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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF COSTUME AND MAKE-UP IN NIGERIAN THEATRE

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Introduction

This essay discusses the evolution of costume and make-up practices within the Nigeria theatre. It is done alongside the development of Nigerian Theatre practice, because there is no way we can trace the history of costume and make-up without taking adequate cognisance of the context within which they were and are still used. In the light of this understanding, exploring the developmental process of Nigerian theatre practice is desirable.

According to Ogunbiyi (1981:3), the exact "origins of theatre and drama is speculative", however, this account for the numerous schools of thought that abound on this issue. This is so because it is difficult to pinpoint in chronological time the exact date when theatre began in Nigeria, due to dearth of written records and authentic oral tradition. In addition to that, the multi-ethnic nature of the Nigerian nation with her numerous ethnic-based theatrical activities also calls to question the accuracy of any historical documentation on theatre practice. But irrespective of this, two theatre traditions have been observed to be paramount to the general understanding of theatre practice in Nigeria, and that is what we are going to adopt for our historical overview in this discourse. They are:

- (i) The Indigenous Theatre Tradition and
- (ii) The Contemporary Theatre Tradition

The Indigenous Theatre Tradition

This theatrical form is mostly acknowledged to be the first type of theatre idiom to emerge in the history of Nigerian theatrical culture. This is because it is subsumed in the culture of the people; hence, the relationship is not far-fetched. It is a kind of theatre where societal expression, social pattern of life, ethical values, moral essence, religion and history are mirrored in a dynamic living form, as visualized in the numerous robust indigenous theatrical traditions of most societies in Nigeria such as religious ritual enactment, festival performances, initiation ceremonies, story telling sessions, masquerade displays and so on.

Nevertheless, in these traditional performances, indigenous actors, costumes, make-ups, masks, songs, mimes, folktales, dances have become the major high points of the communication of this theatre moulds among various communities in Nigeria, thus, bringing to light the fact that, costume and make-up emerged concurrently with indigenous actors, dancers, and musicians on the Nigerian Theatrical scene. In this regard, costume and make-up can be assumed to be as old as Nigerian theatre. To support this observation, Adedeji (1986:103) asserts that:

The Indigenous Nigerian Theatre generally is an activity in which an actor takes a role other than himself through mime, speech, song, or movement with the use of performing aids (costume, make-up, properties, mask) conveys or communicates a message to an audience which may be visible or invisible participatory or non participatory.

Hence, confirming that, the dynamics of aesthetics in the aforementioned traditional performances depended largely on the lavish use of colourful costume and make-up in Nigerian indigenous performances as found in Ekpe, Ogun, Edi, Obitun, Oshun, Ekuechi and Sango festivals among others. For instance, at Ife, the Edi festival that is otherwise known as "The play of Moremi" is usually a seven-day event. It is a festival that displays a lot of colourful costumes and

make-up in the re-enactment of Moremi's singular heroic deed; in the emancipation of the people of Ife from the Igbos. In this festival performance, different colourful costumes made of different materials like Aso-Oke, Sanyan, Ankara are usually worn by members of the community. The major characters in this traditional festival re-enactment are perceived in mythological characters like: 'Obatala', 'Obalufe', 'Obalaayan', 'Oduduwa', 'Yeyegbasa', 'Moremi' etc. They are costumed in different materials in form of 'Aso-Oke' 'Aran', 'Oja' 'Raffia leaves', 'Sinde', while the accessories are cowries, beads, tortoise shells, etc. The make-up is local white chalk and camwood stylishly designed on their faces and bodies where appropriate. Likewise, in the ritualistic manifestation of this same festival, bogus white wrappers and white local chalk are extensively and creatively used on the priest, his acolytes and the carrier of *Edi* known as 'Tele' in the dramatic enactment of the rites of this festival.

Other traditional theatrical institutions like masquerade displays, initiation ceremonies, story-telling theatres also attest to the extensive utility of colourful and elaborate indigenous costume, masque and make-up designs in the evolution of these arts as theatre. For instance, Stewart (1960:10) gives a picturesque description of Ekong masquerade festival dance costume of the Ibibios from the Eastern part of Nigeria thus:

The face and head of the dancers are completely obscured with a table-like structure fastened to the head. This is covered with brightly coloured fringed handkerchiefs and on top appears the head of a female goddess. This head is carved in soft wood and painted with white or pink with little mirrors as decorative base, because the Ibibio gods and goddess are supposed to have come from the waters of the rivers. However, the hands and feet of the dancer are carefully covered and a colourful cloth is usually worn about the waist of the dancer.

From the picture painted above by Stewart, one can easily deduce that the Indigenous Nigerian theatrical costumes and make-up are characterized with great artistic and aesthetic artistry deeply rooted in

the culture of the Nigerian people. This postulation affirms Adedeji's (1986:103) observation that:

Every theatre is informed by the nature of the culture from which it is construed and formalized.

It is however paramount to state at this juncture that apart from the identified raw indigenous theatre modes (ritual, folktales, festivals and masquerade art) there are some more organized and popular indigenous entertainment forms which are refined out of the aforementioned theatre forms in both the traditional and contemporary Nigerian society. Among these are the Yoruba Alarinjo theatres, Annang drama of Ibibio, Bornu puppet shows as well the Hausa comical art of Yankamanci and the Tiv Kwagh-hir among others. In this regard, Kwaghir puppet theatre for example, is

constructed from the Tiv culture as patterns of action showing the people's understanding of their life, how it was, how it is at present, or how it should be, hence, these are replete in the immense artistic and aesthetic creativity projected by the use of colourful and spectacular masque, costumes and props in the puppetry display of this popular theatre aesthetics (Hagher, 1990:12).

Thus, Kwagh-hir costumes are found in different shades of colours and varied design concepts, which are spectacularly sewn into different styles, so as to integrate various societal activities into the Tiv design culture. Therefore, the masks of this theatre tradition are elaborate, reflecting the versatile aesthetic background of the Tiv people. In view of this, Enem (1981:250) highlights that:

The Paraphernalia of Kwagh-hir are diverse in types and moral connotation. The puppets especially, are in different styles. Some are naturalistic, other grotesque and ridiculous, but all reflecting the moral prejudices and sanctions of the community. Historical awareness is shown in some puppets which represents event such as when the first motor bike was ridden in Gboko or the first

woman emerged or when modern dress styles of European design gained local acceptance.

Yankamaci – Hausa comedian theatre is another kind of popular indigenous theatre entertainment that is widely accepted among the Hausa audience. It is a craft that these highlighted Hausa comedians have been practising for so many years to the extent that whenever it is performed, it is greeted with a resounding applause and enthusiasm, because of the creative skills of performers and the special modes of expression that characterize their dramaturgy. Example of this expression is visible in their costumes. In view of this, Gidley (1981:282) describes 'Dara' as a multi-coloured face cap stylistically worn by lead comedian; to make the audience laugh. 'Tun tu tassel' is also Riga gown worn on the apron of the performers to give aesthetic effect to their dance steps when they are dancing, while 'Hamila' is a "sword swing" where the swords used for their theatrical displays are kept and lastly, the performers' bare bodies; that are exposed from the shoulder to the waist are also costumes because they are specially designed that way in order to elicit comic response from the audience.

But among all the mentioned popular indigenous theatrical forms, the Yoruba Alarinjo theatre was "an highly prodigious and electrifying efflorescence of Nigerian theatrical culture" (Ododo, 2000:41). Hence, the research carried out by Adedeji on it is found to be quite resourceful to this study in the sense that, it pinpoints a time in the history of Nigerian theatre when this dramatic tradition was said to have developed alongside ritual performances while still keeping aspects of the traditional ritual festivals. Thus, our study elaborates on the performance aspects of the Alarinjo groups, which consisted primarily of song, lavish costume, masque and extra-ordinary spectacle. Citing Clapperton (1590), Adedeji claims that:

The Alarinjo theatre first emerged from the dramatic roots of the egungun (masquerade) as ancestor worship during the reign of Alaafin Ogbolu who acceded to the throne at Oyo, Igboho about 1590, as a court Entertainment (Adedeji, 1981: 221).

The foregoing has shown clearly that it is from Oyo's court entertainment, that the Alarinjo developed its professional roots. Little wonder then that Alarinjo theatre convention is creatively composed to reflect the indigenous culture of the Yoruba. In short, its production style is a composite representation of high level of creativity and indigenous artistry. This is reflected in the spectacular costumes they used such as *Labalaba*; a butterfly costume and *Ago*; an overall garment, etc.

Above that, the visual aesthetics of the Alarinjo performance mode were consciously amplified in the creative use of design elements and principles in order to enhance their performance outlook. Examples of these are found in Adedeji's repertoire of Alarinjo's theatrical masks. Such masks are "the sociological mask" which he divided into two categories, the non-stranger and the stranger elements in the society. With adroit use of outlandish costumes, such stranger elements as 'Oyinbo', (whiteman), the 'Tapa' and 'Gambari', (Northern Nigerian character types), as well as Idahomi warriors were incorporated into this mode. The non-stranger-elements included 'Abiku' ('the child that is literally born to die') 'Omuti' (Drunkard) 'Pansaga' (Adulteress), Apon (Bachelor) and a few others.

But aside this particular masque categorization, other masque that were used were artistically designed for totemic, satiric and mythological characters; Sango, Osun, Obatala while the satiric masque are 'Didinrin' (Moron), 'Elekedidi' (Numps) and 'Onimu oru' (Nosey), etc. This Alarinjo composite masque dramaturge therefore informs Akinwale (2000:119) conclusion that:

Make-up was not necessary, since the costumes had a mask or net and hence, faces were covered. However, the Alarinjo movement dwindled into oblivion with the incursion of Christianity and the troupe began going down considerably.

What the latter part of the above quotation means is that the decline of Alarinjo traditional Yoruba theatre was due to religious influences in the early and middle 19th century, with the upsurge of Islamic influences from the North and open hostility from the missionary

societies from the South, the Alarinjo theatre group lost their popularity and dwindled into the limbo of forgotten memory.

Then came the 1820s and a new theatrical movement evolved. This marked the commencement of entertainments of non-African origin on the Nigerian soil and this outlined the beginning of concerts of European nature in contemporary Nigerian societies as seen in concert performances in churches in Lagos and Abeokuta in the 40s. Later on, this tradition was moved out of church and was established as professional theatre in Nigeria.

Contemporary Theatre Tradition

The contemporary Nigerian theatre tradition is a mixture of African and Western dramatic styles or influence because it depicts an integration of African culture and Western production styles. It can therefore be divided into three broad categories: the popular theatre or what Akinwale (1993:14) basically called the travelling theatre tradition, the literary theatre, and the commercial theatre.

The Popular Theatre

Hubert Ogunde is an exponent of this theatre form in Nigeria. Ododo (2000:41) posits that he has been variously described as the "trunk", "father" "doyen", "starter" and founder of modern Nigerian theatre practice by different established scholars like Clark, Barber and Ogundijo, Gumucio-Dagron and Beier, etc. An annotation to this statement can be deduced from the fact that he is the first to evolve a formidable professional "actor-manager" travelling company in Nigeria called "the African Music Research party" in 1946. In fact, Clark (1974:3) asserts that:

By this act, Ogunde began the rise of modern professional theatre in Nigeria a movement in which he remains the supreme artist and father figure.

Ododo (2000:43) also sheds light on this assertion while observing that:

Hubert Ogunde's appearance on the Nigerian theatre scene opened up a new vista for theatre practice in Nigeria because of the formal dimension he brought into theatre presentation, using Western models to harness indigenous materials while being mindful of his audience and environment.

From the quotation above, it is obvious that Ogunde's theatre was a combination of influence of Western dramatic forms as seen in opera and cantata and the adoption of repertory system and the tenets of the Alarinjo theatre. This trait is what Obafemi (2001:14) summed up this way:

The two shaping forces in his work are thus the "pagan" and the "Christian": These influences are reflected in the synthetic process of his theatre.

This synthetic process is however reflected in his aesthetic sense, as projected in his use of technical aids in the articulation of his production, concept and style, where great attention is paid to elaborate and colourful costumes and make-up in his theatre practice, thereby supporting Ododo's (1994:155) view that costume and make-up designs are "where the resilient forte and expressiveness of this theatre lies". However, in 1946, Clark (1974:4) also brought out the intercultural concept in Ogunde's production style and costume design while appraising the performance of the actors in his play "Mr. Devil's Money". She describes with relish:

A set of twenty-four stars all donning costumes of up country designs and dancing to the strain of music supplied by a band of ancient instruments.

By this description, it is evident that Ogunde has changed the direction of Yoruba theatre dramaturgy and gave it a new impetus and dimension with the western flavour. This can be perceived in the carnival-like costumes and make-ups worn by his actors, in the closing plee of one of the concert party performances at Abeokuta in 1953. However, this is not to conclude that, in all Ogunde's productions,

costume and make-up are fashioned after acculturation concept. However, production concept is the sole determinant of Ogunde's costume and make-up designs. As seen in the plays like "Olomoge", "Yoruba Ronu", "Oh Ogunde"!, "Seranko S'Enia" and "Ayanmo" where traditional costume and make-up are colourfully and beautifully designed to aid production style and actors' characteristics. (Clark, 1979:32). To this effect, Omoregie (1990:185) highlights in the Igbeyawo Oba scene in his play "Oh Ogunde"! Thus:

The female members of the company were attired in uniform *aso-oke* wrappers secured under their armpits, they wore handbands of cowrie-shells, while Ogunde in his role as the Oba was dressed in a full length wrapper of woven Igbira *Shaki* cloth with a beaded crown.

Apart from Ogunde, the euphoria of Nigerian Independence also brought with it an explosion of creativity in the urban arts oriented towards new African forms and a rejection of colonial influences. Thus, some other artists; Duro Ladipo, Kola Ogunmola, Moses Olaiya, Oyin Adejobi also started their own actor-managers travelling theatre practice in the 60s.

The first in this roll was Duro Ladipo, who created spectacular productions dramatizing themes from Yoruba mythology and history. His trilogy: *Oba koso* (The king did not hang), *Oba moro* (The king of ghost), and *Oba Waja* (The king is dead) published in (1964), reflected history of old Oyo empire. However this traditional value and aesthetics is also transferred to costumes and make-up designs of his plays, in the sense that, his costumes and make-up are spectacularly and colourfully designed to reflect his deep cultural heritage. Example of such costumes can be captured in Sango and Oya's costumes in (1965). In Omoregie's (1990:186) description of these highlighted costume and make-up:

The costume for Oba koso consists of the layered skirts in predominantly red hues of Sango devotees, a tunic top sewn intricately with charms, animal skins and cowrie shells, giving it a most ancient and authentic look. On his

head, he wears the carved wooden headdress reminiscent of the woven hair of the arch-deity, and in his hand, a gourd rattle covered with charms. His wife Abiodun, in the role of Oya, Sango's consort, is attired in *aso-oke* wrappers secured under her armpits with an *adire* piece around her waist. Her woven hairdo is decorated with white beads, a profusion of which she also wears around her neck.

Kola Ogunmola is another brilliant actor and his company's director who specialized in domestic comedies like "Ife Owo" in his production. But his most successful was "Omuti Apa", an adaptation of Amos Tutu Ola's *The Palmwine Drinkard*, where explosive visual aesthetics in his design concept are brought to the surface via beautiful costume and make-up design and properties enriched by Yoruba cultural designs. To this end, Beier (1981:328) opines that:

Demas Nwoko production added some tightness and speed, without interfering with Ogunmola's basic style of performance. His costume design and sets were brilliant and spectacular, thus, giving the play a very wide appeal.

Further contributions in modern professional travelling theatres can also be seen in Moses Olaiya, Oyin Adejobi, Lere Paimo, Lamidi Ayangelu theatre companies. Where artistic and aesthetic harmony were adequately expressed in their creative prowess, as evinced in Moses Olaiya's farcical plays "Owo Ife", "Omidan" etc which integrated symbolic costumes and elaborate make-up into its theatrical repertory. In fact, Ayanganlu's "Iya Olomo" costumes and masque dramaturge were usually an alluring and spectacular sight to behold by the audience in all his theatrical outings. To this extent, Adedeji and Ekwuazi (1998:58) explains that:

The concept of creativity is a common denominator found in the works of the various artists of the Yoruba travelling theatre. There is a common belief in the principle of spectacle and the concept of transformation as applied to the theatre. The artists, by utilizing the resource of the

basic elements of colour, sound and movement, produce a fusion of the surrealistic and the common-place; realism as a mode hardly relates to the aesthetic sensibility of the Yoruba.

Literary Theatre

In Nigeria, this theatre culture blossomed in the post-independence era. It is a product of the system of education introduced by the British colonial administration into Nigeria's political system before independence in 1960. The aim essentially is to use this theatre as cultural enlightenment programme to dialogue with people in English. Oti (1978:24) therefore aptly describes this theatre tradition as a "theatre, which consciously concerned themselves with both aesthetics and techniques of theatre via the text". However this is seen in the first theatre of English expression: Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan in 1948. In alliance with the motive of establishing this theatre, the presentational style is a blend of Nigerian dramatic tradition and Western convention, but in ratio, the influence of Western style is more prevalent. This is replete in the artistic concerns of this theatre as seen in works of early playwrights, dramatists, designers and critics that characterized the activities of this literary theatre. To this end, Adedeji and Ekwuazi (1998:24) highlighted that,

of the playwrights and practitioners of this theatre, Wole Soyinka's "The 1960 Mask" and Orisun (1963) and Ola Rotimi's Oriolokun Theatre Company (1968) have been identified as two leaders of professional theatre in English expression.

This judgement is borne out of the number of actors, writers, directors, and designers that Wole Soyinka and Ola Rotimi have worked with, trained and influenced in the course of their interaction in the practice of this theatre idiom.

According to Adelugba (1987:22), glaring examples can be drawn from the crop of competent costume and make-up designers that characterized the technical production of Wole Soyinka's plays such as

in Demas Nwako, Esoshe Suinner, Danielle Lyndersey to mention only a few. In fact, most of the plays produced by Soyinka *Trial of Brother Jero* (1960), *Lion and the Jewel* (1963), *Kongi's Harvest* (1965) at the Arts Theatre, Ibadan benefited tremendously from the expertise of these costume and make-up production staff. As a matter of fact, Nwoko, Lyndersey and Folarin among others are early costume and make-up designers in the 60s, 70s, 80s, who made their marks in these areas of theatre specializations at Art Theatre, Ibadan. For instance, Olusola (1965:304) reviewed Nwoko's enormous imaginative sense in costume design in Kola Ogunmola's *Palmwine Drinkard* (1963) as thus:

He employed all theatre devices, classic and modern costumes, settings, lighting, perfect timing; acting, sound effects and stagecraft ... the costuming is lavish, alive, original and a bit incongruous in places.

Likewise, in Ola Rotimi's plays, the ingenuity of technical designers was always reflecting in the beautiful costume and make-up designs of his plays, such as *Kunrumi*, *Ovoramwen Nogbaisi*, *The Gods are not to Blame* and a host of others. This was achievable because Ola Rotimi made use of experienced designers like Agbo Folarin, Demas Nwako, Danielle Lyndersay etc in his theatrical build up, since his plays were usually entrenched in African proverbs and idioms. Hence, the need for aesthetic and artistic visual design of costume and make-up in his plays, this made his production to be unique and invariably, it drew enthusiastic response from both university and popular audience, including professional travelling theatre practitioners, a success Jeyifo (1988:52) attributes to:

The influence of the university based artist and companies, with their more formally polished principles and techniques of stage lighting and costume design.

However, with the emergence of playwrights like Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Kole Omotosho, Olu Obafemi, etc. one sees a new vigour and versatility in the Nigerian literary theatre. For instance, the

production of Femi Osofisan's plays reflects the occidental influences of "poor theatre idiom" and a demystification of technical aids of the theatre because great premium is given to low budget (Akinwale, 2000:132). In view of this, most of the plays directed by him were mainly devoid of aesthetic effects because fragmented costumes with little or no consideration for colour symbolism were utilized, and when make-up was applied on actors, they were usually very bare (Ododo, 1988:148), as replete in *Once upon Four Robbers* (1977), *Midnight Hotel* (1985). But for others: Olu Obafemi, Bode Sowande, Kole Omotosho visual aesthetics of the theatre was paramount to them as seen in Bode Sowande's plays *Flamingo* in (1982) *Circus of Freedom Square* in (1985) at the University of Ibadan Arts Theatre, where fantastic and colourful costumes and make-up were utilized to aid actors characterization and the overall production styles of the plays, (Adelugba, 1987:23), in spite of his Marxist ideological postulations.

At this juncture, it is worthy of note that apart from the University of Ibadan, other Nigerian literary Theatre Arts Departments also evolved along the line in the 60s, 70s and 80s such as Dramatic Arts Department at the University of Ife, Theatre Arts Department at Ahmadu Bello University, Performing Arts Department at the University of Ilorin, etc. where Theatre Arts courses are taught and practised.

But regardless of the emergence of more theatre schools, Western theatrical conventions still remain the gauge by which production concepts and styles are actualised in these Nigerian literary theatres, because costume and make-up designs still tend towards eclecticism. Western plays such as Sophocle's *Antigone*, were and are still being costumed in the usual garments that emphasized the grace of the Greek theatre, where movements through constantly changing of the folds of garments characterized the costumes of Classical Greece.

Similarly, make-up that is pertinent to the Greek age is still given required consideration in the Nigerian theatre. Apart from that, even Nigerian plays are still conditioned by the Western specifications of theatrical culture because they are determined by Western production styles of Realism, Theatricalism, Symbolism, Impressionism, etc. However, this is not to conclude that African plays are costumed in flowing gowns and robes that are peculiar to Western dressing modes.

In this regard, early practitioners of costume and make-up in Nigerian theatre did not help matter regardless of the beautiful designs and great artistry exhibited by them in the development of Nigerian theatre. This is because most of the early designers, practitioners and scholars of these arts like Demas Nwoko, Agbo Folarin, etc. later dropped the practice of these arts for other areas of theatre specialization, like scenic design and property construction and fine art. Leading to dearth of competent hands in these fields and hence, the slow growth rate of these two areas of theatre specialization because their wealth of knowledge in these fields is not properly documented for the future practitioners.

This reason partly accounts for why there is dearth of costume and make-up scholars in Nigerian universities. The sense here is that from the empirical survey conducted on Theatre Arts Departments in Nigeria especially where costume and make-up are taught and practised. It was discovered that lecturers in these areas are probably not up to fifteen. But in spite of this scenario, the practice of costume and make-up in the literary theatre remains viable, because of the invaluable utility of costume and make-up designs to the conception of the theatrical productions.

Commercial Theatre

This mode of theatre practice in Nigeria is an offshoot of literary theatre tradition. This is reflected in its practitioners who are products of literary theatre. Example of such theatres are seen in Federal-owned theatre venture like National Art Theatre, state owned theatres ventures such as Art Councils as well as Radio, Television, Home video and Celluloid theatre media. However in the development of this theatre form, various efforts are injected into their presentational styles e.g. Ladi Ladebo, Gbenga Sonuga, Ola Balogun, Eddie Ugboma, etc., so as to present well-packaged productions that are attuned to literary theatre traditions. In this vein, costumes and make-up are not left out.

In fact, costume and make-up practitioners like Peju Sonuga, Felicia Melford, Idowu Sonubi, Dike Nwachukwu, Dagogo Jack Diminas, etc. have contributed in no small measure to the practice. For instance, in the television media, Peju Sonuga, a pioneer staff member

of the Nigerian Television Authority in 1975 started the actual practice of television make-up because what was available then as television make-up was "just rubbing of powder on the face". Her other contributions can also be extended to soap operas like "Cock crow at dawn", "Adio Family", "Village Headmaster" to mention but a few. Her achievement also extends to live theatre, celluloid and home video as seen in 'Ose Sango' produced by the Adesanyas (1992), 'Vigilante' (1987), 'The Vendor' (1987) and 'Paraya' (1991), 'Spirit of Lagos' (1997), 'Salt' (2000), etc.

Felicia Melford on her part was the costume and make-up artist of National Theatre troupe for several years before her death in 2001. When she was alive, she costumed many productions on stage and celluloid like 'Eri Okan', 'Family Circle', *Death and the King Horseman*, 'Onome' and a host of others. Similarly, Idowu Sonubi has costumed many productions on the stage and celluloid such as *Eniyan*, *Ovoramwen Nogbaisi*, *Kurunmi*, etc. before she was made the Executive Director of Lagos State Arts Council in 2000. Also Dike Nwachukwu who started the art of make-up effect in Nigerian home video in (1994), therefore, his efforts are seen in "Mark of the beast", "Love without language II", "Battle of Musanga", among others.

Diminas Dagogo Jack is also another gifted make-up practitioner in the home video industry, who actually advanced the craft of make-up effect to the standard it has attained today by bringing glamour into the make-up practice through his theatre company (Thirteen Fat Man). He has therefore recorded success in productions such as 'Bottle Neck' (1996), 'Shame' (1996), 'Ritual' (1997), 'Oracle' (1998), etc. Before the influx of other make-up practitioners like Odion Perez, Kene Sobifa Dimina, Deigoni Okoye, John Lakenfa, Okechukwu Anyanwu, Regina Igwe, Grace Adinku, Adetokunbo Kazeem and several others into the Nigerian theatrical scenes; but surprisingly, despite all these numerous practitioners, the growth rate of costume and make-up practice in Nigeria remains slow and insignificant.

Conclusion

On the whole, this historical survey has drawn from indigenous and contemporary theatre traditions in the Nigerian theatrical culture, in

order to show how costume and make-up practice evolved in the Nigerian theatre practice and to establish how they have fared since their inception.

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TWO DECADES OF CHRISTIAN THEATRE IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The contribution of Nigeria to world literature is seldom viewed against the background of the role of the missionary bodies which came to establish both the Christian faith and Western education in the country. Scholars in Nigeria differ in their attitudes to the role of the Christian Missions in the development of Theatre and Drama in Nigeria. Gbilekaa (1997:iv) considers the involvement of the missionaries in theatrical productions from purely mercenary considerations. He posits: "it is important to note that the missionaries through their doctrinal and pedagogical entertainments were diligently conditioning the African mind and taste towards the European vision of life. Literature, in fact theatre, was considered as a necessary tool for civilising and humanising Africans". According to Jeyifo (1984:42), the Christian Missions showed interest in drama which affected the development of drama and theatre later in the country. The church through some of its officials and priests encouraged and supported several theatrical productions. Echeruo (1981:357) corroborates Jeyifo's position and notes the existence of theatrical activities in the church from the inception of the missionary enterprise in Nigeria. We have in an earlier work, "Precursors of Modern Drama and Theatre in Nigeria" (1998:45-54), traced the growth of Christian Drama and Theatre in Nigeria from the time of its inception to the period before 1970. In a recent work, we have defined Christian Drama "as a play in which there is the manifestation of Christian ethos, and which represents an authentic presentation of the Christian worldview as it is depicted in the Bible"(Agoro, 2002a:195). In another work, we classified Christian plays into two basic