effutu expression: *Dɔnkɔ Nyantɔ* meaning *Dɔnkɔ's* farm. Within the fishing community some of the bands that performed were: *Osoode* meaning “aso wode mu” or “it has sweetened you”. *Adaha* meaning “ɔda ha na ɔda ho” or “throwing weights about”. *Konkonba* meaning “konn-konn Band”, *Ashewa*, *Adankum* or *Adzewa* ensemble all featured within specific boundaries. All these groups were patronized at their quarters by spectators who could afford perambulation. At such displays, foods were freely served in abundance.

On the other hand Christians especially were contended with the watch night services ushering in the new year's. The services were often interrupted with hilarious jokes by a



group of jokers called *Ndoba-Ndoba*. The very sight of their appearance arouse chant. They always congregated outside the Church house and intermittently shouted their jokes during the sermons of the Pastors. Upon all those activities, the celebrations still seemed virtually boring to some residents who had come to settle at Winneba from elsewhere.

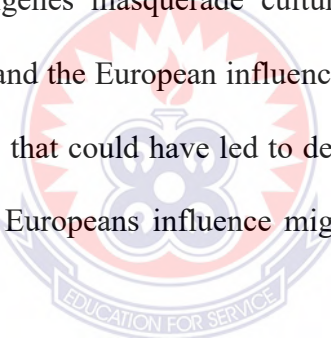
With time the European way of celebrating Christmas and Easter caught the eyes of the Winneba people so the masquerade culture was directly copied from the Europeans who settled at the coasts to do business and other things. This is what has over the years been nurtured to what they have now in Winneba as the masquerade culture.

One will ask; has there been improvement or decline in the masquerade culture since its inception? If there has been any improvement then what has influenced the masquerading culture over the years? The masquerading culture of Winneba have seen a lot of improvement socially, economically, costume style, wise, administratively and a host of others, due to the influence of the European masquerade culture as some members of the group and the Federation are made to visit the celebrations of the European masquerading festival.

Socially, the masquerade groups have learnt to draw people to themselves through their style of dressing and comportment. This is unlike previously when masquerades were beating viewers who crossed them and fighting unnecessarily after each year's performance which caused the death of other masquerades. With time the masquerades and the groups have learnt to present themselves as co-operate bodies that were hired for programmes in and out of Ghana. Economically, the groups, by the help of the Federation, have brought in cooperate bodies and individuals to push some money into the making of the costume. Also the Federation which is the parent body has learnt to be selling rights to various components of the culture to interested parties to raise money

for the groups, the assembly and other related bodies. Individuals are also making a lot of money through their celebration. All these have been influenced directly or indirectly by the Europeans. Looking at the costume styles that are coming up these days through the masquerades of Winneba, one will say that the European personalities, life style and movies are greatly influencing the costume of the culture. Unlike previously when only a handful of masquerades could afford the imported masks, now it's a common thing as a majority of masquerades are doing away with the wire mesh masks. Administratively, the affairs of the masquerades are being handled well as the Federation works for and on behalf of the masquerade groups.

The European influence on the masquerade culture of Winneba and their activities has helped transform the indigenes masquerade cultural institution into a ceremonial perfection. On the other hand the European influence helped stabilize and control lots of the inter group conflicts that could have led to destruction of life and property. In effect the presence of the Europeans influence might have helped create peace and order.



### **5.8 Winneba Masquerade Dance Culture and Ghanaian Dance Pattern**

Winneba as a fishing town can boast of people with rhythmic activities as their activities are mostly associated with rhythms. In fishing, because of the strength needed the fisher folks need something to motivate them and they always find it appropriate to use music which are mostly composed by the fisher men themselves. Good music always goes with a good dance. This character of the fisher folks are translated into real life. They dance at funerals and, other get-togethers where music is played. Dancing at such function is a sight to behold as both the young and the old men and women in their African print cloth get to the dancing floor to dance to African tunes. This is just part

of the life of this fishing community. Perhaps, no wonder Dr. Osagyfo Kwame Nkrumah of blessed memory established the then National Academy of Music in Winneba, an institution that was noted for the teaching of music and dance at the higher level of education. Dancing, for with this fisher folks has become, and is part of the everyday life.

With all these cultural experiences, masquerading has dancing as part of the performances in Winneba. Fortunately majority of the members of these masquerade groups are indigenes of Winneba and out of that a chunk of them are fisher folks who over the years have acquired the most needed skill to be masquerades. They have the strength, the skill and the attitude of endurance; this makes it easier for the trainers to impart what they needed to win the competition.



**Plate 24. Masquerades doing slow dance**



**Plate 25. Masquerades doing slow dance**



**Plate 26. Masquerades doing *high life* dance**



**Plate 27. Masquerades doing *Atwem* dance (the fastest dance)**



**Plate 28. Masquerades doing *Atwem* dance (the fastest dance)**

In addition, the dance styles of the masquerades during the competition are linked up to the very indigenous dance styles that have existed over the years. With their experience these masquerade perfectly blend the traditional dance style. For example, they have *high life* dance style as part of the competition which is well known by all Ghanaians.

Then they have the *slow dance* (Blues) which is a slow motion dance of a blend of indigenous dance style; finally, they do the *Atwem dance* (the fastest dance) which is very fast in motion and it is also an extension of the *high life* dance style.

### **5.9 Masquerading Culture and Inheritance**

Taking over somebody's interest in most African countries has always been a problem especially when there is a lot of money attached to the inheritance. But when it happens that there is no money or anything of value attached to the inheritance you see the taking over is always smooth. I would not like to believe that the masquerading culture has not encountered any problems of inheritance because there is no money in the culture. If it is so then the groups will in future start having problem as with time the culture will grow into money making venture as it is now being well commercialised.

Inheritance has always been an issue in Winneba as the Effutu people who migrated from the Gonja Land went through Cape Coast, settled there for some time and moved on to Munford before finally settling in Winneba their current abode. It looks more like the people of Winneba might have been influenced by the culture of these places where they stayed. Winneba's inheritance practice is matrilineal, but when their fathers have properties their children still inherit it. I would not want to go more into the Winneba inheritance issue as the indigenes are even more confused and is seriously affecting their chieftaincy institution. Fortunately, this confused inheritance system of the people of Winneba has in no way affected the masquerade culture till date. This has been because the Akan aspect of inheritance has been adopted by the masquerade culture and it has kept the system running till date.

Winneba masquerade members who join the groups by inheritance do so through the patrilineal inheritance system where the father upon leaving the group has to be replaced

by any of the children that have the interest to do masquerading. In the event where there is nobody like that, the family will compulsorily nominate somebody from the father's children to replace him. This over the period has made the culture see a lot more women joining the groups as the culture does not frown on women being members.

### **5.10 Influence of Other Cultures on Winneba Masquerading**

From the research one could deduce that the masquerade culture of Winneba has developed tremendously over the years, and this can be seen in every aspect of the culture. Although it could be almost correct to say that this influence mostly have been attributed to the Europeans, there is the other influence from the African perspective which is more spiritual. The African is noted for his belief in spiritism, as there is the belief by the African that everything happens for a purpose. This aspect of the African has permeated the masquerade culture to the extent that the masquerades will have to learn to protect themselves individually spiritually, and therefore most masquerades upon the instruction of the group's collective decision wash themselves in the sea before wearing their costume without wiping themselves of the sea water. It is believed that by so doing one is protected and will neutralise whatever evil charm that has been used against the group and its members. On the other hand the African masquerading culture has not been able to influence the masquerade culture of the people of Winneba. Underwood (1964) states that in Africa, masquerade is an aid and medium to evoke the presence of a spirit deity, and also provides an opportunity for rituals and dance for expression of people, bringing them together socially in the ceremony of common belief. The masker emerges from a special hat in which he has been dressed to conceal his human identity but rather its decoration and costume is a representation of the spirit

evoked by it. Unfortunately the masquerade culture of the people of Winneba is just for entertainment and the masquerades up till now do not use their masks to invoke spirits. Clarke (undated) also notes that for some Niger Delta *kalabari* performers, the masks worn are totally concealed from the spectators. It is rather turned upwards to face the gods. Miller (2006) says according to the people of Yuroba, masks are used in three main cults: the Egungun, to celebrate ancestors; Epa, which honour family and history; and Gelede, which venerates women for motherhood and witchcraft.



**Plate 29. Igbo funeral masquerade**



**Plate 30. The Adamma Masquerade  
In Igboland**

These and many other characteristics of the traditional African masquerading are found as shown in plate 29 and 30 but just a few of these characters are related to the Winneba masquerade culture.





**Plate 31. Winneba masquerade in a costume similar to the Igbo costume**

**Plate 32. Winneba masquerade in a costume similar to the Igbo costume**

Although they may have costumes that are similar, they are not the same in character and the use to which the culture is put, as the Winneba masquerade is not used for invocation of spirits and veneration, as it happens in other African societies

On the other hand the masquerading culture of the Europeans has greatly influenced the performance, costume and the administrative skills of the masquerades of the people of Winneba. The masquerade practices by the people of Winneba are the carnival type of masquerade practiced by the European people, where they parade the street just to entertain themselves and observers. The only difference is that with Winneba, gate fees are taken from the observers as it is organized on a confined park.

### **5.11 Comparison Between Findings and Literature Review**

A plunge into the opinions of persons who have arrived at certain conclusions on the Winneba masquerading culture, the Winneba masquerading institution, and the Winneba masquerading homes, establish a negotiation between them and that of the findings of the researcher. Early submissions have shown that the Winneba masquerading culture and its related activities were created purposely as human centred support systems made to entertain and by extension create economic and also offer recreational services to the members and the community. It is therefore remarkable as to how the indigenous artists have cleverly employed the indigenous concepts, images of man and animals, plants, and man-made objects to drum home messages of their masqueradism and uniqueness to the community and the World at large by teasing the minds of the people culturally and artistically.

An insight was given by Bravmann (1979) indicating that the Sikilen masquerade has been contributed by the Sisala, while the Sigma or Simma of Gonja state can be credited to the Vagala and Tapolensi. The Mossi-speaking Nome, Wala, and Batige also share in the Simma, but their oral traditions suggest that they inherited this masquerade from their Grusi neighbors. It is interesting to note that within Ghana's borders it has invariably been the Grusi and not members of the Mossi family of peoples who have contributed the mask. Thus, it is not surprising to find the complete absence of masks east of the White Volta where Mossi-speaking populations such as the Builsa, Mamprussi, and Dagomba dominate. The researcher was fascinated by this opinion by Bravmann (1979) as the people of Winneba migrated from their parent stock in Gonja

land and masquerading culture was being practised there. Or is it the case that the migration processes might have taken the masquerading aspect of the culture from them? Well everything is possible as it might happen that the leaders might be dying on the journey down south and did not tell them about that culture.

Bravmann (1979) emphatically stated that Masquerades are not now, and probably were never, products of Akan societies. Rather, they represent the historical presence of *Gur* and Manding peoples within Ghana's frontiers. He went on to emphasize that despite the apparently infertile environment for the mask among the Akans, there are instances where one encounters masquerades. The oldest record of a masquerade among the Akan of Ghana is, of course, Freeman's account of the "*Sakrobundi*" tradition. Bravmann (1979) opined that "*Sakrobundi*" may then be seen as the earliest documented instance of the impact of a *Gur* culture and the masquerade upon the Akans. Although there were no precise formal equivalents to the two known "*Sakrobundi*" masks from the Cercle de Bondoukou within the broad range of *Senufo* mask types, the "*Sakrobundi*" carvings present several aspects that place them stylistically within *Gur* masking traditions.

Bravmann (1979) indicated that at the southern end of this masking quadrant of Ghana, to the south and west of the bend of the Black Volta, one encounters a cluster of highly varied and impressive masquerades. These are the *Do*, *Gbain*, and *Bedu*, three masking traditions brought into the region by the immigrant *Mande-Dyula*, *Ligbi*, and *Numu*, and the *Gur-Nafana*. The three traditions operate among Muslims and traditionalists and reveal the importance of the mask in both socio-religious domains.

Although Rev, Kobina Taylor (main informant) and Opanyin Kofi Bortsie made emphatic statements that the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba was a direct replica of what the Dutch were doing, then by extension the Winneba people copied from the Dutch. The mention of the name "*Sakrobundi*" by this writer brings to

mind the name given to the stilts dancers of Winneba which is “Sakrabodu” which, to the researcher looks more like a corruption of the original name. Unfortunately, from all the interviews conducted nothing supported the fact that the culture might have come from anywhere in Africa. All the two main accounts by the key informant suggested that it came from the Dutch (who were Europeans) and this can be seen in the makeup of the culture. Also, Bravmann (1979) indicated that the masking quadrant of Ghana, which proves the existence of the masquerading culture in Ghana presents so the likelihood that the people of Winneba have been influenced. But all these literature did not indicate the migration of the culture so cannot counter the proof that the culture was handed down by the Europeans.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) emphatically stated that “generally the centralized Akan kingdoms of Ghana do not engage in masquerading at all,” but went on further to reveal that the appeal of the “Do” mysterious male maskers of Baule of Cote D’ivoire which was so strong that have been danced by a Fante military association (Asafo) in the town of Cape Coast was the only one that existed in the Fante Kingdoms. This probably is to support the fact that Winneba masquerading culture was not of African origin.

Visonà, Poynor, Cole (2008) went on to make mention of the fact that as the Ghanaian Akans channel great aesthetic energy into regalia and the festivals that make them visible, the Baule in contrast seem to focus much of theirs in an array of masquerades. This is to show where the Winneba people who happened to find themselves among the Akans probably were good at and were doing what has been stated above.

An account given to the history of Masquerading in Ghana by Davies (2010) says in Ghana the tradition began as a party. From the late 19th century Europeans living in the port of Winneba would celebrate New Year by donning masks and dancing at the town's bars. In the early 1920s two local men, Abraham and Yamoah, annoyed at not being

invited, created a rival masquerade of their own. They called themselves the Nobles, and made comical costumes that satirised religious figures and local bureaucrats. Such was their success that rival groups were formed, some boasting hundreds of members. By the 1950s Ghana's masquerade had become a national, annual competition. For a week from Boxing Day, clusters of outlandish figures march together through the streets all over the country in costumes that have taken up to a year to create. African masking generally invokes deities, nature spirits and ancestors. This historical background to the culture has been opposed to whenever it was raised, with the various informants indicating that if that happened then that one did not survive. What they claim they have witnessed is what the key informant asserted. That the planting of the festival in Winneba was first attempted in 1911 by one Kwesi Arkoful, the father of the No. 3 Club. Mr. Arkoful, a fisherman and a boatman and an illiterate lacked the experience in giving publicity to his innovation. The natives therefore, could not patronize and give it the due recognition. By 1918; Mr. Abraham had made friends with some natives of Winneba and discussed with them his plans and the possibility of enlisting them as members. They welcomed the decision and offered their membership. They also assured him of any assistance he might need. They spent the Christmas of 1918, and the New Year of 1919 at Cape Coast after that they invited the Cape Coast club to help them inaugurate theirs. They fixed Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 1919 for the arrival and Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> for inauguration. With this even the date shows that the masquerade culture was already in existence before the formation of what Davis (2010) is saying.

Davies (2010) describes masquerading culture as 'both artistic and anthropological' they are only a mere strident embodiment of rituals that feature heavily in Africa. Celebrations are to give thanks for sunshine, fertility and prosperity; to banish the threatening forces against the society; to make fun at authority figures - celebrate their

harvest festivals, and entertain members of the society. Masquerading in the various societies in Africa is made for a purpose and it is strictly adhered to as they are to solve particular situational need of the society. The masquerade culture of the people of Winneba can be said to serve a purpose although it has been proven to have been handed on by the Europeans. Unlike the African masquerades who mostly have spiritual purpose the masquerading culture of Winneba serves the purpose of entertaining the indigenes and the community. Adherence to the purpose of the culture is well observed but quite improved upon with time as currently the economic importance being raised high.

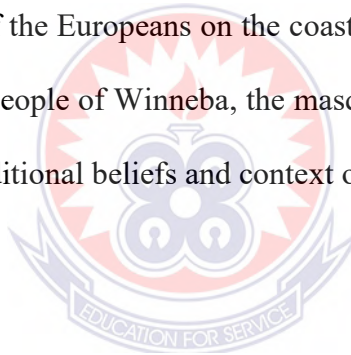
Miller (2006) believes that, virtually all material culture produced in traditional societies is connected in one way or the other to the spirit world, via the means of a ritual ceremony. This therefore informs the producers of the masks as to how the materials to be used should be handled before in the course of production and after production. This is not to incur the wrath of the spirits believed to be dwelling in the materials. Although the people of Winneba and the masquerade believe in spiritism, they treat their materials as ordinary so do nothing spiritually to these materials when using them. These days most of the masks are bought from the store; how then do they check on the spirituality of the masks and other materials that are used by the masquerades? Whether by purpose or by taste the masquerades crave for foreign goods are so high that they would not mind specifically asking someone abroad to buy the materials needed for the costume for them. From observation, as the researcher was dealing with masquerades, it was realised that all they needed was for them to get their costume and they will protect themselves before wearing it.

Miller (2006) states that the Bwa of Burkina Faso, believe that these masks become inhabited by supernatural clan spirits, who protect the owner's family from harm. It is believed that God has given special powers to animals, plants, and objects like stones and metals. These, the writer thinks can be used by man through rituals, rites and ceremonies. This therefore guides the makers of the masks and the wearer alike as the spirits can inflict pains on the producer if not well handled and protect him if well handled. On the other hand the wearer might find its spirit not in consonant with the spirit of the material. In this wise it is always proper to be guided by the philosophies associated with the making and wearing of masks. In the making of the masks, what informs its design is the purpose to which the masks will be put to and what informed the creation of the masks. In the traditional settings traditional carvers or craftsmen are commissioned to produce the masks based on mythology and the spiritual need of the society. After the production, incantations and invocations are made to imbue the masks with spirits. This makes the masks wearer become possessed when it is used. The possessed wearer now acts differently from his real life as he now behaves according to the dictates of the spirit in the masks. Although some of the masks are worn for performance most have spiritual under currents which informs its make, material and its use. Winneba masquerades do not have the above stated perceptions and beliefs with the use of masks so masks, can be shared or passed on to others the following years when not needed by the masquerades since the Winneba masks do not contain any power.

At [buzzle.com](http://buzzle.com) an article published by Shashank Nakate on 2/2/2010, noted that African masks and its use can be traced back to past Paleolithic times. African masks have cultural and traditional significance. African masks denote a rich history filled with meaningful symbols and traditions. These art objects were, and are still made of various mat

erials including bronze, copper, wood, leather, straw, feathers, hair and cloth. Each African mask has great importance attached to it. With expressions that range from benign to terrifying, each African mask usually possesses tribal significance and its uses cut across tribes, villages and various settlements, and there are a lot of similarities in its uses, materials used, style and those who wear them. According to my key informant Rev. Kobina Taylor Papa Akese alias Papa Arthur, an employee of the Elder Dempster Lines and importer of masks agreed to the proposal and readily offered masks for the club members, and this was the first person to have imported masks to Winneba. The masks of the masquerades of Winneba have no symbolic meanings and are mostly made in lightweight materials.

Although the presence of the Europeans on the coast of Ghana brought about the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba, the masquerades of Winneba have been able to build it into the traditional beliefs and context of the Winneba people.





## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY OF THESIS

This research was into the anthropological search and interpretation of the nature and functions of the masquerading event and domain of the masquerading culture of the Winneba people in the Effutu traditional area. Winneba masquerading culture of the recent past and current times have consisted of sculptural forms (masks, stilts and hats), painting, textiles, flags, and other forms. These serve as the major medium for communication by the various masquerade groups into meaningful language that educates one about the concept, and contents of the aspirations of these highly motivated men and women who stood for survival and maintenance of the Winneba traditional area through their act.

In the context of Winneba masquerading culture, this thesis sought to trace the historical background of masquerading in Winneba and to examine the traditional beliefs and practices associated with masquerading. Then it looked at the motivation to observe the masquerading event. In addition, the socio-economic significance of masquerading was explored, and then finally, the thesis identified and interpreted the aesthetic content of different masquerades. In view of this the indigenes will be economically and socially empowered to better the life of their generation and community. It will also offer material source for historians, anthropologists, sociologists, ethnographers, students of history and other researchers to feed on. In effect this research may offer clues to protect and project indigenous art forms, and also revive and strengthen the culture of the Winneba people.

A search light on the Winneba masquerading culture and their homes as a component of the Akan culture points to the ethno-cultural life of the Winneba people. The masquerade culture displays a range of diverse potentials that thrill the community about its visual arts, performing arts, and possibly graphical symbols that speak volumes. Sculpture (masks, stilts and hats), painting and textile works constitute the main form of the masquerade edifice and contain the main philosophy of the various masquerade cultures as well as that of the Winneba traditional area. This has therefore been termed as one of the major channels of communicating the achievements, exploits and activities that constituted the history of the individual masquerade groups. Masquerade culture of the past has transformed from the only one home where Abraham was living and Ketu's home where it started to four homes representing all the four masquerade groups. These homes therefore assume the core spiritual potency and soul of the individual groups.

The masquerade culture of Winneba has their origin from the Dutch through the efforts of Mr. Abraham, Addison, and Aikins, indigenes of Winneba and Cape Coast. This masquerading group was instituted as a socio-cultural unit and was later replicated by the indigenes. These masquerade groups performed specific and loose roles in entertaining the community on Christmas and other festive occasions. It is established that some of the members of the start-up groups provided certain essential services to the Europeans especially in their trading activities. In Winneba, the masquerade group was established due to the desire of both the indigenes and non-indigenes to enjoy Christmas and the best option was for them to copy the Europeans who were enjoying Christmas with the inclusion of the masquerading culture. In Winneba, this masquerading event received the support and recognition of the community members. The masquerades therefore became the life partners of the community members.

Winneba is the only masquerading town that has up to four individual masquerade groups of which all are from the number one masquerade group a direct descendant of the European masquerade system. The Winneba masquerade culture is a mark of social perfection, unity and development as the people of Winneba have been able to nurture it to a very visible culture in Ghana.

All the masquerade groups have their homes from where they were established; the number one, *Nobles* meet at *Domeabra* where they had their home, the number two also known as *Egyaa* also meet at *Mburabamu* their home, the number three known as *Tummuz* have their meetings at *Dɔnkɔnyanmu* where the group is housed, and then finally, the fourth group by name *Red Cross* also meet at *Abasraba*. These homes of the various groups have been maintained effectively as such and that is where the groups meet to open and close the group for the year's activities. The phenomenal display of in-depth culture by the masquerades is one that establishes the creative power of the indigenous artists in their attempt at producing real life visual documentary of their achievement and exploits. This showcases a dramatic process of masquerading that has progressed from simple one man display to a well-structured four group performances on a park well secured for other socio-economic gains. Winneba masquerading have enjoyed an individualistic masquerading display to a group display which has metamorphosed into a Federation that is steering the affairs of the group and giving it a very good direction to follow. These displays and direction that the culture has taken over the years culminated into well-defined sculptures (masks, stilts and hats), paintings, textiles and graphical symbols constituting the major language of the Winneba masquerading Culture.

The coming into being of the Winneba masquerading visual language as part of the world's cultural discourse bring into focus the philosophical articulation of Winneba

peoples effort towards human development. The Winneba masquerading artists displayed the strong edge over Europeanised design and concept and managed to incorporate contemporary arts of all times with indigenous concepts and thoughts. Winneba masquerading creation had over maximized all forms of elements and principles of design and artistic production to their greatest advantage. Various religions were best fused into creative composites that allow for tolerance, harmony and progress as the culture is not limited to a particular creed or religion. In addition, it did not restrict its creation to only western images but also incorporated African or Winneba traditional area images and objects of great significance to the indigenes. These masquerade creations establish a blend of Western culture and spiritualism that prevailed among the Winneba traditional area as an African town. The aesthetic qualities of the Winneba masquerading displays were dependent on the unique interplay of the physical and spiritual inspiration, wisdom, knowledge and skills transferred by the predecessors to the indigenous artists from whom the history of the people Winneba masquerading lives.

The research findings have established that most of the spiritual forces that were being used by the forbearers of the masquerading culture have been compromised as the groups now invite Pastors to pray for the groups. Although the spiritual aspect of the groups is being diverted, the four magnificent masquerade groups are credited to be holding the history of the masquerading culture. These masquerade groups in Winneba have till present day managed to stand the test of the urban culture. Urbanization and infrastructure development has spared these magnificent culture and their homes. It is therefore remarkable the way urban officials have respected the Winneba Culture and their relics as the home where masquerading started in Winneba. Although the first home to the group where Mr. Ketu lived has almost disappeared a small portion of

remnants of the structure is in place and have been allowed to stay there. This has therefore attracted the idea of supporting and maintaining the homes that are still in existence by the various families.

Cultural dynamism has in recent decades eroded the strength of traditionalism in today's generation. It has therefore made it impossible for allowing the youth of Winneba to appreciate and also practice their God given tradition and talents. Modern religion or possibly Western and Eastern religious fraternity has managed to weigh heavily on the traditional religion of the Winneba people. This has affected the faith, of the Winneba people, therefore allowing their indigenous identity to diminish and rather projecting the Western religious beliefs and practices.

Western elitist mentality and elitism in general are some factors that have impacted negatively on the Winneba masquerading Culture. Winneba indigenes that have been privileged to have tasted western education have come home with a type of psyche that plays down on their own traditions and identity. This has affected their taste of fashion and others. In present times those who sojourn in the western world are mentoring the youth negatively to the detriment of tradition. Western culture is now staging a central role in Winneba tradition. Modern education policy is part of the setbacks to the maintenance and promotion of African Culture. Policy makers are almost always inspired by western models, which are by themselves anti African. Moreover these Western policies have not proven to be the panaceas of African solutions; rather they seem to perpetuate Western taste, standards and ideologies on the African so they can continually stamp their influence and superiority on Africans. African policy holders and framers have become agents of western products.

By the implantation of foreign products and ideologies on the educational policies of Winneba and Ghana the Westerners have impacted strongly on the artistic culture of the

indigenes. Professionals, amateurs and child artists have directed their art towards western standards and inspiration, although the indigenous philosophy has not entirely been left unattended to.

The hope for the continuous stay of the Winneba masquerading culture and their homes as part of the Culture of the Winneba people is very important. Regular maintenance of the masquerade homes and the groups itself would make it possible to sustain and transfer into the present and yet to come generations, the rich cultural stuff that might get lost through decay and destruction of the homes and costumes used by the masquerades. Education must be made bare to the indigenes about the fact that not all aspects of the home-grown culture is idolatry, cultist or demonic. As a result of lack of adequate or suitable information and vigorous exposure of this aspect of Ghanaian culture to the entire world, it has become necessary to inject maximum support to make it a major tourist event and sites.

The Winneba masquerade activities and their homes is a recommended cultural boost to the Winneba people. Additionally, making the masquerade cultural activities as part of the curriculum of schools in and outside Winneba and Ghana would fix into the youth the potentials that underline their fore-fathers' achievements and philosophies. Tour guarding programmes could be incorporated into the list of Professionals needed to spear-head tourism in Winneba. Furthermore, funds could be made available to turn these magnificent masquerade cultural homes into mini-museums. Winneba masquerade culture abounds with lots of paraphernalia and other wares that are kept with individuals and the group leaders. The time has come for a room or two to be left in these homes for these artefacts to be displayed in the individual masquerade homes as exhibits of culture and research.

In recent times the institutionalization of groups travelling to a place to witness an event has been in fashion. It is prudent for the Tourism Ministry to institute the travelling to Winneba on Christmas and or new years to be part of the masquerading culture or in turn send the masquerade out of Winneba to display, may be, in all the regional capitals in Ghana. This will enhance the patronage of Winneba masquerading culture and its associated products. As part of maintaining the masquerading culture, there is the need to have mass recruitment of the young ones who have interest in the culture than those who come to replace their fathers. Inhabitants of Winneba who are non-indigenes could be enrolled into their preferred group as a measure of expanding followers, although this has been happening it is on a very small scale, it needs to be stepped up. Organizing training sections for the youth and also perfecting that of the older generation in masquerading history and others will sustain and also attract active followers to the groups. This may call for the regular staging of innovative masquerading performances as well as re-enactment of existing ones. A special day could be set-aside in the culture calendar of Winneba and Ghana to celebrate masquerading apart from what happens on Christmas and New Year's days. This day could see the show-casing of the historical backgrounds of the various groups and artefacts of the masquerades that are kept, which may be going bad. Winneba masquerading culture has a rich culture worth consuming.

## CONCLUSION

People are intrinsically creative. Some act on that creativity all the time, others suppress it, and most of the people are somehow in between. People mix creativity with modernity, because they are too narrow and focused on their taste. People ignore traditions, customs and norms, simply because they do not fit into their personal descriptions and are contrary to their educational achievements, personal experiences and professional field.

It is evident that, all cultures regardless of their remoteness and location have some elements of richness that allow for some level of creativity. The arts of the Winneba masquerading groups especially the homes still stand to speak volumes about the cultural significance of the Winneba people. It therefore becomes mandatory for the individual masquerading groups and the people of Winneba to protect and project the Winneba masquerading culture among its contemporary in the world. It is also to examine ways by which may develop a breakthrough and explore opportunities on the world cultural calendars as well as influence the indigenes of Winneba and citizens of Ghana living inside and outside the boundaries of Ghana to appreciate and participate in their masquerading culture.

Winneba today has lost the self-actualization, development and inward looking principles that kept the society warm till the European imposition of Imperialist measures of divisiveness and apathy that shook the foundation of the African philosophically, culturally, technologically and humanly. A sticky impression of the present adulteration on the perception of today's African, especially the Winneba



community, has daunting reflection that is quite retrogressive on the Winneba culture. Creating a perfect image of the Winneba people within the eyes of the human race has a major leap within cultural circles of the world. Shaping the image of the masquerading culture within the Winneba people and people of African descent living in and out of the African continent is well commendable. The struggle between the Masquerading culture and modernity continues to weigh heavily towards the Winneba people and their hybrid descendants. There is always the quest to educate and re-educate the Winneba people on their cultural values and proponents especially within the spheres of life. Realization that may include the economic, social, political and spiritual development. It is therefore confident that the individual and group commitment to the Winneba masquerading cultural practices and traditions will profess the tendency to establish direction and focus among the Winneba people. There is the need to inform and shape the system, society, structure, soul and situation that evolved the Africans.

The masquerade homes of the people of Winneba are no more relevant to the Winneba people and do not appear to remain bound with the people for eternity. There is the need to reconcile the Winneba tradition, the masquerade traditions and the modern traditions into possible establishment and support system for one another and to create a social fulfilment among the emerging traditions of today. The Winneba masquerading cultural system has been so much influenced modernity for far too long although the culture was copied from the West, therefore preaching Winneba culture that were initially incorporated in to the masquerading culture as demonic, idolist and other vices becomes unfortunate to the Winneba people. Reconciling Winneba traditional practices and Western masquerade practices by the people of Winneba as reinforcement to the Winneba people will set an agenda to prosperity, entrepreneurship, employment and humanity and the preparedness to make Winneba, Ghana, Africa and the world a perfect

place. Teaching Winneba people and the world about Winneba cultural tradition must be active rather than passive. Shaping the mindset of people outside the Winneba traditional area; other Africans, Europeans, Americans, Asians and others on the Winneba culture, especially that of Winneba masquerading culture is worth pursuing. The world has been fed with certain erroneous impressions about Africa to a large extent and that nothing better is expected from the African continent in spite of the numerous scientific, technological, political, economic, social, and spiritual contributions that it has offered the world and keep providing to the betterment of the human race.

The appreciation of the masquerade culture by the Winneba people has increased considerably. It therefore becomes incumbent on the indigenes, artists, artistes, writers, historians, scientists, spiritualists, and other professionals to stage African rather than Western, since modernity does not necessarily mean Western. In a nutshell, celebrating Winneba masquerading culture as a cultural icon of Ghana has a necessary significance that cannot be ripped off so far as community and continental development are concerned. Winneba masquerading culture advocates for prosperity through hard work and dedication to community and individual upliftment. Prosperity is a key element in the well-being of every society that seeks development and unity among its people. The Winneba people must further look at the Western culture, modernity, urbanization to improve its present generation and therefore give a fresh path to their cultural advancement as has been started by the Federation. Focusing on the Winneba masquerade cultural advancement is the most important exercise to be perceived by flag bearers of the Winneba cultural concepts. Winneba masquerade leaders must ensure that their followers attain the true Winneba identity rather than becoming correct copies of Africa and illegitimate copies of the Western propaganda. Winneba masquerade leaders must facilitate economic and social development among their members, a

process that will ensure that the individual masquerade group members of the traditional area are keenly involved in the policy formulation and their implementation at the local level. In situations where local politics are devoid of local participation, there is always the tendency for cultural neglect and possible revolt by the inhabitants. It therefore becomes necessary for the infusion of traditional concept and knowledge in local and national politics.

The Winneba masquerading culture if well understood in terms of their aesthetics, philosophies, symbolisms and cultural significance, could preserve the culture of Winneba. It is therefore a responsibility to replicate and or re-enact the spirit of Winneba traditional culture to the latter since that will be part of the panacea towards the recapturing of the identity of the Winneba people. The Winneba masquerading culture must be celebrated. This may possibly encourage the newer generation to surrender to the principles and concepts of the Winneba masquerading culture. Also celebrating the Winneba masquerading culture will see the gradual erosion of the western and bad social and modern philosophies that preach corruption, disloyalty, self-centeredness, wickedness and unkindness among some Africans of today.

Our responsibility of informing the future generations of the rich Winneba masquerading culture lies side by side that of the world cultures as a possible force needed to reclaim the human hood. It is also necessary to make public the philosophy and symbolisms of the Winneba masquerading culture as a component of world cultures. And that the Winneba masquerading homes are the cultural representation that provide knowledge and renewed mind and strength in the patriotism of the Winneba people and their community development.

The researcher has it in mind to use this work to inform and educate the world about the Winneba masquerading activities, achievements, aspirations and philosophies in the shaping of the Winneba Community and its people on relations to societal growth and development.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Demystifying Masquerade Culture**

The recent past saw the various masquerade groups and their activities as fetish. They tended not to let people see exactly what they do and as most of their doings are shrouded in secrecy, with even the members not getting involved, with, the exception of their leaders. Hence, the activities provided nothing rather than mysticism. It is remarkable, how these spiritual beliefs, seem to provide and protect the vibrancy and socio-religious activities of the masquerade groups and their activities. Until recently, hardly would you see a masquerade reveal his face, as the masks virtually cover their faces. The masquerades open the years with prayers, with some of the groups pouring libation to call on the ancestors who brought about the group and ask them to make the pending year a very successful one. All these are done in the homes where the groups were formed. Masquerades during their rehearsals stay at times late into the night just to prevent others from witnessing what style they are doing. These acts are not seen so, people always think that something else apart from the rehearsals is going on. The tailor who does the sewing for the masquerades is made to move from his original abode to a secret place, not known to a lot of the group members or if the tailor will stay in his house then he will not receive visitors when working on the masquerade costumes. All these are measures to ensure the design is not copied by other masquerade group members as that will affect them.

Therefore, it is being recommended that masquerade leaders should make attempt at demystifying the masquerade culture. This will attract all persons to the masquerade culture, as researchers, visitors and indigenes will be able to visit and learn from the

activities and achievements of these masquerade groups. This, in effect may help spread the positive features of the masquerade culture and institution and their humanitarian spirits towards the development of the modern society that is besieged with greed, selfishness, self-centeredness and lack of patriotism.

### **Marketing Of the Masquerading Culture as a Major Tourist Attraction.**

Historic achievements worldwide have found it very intriguing to place indigenous cultural reminder and heritage of the less developed nations. In time past, the over mystifying of these heritages and their beliefs made it unattractive on cultural platforms. A recent electronic research revealed that just a handful of publication has been launched on the World Wide Web on the Winneba masquerading cultures. It is therefore important that artists, Web page designers, Historians, Anthropologists, Cultural advocates and other researchers provide the suitable materials needed to facilitate and position these Cultural heritages of Winneba to the preferred destination for business. Research on Winneba masquerade culture could be made public through public lectures, symposia and other fora that could be organized in Winneba, and outside the Winneba traditional area. These could target Basic, Senior High Schools and Tertiary Institutions in and outside Winneba, Print and electronic Journalists and other media practitioners, Sociologists, Economic planners and Non-Governmental Organizations who may be interested in cultural and social advocacy and capacity building. Also the culture could be on wheels to almost all the ten regions of Ghana between November and December, then finally to Winneba in the new year and probably be made to join other carnival celebrations to show case what Ghana has to offer the World in terms of masquerading.

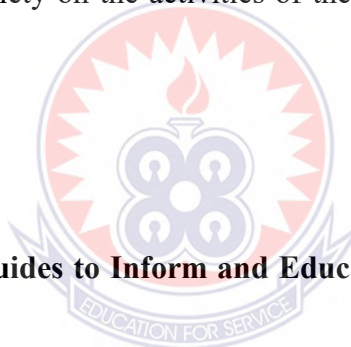
Attempts must be made at encouraging and funding the serialization of some of the research publication in journals, dailies, weekly's and monthly news releases. Columnist reporters and media houses who publish Pan African materials must be encouraged to tilt part of their resources towards educating the reading public about some of the significances of the Winneba masquerading culture. Vernacular or acceptable Ghanaian spoken English could be for specific programmes on the Community Radio and Television networks to help inform, educate and entertain on Winneba masquerading culture. In addition vigorous promotion of Tour calendar should be directed towards these masquerading cultures and their beginnings or how it started. Ghana Tourist Board should promote Winneba masquerading culture as a tourist attraction as well as their homes where it started as a tourist site and provide trained Tour Guides to assist tourists and researchers.

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central stylized figure with four arms, possibly representing a traditional Ghanaian symbol. The figure is set against a background of a sunburst or starburst pattern. Below the emblem is a banner with the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE".

**Proper Documentation of the Culture.**

The Documentation of the masquerading culture of the people of Winneba should be stepped up by scholars and writers. Proper documentation of the Winneba masquerade culture and the homes into literary materials could help forestall the various untrue accounts on how the culture came to Winneba. Research has established that very few literary materials have been devoted to the activities of the masquerade culture of the people of Winneba. It is acceptable that the very masquerade culture that has been celebrated for decades are self-documentary. Stories that make this masquerade culture in terms of choice of colour(s), symbols, figures and objects could best be told by the ageing members and officials who keep visiting their ancestor's one after the other. Until recently, the few existing officials and members who are the repositories of the

masquerading cultural histories are virtually the non-literate members. Since these pieces of information might not be handed over voluntarily to the youth, it is incumbent that, cultural researchers, historians should see this as projects and assignments to expose these rich oral treasures. It is recommended that, this available information should be cross-checked to become reliable and classified. This information must be put into materials such as books, journal, magazines, news prints, periodicals, and so on. It will be refreshing if these materials are also replicated on air waves and other multimedia channels, including both local and foreign radio and television stations. Incentives and sponsorships must be made available to people who would wish to go down this phenomenal road of cultural rejuvenation. Interviews and discussions could be held to inform the society on the activities of the Winneba masquerades and their homes.



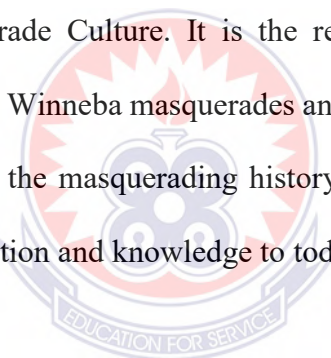
### **Introduction of Tour Guides to Inform and Educate Tourist on the Masquerade Activities**

The world is a Global Village. In this respect, transferring, positioning and repositioning of goods, services and capital have made it possible for persons of race, creed and calibre to migrate. In view of this, people affected by this new wave may be in search of knowledge and information with respect to the cultural practices and principles of the indigenes and the community in question. Information, if not acquired from the suitable source, may form a dent, misinformation, misunderstanding and wrong impression in the minds of persons seeking it. The Ghana Tourist Board should ensure that capable resource persons or Tour Guides who has in-depth knowledge and insight on touring and tour site are put at the fore front to assist tourists and researchers who



visit Winneba since touring activities worldwide requires the giving out of knowledge and information about Tour sites.

It is recommended that a select number of indigenes of Winneba be trained by specialised Tour guides who have received adequate training in guiding tourists. These skills would help inform and promote the true culture of the Winneba masquerades and their activities. It is also recommended that the cultural advocates and researchers in the Winneba traditional area and Ghana provide knowledge through lectures, seminars and workshops for tourists who visit Winneba Traditional Area for research. Also some loyal members of the Winneba masquerading groups who are now old and cannot partake fully in the event could be trained in tour guiding since these indigenes are the true custodians of the masquerade Culture. It is the responsibility of the indigenes to disseminate and protect the Winneba masquerades and the culture. Fieldwork indicated that the true custodians of the masquerading history are now the aged or practically weak to help share information and knowledge to today's generation and researchers.



### **Creation of Mini Museums Out Of the Masquerade Homes with the Group Activities**

World over, institutions of cultural relics are being offered newer dimension and attentions for their preservations, promotions and repositioning as sources of Cultural, Educational and Scientific centres. Winneba masquerade homes are no mean samples of such cultural relics that need to be accorded Museum status. Attempts at demystifying the masquerading culture would create the necessary enabling atmosphere needed to attract sizeable patronage by local and foreign tourists to them. The Ghana Museums and Monument Board must include the Winneba masquerade costumes and

homes where they started as part of the National cultural relics that are needed to be protected and preserved.

Winneba masquerade culture abounds in numerous paraphernalia, regalia, symbol, flags, musical instruments and others that speak about their activities in the past. On the other hand the government can build a museum in Winneba to house these items which contain the history of the masquerading culture in Winneba. This could permit Ghana to assist in the maintenance of these cultural edifices for future generations. Documentation of these masquerade costumes and other items could be properly effected to make way for researchers, historians, writers, photo-journalists and local and foreign tourists to undertake research and leisure respectively.

### **Exhibition of Winneba Masquerade Wares/Artefacts**

The masquerading groups and Federation should take up the task of seeing to the exhibition of the Winneba masquerade artefacts and wares at regular occurrences of the people to throw light on the masquerading culture. In recent past, all the masquerades kept their costume with individual members and officials, while others sell theirs to people who come around to buy and or to go out with on Christmas. But with the putting up of a place to display the artefacts of the masquerades or creating places within the masquerade homes to display their precious items, the buying of the masquerade wares will stop. All the various homes of the Masquerade groups in Winneba should make available in their homes adequate space to showcase their numerous masquerade wares that are under their custody for educational, informational and cultural expediency. These wares when made public will aid research work and publications on masquerade curiosity and activities. These publications and publicities would increase capital

inflow, employment and the development of the infrastructures and hospitality activities and also promote the social and economic lives of the indigenes, inhabitants and people of Winneba.

Winneba masquerade culture abounds in numerous Masquerade artefacts that include the costume, the stilts, the masquerade homes, traditional drums that have been added to the brass band and other attachments that make the culture complete that may reside in the rooms of the individual masquerades and officials of the various masquerade groups. In some instances these masquerade artefacts find themselves in the home of individuals who are advocates of the masquerading culture. A fair recommendation would mean that these treasured artefacts could be shown to the people of today and tomorrow, and to inform and educate people on the activities, exploits and achievements of the masquerade groups, their leaders and the homes of the masquerades. The exhibition could be done by either displaying the items in the various homes of the masquerades and a place built in Winneba to exhibit the costumes, or in recognized institutions and private or state sponsored halls. Also, these exhibits could be put on show in foreign states as an attempt at spreading the message on the Winneba masquerades. The artefacts could be fashioned from the masquerades artefacts and sold out as souvenirs.

### **Creating Pilgrimage Out Of the Winneba Masquerade Culture**

Creation of pilgrimage out of Winneba masquerading culture should be organised by the Winneba masquerade Federation and the individual groups. All over the world, Religious, Political, Economic, Social and Sports ideologists, make pilgrimage to their roots to connect, reconnect or find fulfilment with their souls. The people of Winneba

should be encouraged to do same. Winneba masquerading culture and their homes are such institutions that may fit perfectly into the cultural calendar of Ghana. Winneba masquerade advocates, leaders and the Federation must launch vigorous campaign at informing and educating all Winneba people about the need to visit Winneba and her cultural creation, at least once a year on New Year. In the past indigenes of Winneba made at least a journey to Winneba to celebrate Christmas and or the New Year.

Also masquerade advocates and Cultural Agencies must organize pilgrims for African Americans, Caribbeans, Europeans and Winneba people to participate in the events. These acts will ensure the enactment and registration of members of the Diasporas as masquerade members into the various groups and help create income and employment for the indigenes.

### **Regular Staging of the Masquerading Performance**

#### **(Re-enactment and Enactment of Winneba masquerade Activities)**

The Winneba masquerades from time immemorial have been characterized by their high spirit and enthusiastic performances. This has earned them a lot of prestige and recognition when it comes to towns that celebrate the masquerade event. Aside the performances, these masquerades exhibit a great deal of creativity in terms of the costume they put on for their celebration. Winneba masquerades go through a lot of training for the year's performances, with some of the groups going deep into the remote areas of Winneba to train or rehears. Looking at all the stress, in terms of money, time, and attitude the researcher does not see why the performance should be made just once in the year. It is therefore recommended that there should be regular staging of the masquerading event at least two or three times in the year. The various leaders of the

groups with the help of the Federation should see to the organisation of the event on holidays, with sponsorship from cooperate Ghana

These recommendations if implemented can make Winneba one of the most enviable coastal towns that is into the masquerading culture.



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## Appendix 1

Time table for interviewing and observing the masquerade groups

Group No 1. Nobles	1 <sup>st</sup> /09/2012-1 <sup>st</sup> /01/2013
Group No 2. Egyaa	8 <sup>th</sup> /09/2012-1 <sup>st</sup> /01/2013
Group No 3. Tumus	22 <sup>nd</sup> /09/2012-1 <sup>st</sup> /01/2013
Group No 4. Red Cross	8 <sup>th</sup> /09/2012-1 <sup>st</sup> /01/2013



## Appendix 2

The forebears of the Winneba masquerade group. The club was officially inaugurated on the same day the invited guests came from Cape Coast with a membership of eleven. The officers chosen were:

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Mr. Kofi Katu Addison,   | Chairman/ President |
| 2. Mr. York,  | Secretary           |
| 3. Mr. Kofi Gyansa (Ghansa),  | Treasurer Member    |
| 4. Mr. Halm   | Member              |
| 5. Mr. Kɔw Odoom  | Member              |
| 6. Mr. Aikins (from Saltpond)   | Member              |
| 7. Mr. Frank Agyanka Abraham, Cousin of Kofi Addison                          | Member              |
| 8. Mr. Akɛsɛ alias Arthur (a retired U.A.C. Cashier at Takoradi)              | Member              |
| 9. Mr. Quainoo, then a nurse  | Member              |
| 10. Mr. Josiah  | Member              |
| 11. Mr. Amoah a court official- father of Father Amoah of the Anglican Church | Member              |



The above memberships were later joined by one Ato Kwamena who took his father Kofi Gyansa's post as treasurer upon the father's demise. Ato Kwamena also made masks for the club. They had the following as cooks and mothers of the club as well:

1. Ama Egyirba
2. Iyi-na-oye
3. Ekoa Tomfowa



### Appendix 3

The formation of the Federation to see to the running of the various masquerade groups as the numbers increased. In 1957, therefore, upon the initiation of Mr. C. C Mills Robertson of the Egyaa No. 2 club a Federation was formed with four members from each group. They were to plan the viability of the proposal and the fencing of the park. The following were chosen to lead the Federation:

1. Panyin Enyinnda                      President
2. Yarney, a retired U.A.C. Officer and Lay Magistrate as Secretary
3. Mr. Morgue                              Member
4. Mr. Micah                                Member
5. Mr. Kuntu Blankson                    Member
6. Mr. Ato Kwamena                      Member
7. Mr. Maonka                              Member
8. Mr. Uncle Ebo Yamoah                Member



## Appendix 4

### AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What do you know about the masquerading culture in Winneba, in terms of;  
When the culture begun?  
Who started the culture?  
How the masquerade culture started?
2. Has there been any change in the culture since you started observing or participating?
3. What are some of the things you do as masquerades when preparing and during performance?
4. What is your motivation or how and where do you get your inspiration?
5. Are these masquerade groups' secret societies?
6. Are there any traditional practices practiced by the masquerades?
7. What has been the reason for the celebration of the culture?
8. What do you think are the benefits of the culture to the people of Winneba?
9. How has the culture impacted on your business and other business?
10. Do you do this business only when the celebration is on-going?
11. Have you seen any businessz grow out of this culture?