

# Costume and Make up, as a Tool for Cultural Interpretation: A Study of Egba Festival of the Kokori, Isoko Local Government Area of Delta State

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## Abstract

Costume and make up are very important aspect of a dramatic presentation, as it gives out the interpretative meaning of the physical appearance of a character; therefore it is highly symbolic and cannot be overemphasized. Many people have different conceptions and interpretation on costume and make up, some see it as fashion, and others as a medium of shelter, while others see it as an enhancement of the human body. In spite of this misconception and misinterpretation, the communicative ability of costume and make up still persists among Africans and non-Africans. There is a need to make right this misconception and misinterpretation to help achieve the desired cultural interpretation imbedded in the use of costume and make up. The researcher therefore, to interrogate this research problem, adopted the mixed method of data analysis which includes participatory observation and in-depth content analysis of textbooks, relevant journals and seminar papers towards analysing the symbolic essence, the cultural interpretation of costume and make up, using the Egba Festival of the Kokori, Isoko L.G.A of Delta State as a working metaphor, to successfully give undertone meaning to costume and make up, used in the production. Furthermore the use of costume and make up will give the community cultural identification, sense of belonging and make the indigenes see and appreciate their dress sense as a communicative tool.

## INTRODUCTION

Culture is the sum of attitude, customs and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another, transmitted through language, materials, objects, rituals, institutions and arts, transferable from one generation to the next. To this Edward Taylor contributes that;

Culture is that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society.(1)

This in essence explains further that culture cuts across all dimensions of life as practiced by a people in a given setting and within an age. The culture of a people means a lot to them, their lives and beliefs are expressed as they live and go about their everyday businesses. This simply shows that culture conditions the communication of a people and how it proceeds among individuals, no matter how homogenous. To this, Ngugi wa Thiong O contributes that;

Culture in its broadest sense, is a way of life fashioned by a people in their collective endeavor to live and come to term with their total environment. It is the sum of their arts, their science and all the social institutions, including their system of beliefs and rituals...Such values are often expressed through the people's song, rites, these varieties of artistic activity have come to symbolize the meaning of the word, culture. (127)

The concept of culture has a long evolution, so dynamic in nature. The Anthropologists has an assumption that culture is generally adaptive as it provides people an adjustment to their physical and social environment, the basic or derived needs of individuals within the society, such as the need of nutrition, reproduction, comfort, safety, relaxation, clothing, shelter and growth. This simply means that culture is a learned behavior shared by a member of a society, which could be said to start when a child is born. It is culture that distinguishes human beings from other animals. To support this, Richardson Boyd states that;

Culture is information capable of affecting individual's behavior that they acquire from other members of their space through teaching, imitation and other forms of social transmission. (5)

Costume and make up is a very important aspect of a people. The culture of a people identifiable by the kind of costume and make up they put on, as it is always the first call of attention, not only for the external covering of the body, they are unique identities particular to people, which identifies them in any gathering or location. To support this, Julie Umuokoro as quoted by Tracie Ezeajugh maintains that;

Cultural Symbolism is the hallmark of the Nigerian traditional dress. It is consciously or unconsciously evolved to bear emblems unique to its owner. Such emblems may be derived from common features in the environment, it may also be persistent contact of an ethnic group with some other, be a feature borrowed, appropriated and seemingly endorsed by widespread acceptance and use as one of its ethnic symbols. (23)

This explains costume and make up as symbolic and carrier of information, as it concerns a people to the end. It

gives expressive and explanatory information of the wearers, an aid to characterization, that in performance for instance, it speaks volume, even before the characters begin to speak or express themselves.

In any event or production, the costume and make up worn speaks all about the people and the production they are involved in, it consists the total visual appearance of the character in any performance. It stands as a very important fact of a character and stands as the strongest element of the visual sense in a production. Costumes are jewelries, ornaments, accessories worn by an actor to impersonate a character, and to play a role in a dramatic presentation. To this, Robert Cohen opines that;

Costume has always been a major element in the theatrical experience. It is a vehicle for the “dressing up”, actors and actresses alike that have always considered a requirement for the fullest degree of theatrical satisfaction. (147)

This simply put means that costumes transform an actor or a performer into an actor that is being portrayed, thereby aiding the audience to understand the effectiveness of this actor, as well as his or her costume.

Costumes are different from everyday clothing. Clothing refers generally to what is worn on the body as a covering for the skin, which is part of the evolution in African culture, when they started considering nakedness in the public as disgraceful. It motivated people to make and wear clothes out of necessity to protect their bodies from cold, heat, rain, damp and other hazards in the environment. Costumes are used as a form of symbolic expression of oneself as well as a communicative tool that interprets its sociological effects at any given time.

To support this, Anthony Duruaku states that;

The objective of costume design are to set the tone and style, indicate time and place, characterize individuals and groups, underline personal relationship, create symbolic outfits when appropriate, meet the practical needs of performers and coordinate the entire production. (307)

The above means that costumes communicate a whole lot about a production and its values on day to day activities cannot be overlooked.

Make up on the other hand plays a complimentary role to costume. Some make up practitioners see it as costuming; it has an innate communicative connection with the appearance of the actor.

Make up is used to conceal all the exposed part, that was not concealed by the costume worn by an actor, and its form could be in liquid or solid form depending on its purpose and communicative potency. Micheal J Gillette opines that;

Stage make up enhances the illusion that the actor has become the character. In almost every production.

Some of the actors... do not facially resemble the challenge by providing actors with the means to change their appearance, (451)

This simply means that make up is very essential in performances, as it changes an actor into that desirable character in the world of the performance

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Culture as it concerns costume and make up among many others is gradually taking another dimension, losing its sacredness, artistic and aesthetic values, and need to be preserved and documented, before it finally goes into extinction.

Many ethnic groups in Nigeria, no longer recognize the fact that costume and make up goes beyond articles of beautification, despite the socio-cultural, political and economic context of Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups. The style in which costume and make up are made into, these days, no longer represent its cultural identity, it is a sure fact that no culture grows in isolation, but not recognizing the communicative essence of costumes and make up is a difficult issue.

The lackadaisical attitude of this generation towards culture, especially the youths is overwhelming and degrading. Youths no longer research into the important factors that make them a member of a particular ethnic group and may wrongfully misrepresent an ideal costume and make up all in the name of celebration.

The crux of this study is to join force with preachers of good cultural identity, to show costume and make up, not as mere fashion, rather as an indispensable tool in cultural representation, showing its sustainability and transformation. So that indigenous of various ethnic groups will understand through this work that beyond aesthetics in costume and make up, there is an element of communication.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To showcase costume and make up as very important in performance, as a first call of attention in a performance, to give character definition.
2. To suggest an advice on what can be done to retain the originality of a people, not minding the influence from globalization.
3. To preach against Ethnocentrism, there should be a balance between the African culture and the

western culture, since what the westerners brought was not entirely wrong and there is no culture that is not open to outside influence

### **ESSENCE OF COSTUME AND MAKE UP IN PRODUCTIONS**

Costume and make up play significant roles in performances. They are worn to pass across signals or information of a character about themselves to the others; at the appearance of a character, messages and impressions are passed to the audience about that character and this message can be related to preconception which forms immediate judgment. To support this; Julie Umukoro maintains that; “The art is a manifestation of cultures as flowers are manifestations of a tree.” It follows that any art form is created and executed within a specific environment. (117)

These wonderful elements of performance are very vital for the success of any production as they have the capacity of transforming a character and getting them assume different forms aside their true self, also providing an aid to characterization. They aid the understanding and interpretation of art works. To support the above, Utoh Ezeajugh maintains that; “For the stage actor and actress, costume and make up transpose him or her role, and illuminate the character both for the impersonate and for the audience.” (83)

These elements have the features of transforming and projecting the image of different characters. There are specific needs that these important elements of performances must meet and they include the following:

1. Establishes the tone and style of a production
2. Indicates the historical period of a performance, as well as the locale it occurred in.
3. Indicates the nature of individual character or groups in a play, their status in life, their occupations and their personalities.
4. Shows the relationships among characters, separating major characters from minor ones, contrasting one group with another.
5. When appropriate, symbolically convey the significance of individual characters and the themes of the play.
6. Meet the needs of individual performances, making it possible for an actor or actress to move freely in costume, to change quickly from one costume to another.
7. Be consistent with the production as a whole, especially other visual elements.

Costume and make up in general build actors and actresses into the character they are portraying. Make up build the appearance of the character; the costumes convey the correct impression and attitude of the character. To this, Sworth Allen contributes; A good costume, like good speech or good dialogue or good business should perform certain definite functions. It should cover and if desirable enhance the appearance of the person wearing it. (31)

These important elements of performance aids in exaggerating some parts of characters. It gives a character’s age, gender, profession, social class, personality, historical period / era, geographical location, time of the day, season or weather of the day in the performance. They establishes style of production, indicates the nature of individual, character or groups, their occupation, personalities and status, convey the relevance of individual characters when necessary.

They also play important roles in performances in the area of character creation, visual aesthetics and practical elements in a production. These important roles played by costumes and make up as supported by Hodges Francis, who perceived them as; The most dynamic and living of all the visual designs... as a live scenery worn by an actor, in a particular production.(251-252)

There are elements which they influence in a production and they include the following:

1. VISUAL EFFECT: It aids visibility and aesthetics. Make up is necessary for the ensuring that the features of an actor is fair and easy to see and don’t get “washed out” by the bright stage light, make up also perform similar function with the right choice of colour.
2. CHARACTER: Good costumes and make up give the audience key information about a character at first sight. If a character is wearing a bright costume and beautiful make up, it may depict a cheerful mood. Maybe in dull dark costume may depict a sorrowing mood, giving realism to the performance.
3. SETTING: Costumes especially, are the chief indicator of time and locale of a performance. Make up on the other hand can be coordinated to match the setting of the performance.
4. STYLE: The costume and make up worn creates visual aesthetics for a performance that requires such, for instance: festivals, carnivals. There is a creation of theatrical experiences that is richly enjoyable from a visual stand point, as well as dramatic standpoint.
5. ACTORS: Costume and make up proves important purpose for actors, it transforms a person visually into a character.

To that, Hodge Francis says that; “Costumes belong to the other people, and the actor’s job in this process of impersonation is to make. The dress belongs to the character he creates.” (252)

Costume and make up in essence is expressive in nature, it takes the psychological nature of its wearer

and project the truth about them. There is a clear show of difference between a character in performance and his usual self, through the use of costume and make up.

### **MAKE UP AND IT'S SOCIO-CULTURAL ESSENCE**

Make up is the key component to a successful performance; it is major piece of puzzle in ensuring the unique experience associated with performances. Hodges Francis defines make up as "The appropriate application of colour on actor's skin with the intention of exaggerating the facial features in order to make them appear specific and emphatic". (261)

No make-up design is less important and none should be regarded as such, each of the make-up designs is unique and particular to a group of person and has a meaning, which it is depicting. Some make up designs depict strength, beauty and even a seer. And no matter the design, it is not insignificant, which was why Edward Anon said that, "Objects of adornment and apparel should not be seen as timeless, but historically untamed." (96)

Make up is the application of cosmetics to the face and body. Harrison says; "Make up is the application of grease paints, water based paint, false facial hair, prosthesis etc, to alter the appearance of the actors face". (148)

This is the key function of make up, to help the performer's personify and embody the character he or she is playing. It aids as an additional tool, apart from costumes for the performer, in creating an image of the character, the story talks about. To support this, Allen Sworth defines make up as the; "The culmination and outward expression of all the thoughts and evaluation that has gone into his study of a role". (296)

Make up is a very important factor in the overall building of the appearance of the actor. To a large extent, it aids the audience insight, into who the character is, from the character's age, to race, to social status, to nationality, to profession among various others. Richard Corson in his stage make up says that; "Genetics, environment, health, disfigurement, fashion, age and influence that affect physical appearance". (19)

This most important element of production can also be used in making an actor resemble a character they are portraying and this can be achieved through a careful and skillful application of different make up techniques. Furthermore, some genetic traits in a character can also be highlighted using the make-up techniques for its efficient interpretation. To support this, Utoh Ezeajugh opines that; with the tools and materials of make-up, a designer brings to life, by manipulating the design elements for the enhancement or alteration of the actor's physical features. (86)

The make up in the hand of a make-up designer is to create beautiful interpretative designs that will transform the actor into a character that he or she is playing, thereby providing a smooth communication process which will transmit information from the actor to the audience, with the view of make-up concept, thereby, projecting the intended character to the audience and not the actor, since make up is not basically or simply for the exaggeration of the facial features of the actors.

### **COSTUME AND ITS CULTURAL IMPLICATION**

Costume is a visual element of a performance traced back to the early men and the dramatic rituals that enact in the bid to survive. Costumes play a central role in performances, one of the major high point of communication of a performance which is associated with the performers in a production as well as the community at large. To this, Utoh maintains that; "Costumes has remained an integral part of characterization, so much so that performances would decidedly be incomplete without them". (84)

Costumes have the primary aim of transforming a performer into a character while passing across information to the audience. A performer wears a costume to portray a character before a live audience. Costume possesses the quality of capturing the audience attention, intensifying their mood and conveying the message, through non-verbal means. Anthony Duruaku opines that; "Costumes heightens the aesthetics values of the play, offering basic information and coordinate the entire interpretation". (16)

That means that costumes set tone, style, indicate time and place. Characterize individual and groups, underline personal relationships, create symbolic arts, meet the practical need of the character being played out and as well coordinate the entire production.

Costumes serves a vibrant medium of performance, a tool for cultural expression which apart from its feature as an item of clothing worn by the performers to make a statement, serves a great purpose of cultural identification. It showcases the cultural aesthetics, artistic styles and traditional representation of a people. A metaphor of cultural space, providing an identity and consciousness among the people. It is a known fact that costumes worn by people of a tribe reflects them, even as it preaches the aesthetics and artistic nature of that tribe. To support this Mark Twain, as quoted by Julie Umukoro says;

What would a man be without his clothes? Without his clothes, a man would be nothing at all. The clothes do not merely make the man...clothes are the man. Without them he is a cipher, a vacancy, a nobody, a nothing. (68)

This simply means that people are known with their dress culture, even beyond the utility associated

with clothes, which is its protective quality, a covering or a means for beautification, there is uniqueness of these different costumes, which as well gives culture its definition.

In contradiction, it is been observed that costumes these days no longer prove for the identification. Sometimes wearers may not necessarily belong to the ethnic origin of the costumes they are wearing, but then there is aura about regions of origin despite the development, for instance, in Nigeria, in the different ethnic groups, there are costumes for various characters such as Royalty, Warriors, Dancers, Chief priests / priestess, Hunters, Chieftaincy etc, and when violated by other ethnic groups may led to stiff oppositions. To support this, the Cultural Policy for Nigeria under 9.4 sections as quoted by Okpo Ojah on dress, states that;

The state shall encourage the preservation of Nigerian traditional design resources in dress and hair do and promote their adaptation for making strong impact in international fashion. (83)

This means that it is very necessary to acknowledge ones culture rather than allowing it go into extinction. It could be rebuilt into adorable styles while still retaining its originality. This can be done by a careful analyzing of its organizational symbols, in relation to that, which is represented.

### **BRIEF HISTROY OF THE TOWN KOKORI**

Kokori is the second son of Otoro – agbor, with other siblings known as Ukpala, Orkpor and Eku. In the bid to seek for greener pasture, Kokori left his father’s house, who was a great chief priest, and also left with one of his father’s goddess for spiritual backup and protection. The name of the goddess is called “Ogidingbo”, among others, such as Oriri, Omo and Echerukuo.

Kokori and Ogindigbo as a goddess settles in Delta State and as life began. As life continues, he grew both in material things and otherwise, and then problem showed up, jealousy rose from neighboring communities, based on the following; land dispute, fight over women and other properties, which led to war. Kokori as a hero of the people was called upon to look for solution to the existing problems. He decides to consult his father as a renowned chief priest, who answered him and helped him acquire a god known as “Egba”, to join force with Ogidingo. Egba, is known as god of justice and protection to all his worshippers. Kokori took the goddess from his father to support, protect and guide his people till date. The goddess is highly revered in the community, as the goddess of the war and solution.

### **INTERPETATIVE ANALYSIS ON EGBA FESTIVAL**

The Egba festival celebration is a yearly event that happens every February between 1th and 24<sup>th</sup> precisely. The Kokoris goes to market on the eke market day, because it was on the eke market day that the saving god “Egba” was brought. On an Eke market day people will go for what they call “Emuemi”, that is going around the village to collect money and other tangible items from people, both indigenes and non-indigenes. At the end of this exercise, people move with the chief priest to the Egba shrine, where he performs incantation and purification. After which he serves Egba with kola nut, drinks and some items collected from people. On acceptance by the gods, the chief priest makes an announcement to the people that the gods has accepted their sacrifices and they can continue with the festival, with this the festival is declared opened. Once the festival is declared open, there are processes to follow from the first day to the last day. All these processes are very symbolic.

**THE FIRST DAY:** This day of the festival is very symbolic, from the morning hours people will start preparing in their houses in various forms such as; making fresh food of different dishes, cleaning their house and environment, arranging clothes in sacks for people who wish to stay back in the evening.

In the evening of that same day, the indigenes would be so expectant to hear the symbolic village gong and local gun which sounds thrice and iconally portrays a means of informing the villagers that it is time of the great and ageless festival. Immediately after the gong, a symbolic shouts would be heard from different angles and the ageless drum beats, then indigenes would start dancing to the shrine of Egba in the village square, where they will all adore him with different beautiful names and also with various dances. Another symbolic thing during the festival, is the visitation of the Oniemos (the old women) by the members of the community, the people believe ones you visit them with clean mind, automatically the person or person is dining and wine with the gods and goddess of their land and they will also bless those people and call upon the gods and goddess to always favour and guide them. Once this is done, it marks the end of the first day celebration.

**THE SECOND DAY:** Though all the days of the festival is filled with merriments, drumming, dancing, eating and drinking. But unique thing about the second day of the festival is the sand pouring celebration which is interpretively communicative. At the night of the first day, the chief priest communes with the gods and the ancestor who appears in form of very fearful masquerade, during such appearance women and children are not allowed to see the masquerade, reason because the women folk, the children and those who has not been initiated into the masquerade cult would face the various wraths of the gods for beholding the sight of the masquerade such as; miscarriage for pregnant women, lack of favours for business men and sleepless night for children, so based on this, it is only initiates who understands the necessary rituals during the festivals both in its blessing and curses of the land defaulters will appreciate it sacredness.



On the second day of the festival properly, at noon, the people gather at the village square, there would be various entertainments, especially dances as people drink and merry.

When this is going on, the chief priest makes incantation and announces to the villagers that it is time for the sand pouring ritual, he first lifts the sand and pour on himself, then other chief priests and priestess of Egba and Ogindingbo follows and as they pour the sand on themselves, they will say “Egba, we are here again this year, protect us and do not allow any evil befall us.” Immediately after them, the elders of the village, men and women, the youths and the children follow suit in the sand pouring rituals, while non-indigenes who believes in the prowess of Egba and wish to partake in the ritual, follow suit in performing the same ritual. At the end of the ritual, everyone goes to their various home and continues with this sand pouring ritual every morning till the end of the festival elapse. The sand pouring ritual is very symbolic as it is sand from the land of Kokori, is believed to have possible solutions to various problems and answers to different requests from the indigenes who believes so such in Egba’s potency.

**THE THIRD DAY:** This third day of the festival is the day mapped out for various initiation ceremonies into different cults and age grades in the village. This initiation includes both male and female. To be initiated into the masquerade cult, a week before the Egba festival, the persons to be initiated goes with his people to the chief priest’s house for screening both in manner and attitude and also to be confirmed if he has the requisite requirements. Once confirmed, he can now be ready for the initiation. The chief priest uses “Orhe” (the native white chalk) to design his whole body, which is left for a while for the chalk to go off on its own before he returns home. The reason for this, is for purification from any form of contamination, especially that of sexual immorality or marital infidelity. After this, he will be fully accepted to be initiated into the masquerade cult, during the Egba festival.

There are also other aspects of initiation into various age grades, a symbolic one is that of the young ladies who are to marry that same year or before the next Egba Festival Celebration.

These group of persons make use of red costumes throughout the festival, which simply portrays that red costume in the festival has two functions. First, it is worn by the priestess of Ogidigbo as danger, to ward off the enemies, but in the case of the young ladies, it represents an honour to transmits from young ladies into wives and mothers. Also, the expectant mothers or women who wish to be blessed with the fruit of the womb, In their own case, culturally bond, red colours also signifies childbirth, blood or life. These women are initiated into these symbolic age grades and throughout the festival, their costumes differentiate them.

**THE FOURTH DAY:** This is the day of the wrestling. Kokori men are known with strength and vigor, as they are mainly farmers and fishermen. The community is made up of six sub communities; the Okpara, Eku, Ovu, Orhoakpor and Igun. On this day of the festival, each of these communities must have chosen a representative who has great vigor and strength to represent them in the contest. Each of these communities arrives in the central village square with great jubilations, drumming, dances and all the members of each community follows in order to motivate their wrestler, when the need arises. These representatives are always well fortified to gain victory. Some of them are seen with chewing sticks, but in this context, the chewing stick is not used to clean the teeth but it signifies stamina, strength, and energy. Some of them wear amulets (Egbele) around the upper side of their arms, which made up of cloth or leather, cowries and beads with medicine stuffed in and tied on the participant. This serves as immunity device against all harm. Before the start of this wrestling contest between the six sub-communities, there is usually a symbolic thing which happens and that is usually the mock wrestling between one of the priestesses of Egba and one of the priestesses of Ogidigbo, where the Egba will win. This in essence teaches the younger generation and the indigenes the history of their town Kokori, where Egba was brought in when Ogidigbo needed assistance and the war was averted. At the end of the mock wrestling, the different communities start their jubilations with drumming and dances, loud praise in honour of their own various communities against others. It is usually very competitive in every aspect and people are seen overjoyed in great anticipation. Once the competition starts, it continues till it gets to the climax where each community is called upon and there are cheering by his community. The chief priest representing each community whenever any representative is called upon refines his person again, calls him names and assures him of victory. In the course of the competition, there are usually claps, shouts of jubilation or disappointment. The end of the wrestling each year produces a winner, who is crowned with a title and his community will appreciate him with great respect and assists in his farmlands throughout the year.

**THE FIFTH DAY:** This fifth day, the villagers practice trade by barter, people go to the central village square with whatever they have, in anticipation of seeing a person from the village or from the neighboring village who needs what they have, and will equally have what they need. Then there would be an exchange. Though this fifth day is no longer as evident as in the olden days. The reason for the existence of this day is to help the indigenes get what they do not have as the festival is usually during the planting season and there may be lack of food items and other things in the village. It is assumed that at the end of that day, one must have got what he/she needs in exchange for what another has.

**THE SIXTH DAY:** This day is the great day of showcasing different masquerade performance. In

Egba festival, masquerades perform basically two functions and they are:

- To entertain. Some of the masquerades perform dances, acrobatics and make people very happy. They chase people around and as well gain gifts and praises from people, sometimes for their wonderful performances or displays.
- The second function is, that most of them climb palm trees. Kokori is on a flat plane and situated in the evergreen tropical forest zone, they are rich in palm trees. The masquerades climb palm trees to bring down palm fronds for the people which they take home to build the twelve tied broom as a “Symbol of peace” as seen in Plate 3.

**THE SEVENTH DAY:** This day is the grand finale of the festival; the last day of the festival goes with different forms of activities. There are usually drumming, dances, sharing of gifts and the masquerades. On the morning of the last day, just like the first day of the festival, once the village gong goes thrice for emphasis, the villagers with drums, gift items to share with one another, goes to the village square and thanking Egba as they go. All gathers at the village square, the chief priest performs some rituals in honour of Egba, thanking Egba and Ogidigbo for helping the indigenes throughout the Egba Festival celebration. After this, the drums roll and dancers from different communities perform to honour Egba. As the dances progress, there is sharing of gifts among the villagers ranging from food items, clothing materials and money. On this last day, indigenes and non-indigenes mingle. Another important thing that happens on this day is that young people who might have found themselves and wish to get married can confess their love in the presence of Egba, while pleading that their love be preserved till they marry.

There is great jubilation throughout the day, with eating and drinking. Villagers bring gifts to place at the shrine of Egba, likewise non-indigenes who believe in Egba’s protection. At the end of the day, people return to their various homes and non-indigenes and indigenes who came from other towns prepare to leave for their various destinations, determined to face the year, as Egba has promised to protect them.

#### **COSTUME AND MAKE UP IN EGBA FESTIVAL**

Costume and make up generally are extracts of the cultural environment in which they are made. All over Africa, make up designs are used for different functions in various cultural settings and may be permanent or temporal. Costume and make up are generally used in most traditional festivals for specific functions; some of those functions include;

- (a) Some of them are used to ward off enemies, especially in the use of the red costume in Egba festival, which indicated danger, and also the use of the Orhe (native white chalk) around the eyes of the Egba priest and the priestess instill fear into the minds of any would be enemy or enemies.
- (b) They are used for specification of characters, the Egba Priestess and the general public.
- (c) They are used to indicate social status, religious inclination, war, ritual, and mere entertainment, as seen in the varieties of the various costume materials used in the festival and amongst the masquerades.
- (d) Costume and make up designs communicate the cultural environment in which the festival represents especially the Egba festival.

In Egba festival, there are three unique personalities involved and they include the following:

- A. The main worshippers (Priest and Priestess)
  - i. The Priest & Priestess of Egba
  - ii. The Priestess of Ogidigbo
- B. The Masquerade
- C. The general public, which comprises both the indigenes and the non-indigenes.

The above three personalities have very unique functions in the festival.

- ❖ The priest and priestess of Egba both wear white costume, likewise the entire community both indigenes and non-indigenes. The priestess also wears white beads and holds horse tail to show honour and dignity. The priests wear skirt (Ubuluku) and a top to match. From time immemorial, the early skirt was made out of raffia weaving but with the present modern exposure, the priests and male participants make use of white materials of different types depending on the status of the person. This white material was chosen to show the peaceful nature of the seven days of the celebration of Egba. The white colour in their culture represents the best in moral, peace seeking, and orderliness within the stipulated time as seen in the costume in Plate 1. The priestess of Egba also wears white material, a long wrapper tied from the chest down and a white head gear, white beads and her type of material depends solely on what she can provide and the kind of material she can afford as seen in plate 2. The only make up used in Egba festival is the native white chalk (Orhe) and the priest and priestess of Egba make use of this extensively in designing some important sensitive parts of their bodies. They apply the native white chalk (Orhe) around their eye balls for proper visualization of any incoming danger or poison that may be sent by an evil person or opponent and also for clearer vision to be able to commune with the gods effectively.
- ❖ The priestess of Ogidigbo is also an important personality in Egba festival. The priestess of Ogidigbo

wears red costumes in place of white. The red colour they wear signifies danger, fear, threat and wildness for their opponents not to come close to the arena, while the festival is going on. Red in general is a colour of ambivalence. Redness in costumes at times is associated with greatness, power, strength, male aggressiveness, felinity and productivity. Young ladies in Kokori who are about to marry and become mothers and have been initiated into the age grade also wear colour of costumes, as an honour as they become wives and mothers. The most pronounced colours in Egba Festival is the white and the red colours.

- ❖ The General public comprises the males and females of the village and also non-indigenes of the village. The elders both male and female, the youths and even the children of non-indigenes who are participating in the festival all wear white costumes throughout the festival. Some of the men wear the flowing skirt (Ubuluku) and a long sleeved free top with red beads, hats (in recent times) with feathers and hand beads, while some other men make very free long tops with skirts underneath and beads to complement as well. The women wear flowing armless tops and flowing skirts with very beautiful elaborate beads on their heads, neck and hands and this is mostly worn by the elders to show who they are, they also carry horse tail which at times portrays the symbol of peace, as seen in Plate 4. The young girls are allowed to wear gowns of different designs, though they are to be modest.
- ❖ The Symbol of Peace, a broom, posits multiple potential meanings of a good home, health, cleanliness, witchcraft, marriage. In Kokori, this symbol of peace which is a broom like object, also symbolizes unity as well as victory. The broom (the symbol of peace) is made up of twelve different sticks, two representing a particular sub community of Kokori and suggesting Unity in their coming together to win a victory, no matter how difficult the war may be.

The kokoris choose the broom, because of its significant value and being a town in a flat plane in the evergreen tropical forest zone. The palm tree is one of the most important trees on earth with all its parts so functional for the human existence. The symbol of peace is prepared yearly and one keeps it even after the festival. Every participant including non-indigenes is entitled to one of it during and after the festival. The Kokoris believe that this symbol unites them and gives them a peaceful cohabitation during and after the festival and one with the symbol of peace, during the festival do not go against peace. The symbol of peace as in Plate 3.

#### **Kokoris PICTURE REPRESENTATIONS**

PRIEST OF EGBA

(PLATE 1)



THE PRIESTESS OF EGBA  
( PLATE 2)





THE SYMBOL OF PEACE  
(PLATE 3)



THE ELDERS IN EGBA FESTIVAL  
(PLATE 4)

#### MAKE UP DESIGNS IN EGBA FESTIVAL

The only make up substance used in Egba festival is the native white chalk known as “Orhe” in Kokori. It is a temporary make up substance with different functions. It is highly symbolic and signifies purity. Orhe is a porous white clay substance obtained from beds of special streams and rivulets. Culturally, it symbolizes joy, happiness, good health, exoneration and sacredness. In some cultures, Orhe is regarded as a symbol of exoneration and sacredness.

In some cultures, Orhe is regarded as a symbol of exoneration, if an accused goes through trial and is not found guilty, the accused and the members of the family rub Orhe on their bodies in jubilation. Yet in another community, it symbolizes innocence, joy and purity. Thus, Orhe is used as a symbol to give message of

joy and innocence.

In core Igbo land, “Orhe” known as Nzu is used in different ways and especially for the women who just delivered a baby, to provide freshness for both the mother and the baby, and also a radiant skin free from skin infection. In Egba Festival, designs on the body are just done with the Orhe. Orhe as seen in Plate 5.



ORHE (PLATE 5)



ORHE IN PREPARATION  
(PLATE 6)



THE PRIESTESS IN ONE OF THE COMMUNITIES IN KOKORI DESIGNED WITH  
ORHE AND SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.  
(PLATE 7)



WRESTLERS ALL READY  
(PLATE 8)





INIATES ALL READY  
(PLATE 9)

The white native chalk, Orhe is rubbed on the initiates; it symbolizes cleanliness, purity, joy and success. It is used on them for purification from their sins, particularly fornication. It is believed in Kokori that Orhe neutralizes such sin and also all the powers and charms. The initiates also wear red marks and red beads which is a respect to Ogidigbo, though the white chalk is the most pronounced.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends the following:

1. Going with knowledge that education is the order of the day. Culture and its elements, for instance costume and make up, should be built into the school curriculum, starting from small to know that these elements can be used to represent a people.
2. Costume and make up designers should embrace the habit of attending different festivals, which portray the people's culture, as to be versatile in their art and always be able to present those designs whenever the need calls.
3. Costumes and make up designs used in performances should be preserved and as well documented for it not to go into extinction and also for the purpose of references in time when they are needed.
4. The entire public should start seeing costume and make up as having qualities beyond mere artistic and aesthetic features, but also a viable tool for cultural interpretation and this consciousness will aid them eventually in noting the sacredness associated with their culture.

### CONCLUSION

Costume and make up, cannot be appreciable without performances. They form the integral part of any performance. They serve the purpose of culture identification when utilized well in a performance. Cultures should build costume and make up design that best represent them to be able to give life and meaning to any performance, taking into cognizance that for the sustainability of their culture, that costume and make up is a great projector.

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