

**ENHANCING MOOD, PERIOD, AND RHYTHM:  
THE INFLUENCE OF APPROPRIATE COSTUME IN  
YAW ASARE'S *ANANSE IN THE LAND OF IDIOTS***

**BY**

**REGINA KWAKYE-OPONG**

**A COSTUME DESIGN THESIS PROJECT**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF  
THE AWARD OF MASTER OF FINE ART (MFA) DEGREE IN  
THEATRE ARTS**

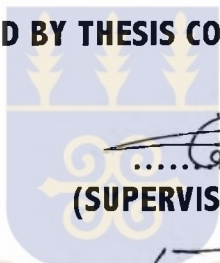
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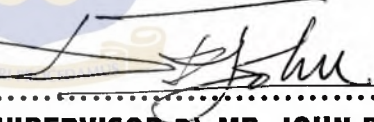
**BY**

**REGINA KWAKYE-OPONG**


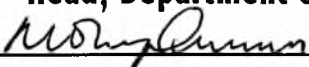
**APPROVED BY THESIS COMMITTEE**



  
.....  
**(SUPERVISOR) MISS CECILIA ADJEI** 14/08/03

  
.....  
**(SUPERVISOR 2) MR. JOHN DIISENU** 14/08/03

.....  
**(EXTERNAL EXAMINER)**

**APPROVED:**  20.08.03  
-----  
**Head, Department of Theatre Arts**  
 21-08-03  
-----  
**Director, School of Performing Arts**  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Thesis-Project is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in the University or elsewhere.

CANDIDATE:.....  
REGINA KWAKYE-OPONG



DATE: 14-08-03.....

## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my husband Henry, my Children Genevieve, Robert,  
Crystabel and Rene.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

When embarking on an endeavour such as what I have attempted with this presentation, it is obvious that this massive task did not rest on my shoulders alone. Thus, one becomes indebted to many people in various ways.

Especially acknowledged in this thesis project documentation is God Almighty, who through his care and devotion has seen me through life even to this stage. To express my heart-felt appreciation to him I need a whole chapter but Dear Father, with this few lines, I am expressing my most profound thanks that no words can coat. Thanks so much and stay BLESSED.

Henry, my husband, you devoted so much time for the kids and held the fort when I was out from home trying to make what you are reading today possible. Ayekoo!

Genevieve, Robert, Crystabel, and Rene, my lovely children, I know what you went through when I was away from home. You suffered for your dear mummy to make a grade. You know I love you, don't you? You are the best friends I have ever had.

Mum and Dad, I need to commend you for the financial support and prayers said on my behalf. While I am still married you never stopped sending me money and presents. Thank you so much.

Hallo! Auntie Ceci, I can hear you say “yes darling” your superb creative style of lecturing met all the challenges I would have otherwise faced in this presentation, and thus resulted in this massive ending. You are a darling.

You are my first lecturer in costume designing, introducing me into this discipline, as well as giving me the necessary help and encouragement needed. Mr. John Djisenu my second supervisor, for also taking time off your very busy schedule to help with this thesis, you need a warm commendation.

Benedicta Owusua of the Costume Shop also assisted in these efforts, and tirelessly and skilfully helped in the development of the costumes. Owusua, keep same spirit.

My wardrobe girls, you are marvellous, your immense contribution is greatly appreciated for preventing any blunders at this crucial stage.

Nana Adanse, Johnson, Akua, Mac, Sarah, Nii, Ernest, Rueben, and Ben, (Wofa), colleagues of the MFA programme, thanks for the encouragement and the warmth you put in me. You were always on my toes, making sure I worked within time.

And to all, who in diverse ways helped to make this dream a reality, I say  
THANK YOU!

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## **ABSTRACT**

The bases of costuming of most plays are inappropriate in Ghana because some directors are ignorant of what actually goes into costuming. In most instances, there are a lot of anachronisms where costumes do not march up with the period and occasion. Also lack of funding for productions, has made directors and designers handicapped, thereby making use of any available costume. For fear of being charged high prices, directors sometimes do away with capable costume designers, and leave the job in the hands of actors, forgetting that costume goes beyond just wearing a dress on stage.

This thesis project is to provide suitable costumes based on the design interpretation of the play, the different processes it underwent up to the opening day. It also gives record of character analysis, design concepts, problems encountered, and the evaluation of the performance.

## INTRODUCTION

The story of costume is over centuries old, as old as the story of civilisation. But it is new everyday. Each day offers fresh batch of evidence that can be used to support or to reshape a production. Principles documented in Biblical times are still relevant today, and this is because fashion revolves.

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, defines costume as style of dress: actors wearing historical clothes in the style of a period in the past.

Merriam Webster's Collegiate Thasarus also defines costume as "a style of clothing and adornment".<sup>2</sup>

Putting these two definitions together, I would say that, costume is a style of clothing and adornment typical of a certain period, country, rank, or profession, especially as worn on the stage by an actor, dancer, or a musician revealing the physical, emotional, and psychological man within.

Costumes play an important role in our daily life because it reveals specific information about the wearer, position and status, occupation, degree of independence or regiment, and whether one is dressed for work, leisure or for a special occasion.

Through what you are wearing, you announce your age, sex, and class. Also, it is possible to reveal your occupation, your state of mind, personality, opinions, tastes, sexual desires and current mood. These pieces of

observation may not necessarily be put into words, but they register unconsciously and you on the other hand will do the same for me.<sup>3</sup>

Clothes worn in real life are not the same as that used in the theatre. In the theatre, clothes send signals similar to those in everyday life, but as with other element of the theatre, there are significant differences between the costumes of everyday life.<sup>4</sup>

This vocabulary of costume does not only include items of clothing but also hairstyles, accessories, jewellery, makeup, and body decorations.

Theatre cannot be whole without costumes. It is a component of the elements of the theatre, and the most personal of the various visual aspects (element). This is because they are actually worn by the performers. Visually, performers and costumes are perceived as one, mainly because they merge into a single image on stage.

To be able to measure up to the requirement of producing the correct costumes, the designer is faced with certain obligations to.

- Help establish the tone and style of a production.
- Indicate the historical period of a play, the locale in which it occurs.
- Indicate the nature of individual characters or group in a play; their status in life, their occupation and their personalities.
- Show the relationships among characters: separating major characters from minor ones, contrasting one group with another.
- Meet the needs of individual performers. making it possible for an actor or actress to move freely in a costume, perhaps to dance or engage in a

sword fight, and to change quickly from one costume to another when required.

- Be consistent with the production as a whole, especially with other visual elements.<sup>5</sup>

The above are the major salient points that any good costume should thrive on. By way of elaborating on some of these, I would say that the costume designer should be able to use the costumes to depict the period of the play; whether the play is in the past or in the present, whether it is in the Shakespearean, Elizabethan, Roman, Greek etc. era. Both in style and in fabric, the audience should be helped to identify the period without being told.

Costume should be able to tell the setting of a production, whether it is set in the urban or in a rural community.

Costume at the same time depicts differences in sex. Male and female are characterised with specific outfits but in a production, a designer should be able to disguise a sex convincingly if the script so requires it.

Age differences are also clarified by the use of costumes. Certain garments and colours are only suitable for the youth, and some are only good for the aged. Costumes can, therefore, make someone look young on stage.

The designer makes a conscious effort to establish the status of each character; the poor peasant farmer, the rich cocoa farmer, the helpless poor dejected housewife, are all clearly identified by what they wear. Characters are best distinguished when costumes are treated properly. The outfit of a

King should stand out from that of the linguist and the elders of the palace and so on.

Similarly, costumes help to tie family members, a group of people or a party together. By the use of contrasting colours and style, players of Kumasi Asante Kotoko can be separated from their rival club, Accra Hearts of Oaks in any football match.

Costumes also tell the time and season of the year. Occasions like wedding, birthdays etc, call for specific costumes, whilst funerals or mourning are also symbolized by the use of definite outfit.

A nightgown on stage easily tells what time of day it is. The style, mood, and theme of a production, are some of the hidden ideas which costumes should be able to express or bring out.

Costume, is, therefore, an intergral part of the theatre, helping to establish the overall mood, identity, and position of each individual character, as well as adding to the total aesthetic beauty of a production.

It is the total commitment of the costume designer towards such objectives that the play can be complete in terms of mood, period, styles, characterisation, language and even rhythm.<sup>6</sup> And this brings me back to my topic: The influence of appropriate costume in a play production.

## **WHY THIS TOPIC**

I was in the costume shop one afternoon when a gentleman walked in and requested for costumes for a choreographed piece. When I inquired

about the mood and setting of the piece, he pretended to be in a hurry and simply said, "... the students will come and sign for them, please try and get us something presentable for four male and three female dancers, and please don't forget the drummers, they are four". Before I could ask him any further questions he was gone. But all the same I got the message. Pretence.

Students are the worst victims. "Auntie Regina, please I want costumes, but could you please include the one Ananse wore in *Marriage of Anasewa*?" When I questioned her on why that particular costume, her answer was the usual "I want the character to look gorgeous" or sometimes it is, "... that is what the director wants".

I quite remember one such encounter of my supervisor, Miss Cecilia Adjei, with a student: It was a production of *Hamle* an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* directed by Dr. Martin Owusu, now Professor. There was this messenger in the play who wouldn't put on his costume because it was not nice. He finally went on stage but very furious because Miss Cicilia Adjei insisted on the costume. For the three nights of performance, he would come to the changing room highly annoyed and casting insinuations because he claimed to be a Northerner and, therefore, knew what to wear. Meanwhile Miss Adjei had taken the trouble to educate him on the fact that the costume was for the character, but not for him. I quite remember she simply told the student "My dear, we are costuming the character not you, is that clear?"

**Costume Shop Mistress:** Hello! Can I help you?

**Student:** Yes, please, Madam, I want costume for a one act production next week and the director has asked me to see you.

**Shop Mistress:** I hope you have written everything on paper and signed against it? But by the way, what is the period and setting of the play?

**Student:** (After a brief pause) Oh! eh e-e-h I don't have any period again, actually I have closed for the day.

That was an encounter between I and a fresher. You may find this unbelievable but dear reader, it really did happen and we face such countless problems at the costume shop quite often. The essence of proper costuming seems to be nicked in the bud. In fact, costume is too important to neglect in a production, because you cannot do without it, but it is subjected to analysis, interpretation and application; there are philosophies engulfing it.

In this thesis project, therefore, I will try to convey the vitality and excitement of this discipline and to show its relevance and power to make or mar a production, using *Ananse in the Land of Idiots*, written and directed by Yaw Asare, as a case study. It is the year 2000 staff production of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon. The costume design aspect of the production is what this documentation is all about.

Each chapter in this documentation is divided into logical sections and subsections. Rather than simply breaking the chapters into digestible units, the organisation enhances the presentation. Chapters consist of two or more sections, with each section critically dealt with as the chapter progresses. For easy and better understanding, sketches (rendering) and pictures of most of

the cast in real costumes are included in this thesis project, and the secret is to provide just enough details so that this documentation will be a unique model for the up and coming costume designer.

**NOTES**

1. A.S. Hornby. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1974, P. 136.
2. Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Thesaurus*, Merriam-Webster Incorporated, Springfield, Massachusetts, USA, 1988 P 165.
3. Lurie Alison, *The language of Clothes*, Random House Inc., New York, 1981. p.3.
4. Ibid., p. 3.
5. Edwin Wilson. Alvin Goldfarb, *Theatre the Lively Art*, McGraw-Hill Inc., 1991, p.87
6. Edwin Wilson, *The Theatre Experience*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill Inc., New York 1994, p.349.
7. See, Efua T. Sutherland, *Marriage of Anansewa*, Longman, London, 1975.

## CHAPTER ONE

### SELECTION OF THE PLAY

My initial attitude towards costuming *Ananse in the Land of Idiots* was that of mixed feelings. This was because I found it to be too flat and, therefore, unchallenging. And so when my lecturer for costume design confronted me with the task and condition to costume the year's staff production, I was really disappointed and, therefore, reluctant to take that offer. But she insisted I should do it because it is the only production that could better cater for its budget on costume. And so I decided to costume the production. I quickly contacted the director, collected a script, and started reading that very day.

The play is about Kweku Ananse who gets himself as usual into trouble. He manages to be disentangled and at the same time runs away with the beautiful princess of Dim-Nyim-Lira.

After reading through the first and second time, I realised that, certain ideas were already forming out in my mind. I started questioning myself on how to use costume to incorporate mood, dialogue and rhythm. How I can possibly create costume for Ananse and what kind of fabric will be desired.

My enthusiasm for costuming the play began building up as I started visualising the characters on stage. I read the script for the third time, jotting down details that I would need in giving the play the required costume. I arranged for a meeting with the director, and it was there that I got to know among other things that, as part of his directorial approach, the play is based

on a mixed culture but predominantly influenced by the Northern part of Ghana. And this was evidenced by the use of names like: Naa Buruku, Queen Fayosey, Sodziisa, to mention just a few.

I also got to know that the period is present, and so I started my research. This gave me an idea about the style prevalent at the present time as well as the type of fabric and colours in vogue.

I went ahead with my sketches based on my conception of the characters in terms of mood, characterisation, and colour. The director, on seeing them, gave his approval and this gave me the chance to work on my budget for the production.

### **PLOT SUMMARY**

Ananse the trickster is travelling and makes a stop at Dim-Nyim-Lira the land of idiots. Meanwhile somewhere in the forest, a ritual ceremony is being performed for King Dosey's daughter, the princess Sodziisa and her peers. Ananse watches on unnoticed. After the rituals he comes out from his hideout and begins to feast on the sacrifice meant to appease the gods, but Ananse is caught by Akpala the hunter. Akpala tells Ananse of the consequences of his act, and Ananse is finally brought before King Dosey, the Chief of Dim-Nyim-Lira. Ananse is sentenced to death but just before he is sent away he pleads with the King and promises to weave the most beautiful cloth that anyone has ever seen when his life is spared.

Ananse is given the chance to prove his craftsmanship. He then makes three requests by which he is able to lure the beautiful princess into the bush and had an affair with her. Ananse cunningly exploits Akpala, the hunter, and manages to kill Potagyiri, Sodziisa's suitor, in pretence of taking his measurement.

Crafty Ananse poses as Potagyiri on the wedding day and finally marries Sodziisa. Through his usual tricks Ananse manages to seal Akpala's mouth with a gum and runs away with the beautiful princess who is the only heir to the throne.

King Dosey at the end of the story gets to know of the whole truth and also about the death of Potagyiri through Odudu the idiot. But it is rather too late for any fruitful recovery because, Ananse is already gone with the princess.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SCRIPT ANALYSIS

This chapter which deals with the components of script analysis includes given circumstance, idea, dialogue, plot, rhythm, and mood. A detailed scrutiny of all these collaborations help the designer to use costume to capture the overall visual effect of the play enhancing each movement and picturization.

### GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCE

The place, time and Locale of *Ananse in the land of Idiots* is the present set in the town of Dim-Nyin-Lira an imaginary town in the Northern part of Ghana. King Dosey rules as Chief of this town and he has a beautiful daughter Sodziisa and wife Queen Fayosey.

Ananse is also from a different culture travelling along, and he decides to make a stop at Dim-Nyim-Lira, the land of idiots. These two circumstances suggest to me as a designer that, costume for the people of Dim-Nyim-Lira should be different from that of Ananse.

Also the phrase 'land of idiots' gives images of and a conception of different hot colours.

Still in the opening scene, six maidens including the Kings daughter have reached puberty and are being led off by the priest for the necessary ritual ceremony.

In movement two, Akpala, the hunter, is made to guard Ananse as he weaves. The maidens are also made to dance for Ananse on the same purpose. Potagyiri, a prince of another clan, a fiancée of Sodziisa also comes to take his measurement. But he is murdered by Ananse.

In the third and final movement, Ananse is disguised as Potagyiri and marries Sodziisa unknown to the King, Queen, and the entire Kingdom except Odudu the idiot and Akpala the hunter.

### **IDEA**

The ideas of any given play is the thematic concern of the playwright. A play might have one or several meanings,<sup>8</sup> and that is why in this play the writer tries first, to reveal the basic causes alien domination in all forms, insatiable lust, egoistic materialism, unfaithfulness, greed, lack of commitment, and loyalty on the part of the victims.

But above all, the play is meant to sensitize African and other exploited peoples of the world on the prevailing perversions, lusts, and carefree attitudes which have resulted in the social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual enslavement of the African.

### **LANGUAGE**

The language is everyday simple English but full of wise sayings and proverbs. One will ask what bearing language has on costume. For instance,

the language in Shakespeare's time was different from what we speak today and, therefore, drops hints on ancient costumes like jerkins, breeches etc.<sup>9</sup>

The poetic use of language in *Ananse in the land of Idiots* is also characterised by the use of simile and metaphor which gives the audience the challenge not only to watch but to think as well.

Worthy of note is the use of language in an adaptation. This should be very well considered. In this instance the director should work with the designer if certain lines contradict with the costume. It will sound very ridiculous when an actress refers to her flowing gown whilst she is wearing Kaba and slit.

### **PREVIOUS ACTION**

The previous action of a play normally sparks the production. Characteristic of such are historical plays. In this play, the name Ananse brings back memories of such a character who tries to manoeuvre through thin and thick by means of deceit and tricks. And so the mere mention of the name Ananse as a hero of a play tells the designer what to expect: deceit, exploitation, cheating, wisdom, tricks etc. Ananse mythologies have erupted from nowhere and these stories have been widely accepted.

But the pivotal question is: who really is Ananse? Most African playwrights have used this character in a satirical way to awaken the clergy, the politician, the housewife, you and me, a way of sensitizing society on the effect of their frivolous and greedy behaviour on each other.<sup>10</sup> It is, therefore,

very important for the designer to know from which direction the director of the play is moving.

Like all folktales, this play is timeless and has its base or source from Ananse mythology.

## **RHYTHM**

Rhythm, according to the Advance Learner's Dictionary,

"is the pattern produced by emphasis and duration of notes in music or by stressed and unstressed syllables in words or a movement with regular succession of strong and weak elements constantly recurring sequence of events or processes."<sup>11</sup>

Lois Fichener-Rathus in his book *Understanding Arts* also states;

The world would be a meaningless jumble of sight and sounds were it not for the regular repetition of sensory impressions.<sup>12</sup>

The rhythm of this play is tense and fast and this is characterised by fast movement, and the use of language. But the rhythm breaks down at the end of the play when Potagyiri is confirmed dead.

My effort then to try and use rhythm to help achieve the overall sustenance of the production was by way of style and colour.

In the forest scene, I gave Sodziisa plain light blue skirt and top dress with a white band around her head. The other six maidens had another shade of blue and white spotted dress. Some of the drummers were given stripped

blue and white pantaloons with another shade of blue as their top costume. I managed to play with monochromes of blue to achieve some degree of rhythm.

The colour white was also introduced to help with the rhythmic pattern. This colour was employed in almost all the costumes in this same scene. The priest had white powder on his face, Odudu had hers around the neck, the maidens and Sodziisa had white bands around their heads.

Then again at the forest scene where the maidens and their mistress went to dance for Ananse, I tried to use the colour yellow and green to achieve the same effect even though costumes were just two loin cover cloths.

The King and Queen had different shades of green costume during the wedding ceremony, and the bride and groom had same costumes but with slight variations. Costumes were, therefore, rhyming into each other and this gave a pleasant stage picture, movement by movement. The rhythm of the play affects the costume. The happy moments in the play were graced with colours like white, blue etc., but the rhythm, is broken down by the use of black and red colours at the end of the play.

### **MOOD OF PLAY**

From the beginning where Ananse comes on stage to introduce himself, the mood of the play is that of suspense. The numerous praise-names that he qualifies himself with ".....master, craftsman in the guild of divine craftsmen, one who manipulates creation from the fringes of – A vibrant – web etc.", prepares

the minds of the audience on what to expect. Something pleasant. The play starts on a happy note throughout until at the very end where Odudu reveals the truth about Potagyiri's death. Until this moment the whole play is a comedy.

### **ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

It is always very necessary to use costume to classify the economic diversity of characters in any given play. This is because this aspect which deals with the class distinction helps the audience to readily ascertain the characters status mood and characterisation.<sup>13</sup>

I have for this play three classifications. King Dosey, Princess Sodziisa, Queen Fayosey and Potagyiri will be in the upper class, the maidens, drummers, elders, Mbasila will constitute the middle class, whilst Odudu and the hunter will fall within the low class. Costumes for that matter will have three levels.

### **STYLE OF PRESENTATION**

Another important aspect of costuming properly, is for the designer to know the style of presentation. This deals with the inner truth or the director's interpretation of the play.

Realism, Naturalism, Expressionism, surrealism, are some examples of this style of presentation, and every play centres on either one or more of these.

For instance, realism says that, everything in connection with the play must look real. Furniture, clothing etc should be linked with normal everyday occurrences.

Naturalism is also suggesting that nature should be portrayed as such. Therefore, if a play talks of nudity on stage, then there is no need of costumes.

Hence, the costume designer in consultation with the director tries to use costume to reveal this truth.

*Ananse in the Land of Idiots*, is a fusion of realism and surrealism. There are real characters like King Dosey, Akpala, Odudu, to mention just a few. Ananse is also non-human and that makes him non-realistic.

The play at the same time can be said to be surrealistic because the play wright seems to be in a dream world, trying to mix recognizable events with fantasy. This situation also calls for different bright colours in costuming.

**Notes**

8. Martin Okyere Owusu: *Analysis and interpretation of Ola Rotimi's the Gods are not to Blame*, Afrique Publications, 1998, p.3.
9. Lucy Barton. *Historic Costume for the stage*, Walter H. Baker co., 1969. p.215.
10. See, (a) Martin Okyere Owusu, *The Story Ananse Told*, Soundstage Production, 1999.  
(b) Efua T. Sutherland, *Marriage of Anansewa*, Longman, London 1975.
11. A.S. Hornby. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, fourth edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1989, p.1087
12. Lois Fichner-Rathus. *Understanding Arts*, second edition Prentice Hall Inc. Englewood cliffs, New Jersey, 1989. p. 68.
13. Lurie Alison. *The language of Clothes*, Random House Inc., New York, 1981 p.115.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **CHARACTER ANALYSIS AND COSTUME CONCEPT**

Character analysis and the costume concepts are functional in designing individual costumes among others. In order to achieve this, there are a lot about the character that the designer must take note of.<sup>14</sup> The costume designer is faced with questions like: What role does the character play? Is he the protagonist or antagonist? What do other characters think about him and what are his ambitions in the play? Also certain vital environmental issues like political, economic, social and religion, should be considered when analysing each character.

It is these fundamental information about each individual character that the designer uses to build costumes for him. My perception for each character was, therefore, based on these factors and by the use of line, shape, form, texture, colour, fabric, balance, proportion, and dominance, I was able to design costumes for each of them.<sup>15</sup>

### **ACTION CHART**

This aspect deals with a character's inter-reaction with other characters and the number of times he or she appears on stage.

Another function of this chart is to help the designer to differentiate between major and minor characters and also to know how many times a character has to change his costume and what time limit is available to effect the change. Does the costumes at the same time so that he can easily change for the next scene? This is the importance of the action chart.

**Table 3.1**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT I	MOVEMENT II	MOVEMENT III
Kwaku Ananse	x	x	x
King Dosey	x		x
Queen Fayasey	x		x
Princess Sodziisa	x	x	x
Elder	x		x
Priest	x		x
Guards	x		x
Mbasila			x
Akpala	x	x	x
Potagyiri		x	
Odudu	x	x	x
Maidens	x	x	x
Woman in Crowd	x		
Drummers	x	x	x
Royal Retainers			x

### COLOUR CHART

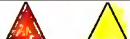



















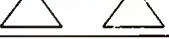
The purpose of the colour chart is to help the designer perceive colours appearing on stage at a glance. Colour is very important in creating optical illusions and it is possible to use colour to enhance a production when you have a better understanding of its value, intensity and meaning.<sup>16</sup> Having a good insight into applying colour harmonies also help to plan for a pleasant combination.

Certain colours are believed to have some psychological associations, and in Ghana black is always linked up with sadness or death. Yellow has

varying associations in different cultures. It is a sacred colour to the ancient Chinese, a symbol of power to the Egyptians and Greeks, the early Christians looked down on it because of its connection with gold (wealth). But in our Ghanaian set up gold is associated with wealth, pride, cowardice and envy.

The use of colour is, therefore, not only done to enhance a play but to add meaning to it. Colours are chosen according to the characterisation which helps to bring out the physical as well as the emotional stance of the characters. Worthy to note is the fact that colour has cultural connotations and should be applied effectively.

**Table 3.2**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT I	MOVEMENT II	MOVEMENT III
King Dosey			SAME AS IN MOVT. II
Queen Fayasey			
Kweku Ananse		SAME	
Elder			SAME
Sodziisa			
Maidens			SAME AS IN MOVT. I
Potagyiri			
Odudu		SAME	SAME
Drummers			SAME
Woman in Crowd			
Royal Retainers			
Akpala		SAME	SAME
Guards		SAME	SAME
Mbasila			
Priest		SAME	SAME

## **CONCEPT AND COSTUME**

### **KING DOSEY**

King Dosey is the chief of Dim-Nyim-Lira. He is of middle age and well respected by his citizens. He has a pretty daughter Sodziisa, an only child, and a wife, Queen Fayosey.

His first appearance is in movement one when Akpala brings Ananse to the palace for defiling the sacrifice.

King Dosey is powerless when he has to face realities. He puts himself carelessly into the hands of Kweku Ananse without taking any precautions suggested by the priest. He is less ready to consider secondary matters including those which concern conscience and that is why a whole kingdom was plunged into disaster.

Throughout the play King Dosey does not give serious thought to this moral aspect of his action and its implications. He is a leader who is prepared to exchange a whole sacrifice of the purification of the land, for an act considered to be an abomination because of a piece of ornamented cloth. ( a kente stoll). He also puts more premium on personal interest. King Dosey at the end of the play loses his only daughter to a stranger. He boldly and publicly confesses of having a lot of idiots in his Kingdom, and in the end he proves to be the biggest idiot in the whole Kingdom.

He is an image of our African political leaders who out of greed manipulates the country's scarce resources to suit themselves without actually bothering of its repercussions on the entire nation.

King Dosey is greedy, selfish, materialistic, a dictator and, indeed, not fit to be called a King. His colours will be shades of gold to portray royalty and his costume will consist of a pantaloon, smock, a cap, flying whisk, a towel and a pair of Northern boots.

In his first appearance he comes in a gold smock, a pantaloon and cap to match, orange towel and flying whisk.

In the second movement at the wedding scene he is seen in blue and green smock and pantaloon. I gave him green and blue because that was what I could get from storage. But all the same it worked within my concept, because blue means serenity, and King Dosey seems to be at peace with himself even when a whole nation is being gradually dragged into a mess.

**Table 3.4**

**COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
King Dosey	Movt. I	1.Stripped gold smock with cap (up & down)	Pull	¢
		2.Brown Slipp on	Buy	60,000
		3.Flying whisk (white)	Buy	20,000
		4.Orange towel		
	Movt. III	1.Combination of green and blue agbada up and down with cap.	Pull	
		2.White pair of slippon	Buy	180,000
3.White flying whisk		Buy	60,000	

FIGURE 3.1



**FIGURE 3.2**



**KING DOSEY  
MOVT. II & III**

## KWAKU ANANSE

In all folktales, Ananse is symbolic, including *Ananse in the land of Idiots*. In this play Ananse could be anybody: you, me, a housewife, priest etc. He is sly, a cheat, trickish and cunning, and he himself confesses that people associate him with the above.

Ananse:....You have turned my hard won fame into titles of notoriety "Ananse the – the – Trickling – trickster," Ananse the cunning crook "you call me".

Movt 1, p. 2

The woman in the crowd also confirms this allegations.

Woman ....Everybody here, even the smallest kid knows you well....your sly and deceitful ways. We hear them time and again in your numerous tales....Ananse tales.

Movt. 1, p. 3

Akpala has also described Ananse's outfit as strange.

Akpala....His strange outfit and manner caused me to suspect he was up to some evil.

Movt. 1, p. 6

Through Akpala's lines, I visualized Ananse as a non-human character.<sup>17</sup> I, therefore, decided to explore on that. To make him appear strange, I chose the jute fabric for his costume, something which is not normally used for clothing in everyday life. On both the front and back of this outfit are woven the spider web motif with eight legs projecting from the sides. Beneath this jute top, is a big long togas.

In his next appearance where he poses as Potagyiri, Ananse appears in the costume meant for Potagyiri for the wedding. It is in the form of three piece agbada and a cap, with a pair of Northern boots to match. The designs in them are that which Ananse made for the bride and groom. The colours are off-white, light purple, light blue, and gold.

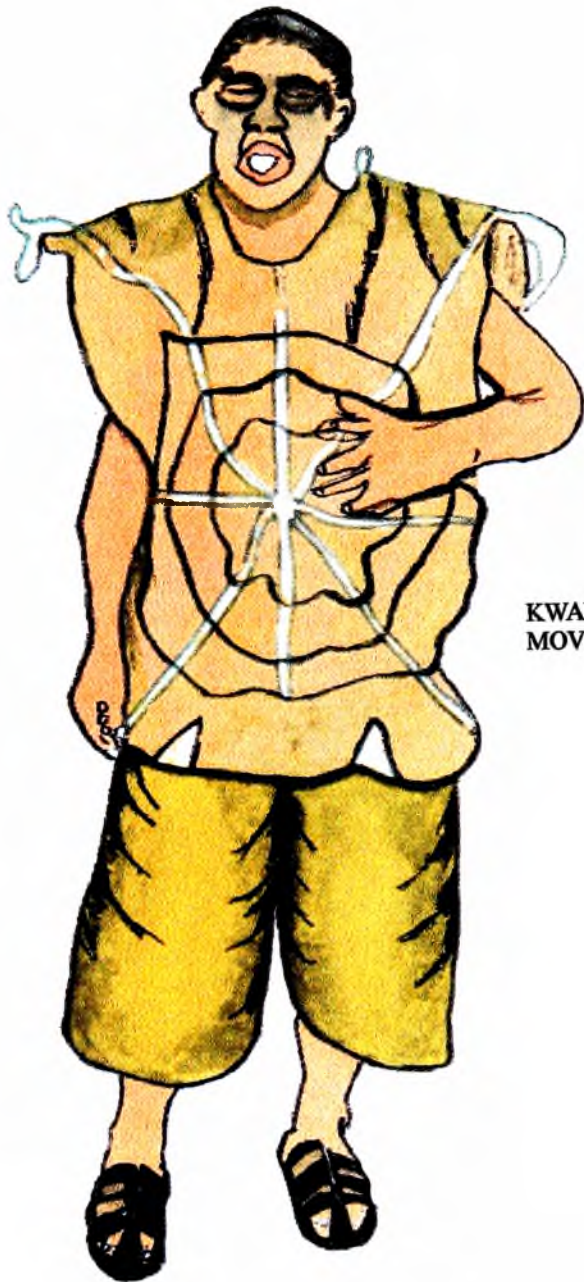
**Table 3.5**

**COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Kwaku Ananse	Movt. I	1. Big brown togas	Pull	¢ 60,000
		2. Smock, made with jute fabric with the spider web motif on both the front and back for his top outfit.	Buy	
	Movt. II	3. One brown loin cloth	Pull	25,000
4. A pair of black slippers (Afro Moses)		Buy		
Movt. III		1. Same as in Movt. I but without loin cloth		
		1. A pair of Northern boots	Buy	200,000
		2. 3 piece agbada with cap (off white)		

**Renderings follow**

FIGURE 3.3



KWAKU ANANSE  
MOVT. I

FIGURE 3.4



KWAKU ANANSE  
MOVT III

**QUEEN FAYASEY**

Queen Fayasey is King Dosey's wife. She is of middle age and has an only daughter Sodziisa. She is cool, gentle, humble, and submissive. Her first appearance is in movement one when she comes to receive one of the head bands Ananse presented to the King. Queen Fayasey is very emotional, sensitive and caring, and she reveals such attributes when her daughter was leaving for her marital home.

Her costume will consist of a head gear, wrapper and anago top, a pair of slippers and a shawl. Her colours are gold and purple, but in her second appearance she will come in lemon green which is going to blend with the costume of the King. If I had given her royal colours she would overshadow the King, and so in order to achieve harmony, I chose a lighter shade of green in order to blend that of the King. She also seems to follow the King's suit. Green means serenity and like her husband, Queen Fayosey is at peace with herself even when her only child's fate is at stake.

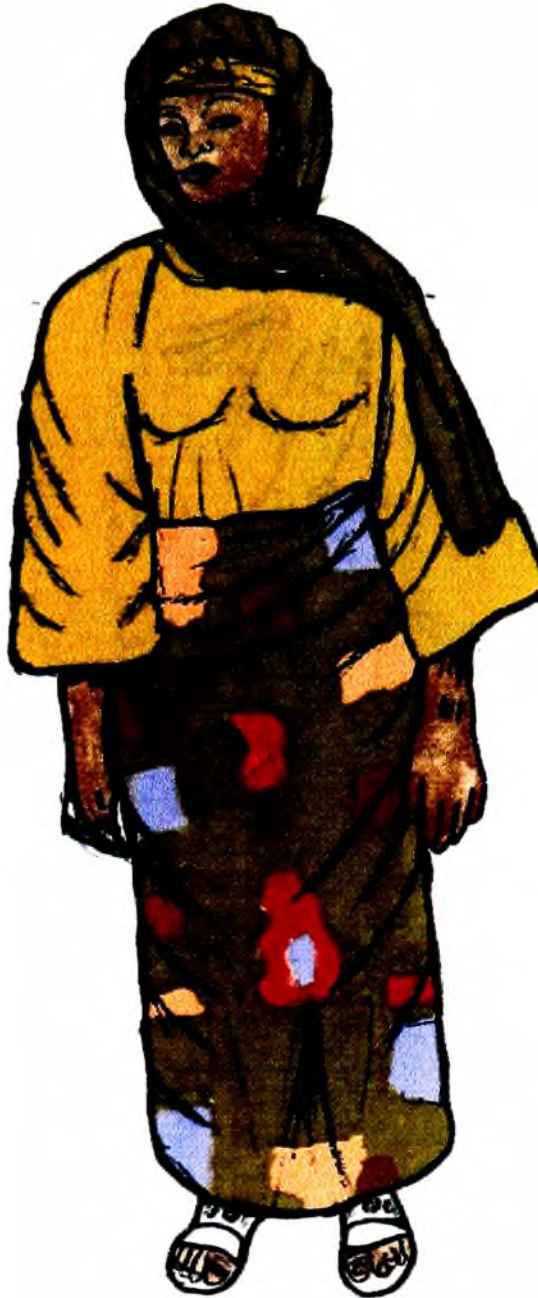
**Table 3.6****COSTUME PLOT**

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>MOVEMENT</b>	<b>COSTUME</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Queen Fayasey	Movt. I	1. Gold top and mud-cloth wrapper	Pull	¢
		2. A pair of golden slippers	Buy	40,000
		3. Yellow head gear	Buy	25,000
		4. Gold shawl with flower patterns	Buy	40,000
	Movt. III	1. Lemon-green wrapper and top	Buy	60,000
		2. A pair of gold slippers	Buy	40,000
			Buy	40,000
			Pull	40,000

		3. Gold head gear 4. Green and yellow shawl		
--	--	--	--	--

**Renderings follow**

**FIGURE 3.5**



**QUEEN FAYOSEY  
MOVT. I**

FIGURE 3.6



QUEEN FAYOSEY  
MOVT. III

**PRINCESS SODZIISA**

The princess Sodziisa is twenty-two years old, daughter of King Dosey and Queen Fayasey, and the only child to the throne. She is very pretty and Ananse testifies to that:

Ananse.....I suppose you are the charming princess, Sodziisa.

Movt. 2. p. 15

Sodziisa is one of the maidens whose puberty rites Ananse ruined. Potagyiri, a prince of another clan is soon to marry this beautiful princess but before the marriage rites are performed, Sodziisa cheaply falls into Ananse's trap by which he makes love with her.

Sodziisa is loving, gentle, pretty, respected, but unfaithful. Her colours will be white, gold, light blue and off-white. During the puberty rites she is in white but at the wedding ceremony, I will give her off-white and gold because she has been unfaithful. Sodziisa has betrayed a trust by giving away what was only meant for her husband to a stranger. Sodziisa's costume will consist of a wrapper and top, head gear, shawl, skirt and top, a pair of slippers, two loin cloths and beads.

**Table 3.7**

**COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Sodziisa	Movt. I	1. Light-blue skirt and top dress	Buy	¢ 40,000
		2. White head band	Buy	5,000
		3. A pair of white slippers	Buy	40,000
		4. White flying whisk	Buy	10,000
			Pull	

	Movt. II	1. Two yellow loin cloths	Pull	
		2. Beads (neck lace)	Buy	40,000
		3. Head cover	Buy	40,000
		4. A pair of white slippers	Buy	60,000
	Movt. III		Buy	20,000
		1. Off-white wrapper	Buy	40,000
		2. Gold anago top	Buy	35,000
		3. White slipper	Buy	45,000
		4. Gold gele		
	5. Sparkling gold shawl			

**Renderings follow**

FIGURE 3.7



PRINCESS SODZIISA  
MOVT. I

FIGURE 3.8



PRINCESS SODZHSA  
MOVT III

## **POTAGYIRI**

Potagyiri is a prince of a different clan and will be about forty years old. He is brave and strong but very impatient and always talks of having little time.

Potagyiri is a villain and even threatens to kill Akpala for feasting his eyes on Sodziisa his betrothed. He is ferocious, the most ruthless warrior and wrestler in his time. Potagyiri is an esteemed prince and after his marriage to Sodziisa, the King is going to offer him a whole chieftom, the islands of Boyile. A chieftom complete with palace, cattle, an army, food, barns, everything. Potagyiri limps on one leg and this was because he had long bout of yaws under his left foot when he was a child. Among the appellations that he gives himself are "one who wrestles seven lions and kills them empty-handed, son of Pataguo whose totem is the prawling – bush-cat, Prince of the dark forest". But despite all his braggings, Potagyiri cheaply gets entrapped in Ananse's usual webs and finally meets his untimely death. He didn't get Sodziisa to marry.

His colours will be a combination of black, browns, etc. like the colours of the tiger, symbolic of his prowess.

Potagyiri's costume will be a pantaloon, straight top with one shoulder bare (warriors costume), a pair of slippers with straps to wind round the leg, cowry head band, amulets, and a cowry chest band.

Table 3.8

**COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Potagyiri	Movt. II	1. Pantaloon	Buy	100,000
		2. Straight top with one shoulder bare	Buy	
		3. Brown slippers	Buy	45,000
		4. Cowry bracelet	Buy	20,000
		5. Cowry head band	Buy	20,000
		6. Cowry chest band	Buy	12,000

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.9



POTAGYIRI  
MOVT. II

**PRIEST**

He is the high priest of Kompi and he will be about forty-five years old. This priest is in striking contrast to King Dosey. He first appears is with the maidens during the purification ceremony which takes place in the forest. In his struggle to convince the King of the need for Ananse's death in defilement of the ritual, the priest distinguishes himself as incorrupt, one who cannot be bought, firm, pure, loyal and a committed citizen who is ready to stand and die for the truth. The priest of Kompi rejects the stoll presented to him by the King and constantly warns of an impending danger. His poetic nature can be linked up with our forefathers who foresee dangers well ahead of time and warn us. But do we listen. No! Rather we think their advice is 'colo', and what is the end result? Chaos.

The priest will be in raffia skirt, cowry bands around chest, ankle and wrist. He will be bare-chested and his colours will be predominantly white, to portray African culture.<sup>18</sup>

**Table 3.9****COSTUME PLOT**

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>MOVEMENT</b>	<b>COSTUME</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Priest	All movements	1. Raffia skirt 2. Cowry head, wrist, chest and ankle band 3. Bare footed	Pull  Buy	¢  60,000

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.10



THE PRIEST OF KOMBI  
ALL MOVT.

**MBASILA**

Mbasila is a war-captain and head of the royal archers. He will be about forty-two years old. Mbasila makes his first appearance in the play at the last movement, where King Dosey asks him to accompany Odudu, the idiot, to exhume the dead body for identification. He is brave, dutiful, and intelligent because he claims he can even tell the very patterns of Potagyiri's most obscure body scars even in the dark. Mbasila at the end of the play, leads the royal retainers who bear the body of Potagyiri to the palace.

His colours will be dark green, but because of scare funds what I could give out was light brown. Dark green and browns are given to warriors so that they can hide between the green leaves during battle.

Mbasila's costume will be a pantaloon, two cowry chest bands which cross each other, and a pair of brown sandals. He is bare-chested.

**Table 3.10****COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Mbasila	All Movts.	1. Stripped pantaloon	Buy	¢ 100,000
		2. Bare chested		
		3. Cowry chest band	Buy	20,000
		4. A pair of brown sandals	Buy	50,000

FIGURE 3.11



MBASILA  
MOVT. III

**MAIDENS**

The maidens are six in number and they are peers of the princess Sodziisa. They have all reached the age of puberty, and rites are underway for their purification. The forest scene is where they first appear to go through the initiation which is wantonly destroyed by Kwaku the intruder.

Upon Ananse's request, King Dosey orders these girls to sing for Kweku Ananse as an accompanying demand for his creative work.

During the wedding ceremony of the princess, these maidens come to sing, and dance to help grace the occasion. When the couple are finally leaving for their matrimonial home, the maidens are also ready and willing to accompany them to the outskirts of the town. They are happily organized, very obedient to their mistress, submissive, caring and dutiful.

Their colours will be green, blue, and white. White signifies purity, innocence, faith and peace, a symbol of virginity. The colour blue also means rest, hope, truth and tranquillity. Their costume will be loin cloth, skirt and top, head band, and flying whisk. They wear no slippers.

**Table 3.11****COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Maidens	Movt. I	1. Blue and white skirt	Buy	160,000
		2. white head band	Buy	5,000
3. Bare footed				
	Movt. II	1. Two loin cloths (green		160,000

		& gold)	Buy	
		2. Gold waist band		10,000
		3. Bare footed	Buy	
		4. Black net head cap	"	5,000
	Movt. III	1. Same as in Movt. I	"	

**Renderings follow**

FIGURE 3.12



MAIDENS  
MOVT. I & II

**FIGURE 3.13**



**MAIDENS  
MOVT. II**

## AKPALA

Akpala is a hunter and he is about 40 years old. In one of his usual rounds in the bush, he pounces on Kwaku Ananse eating the food prepared for the purification of the six maidens. Akpala brings Ananse before the King.

To be sure Ananse is under strict vigilance, King Dosey employs Akpala to keep watch over the trickster as he wove in the bush. But the hunter doses off in the process, exhibiting folly and lack of commitment to duty.

Akpala is Ananse's accomplice who is bribed to help in the killing of Potagyiri and with the help of Odudu, he buries the victim. Trapped in his own cruelty, Ananse cunningly manages to seal Akpala's mouth thus, preventing him from revealing the truth about Potagyiri's death and the plot therein. Eventually, Akpala finds out about Ananse's dubious and heinous trickery on him, he tries hard to tell his story but he cannot, because Kwaku Ananse, as if all that he has done to Akpala was not enough, had told the King and the whole people that if Akpala is allowed to live with them, they were going to be infected with the disease. Akpala is condemned to death and the executioners lead him to the evil forest.

Akpala is greedy, selfish, unfeeling, foolish and a villain and could represent those in authority who exploits society for their own selfish means even when it comes to shedding innocent blood.

His colour is brown. A colour which is associated with the low in the society. Akpala's costume in his first appearance is an old pantaloons with an equally old smock. In movement three, at the wedding scene, he wears a

brown pantaloons and on top is a spotted brown and white jumper. He also wears a cap.

**Table 3.12**

**COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Akpala	Movt. I	1. Old brown smock 2. Old brown pantaloons 3. A pair of black slippers (Afro Moses) 4. Necklace (talisman)	Pull " Buy "	¢  45,000 15,000
	Movt. II	Same as in Movt. I		
	Movt. III	1. Brown and black agbada with cap (very old) 2. Same slippers as in Movts. I & II	Pull	

**Renderings follow**

FIGURE 3.14



AKPALA  
MOVT. I & II

FIGURE 3.15



AKPALA  
MOVT III

**DRUMMERS**

The drummers are youths aged between twenty-five and twenty-eight. They help in all the merry-makings in the play, and appear first in the forest accompanying the maidens during their initiation. Their presence help to heighten the melodious nature of the play. We see them in all the three movements of the production and in each instance with their beautiful performance. Their group helps to establish both the mood and rhythm required of the play.

They come on stage and work as a group, with all smiles on their faces exhibiting a feeling of peace, joy and harmony within.

Their colours are light blue, and blue-black and their costume will be a pantaloon, sleeveless top, but no foot wear.

**Table 3.13****COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Drummers	All Movts.	1. Stripped white and blue pantaloon 2. Light blue top 3. No foot wear	Buy “	¢ 260,000 10,000

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.16



DRUMERS  
ALL MOVTS.

**ELDER**

The elder is seventy years old, and he is at the palace with the King. The King consults this elder on almost all matters. He is the only person in Dim-Nyim-Lira who could stand up to say that he had flimsy memories of the name Kweku Ananse, and identifying him as Odomankoma's head weaver. A name he claims to have heard from legendary tales.

The elder fails in his duties as counsellor, for, it is infact, this elder who cushions the King to plung the whole Kingdom into disaster. He is too loose for an elder, cheap, not firm, hopeless, and greedy.

Because of his age, his colour will be grey and his costume will be a smock, pantaloon, with a pair of Northern slippers.

**Table 3.14****COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Elder	Movt. I	1. Stripped grey smock and pantaloon with cap. 2. A pair of brown slippers	Pull  Buy	¢  40,000
	Movt. III	1. Grey up & down agbada with cap 2. Same slippers as in first movement	Buy	120,000

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.17



THE ELDER  
MOVT. III

**GUARDS**

They number three, and their duty is to guide the King at the palace. They are also made to go on errands to and from the palace, and they position themselves behind the King as he sits in state.

One of them is asked to call the King when Ananse is brought as a captive into the palace and another one also calls in Mbasila, the head of the royal archers, on the Kings order.

The guards at the end of the play, display a great magnitude of foolishness in the wake of the confusion of Akpala's supposed affiliation on the people. At this point the guards were supposed to keep still and defend the King in case of an attack but, rather, we see them all running for dear life. What do we see with our security agencies? Are they all not self centred?

Their costumes will be pantaloon and the colour will be brown or earth, because brown is associated with the lowly in society.

**Table 3.16****COSTUME PLOT**

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>MOVEMENT</b>	<b>COSTUME</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Guards	All Movts.	1. Brown pantaloon 2. Waist band (brown) 3. Bare-chested 4. Bare footed	Pull Buy	¢ 20,000

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.18



GUARDS  
ALL MOVTS.

**ROYAL RETAINERS**

The royal retainers are four men aged between thirty-four and forty years. Their presence in the play is felt at the last scene when they come in carrying the corpse of Potagyiri.

Their very steps reveal that of sorrow and pity, and their colours for that matter will be red and black, and their costume, two loin cloths and head band.

**Table 3.17****COSTUME PLOT**

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>MOVEMENT</b>	<b>COSTUME</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Royal Retainers	Movt. III	1. Red loin cloth (one) (worn on top to reveal one arm)	Buy	¢ 120,000
		2. Black loin cloth (worn like the togas)	"	120,000
		3. Red head band	Pull	

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.19



ROYAL RETAINERS  
MOVT. III

**DANCERS**

The dancers are mainly males, in a group of four. They are also youths between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. The involvement of these dancers is an integral part of any festive mood, and the director intentionally introduces their presence not only to add to the clamour but also to give enough room for costume and scene changes.

The dance introduced in this particular case is the bambaya dance which goes with a bambaya skirt, a fan, a pair of tight, headgear (scarf), earrings and necklace.

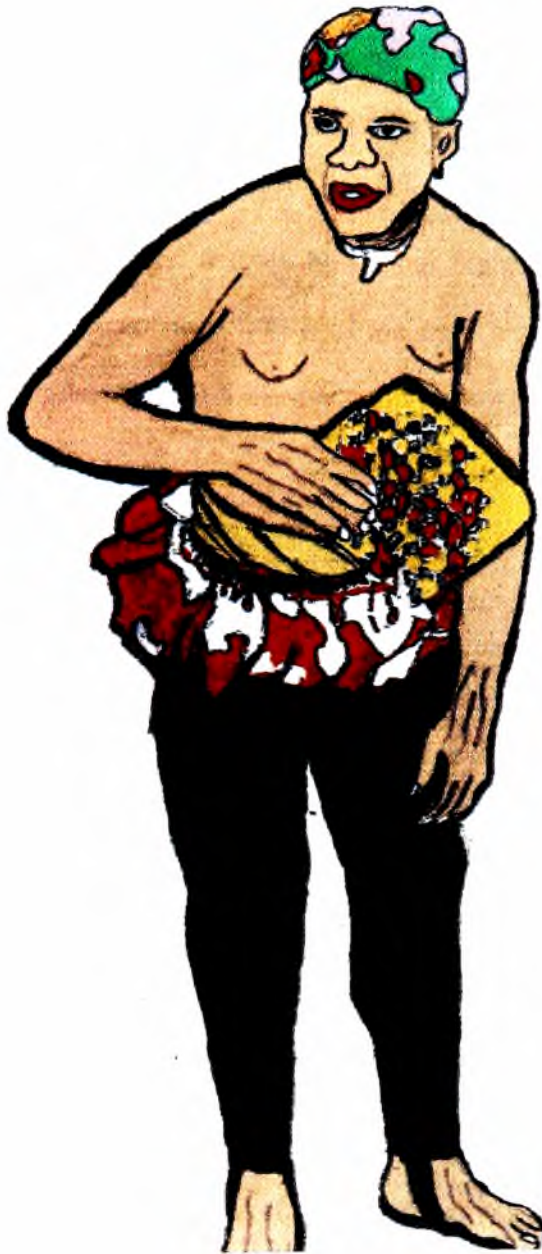
Their colour is a combination of black, red, white, and light green.

**Table 3.18****COSTUME PLOT**

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>MOVEMENT</b>	<b>COSTUME</b>	<b>TODO</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Dancers	All Movts.	(1) Black right (2) Bambaya skirt (3) Scarf (4) Fan (5) A pair of earrings	Pull " " " "	-

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.20



THE DANCERS  
ALL MOVTS

## ODUDU

Odudu is an idiot and a certified one, because when Ananse requests for one as a messenger to run errands for him in the bush, King Dosey landed on no other idiot in the whole Kingdom than Odudu.

To prove her idiocy, she is convinced that she can fetch water with a perforated gourd, and so when Ananse hands her the gourds she turns it up and down and happily runs away with it to the river side. But she virtually came back with no water and, as if disappointed in herself, she complains for having failed in her duty.

After the death of Potagyiri, it is Odudu whom Akpala calls for help for the burial. But as if unaware of the plot about Potagyiri's death, Odudu finally reveals the truth to King Dosey, proving to be the only sensible person in all the Kingdom.

Why can't our noble leaders involve the poor and down-trodden in their decision making? They have a lot up their sleeves but they are always ignored. No doubt then, that at the end of the play when King Dosey asks Odudu why he was not informed about the plot, her answer was very appropriate – "because nobody asked me."

Her costumes will be kaba and cloth with scarf (very very old partially torn, and different cover cloth). Her colours will be dull and she wears no slippers.

Table 3.19

**COSTUME PLOT**

CHARACTER	MOVEMENT	COSTUME	TO DO	BUDGET
Odudu	All Movements	1. Old kaba 2. Two different loin cloths (very old and almost tattered) 3. Head cover 4. No footwear	Pull " " "	 " " "

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.21



ODUDU  
ALL MOVTS

**WOMAN IN CROWD**

This woman will be about forty years old, and the writer uses her intentionally to create audience participation inherent in folktale story-telling sessions. When Ananse claims he is falsely criticized, it is this woman from the crowd who answers, and in her response, she tells the audience about Ananse's sly and deceitful ways, a habit which is a probability for such accusations.

By this timely intervention, she helps to prepare the minds of the listeners and to alert them to be careful with the character of Ananse. She, thus, exhibits boldness, frankness, and vigilance. Her costume will be a shawl, an anago and wrapper (very casual) and her colours will be pale yellow with brown patterns.

**Table 3.15****COSTUME PLOT**

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>MOVEMENT</b>	<b>COSTUME</b>	<b>TO DO</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Woman in Crowd	All Movts.	1. Pale yellow anago top and wrapper with head gear 2. Light brown shawl (flower patterns) 3. A pair of Northern slippers	Pull Buy	¢ 25,000

**Rendering follows**

FIGURE 3.22



WOMAN IN CROWD  
ALL MOVTS.

Table 3.20

**CHARACTER SUMMARY**

<b>Name of Character</b>	<b>Desire</b>	<b>Will</b>	<b>Moral Stance</b>	<b>Decorum</b>	<b>List of Adjectives</b>	<b>Mood-Intensity</b>
King Dosey	To amass wealth at all cost	Release Ananse if he is able to weave the beautiful Kente cloth	Self-scented, cruel, complacent	Highly respected, recognized	Cheap, weak, cheat, senseless, childish, stupid, hopeless	Happy and careless
Kwaku Ananse	Outwit anybody who comes his way	Use any foul means to marry the Princess	Self-scented, complacent, cruel	An actor, knowledgeable	Crafty, mean, slanderer, sly, rickster, cunning, deceitful, wise, intelligent	Happy and confident
Queen Fayasey	To see her daughter happily married to a royal	Make sure her daughter goes through her puberty rites, and gets a good husband	Respected, dutiful and humble	Morally good, caring, decent	Loving, gentle, obedient, submissive, sensitive, emotional	Gay, cool, relaxed
Sodziisa	Go through her puberty stage and get a suitor	Get a happy marriage	Respected, not firm	Respected, bossy	Loving, gentle, unpredictable, not trustworthy, unfaithful	Mixed feelings, anxious, relaxed
Akpala	Prove his loyalty to the Kingdom	Punish Potagyri and also to protect their inheritance	Courageous	Traitor	Vengeful, wicked, foolish, cheap, unforgiving selfish, murderer	Eager, anxious, vengeful

Name of Character	Desire	Will	Moral Stance	Decorum	List of Adjectives	Mood Intensity
Potagyiri	Marry the princess	Firm on that resolve	Courageous	Proud, bossy	Proud, wicked, fierce, brave	Boisterous, aggressive
Mbasila	Avail himself at all times in response to duty	Help establish the truth about the plot	Well behaved	Dutiful	Brave, intelligent, wise, hardworking, vigilant, observant	Aggressive
Maidens	Be able to go through the puberty rites successfully and wait for Mr. Right	Cleave to their mistress and be at her service	Modest	Dutiful	Obedient, serviceable, caring, loving	Happy, relaxed
Elder	To make sure Ananse is punished	To help the King in his pursuit	Weak	Cheap	Senseless, unreliable	Confused
Royal Retainers	Help unravel the truth	Be at the service of the nation	Brave	Dutiful	Serviceable, diligent, committed	Pensive
Woman in Crowd	Reveal Ananse's true nature	Stand for the truth	Straight forward	Brave	Unbending, wise, bold	Angry
Drummers	Respond to make life pleasant	Help in all occasions	Good	Lively	Happy, hardworking interesting	Happy
Guards	The King and the entire Kingdom is protected	To help the king to bring Ananse to book	Well-behaved	Dutiful	Cowards, cheap,	Hopeless
Odudu	Be accorded a certain degree of acknowledgement	Open up only when she is consulted	Good, hopeless yet settled	Useless, hopeless	Foolish, careless, vigilant,	Happy go gay
Priest	Prove to have Ananse killed	Stand for the truth at all cost	.....	Unbending	Wise, cautious, firm, bold	Highly annoyed

**Notes**

14. C. Hugh Holman. William Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Macmillan Publishing company, New York, 1986, p.81
15. Lois Fichner-Rathus, *Understanding Arts* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey 1989 p. 35.
16. Lurie Alison, *The language of clothes*, Random House inc., New York, 1981 Chapter VII.
17. Edwin Wilson. *The Theatre Experience*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994.
18. Michael Etherton. *The Development of African Drama*, Hutchison and Co. (Publishers) Ltd., London, 1982 p.29.

# **CAST IN REAL COSTUMES**

**FIGURE 3.23**



**KING DOSEY**

**FIGURE 3.24**



**QUEEN FAYOSEYI**

**FIGURE 3.25**



**KWAKU ANANSE**

**FIGURE 3.26**



**PRINCESS SODZIISA AND KWAKU ANANSE IN THEIR WEDDING COSTUMES**

**FIGURE 3.27**



**POTAGYIRI**

**FIGURE 3.28**



**KING DOSEY AND THE PRINCESS SODZIISA**

**FIGURE 3.29**



**KWAKU ANANSE AND THE MAIDENS DURING THE FOREST SCENE**

**FIGURE 3.30**



**THE PRIEST OF KOMPI**

**FIGURE 3.31**



**DRUMMERS**

**FIGURE 3.32**



**AKPAK THE HUNTER**

**FIGURE 3.33**



**ODUDU THE IDIOT**

**FIGURE 3.34**



**THE MAIDENS AND THE PRINCESS AT THE WEDDING SCENE**

**FIGURE 3.35**



**MBASILA AND THE ROYAL RETAINERS**

**FIGURE 3.36**



**SOME OF THE CAST BIDDING THE COUPLE FAREWELL, AS THEY LEAVE FOR THEIR MARITAL HOME**

**FIGURE 3.37**



**WORKING AT THE COSTUME SHOP**

**FIGURE 3.38**



**WORKING AT THE CUSTOM SHOP**

**FIGURE . 3.39**



**DRESSING ANANSE DURING DRESS REHEARSAL**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE WORKING JOURNAL

Costume design on *Ananse in the land of Idiots* started on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, 2000. I took the script from the director and read through three times, noting all the relevant points that would be needed for designing the costumes.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2000:**

I was able to complete my character analysis and the costume plot. This was basically what was going to help me to give the characters the required costumes.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2000:**

My sketches were made ready and put in colour. I also did my action chart to enable me know how many costumes each character would need.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

I arranged for a meeting with the director of the play and showed him my sketches. He gave his approval of them, and came out with some suggestions. I got to know about his concepts and his directorial approach.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

I presented my budget for the play to the director, but unfortunately he told me that money was not yet available. That same day, I had a meeting with my

Wardrobe girls. Through the meeting, I got to know that almost all of them knew how to sew. I talked about the play and what I intend to achieve. I also discussed the action chart, colour chart, and the costume plots with them. I made them aware that they were supposed to be at the costume shop every rehearsal time to help with the sewing.

**6<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

The director gave me part of the money for my budget. He told me to start with that, and promised to release the rest later. That same day, the cast came in to have their measurements taken.

**9<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

I went to town with the costume shop assistant and bought some of the fabrics. Because the money was not sufficient, I decided to costume the leading characters first. I bought fabrics for the Queen, King and Sodziisa's costume.

**10<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

This day was a very busy one, because apart from going to town again to purchase some materials, I had to come back, cut, and sew a dress for the princess Sodziisa for her first movement.

**11<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

Costumes for the King and Queen for their second movement was made. I had to pull from storage and make some adjustments on them.

**12<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

I made the Ananse's costume. After cutting it out, I gave it to the wardrobe girls to sew the spider web on both the front and back with hand needles. That work alone took us about three days to complete. But it came out very nicely.

**20<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

Costumes for the maidens first appearance was sewn. Something happened this day. After finishing with this costume, the director came in with two extra maidens requesting me to add them to the six, (what the script stated). But I explained to him that the fabric was finished and more so he did not bring extra money for them.

**23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2000:**

I consulted the director for the rest of the budget for the show, but I was highly disappointed because the director told me that there was no money. I went back to my supervisor and told her of this unfortunate situation. She gave me all the necessary encouragement and asked me to relax, but she advised me to start pulling for all the cast, so that if funds were not released on time, I

would not be caught up. I took her advice and started pulling, but trying at the same time to maintain my colours and design concepts.

**28<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

The wardrobe girls were assigned to put finishing touches to some of the costumes. For instance, the maidens' costumes needed some fastening and knitting, and also Mbasila's costume needed to be hemmed.

**30<sup>th</sup> October, 2000:**

All costumes which were ready were neatly ironed, labelled, and hanged on a rack.

**31<sup>st</sup> October, 2000:**

I gave out the names of the characters whose costumes were ready to the director and asked him to announce during rehearsal that, they should come and fit them. By noon this same day, some of them had come in to fit their costume. Ananse was not feeling comfortable with his outfit. This was because of the wire gauze I had introduced into the costume for the projection of his eight legs. I had to do something about it.

**1<sup>st</sup> November, 2000:**

I worked on Ananse's costume by reducing the length of the wire gauze. He came in to fit. I asked him to make certain movements with the costume. He

did all that, and I realized it was perfect. I made him do the movement because he had a lot of vigorous actions in the play and his costumes should not be an obstruction. It should rather help him to move freely.<sup>19</sup>

### **2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2000:**

I finally decided to use my own money to buy some fabrics and footwears. I talked to my supervisor about the problem of finance and also about my intention of using my own money. He approved of it and promised to see to it that, every pesewa I spent on the production was given back to me. I consulted the director of the play and told him of this meeting and the outcome. He also gave his consent. From there, I went to town and bought some fabrics and footwear. When I came back, I managed to cut the wedding outfit for Sodziisa and Ananse. All hands were on deck because we had limited time. I was very tired that day, but I managed to work on the costumes for both the King and the Queen. These costumes were for their second movement.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2000:**

We worked on the costume for the King and the Queen. I had done the cutting the day before, so work on it moved very fast. By noon this day both costumes were ready.

**4<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

Odudu came into the costume shop to fit her costume. I realised that her clothes were too old and very weak. The least movement could expose her skin. I went back to storage to get a better one for her.

**6<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

I rushed to town to buy some trimmings for some of the costumes. When I came back, I contacted the Dance Ensembles (a residence Dance group of the University of Ghana) for some talisman, flying whisk, and Northern Boots. They were very helpful and cooperative.

**7<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

I spent time at the costume shop putting finishing touches to all the costumes. I was still left with what to give to Sodiziisa and the maidens in their second appearance. I went back to the storage and tried to get something suitable for them. I talked to my supervisor on my decision for those costumes. She also asked why I wanted to use them. I gave my explanation, she advised me and gave me some suggestions. They worked perfectly.

**8<sup>th</sup> November, 2000**

Almost all the costumes were ready. All the characters came in again to do a final fitting. They were asked to give their comments on them. I wanted to know how comfortable they were.<sup>20</sup> But almost everybody was satisfied with

his or hers. I showed them their costumes for each movement. I also advised them on how to handle the costumes, with care. I told them that I would assign wardrobe girls to each of them and so they should know who would take care of their costumes before the technical dress rehearsal, day.

**9<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

Almost all the costumes were ready, with the necessary accessories. They were ironed again and hanged with characters' names and specific movements written and pasted on them. I called the director to come and inspect them. He was very happy, that we were able to do a lot with just a little. The lighting designer was also called in to have a look at the costume. The reason is that, the colours for the costumes will help him to select the appropriate gels. Some gels can change certain colours.

**10<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

The set designer came to have a look at the costumes. We discussed a lot about the colours that I had used. This gave him the chance to do some slight changes on certain colours he intended using. The guards at the palace were too close to the wall. Their costume was brown and the painting of the wall was also brown. The guards were swallowed in. We both decided to give the wall a different tone of brown so that the guards could stand out. He went ahead with the decision and it worked.

**13<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

I had a meeting with my wardrobe girls. I instructed them on how to handle the costume, as well as taking good care of the characters. I also told them what their duties were. That was, they were supposed to be ready for any scene changes. They were not supposed to be seen in the auditorium during the performance. And also, they should collect and hang all costumes after the show.

**14<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

Names of characters and their attendant were pasted on the entrances of both the male and the female changing rooms. This was done to enable artistes to get easy access to their costumes. Also costumes are not found loitering at the back stage after productions, because, the attendants would be tasked to account for any loss after the show.<sup>21</sup>

**15<sup>th</sup> November, 2000:**

It was the day for the technical dress rehearsal so students came in on time for their makeup. From there, they came for their costumes. I went round and made sure that all costumes were worn exactly how I would want it. My supervisor came around to make sure if I was ready to be assessed. I told her I was. The show started at 7:00pm, and I sat by my supervisor with my pen and paper. She pointed out certain things and I noted them down.



imagination of that character was great but this was shattered due to scarce funding. I had to rely on the school's storage, pulling costumes to fit all the movements but making sure at the same time to work within my design concepts.

A case in point is the King's second appearance in which he comes in blue and green agbada. It was my intention to give my King, gold (wealth), but apart from the monetary aspect, the size of the character forced me to pull from storage, a green and blue pantaloon which was quite sizeable and which fitted him perfectly. What I was then left with was to buy the same fabric and colour, and out of that make a smock for the pantaloon. This then gave me the chance to costume the Queen in lemon-green to march that of her husband.

Having struggled through with the King, my next approach was how to costume Ananse. To make him look strange as indicated in the script by Akpala, I chose the jute fabric, something which is not normally used in making clothes.

Back to the financial aspect. At a point when I realised that the rest of funding was not forth coming, I decided to use my own money to enable me to meet the dead line, because I hate working under pressure. What I was able to lay hands on was only five hundred thousand cedis (¢500,000) bringing it up to one million cedis (¢1,000,000). But imagine having to work with one million cedis, instead of three million. A real struggle and challenge began since I had to work with this scanty money.

Costumes for Sodziisa and the maidens were next on my priority list, and so I devoted part of the amount for them. The rest of the money was then used on the wedding dress.

Another unpleasant encounter was this: On the night prior to the technical dress rehearsal, I sat in the rehearsal, and even though I had earlier on informed the director about certain lines of Ananse conflicting with his costume, I still realised he had not effected any change.

I was faced with the obligation to change his straight top costume into a smock. I immediately organized the wardrobe girls, and by inserting V-shaped fabrics into the various slits that we had made in his top costume, we immediately got a smock to apprehend those lines.

My wardrobe girls were a marvellous set, but for scarce funding the costumes would have been ready even a week earlier. All the same, we were not caught up with time, for costumes were ready on the day of the dress rehearsal and everybody's costume fitted perfectly well.

In all, it was an unpleasant encounter having to work within limited budget, and having at the same time to meet a deadline. But before I could successfully arrive at my design concepts, I had periodic consultations and discussions with both the lighting and the set designers in order to be able to achieve unity.

## **STYLE**

As said earlier on in one of the chapters, the play, according to the director, is based on a mixed culture. But the use of names had great bearing

on the costumes. This gave me the chance to use diverse cultures, but giving dominance to the Northern part of Ghana. And so from the intensive research that I did from the library, magazines and films, I was able to costume the play to suit the period, which is characterised by the use of smock, pantaloons, agbada, wrapper, and loincloth. Not only did this research help in bringing out the period, but it also helped to establish the locale of the play as well as contributing to the rhythmic pattern.

**Notes**

19. Edwin Wilson. *The Theatre Experience*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill Inc., New York, 1994 p.356.
- 2.0 Rosemary Ingham Elizabeth Covey. *The Costumer's Handbook*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980 p. 101.
- 2.1 School of fine Arts, University of California, *American Theatre*, Vol. 10 No. 10, Theatre communications Groups. 1993.
22. See Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through cloths*, Viking, New York, 1978.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal in theatre is to bring all the elements together to create one integrated whole. Proper emergence of these elements are a pre-requisite to producing a good theatre. Theatre is a gamble. The many steps leading to a production, and the great number of people involved in bringing it about, increase the chances for error along the way. Fortunately, we do not need perfection in a theatre event for it to be meaningful; a small mistake or miscalculation will not necessarily mar the overall effect, and moreover the ultimate integration of a theatre event takes place in each spectator's mind.<sup>23</sup>

But how do you as a theatre personnel feed the minds of your audience? (1) Is it attempted by haphazardly working on your area so that you confuse the minds of the people in the auditorium? (2) Do you try your best to use your special area to help them give proper judgment, hence understanding the play. (3) What about the separate elements of a production: are those watching aware of what each contributes to the whole production, and how they are also related? Surely, when these varied elements come together successfully, it offers the audiences a particular rare experience.<sup>24</sup> But each element of the theatre has its own meaning and impact, a language which needs to be visible to all without an interpreter.

Throughout this presentation, we have seen that by reading and analysing a play very well, the costume designer is able to help the actor or actress to bring out the hidden character.

Basically people wear clothing not only for comfort but for the information they want to give others about themselves, and in the theatre this language is best transported when the designer makes conscious move to consider the period in which the play occurs, the style, sex, occupation, social status of the character, and also his relationship with other characters.<sup>25</sup>

The people of Dim-Nyim-Lira were not given suits or jerkins but rather their names synchronized what they wore.

In a given situation where Ananse is described as having strange costume, his clothes tried to convey that. It was not at all difficult to recognize the idiot, Odudu and this was because of the way that character was costumed.

Moods were clearly established. The gaiety during both the wedding and the initiation celebrations were experienced through the use of colours differentiating it from the end of the play where everybody looked sad.

It was not that difficult for the audience to accord status to the individual characters, and this was due to the fact that costumes for the high class differed both in fabric and in texture.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, by proper and cordial collaboration with the director, the set and lighting designers, a good team work could merge out avoiding any cross purposes.

Proper costumina has a wide impact in the theatre: its input, when administered wrongly, can jeopardize a good course and a good one can merit a standing ovation.<sup>27</sup>

## **SUGGESTION**

To this end, I will like to give the following suggestions which could help. Directors must ensure the use of qualified costume designers who will be able to give what is required so that the minds of the audience are not set wondering.

Of late costumes used in most of our Ghanaian films are incongruous, and in most instances do not march the occasion, let alone the mood. A gorgeously dressed woman can be seen very busy preparing meals in the kitchen, and the reason for this wrong costuming is that, actors are sometimes allowed to bring their own costumes. I think it is not a bad idea any way but what I would like to caution is thus: if for any reason actors are to produce their clothes, I still think there should be a capable costume designer who would be given a script to read and analyse so that she would be able to assess costumes brought from individual characters, whether they fall within all the requirements I have already talked about.

My other observation is thus: by way of advertising their products, some fashion designers have found their way into the theatre. They voluntarily give out their clothes to the film makers and what do we sometimes see on our screens? Almost everybody is in the sheda material with a lot of heavy decorations regardless of status, occupation, occasion etc. Ultimately this situation creates boredom making everything to look flat. Mr. Film Maker, what is fashionable may not be constituted for an appropriate costume.

Last but not the least, the costume section of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana is quite young and is, therefore, struggling hard to find its footing. Bravo!

What I will suggest is this: costume design should be made a core subject at the very first year when students enrol in the School (if even it is an introduction to costume design). This will enable students to have a basic idea of what costume design is all about, and also help to avoid those embarrassing comic scenes that we experience daily at the costume shop, when students, especially freshers are assigned to costume a production.

Having tried with this play, to give all that it entails to costume a play, I hope that this thesis project is going to be a model for the up and coming costume designers.

Costume has such a great impact in the theatre, because it has a loud and sweet voice when used appropriately.

**Notes**

23. Edwin Wilson. Alvin Goldfarb. *Theatre the Lively Art*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., U.S.A. 1991 p. 9.
24. See: Lawrence Langner. *The Importance of Wearing Clothes*, Hastings House, New York, 1959.
25. See: James Laver. *The concise History of Costume and Fashion*, Abrams, New York 1969.
26. Lucy Barton. *Historic Costume for the Stage*, Walter H. Baker Col., 1969 Chapter 1.
27. James laver. *Modesty in Dress*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1969, Chapter 1.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

Regina Kwakye-Opong was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1957. It was a Thursday. Regina was the first child of Mr. J.C. Kwakye-Opong and Madam Beatrice Adjei.

She started her primary education at the Presbyterian Primary School at Obogu in the Ashanti Akim District. Since her father was a school teacher who was always on transfer, Regina spent each year of her primary and middle schooling in a different town.

This trend of affairs was not very healthy for her education, so in 1970, at the age of thirteen, Regina was finally sent to Koforidua / Effiduase to stay with her grandmother. In 1972, whilst in standard three, she took the common entrance examination and gained admission to Dunkwa Secondary School, now Boa Amponsem Secondary School in Dunkwa.

She spent the first three years of her secondary education in the above mentioned school, and then to Apam Secondary School at Apam. She obtained both the 'O' and 'A' Level Certificates in 1977 and 1979 respectively.

Regina enrolled with Kalbs Dressmaking and Embroidery School at Accra and passed out in 1987. With this background, she was employed as a needlework teacher at Ted Preparatory School, Mamprobi, Accra in 1989.

She gained admission to the University of Ghana Legon in 1990, where she offered Diploma in Theatre Arts (Drama) and majored in Costume. She obtained a three year Diploma Certificate in Theatre in 1993.

Regina was made to do her two-year National Service with the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, from 1993 to 1995. After the Service the University employed her, and up to date she has worked with this institution.

Presently, Regina is offering Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Theatre Arts and is majoring in Costume Designing. She will graduate in December 2001.