



University of Uyo

JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

Dr. Willie U. Willie,

Editor-in Chief, UUJH

chief-editor@uujh.org

www.uujh.org

UNIUYO JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES (UUJH), VOL. 26, NO. 1, MAY 2022

Mask Design and the Social Implications of Pandemic Policy in Nigeria

By

Joel Avaungwa Fanyam

Department of Theatre Arts

University of Maiduguri

Email: joelavaf@gmail.com, fanyamaaj@yahoo.com

Abstract

The question of, ‘are all appearances of masks connoting mask dramaturgy?’ is the issue of focus in this paper. Before now, the use of mask in the society was limited to specific activities. However, the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic has expanded the context of mask usage to a form of universal costume for everyone through government regulations. Thus, face mask now has enormous demand with different designs. This trend brings significant force to the signification of mask and to the notion of every-day-is-theatre. It expands the creative enterprise of face mask design and the function of mask production. This paper adopts an observational approach to interrogate the place of mask in the theatre at the time of the pandemic in Nigeria. It concludes that mask has contents when its appearance is wholly symbolic of specific function (entertainment, religion, awareness creation and education) and it

is without contents when its appearance is for the purpose of protection.

Keywords: Mask Design, Covid-19 Pandemic, Dramaturgy, Social Implications

Introduction

Perhaps there has not been any era that brought innovation into mask design like the Covid- 19 pandemic era. The advent of the pandemic brought much fear into the mind of the people as a result of the loss of many lives. The apparent threat of the disease to human life led to a wide use of mask as part of government policies, to prevent those without the disease from contacting it. The lock down policy sponsored and enforced by government, where all states in the country, restricted the movements of their citizens, banned social programmes that involved congregating

including going to market for a period of time, created considerable difficulties for people. Of course, during the same period theatres, churches and schools were also closed down on government directives. This situation caused a lot of setbacks on cultural practices. People worshipped in their homes, those who wished to farm, had tremendous difficulties in purchasing agricultural materials from the market. Similarly, those who wished to sell commodities, had difficulties in doing so. Public performances were suspended for fear of gathering people. Thus, both buying and selling of any commodity, was difficult until government gave new directives to open public places, churches, schools and other institutions, on the condition that, all citizens going to these places, must put on face mask and observe Covid-19 protocols.

The instruction on the use of face mask brought great innovation for its design, not only that, the designers had a large population to satisfy, there is equally a great demand for quality; people making choices from a variety of designs for diverse reasons, and different companies producing multiple dynamic designs simultaneously to meet up with the social demand of the users. The point is that, government policy on the use of face mask to prevent the spread of Covid-19 forced many people to abide by its usage. Various armed and civil agencies in the country were mandated to monitor the implementation of this policy besides signing into law certain punishments for the violation of Covid-19 rules or protocols in public places. The government again deployed huge sums of money to companies for the production and distribution of these masks, and those who could not access materials donated by government, had to locate tailors who locally designed mask for them to use. This wide demand for masks made room for innovation in both design and

production procedure till today.

However, it is important to note that mask has been in existence long before the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic only that it was not for everyday use. Therefore, the ubiquitous use of masks during Covid-19 pandemic shares similarities with the theatrical application of mask. Nonetheless, it is important to delineate these parameters, to define the essence or functions of the appearance of people in these masks, for, the use of mask connotes different meanings. The question of ‘are all appearances of masks connoting mask dramaturgy?’ will be deciphered at this juncture to differentiate mask with or without mythic content. The use of mask has occupied many aspects of human life, especially in religious circus. The African society especially has different masks traditions that serve religious purposes. Therefore, it is expedient to consider the current wave of everyday life in mask design.

Everyday Life/Act is Theatre

To understand this principle in this discourse will require first, understanding Burke's analysis of dramatic approach. He says, "the dramatic approach is implicit in the key term "act". "Act" is thus a terministic centre from which many related considerations can be shown to "radiate," as though it were a "god-term" from which a whole universe of terms is derived"(7). On this principle also relies the concept of "everyday life is theatre". This idea is conceived from the perception that human beings are faced with challenges and peculiarities in the scenes of life. Thus, "the numerous activities we engage in as human beings on daily basis all fall within the realm of theatre performance" (Doki 10). The idea is in consonance with that of Turner.

According to Turner (102), everyday life is acting. "Acting, like all "simple" Anglo-Saxon words, is ambiguous – it can take place in ordinary time or in extraordinary time. It may be a way of working or moving, like a body's or machine's "action"; or it may be the art or occupation of performing in plays." What this means is that Turner tries to conceptualize everyday life into a two way type of acting, "work and play". The first one which he refers to as work is what it means when people talk about playing a role, "such as an advisory role to a president" and the second which is play, has to do with "solemn and ludic, pretence or earnest, our mundane trafficking and commerce and what we do or behold in ritual or theatre". Therefore, when he says acting in everyday life is ambiguous it refers to the two way activities of work and play which have complex dynamics of analysis. For instance, ordinary way of life in ordinary time and extraordinary way of life in extraordinary time will become theatre when there is "the commitment of the self to a line of action for ethical motives perhaps to achieve "personal truth," or it may be the essence of pretence." When human life is regulated to a unidirectional pattern, like the policy of the use of mask for everybody in the society, dynamic motives will arise – those that will use it for using sake because it is compulsory and those that will use it for the genuine purpose of preventing the disease. That is the place of ambiguity, the line between pretence and actuality. Incidentally, both pretence and actuality are practical situations and experiences in everyday life. Doki (77) presents these posers: "how else should we explain the scenario of chil-

dren trying to behave like their parents, students trying hard to be like their teachers, Christians struggling to be like Christ; how else should we explain the scenario of an adulterous man flogging his daughter for fornicating, a school dropout chastising his son for failing an examination, a driver disguising as the owner of the car". Man is involved in acting and dissimulation of characters at different levels of dramaturgy. The use of mask design in the pandemic thus heightens this experience.

The peculiarities of this experience results from a pure desire to carry out an action or it may be shaped by other situations that might prompt the use of mask. Burke relates this activity with two concepts: "scene-act ratio" and "agent-act ratio" (8). The former has to do with any situation that motivates or propels human beings to behave the way they do while the later has to do with trying to be one's exact character. In all the ratios, there are similar relationships which have to do with the purpose of the actions; both those acting as motivated by their circumstances and those trying to be their exact character, do so for a purpose. The justification is with the extent of the purpose and how it affects the society. In reference to the act of conscious self presentation, Beckerman (5) explains that, "when played by children, it is an imaginative form of play; when played by adults who believe their roles, it becomes a form of delusion. Presented by children or adults to others, it is a form of theatre. As a game, its purpose is to provide pleasure for the participants. As a theatre, its purpose is to affect spectators". Human activity and everyday life could be significant to theatre in the manner that it affects the audience. Scene-act ratio and agent-act ratio are considered as drama or theatre because of the consciousness in the activity. Burke (8) says this "can be called an act in the full sense of the term only if it involves a purpose (that is if a support happens to give way and one falls, such motion on the agent's part is not an act, but an accident)". In other words, one's action in falling must be as a conscious structure in the principle of behaviour of the character he is. Once the action is an unconscious activity, then it cannot be measured as theatre. The purpose of an action is also its intentionality. This could be interpreted from the part of the person doing the act and those he is doing the act for, as well as, the motivation for the act. Arguably, every human activity in everyday life thus has a purpose.

Mask Traditions

Mask traditions have embodied the corpus of religious and social aspects of

cultures for a long time now. The Greek performance culture is notable of this practice. Roberts (15) observes that, “much of the impressiveness of the Greek theatre lay in the masks of the performers, an interesting holdover from more primitive times. They were made of linen, cork, or wood, and fitted over the entire head as primitive masks almost invariably do”. Many studies have also exposed issues about mask traditions in Igbo culture of Nigeria. Ugochukwu and Onyekaba’s *The Visual and Performance Aesthetics of Ijele Masquerade Theatre* (2019) treat the subject of mask for instance, where they explain its origin from Omambala area of Anambra State. Many other scholarly works have been conducted on the Ijele theatre including, Chike Aniakor’s “The Igbo Ijele Mask-African Arts” (1978) and Nwa-Ikenga and Egwuatu’s “Ijele Masquerade/Odinami: The Sacred Arts and Sciences of the Igbo people” (2016). Ugochukwu and Onyekaba submit that, the mask tradition is visible in many dramatis personae of Ijele theatre such as Ijele, Nne-Ijele, Nna Ijele, Onye uwe ojii, and Otenkwu Ijele. Each mask design has its religious and aesthetic functions. Ijele’s appearance is “as a royal personage from the world of the ancestors carrying on its head (which was once the arena of performance) all the vestiges of dramatic moments that men who once occupied the earth had been engaged in” (122).

The mask hosts “artefacts of trees, birds and other animal forms symbolising the harmony and interdependence between nature and man in Igboland” (112). Other materials on it include a collection of memorabilia and effigy of lives once lived on the revolving arena of Ijele” (122). All that are described above comprise of the masks’ upper part designs. There are also the lower part designs which carry “mystical motifs and designs eulogising the world of the ancestors and the deities” (122). The Nne Ijele which implies Ijele’s mother adorns a feminine appearance with unique paraphernalia to signify the presence of the mother who “symbolically guides Ijele from the spirit world onto the arena of mortal men by wielding a big ox tail to keep evil at bay” (124). On the contrary, Nna Ijele is dressed in male outlook, “armed with a very huge afo the symbol of authority, and a horse tail, even as the usual red cap which signifies and symbolises royalty is not left out” (124). Onye uwe ojii symbolises a police man. In other words, he is the guardian of Ijele masquerade. These personae are six in number. They could wear mask or not, “their primary duty in the performance is to keep Ijele safe from the surging crowd, audience and potential enemies” (125). Ugochukwu and Onyekaba describe Otenkwu Ijele as a character who is “masked and is dressed more like a chief fitting

in some ways to the character of Nna Ijele” (128) who has been described earlier. The Otenkwu Ijele also signifies “Ijele’s palm wine tapper”. These constituted characters in Ijele mask tradition of the Igbo people connote ethereal meanings bound with human physical familiarity, what Hagher (25) describes as the spirit and human worlds.

There is also the Oghu ensemble theatre described by Ihentuge in *More Than Meets the Eyes: Analysing the Mask Characters of Oghu Ensemble Theatre* (2019). During the Oghu festival, “many of the masquerade appearances and Oghu dances at this stage are to raise fund for their organizers. Some are to attract government attention to the needs of the organizers” (141). The mask tradition of this festival is also noticeable in its dramatic personae. First is the “Nwa Ohu Uzo” also called “Nwa Okpa na Abali” or “Nwa Ohu Uzo” (the one that moves at night)” (143). As the name suggests, “it starts making its appearance from around 11pm on the day preceding the Oghu performance” (143). Having been associated with a sense of incarnated ancestral spirits, the Nwa Okpa na Abali makes appearance in the community as a sign of ancestral spirit pre-visiting to ascertain the level of preparedness, purity, and security of the land before the appearance of other ancestral spirits. There is also the character called Umuokorosha whose mask is “mbunishi (a type of head gear)” (144). This is explained as a group of dancers who “take part in stationary Oghu performances” (144) during the festival. “They are different from the Ugbala or Nwaonyeure that are itinerant” (144). Other personae in the Oghu festival include, the Egudo also known as Okorosha or Udo respectively. The appearance of this character is sensed from its design. That is “the use of different shades of colours in knitting the mask, the use of various designs and colours of wrapper tied in varying patterns around the waist and across the chest of the masquerade” (147). The Nwa Okwa characteristic is scarier. These masks represent the spirits of particular age grade who are dead. “It impersonates old men and is seen as the spirit of dead old men” (147). In its appearance, “the mask is carved to portray one disfiguring mark of aging or the other: bulging eyes, twisted mouth, or nose, large moles on the face, protruding cheeks and/or forehead, irregular positioned cheek bones, extra ordinary large lips” (147). Then there is the Ugbala, an elegant mask that represents “the spirit of dead young ladies” (150). It is “typified with extraordinary beauty, neatness and elegance of movement characteristic of typical young ladies” (150).

There has been a discourse on Ebiraland festival of Ebiraland which engag-

es the concept of mask tradition from the theory of facekuerade. In *Facekuerade: The Transformational Duality in Ebirá-Ekwuechi Festival Performance* (2019), Ododo states that, there are characters that appear with bare faces without material mask design but are masked by metaphysical essence or darkness as the mask in the role they play. “Facekuerade therefore, refers to a performance masquerade character without mask. Even though his audience encounters him face to face, the spiritual essence of the masquerade character is not devalued” (551). Thus, mask is considered in this tradition from the spiritual essence of the existing character and the way the society relates with it. This is like a quality of trance described by Adelugba (210) on the Kalabari theatre and Horn (187) on the Bori theatre of the present day Rivers State in Nigeria. An activity where “the possessed is consequently transformed into the essence of the god himself or the goddess herself”; a kind of “stylised behaviour” metamorphosing the god in the physical body with which the audience make contact physically. The characters transformational appearance is manifested through mannerisms and the belief of the people. However, the concept also covers characters that use some facial designs. Ododo explains that, “in Angola for instance, there are the Ganguela female masquerades (facekuerades) that do not don masks. Their faces are sometimes painted but their identity is unconcealed” (552).

Mask traditions in Tiv society includes Akume, Ajigbe, Ijov-mbakuv, mammywata, kwagh-hir theatre and other spirit representations. Information provided in Ahura (23-42) suggests that, the origin of “Ijov-Mbakuv” is traced from the early performances of “Akume” which was a religious based activity in Tiv society. Thus, Akume’s role in the Tiv society could be likened to the police force available in our contemporary times. Akume appeared only when there was a need to repair death (sor ku). The idea behind ‘repairing death’ is to propitiate the highest Tiv rite (IKyase Akombo) which may have been violated. Abnormalities in the cosmic order occur when a person who possesses a rite (Akombo) is dead. Ikyase Akombo is considered as the government of the Tiv. The old initiates normally assemble in an enclosure on the death of one of their members. “They communed together in their enclosure and perform all the necessary rites that would repair the damage done so that the land would once more enjoy peace, good health and fertility” (Ahura 24). At this time children, women and men of bad or evil dispositions were not allowed to come near the council of elders. Thus, during these occasions Akume is performed. “Its function was to maintain peace and order to keep all evil

people away from the scene of the performance of the Ikyase Akombo rite” (Ahura 24).

During the performance of Akume, those who perform wear masks to cover every part of their body. Equally every performer must have been initiated into a particular rite (Akombo) in order to qualify to join in the performance. “The masks were made up of a woven pair of trousers and shirt sown together. The pair of trousers was continuous to the foot as if extended into socks just as the shirt covered the fingers” (Ahura 25). The shirt was designed to cover the head and the entire face, allowing only two slits for the eyes. “This formed the inner part of the mask. The outer part of the mask equally covered the entire frame. It was made of raffia which was dyed in three colours: black, blue and white. The colours are arranged in a particular pattern, one colour after the other to produce a beautiful colour combination. The face masks were also woven with raffia and they were woven in such a way that they could induce fear” (Ahura 25).

Then there is the Ajigbe performance which had two types of face masks used from the early Ajigbe performance. “One was carved out of wood and had a rough finishing. The face was not usually adorned with paintings or other super imposed structures. It was also small” (Ahura 32). The second “masks were made out of broken calabash through which three slit gaps were made: two for the eyes and one for the nose. Strings held this to the face as the strings were knotted at the back of the head” (Ahura 32). There are indications that those masks made from broken calabashes were attempts by school pupils who wanted to copy the Ajigbe art but had no technical know-how. Yet this presupposes the first attempts at creating face masks in Tiv land.

Ahura explains further that, these masks at this time, especially in Eastern Nigeria where the Catholic Mission came to Tivland, still had religious connotations especially as they were, associated with heathen practices. Similarly, from the history of the development of Tiv and its competitive nature it would be inconceivable to have backward growth in aesthetics, the more aesthetically a performance was, the more likely it was to get rewards from the audience. Therefore, the growth of aesthetics of the face masks moved from the broken calabash to the more complex wood carvings. This means that the Tiv people borrowed the idea of face masks of wood carvings and indigenized it using the Tiv indigenous materials and design when Ajigbe was brought into Tiv land by the Ibos and Ogoja people, and the Tiv, liking it especially after Akume had been banned, took it up and following

the fashion of Akume, invented the face masks made from wood instead of woven raffia as was the case with Akume. Again, since Akume was frowned at by the colonial administration, efforts were made not to pick up too many of the things with which Akume was identified. Yet the continuities or linkages were obvious enough as in the use of raffia for the body masks, the holding of a whip and the fearlessness as shown in the braving of the spirits (32-35).

Now that the Tiv people had succeeded in creating a performance that was tolerable with the colonial administration, it was easy to recreate it and link it up to their world-view; this gave rise to the creation of Ijov-Mbakuv. In the Tiv belief system, Mbakuv is considered an abode of spirits while Ijov (singular) is considered as a spirit which lives in the abode of spirits called Mbakuv. This is “more or less a metaphysical creation of the Tiv to explain the continuity in the world of man, spirits and the land. It is believed that Mbakuv is a place where the natural spirits and sometimes the spirits of the dead mix freely and carry their nightly chores” (Ahura 35). Akiga cited in Hagher “defines Ijov as the thing that appears in human shape, but no one who sees it knows that it is the ‘Ijov’. It lives in the wood or in the hills, and does whatever it pleases, good and evil” (26). Similarly, Hagher sees the concept of Ijov as “the unseen counterparts of man, that engage in all human activities, but in addition to this are free from the control of Mbatsav”. This means that “Ijov-Mbakuv” performance is an attempt to explain the carved figurine on the masks which appear in the seeming nature of human beings. Hagher specifically notes that “the Tiv believes in the existence of Adjov (plural of Ijov) as the spirits that occupy the same space as the Tiv, engage in the same art of living (cultural practices) and at times could manifest themselves in human form “(25). It is correct to assume at this point that with the evolving or emergence of face masks made of wood figural carving it became more suggestive for the Tiv man to refer to such performance as “Ijov-Mbakuv”. This idea brought the performance closer to their religious belief even though religious conditions were not popularly attached to it. This appearance of the mask has been described by two opinions. The first opinion is that it “has a nimpish and cheeky face with the nose and mouth pointed outward in a perpetual pout. The mask is linked to the torso with raffia fibers which effectively disguise the joint of the mask with the rest of the body. The eyes are bold, and there is a slit behind the eyeballs through which the dancer’s vision is ensured” (Hagher 24).

The second opinion is that, the costume is made of a long female flowing gown

reaching down to the ankles. It also has long sleeves. The hands and the feet are put in socks or stockings. These are the devices to ensure that no part of the body is exposed. A belt is strapped to the body around the middle of the trunk and immediately below it a large girdle is tied at the back around the waist. This is aimed at enhancing the feminine beauty of the Ijov-Mbakuv performer who is now equipped with large buttocks (Ahura 38). There are also rattles tied to the feet of the “Ijov-Mbakuv” performer which it often carries along. It also carries in its hands, horse or cow tails. Some Ijov Mbakuv group sometimes also involve a male character known as Nom-Ijov who make caricatures and attempts to romance the Ijov-Mbakuv on stage. When the Nom-Ijov is involved in a repertory, its face mask is usually very scary with large nose, wide open mouth with protruding teeth’s and an artificial male sex organ attached in between the legs of the performer, in a way that the audience will sight it. This is almost similar to the Roman theatre example of the phallus.

There are also “Mammywata” dance performances with different forms of masks which bear female hair on a smooth face mask. According to Ukuma, “the dancer always wears a flamboyant costume that covers the body from head to toe; he is dressed in loose-fitting and light weight gown. To further reinforce his femininity(sic), he adds big breasts, and wears ear rings fastened to the mask, even as the mask itself looks feminine physically” (287). The Mammywata masquerade has been very popular in Tiv society in recently times more than the Ijov-mbakuv and Ajigbe. Other mask traditions include the Nyamtswam performances, “the masquerade is impressively carved and designed in colours, especially red and black which aesthetically make it distinct from the Kwagh-hir masks. The Nyamtswam mask appears very heavy but the belief is that it can be easily lifted by people who are not evil at heart, while evil-minded people are not able to lift it” (Ukuma, 285). So far, the Kwagh-hir performance has more mask characters than any Tiv masquerade theatre but they are all representations and interpretations of Tiv culture.

Mask Design With and Without Mythic Content

The idea of mask with or without content lies with the concept of mask dramaturgy which entails that, mask hides an actor inside a covering. It is a dual existence philosophy where appearance of mask design in action embodies another character which might not be seen by the audience but who is the real being responsible for the actions of mask on stage. This experience surpasses the ordinary use of mask in everyday life, it portends transcendental meanings. Meanwhile, the similarities in

the use of mask lies with the term itself. That is, the idea to shield a person, disguise or characterize for specific functions.

This means that, the purpose of protecting individuals during Covid-19 pandemic with the use of mask from contacting the disease adversely disguises them. In essence, mask becomes a means to disguise people's appearance in many designs that surfaced. The mask designed in most parts of the society were to mask the nose and mouth but all such designs were called face mask instead of nose and mouth masks. But there were other designs that actually mask people's faces. It is important to stress that, the use of these masks are not to act any role per se except those who are involved in attending to patients. Even for those people, the consciousness in the act of their roles requires introspection, if their activity is for spectators or to simply discharge their duties. Burke's concepts of "scene-act ratio" and "agent-act ratio" could be expedient in explaining this situation. That is for as long as the reason for putting on a mask is not to consciously act before an audience, Burke see it as a "scene-act ratio" which has no desired effect for the audience. This is contrary to "agent-act ratio" whose target is when the act corresponds with the desired effect meant for such character on the audience. The use of mask occasioned by the pandemic just to protect the people from contacting the disease has increased the demand for mask design in our society but the purpose for its use is without mythical content because it is not anthropomorphic or representative. Their appearances of the people wearing them only connote symbol of protection and a sense of universalism.

Mask designs with mythical content are those that affect both society and audience in conscious act. Their dimensionalities can be analyzed from religious to secular functions. Their effect is from the meaning they represent to the society. According to Nnadozie:

Masks are produced in order to enable the souls of the dead or the protective spirits of a certain community or society make appearances in tangible or visible forms or for dramatic representations of mythical actions. Masks are produced in such a way that they either cover only the face or enclose the head like a helmet or are placed as head dresses upon the head. There are also masks which are not worn but are only venerated as sacred objects while some serve as badges or symbols of authority in secret societies/cults. Like the ancestor figures, masks are also consecrated and imbued with power as thus venerated (14).

Therefore, the content of the mask is the power which it has. And, as described above, these appearances mark their power as representatives of spirits, of certain community or societal beliefs and as objects or symbols that express and perform ethereal functions. Some of these functions include resolving disputes and protecting the community, cleansing, healing or fertilizing the land. Ukuma (279) captures this when he says “masquerade traditions are held seasonally, and during the allotted times, various masquerades with peculiar and unique philosophies are believed to visit the land of the living to commune, cleanse, enrich or even to correct their communities”. Meanwhile, Inyang (307) observes that “masquerade emerges from the ancestral worship roots of the African world...This philosophy is at the root of masquerade performances as the masquerade or masked figure is a de facto symbolism of deified personages who maintain communion with the world of the living”. That is the significance of mask with content. Symbolism behoves masked figures or the mask, because it expresses cultural beliefs. The masked figure or mask un-used with content is perceived from the transient once it appears in the environment of its cherished value but as associated cultural symbol in its non-existing environment. There is an instance cited by Anyebe on African Masquerade Tradition and the Colonial Training: A Postscript (2019) about African mask traditions that have travelled to Europe which is an analysis of a report by Molly Uzo on masquerade festival celebration by some Nigerians living in New York. This evidence will suffice to illustrate how mask welds power in its place of cherished value. He says, “she attests to the fact that though the issue of mask performances, as well as the use of talking drums and other traditional instruments that give air of immediacy and fulfilment are absent in the New York performances, the creation of myth, which is central to the coming into being of the masquerade, is sufficiently accomplished” (55). The point is that, first, these masks were used outside their larger existing environment. Secondly, those who were not used to its functions, appreciated it “as a vehicle for entertainment” (54). However, beyond its existing environment and as vehicle for entertainment, it carries an aura of myth which is unique to the culture that owns it. The mythical identity in the appearance of the mask is metaphorical to its social essence. It is what gives credence to the mask figure as an actor in theatre and separates him from everyday life experience and the use of mask in the pandemic era. During this era, everybody adorns mask in playing different social roles in the society but not all the masks have mythical or spiritual content.

Conclusion

Over the years, the use of mask has occupied many aspects of the human life, especially in religious circus. The Greek society made use of mask in the theatre for role playing; this enabled efficient changing of roles by few actors for multiple characters. The traditional African theatre has many of religious masquerades and facekuerades who are symbols of sacred beings. Yet, there are also secular uses of mask in African performances. The pandemic era has expanded and entrenched the use of mask in the Nigerian society. This practice is not for entertainment or religious reasons. It is part of government health policy and instruction to protect the lives of the citizenry from contacting the deadly disease. Fortunately, it has become part of costume for everyday life. Meanwhile, it expands the idea of everyday life as theatre. Arising from this argument, the use of mask in everyday theatre assumes many dimensions either without content or with content. The basis for these dimensions is their functions. Whereas in masks without mythic content, the mask figure does not totally become a symbol of expression, while the mask with content is not universal, for it is rather specific, a symbol of cultural expression. Their appearance is mythical with metaphoric social essence. Nevertheless, mask designs have made considerable impact in the country, for the use of such designer masks in the pandemic have helped to effectively control the spread of Covid19 disease in the country.

Works Cited

- Adelugba, Dapo. "Trance and Theatre: The Nigerian Experience". Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine. 1981. Pp. 203-218.
- Ahura, Tar. "Creativity and Continuity in Tiv Oral Play Creating and Performance: A Study of Mammywata Masquerade". Diss. Department of Theatre Arts, University of Jos, 1987.
- Anyebe, Ted, Anyebe. "African Masquerade Tradition and the Colonial Framing: A Postscript". Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades*. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 44-68.
- Beckerman, Bernald. "Definitions-Theatre". James E. Combs and Michael W. Mansfield (eds.) *Drama in Life: The Uses of Communication in Society*. London: Saunders of Toronto, Ltd. 1976. Pp. 4-6.

- Burke, Kenneth. "Dramatism". James E. Combs and Michael W. Mansfield (eds.) *Drama in Life: The Uses of Communication in Society*. London: Saunders of Toronto, Ltd. 1976. Pp. 7-16.
- Doki, Ama, Gawon. *Everyday Life is Theatre: Appropriations and Canonization*. Makurdi: Benue State University (BSU) Press. 2017.
- Hagher, Iyorwuese. *The Kwagh-hir Theatre: a Metaphor of Resistance*. Ibadan. Caltop Publications. 2003.
- Horn, Andrew. "Ritual Drama and the Theatrical: The Case of Bori Spirit Mediumship". Yemi Ogunbiyi (ed.) *Drama and Theatre in Nigeria: A Critical Source Book*. Lagos: Nigeria Magazine. 1981. Pp. 181-202.
- Ihentuge, Udoka. "More than Meets the Eye: Analysing the Mask Characters of Oghu Ensemble Theatre". Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades*. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 136-158.
- Inyang, Ofonime. "Masquerade as Agents of Community Development in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria". Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades*. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 298-319.
- Nnadozie, Uche. "Creative Expressions in the Art and Act of Mask, Masquerade and Masking/Masquerading". Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades*. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 13-43.
- Ododo, Enessi, Sunday. "Facekuerade: The Transformational Duality in Ebira-Ekuechi Festival performance". Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades*. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 549-589.
- Roberts, Mowry, Vera. *On Stage: A History of Theatre*. London: Harper & Row. 1962.
- Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publishers. 1982.
- Ugochukwu, Ephraim and Cornelius, Eze Onyekaba. "The Visual and Performance Aesthetics of Ijele Masquerade Theatre". Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks,*

Masquerades and Facekuerades. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 115-135

Ukuma, Teryila, Shadrack. “Masquerade Theatre amongst the Tiv of Central Nigeria: The Mammywata in Perspective”. Sunday Enessi Ododo and Chike Okoye (eds.) *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades*. Awka: Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA). 2019. Pp. 277-297.