

## **PROMOTING NIGERIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH THE COSTUME AND MAKE-UP OF DUROLADIPO'S *QBAKÒ SO* PRODUCTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Culture is a dynamic phenomenon that can be regarded as the ways of living built up by a group of people overtime and transmitted from one generation to another. This points to the fact that, culture varies from one society to another. Unfortunately, the cultural practices of many societies across the globe have been eroded through acculturation and other militating factors leading to partial neglect or total extinction of such cultural heritage in the affected societies. To this end, this paper adopted analytical, historical and descriptive research methods through primary and secondary data to highlight theatrical parlance as cogent platform of cultural revival and transmission in the society by examining the role of theatre costume and make-up in reviving and promoting the rich cultural heritage of the Nigerian people in the production of Duro Ladipo's *Oba Kòso*. Among other findings, the study revealed that the message of the production was creatively harnessed and effectively transmitted to the audience through the articulated theatrical elements because they artistically and aesthetically characterised the actors and projected the rich cultural history of the Yoruba people of Southwestern Nigeria to audience through the trademark of their cultural heritage exemplified in indigenous fabrics, bead works, hair styles, cosmetic products amongst others. The paper therefore recommended that the aforementioned artifacts should be revamped, preserved and promoted for local and international use so as to cater for the cultural, social and economic needs of the Nigerian people and attract cultural tourism through the exportation of these goods to other countries.

**Keywords:** Promotion; Culture; Theatre; Costume; Make-up

## INTRODUCTION

Generally, culture is a poly-scenic word with diverse definitive connotations. This indicates that the subject of culture is complex and applicable to all human activities because it includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs and any other habits and capabilities acquired by human beings as members of society. Thus, it can be perceived as the totality of the way of life of a people overtime, because it showcases how they dress, what they eat, the architectural design of their houses, their languages, their belief systems and other activities they engage in order to meet the challenges of living in their environment which give order and meaning to their existence as a people socially, politically, economically religiously and aesthetically, while distinguishing them from their neighbours (Nigeria Cultural Policy , 1988). This then implies that culture helps society pass reminiscences from one generation to another. By keeping them in touch with their past, protect the present and preserve them for the future (Binebai,2017).Therefore, to effectively recreate, showcase, promote and transmit cultural experiences in the society for posterity, theatre has been identified as a veritable platform, since every theatre is rooted or subsumed in the culture of its people. It follows therefore that culture and theatre are intertwined and central to a societal life as they give meaning to life. In this regard, theatre and culture have become environmental phenomena that are interrelated (Gowon, 2004).

Thus, the nexus between culture and theatre is largely interwoven, while culture generates codes on which a people behavioral pattern is anchored, theatre provides the vehicle with which these codes are passed from one generation to other. These are replete in religious ritual enactment, festival performances, initiation ceremonies storytelling sessions, masquerade displays and so on where social pattern of life, ethical values, moral essence, religion and history are mirrored in a dynamic living form. To this end, (Musa, 2000) submitted that “culture is

theatre and theatre is culture”, because all cultural activities are essentially theatrical and most of the theatrical events are moments of cultural enactments.

However, because cultures are exposed to different influences from varied countries of the world through globalisation, which allows for interaction of many cultures on the global space, the original readings of many cultures are most times acculturated, bastardised and shortchanged by more influential cultures resulting in partial neglect or absolute eradication of such cultures. To confront the highlighted challenges in Nigeria, theatrical activities have become a significant communicative space for projecting and reinventing past cultural heritage, while sustaining them in the present and preserving them for the future generation so that they do not dwindle into limbo of forgotten memory. To this extent, a typical example of rich theatrical representation of Nigeria culture is projected and examined in this paper through the costume and make-up designs of the production of Duro Ladipo’s *Oba KòSo* by the Department of Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. This is because the Yoruba people found in the Southwestern part of Nigeria has extraordinary creative inventiveness and rich tradition of artistic expressions in textiles, sculpturing, body designs, bead works, metal works etc that can be showcased, preserved and promoted for sustainable development of Nigerian cultural heritage to the present and future generation and the world at large.

### **Sociology of Theatre Costume and Make-up**

In the human society, the arts of clothing and body adornment are universal phenomena that are conceived by (Roberts, 1974) to be "almost as old as man", this is because from Paleolithic period till date, every culture of the world has in one way or the other decorates, covers, exposes and alters the human body to convey some cultural, social and religious meanings in the society from one person to another. This establishes the fact that, one distinct way of distinguishing a people from other decimals is through their physical appearance.

Concomitantly, this gives credence to (Fanon, 1989) submission that it is by their apparel and ornamentation that types of society first become known. To this effect, (Lyndersay, 2011) opined that “social anthropologists and psychologists have ascribed many motives and desire to man in explanation of the origins of the great diversity of styles of body ornamentation”. In her own opinion some of the reasons why man cover and uncover himself after puberty with animal skins, matted fabric, or bark cloth, woven cloth, beads, paints and dyes on one hand, is for covering nakedness and shame while on the other hand, it is for the protection of the body against insects, or the elements; cold and damp weather, the sun rays, or high winds etc.

However, overtime the arts of clothing and body adornment have grown and evolved into socio-cultural, religious and political endeavors in human society. They have evolved to attain symbol of crucial social and psychological relevance to an individual and as such communicates to others an impression of one's social status, beauty, occupation, role, self-confidence and other personality characteristics within the society, hence, serving as a force of identity, social cohesion and integration (Obafemi, 2011). It is therefore important to note at this juncture that, it is the socialization of these two art forms in the human society that developed into costume and make-up in the theatre because theatre costume and make-up are the microcosm of the larger(macrocosm)of clothing (costume) and body adornments (make-up) worn in the society because of the symbiotic relationship between theatre and society. In this sense,(Akaaer,2001) averred that “drama is the diagram of societal occurrences because it is an extract from life as we live. It portrays in small scale the socio-political, economic, religious and cultural aspects of our lives as we live in a society”. In view of this, Costume and make-up as elements of theatre are primarily designed to aid actor's characterisation to convey these messages. They are designed to help an actor interpret realistically whatever role he is depicting in a play. According to (Ode, 2000):

Costumes are clothes that are worn on stage for the personification of assigned roles in dramatic productions. Be they personal clothing or ordinary apparels, they are called costumes because once on stage they cease to act as such personal belongings. They are part and parcel of the entire performance and therefore contribute to the interpretation and understanding of the play in performance.

Theatre make-up on the other hand is described by (Osunde, 1997) as the transformation of an actor from his person to the character that playwright has in mind. Also, (McHenry,1998) captured theatrical make-up as “the practice of painting, enhancing or altering the face, the hair and body of the actor with cosmetics, plastic materials and other substances. It is also the collective term for the materials used in making up”.(Nwachukwu,2006) also posited that make-up is "the use of non-natural means to change the physical appearance of the actor and actress to create a dramatic identity" to the audience. Make-up can then be referred to as anything applied on the face and other parts of the body of an actor with the aim of enhancing beauty or affecting his appearance to the audience in the theatre. This denotes that, to a great extent, make-up designs give the audience primary clue to the age, health and vitality of character (Gillete, 2006).

From the foregoing, Costume and make-up can then be regarded as visual appurtenances of stage production that enliven the performers' appearance so as to enhance message communication between the actors and the audience, To this end, (Bucham, 1989) summed them up as "the vital link between the artist and the audience". The statement connotes that costume and make-up are essential in the transmission of the theme, plot, genre, setting and production style of a play etc to the audience. In short, the story of a play is easily told by these two aural effects of theatre production. In view of the fact that, they help to set the right mood for the actors both physically and psychologically, so that the audience could easily understand the kind of character the action of the play is communicating.

### **Synopsis of *Oba Kò So***

Duro Ladipo's *ObaKòSo* is an opera that showcases the life and times of King Sango; a powerful king and mythological god of thunder and lightning in Yorubaland. It is a play that demonstrates the intricacies and the depth of power tussles that happened between Sàngó as the third Aláàfin (King) in old Òyó empire and his two warlords; Gbónkà and Tìmì. The play dramatises how Sango pleaded with Tìmì and Gbónkà his two war generals in old Oyo empire to desist from fighting more wars in their quest for territory expansion because of its devastating effect on the lives of people of old Oyo empire. And how their refusal to heed to his pleas but defied his authority ignited his anger to secretly plot how to stop their war expeditions by killing them. Unfortunately, all Sango's strategies fail and Gbónkà eventually kills Tìmì in the last fighting contest organised by Sango. This victorious feat by Gbónkà makes him arrogant and boastful of his spiritual powers and with the support of Oyo people asks for the dethronement and exile of King Sango. Sango feels betrayed and humiliated and out of anger uses his fiery power that manifest in the emission of fire from his mouth to destroy lives and properties but realizing the negative effect of his action on his subjects decides to hang himself on Àyan tree. The news of his death spread around the town and the people become remorseful of their action. He then appears to them amidst thunder and lightning from the sky instructing them to always worship him as he will continually help them in their endeavours. This appearance marks the deification of Sango as god in Yoruba land to date, because to his worshippers "ObaKò So" which means "the king did not hang" but lives on to eternity, where the play derives its name.

### **Ethnographic Reading of Costume and Makeup of the Play**

It is obvious from the synopsis, that *ObaKò So* is a play that showcased the rich cultural history and cosmological belief of the Yoruba People. This informed (Shuaib's, 2008) submission that "Duro Ladipo created spectacular productions dramatising themes from Yoruba mythology

and history in his play, which reflected the deep history of the old Òyó empire, where traditional values and aesthetics are transferred to costume and make-up designs in it. This annotation stemmed from the record that Òyó empire was one of the largest empires in West Africa established by the Yoruba people around (1650-1750) with rich ingenious artistry in textile art and beadwork, body art, sculpturing to mention a few (Mckenna, 2019).

As recorded in Yoruba historiography, at that time, the kingdom was bounded by Volta river in the west and Niger river in the east. But, overtime, specifically between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century it expanded its territory through the proceeds of trade accrued from its neighbours and Europeans to become one of the most politically and economically influential and powerful empire not only in Yoruba land but among other powerful African kingdoms such as Fon kingdom of Dahomey in Republic of Benin. To this extent, (Eicher, 1976) articulated the long tradition of textile civilisation and high taste of fashion practiced among the Yoruba people in 1890 from an anthropological perspective and highlighted that it was considered “the highest degree of unfashionable for a Yoruba person to appear in public street without a complete covering of two or three ample and well dried cloths, draped round the body in not ungraceful folds”.

With the painted scenario above, great attention was given to the preparatory stage of the production of the play which was staged on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010 at the Department of the Performing Arts Theatre, University of Ilorin. Sequel to the performance, varied ethnographic researches were carried out by the researcher who happened to be the costumier and the make-up artist of the production, these comprised of field work that include oral interview and participant observation as well as, consultation of published literary works and internet sources in order to get firsthand information and ascertain the historical and aesthetics constituents of play so as to present as well packaged production to the audience by taking cognisance of the fact that body

decoration is a powerful tool of communication with deep cultural antecedents widely practiced among many ethnic groups in Nigeria for aesthetic, religious and ceremonial purposes amongst others.

In view of this observation, the costume and make-up designer went as far as Oshogbo, Ìshéyìn, Èdẹ, Ilé-Ifẹ and Òyó Town, in South-western, Nigeria where historical facts and archeological information were provided by knowledgeable sources and custodians of the peoples' culture. It is discovered that the most widely used textile material worn by kings, chiefs and people of high social status in the old Òyó empire to showcase their social and economic status in that society was "Asọ-Òkè" also known as Asọ-Òfi; this is a rich hand woven traditional material made with different fiber threads or yarns got from cotton plant in Yoruba land.(Olutayo etal2011) opined that the significance of Asọ Òkè is enshrined in Yoruba tradition that transcends economy and exigency to explain their existence overtime through the display of affluence, stratification, class and life after death.(Afigbo&Okeke,1985)also confirmed that archeological discoveries have revealed that indigenous technology in carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving has been a product of Yoruba peoples' efforts to exploit their environment to their advantage before their contact with Europeans. Apart from the Old Òyó empire's Asọ òkè, this statement was reflective in other Yoruba speaking areas such as Ìsẹyìn, Ifẹ, Èdẹ, Òshogbo, Ilorin and other related Nigerian traditional woven fabrics at that time such as Akwete by the Igbos ,Bìní clothes by people of Benin kingdom and Kano clothes from central and east Sahara.

The highlighted Oyo empire traditional Asọ-òkè materials can be categorised into three in order of prestige. The first was perceived in "Sányán" (an alluring beige fabric with white stripes) made from the cocoon of *Anaphe larvae*(wild silk) mostly referred to as "baba asọ" among the Yoruba people meaning "king of clothes" in English language due to its superior quality and texture. It was a specially designed fabric linked to and worn by kings and high



ranking chiefs, and other members of royal family but not by ordinary people in the old Òyó society. Ètu was the second prestigious and beautiful Aso Òkè fabric in this category with black indigo background and high blue stripes used for high societal ceremonies by the nobles in the old Òyó kingdom. (Olutayo et al, 2011) informed that the weaving of the two aforementioned fabrics was normally done within the king's compound by old and experienced master weavers and not by just any weaver, because the kings are revered as second to the gods in Yoruba land whose clothing should not be handled by just any weaver.

Apart from the two Aso Òkè highlighted, Àláárì made from woven magenta waste silk and cam wood dye was the third prestigious Aso Òkè worn by chiefs, queens, princes, and princesses in old Oyo community to connote their affluence and nobility. Nevertheless, (Olutayo et al, 2017) reiterated that other varieties of lesser quality Aso Òkè assigned for marriage ceremonies and funeral rites were regarded as Aso Aláró they were made from handspun cotton dyed into indigo with wrap patterns in varying blue shades. But, generally, in old Òyó empire, Àdìrẹ was commonly used as fabric among the poor and not too rich classes of people (Ezeajugh, 2011). These cheap but resplendent designs were achievable through tying and dyeing of fabrics into different colours but mostly found in indigo colour via methods of folding, marbling, knotting, squeezing to create interesting design motifs and patterns from nature, animals and plants. It is however disheartening to note that apart from Àdìrẹ fabric that is still popular in the Nigerian society particularly among the Yoruba. Most of the beautiful aforementioned traditional Aso Òkè fabrics, are no longer common sight in contemporary Yoruba society, except on few special occasions, because they are no longer in production by the weavers and have been replaced with modern versions with lesser value in terms of design, texture, finesse and durability.

Beads also known as Ìlẹ̀kẹ and lágídígba in Yoruba language are important archeological

artifacts that played prominent roles in the old Òyó empire and Yoruba land in general to date. Tracing the history of bead works in Yoruba land,(Negri,1978) recounted that the taste for personal adornments necessitated the craft of bead and jewelry making in Nigeria. These beads were used to portray the socio-cultural lifestyles of the Yoruba people. They were inculcated to espouse the beauty, identity, status, and personality of the people of old Òyó empire. Consideration was given to their sizes, colours, shapes and materials used in making them. They were worn by men, women and children in that society as personal adornment depending on their social status and religious affinity. According to (Busari, 2017 )beads were one of the products traded in exchange of humans between the Europeans and West Africans in the Trans- Atlantic Slave trade era. He expatiated further that evidence of bead making among the Yoruba dates back to 11<sup>th</sup> century ascertaining their great knowledge of indigenous technology in bead making at that time.

Interestingly, most of these beads were gotten from mineral deposits from the depth of the sea, as well as plant and animal sources crafted from materials like glass,shells,metals, ivories and wood which are pierced, stringed and threaded together into an artistic and aesthetic designs around the neck, wrist, leg, fore head, hair or attached to clothing materials and so on. Such Beads have categories in line with their quality. They include "Iyùn" a decorative coral bead, which feature translucent amber cores and thin yellow coating with red stripes introduced by the Portuguese explorers and traders into the Òyó community around 17<sup>th</sup> century, which a Yoruba dictum tags “the most superior and expensive of all beads” and as such they are worn mostly by the rich and influential(A. Fabunmi, personal communication, September19,2010). Next is “Àkún” another special bead made from gemstone. There was also “Eyín Erin” made from Elephant ivory and "Sègi" a blue translucent glass, cylindrical and corded in nature, the shape about 5 to 200cm in length(E. Aremu, personal communication, September

17,2010).(Ogundiran,2017) explained that other variant of beads was Owóẹyọ (cowry) a whitish sea- shell shape accessory with length about 1cm that varied in sizes depending on the archeological sites they were excavated from, as well as Òpòtó and Ikàn amongst others.It is important to note that, apart from personal ornamentation and decorative purposes, bead also function as protective covering from evil forces as perceived in some amulets, waist and neck beads used to ward off evil spirits from the wearer. This gives credence to the fact that, in old Oyo empire variants of beads abounded ranging from special to ordinary and from exquisite to plain beads. Although, in contemporary times, most of the aforementioned beads have become scarce and expensive in the bead market because their production rate has greatly declined due to modernity and they are largely replaced with lesser quality imported beads from foreign countries such as China etc.

Body design was also a general practice among the Yoruba people of old Òyọ empire. They were used for expressing beauty, age, socio-status, mark of identification and membership of a revered group in the society. The decoration may be permanent or a temporary one. For permanent decoration, tools like knife, needle, were used to incise marks or designs on the body. In this category were tribal marks, scarification and tattoo. (Daramola & Jeje, 1975) highlighted that the most common design was found in tribal markings which connote identification, ethnicity and beauty. These were visualised in Pélé, Owónifààrí, "Àbàjà, "Kékéké"and Gòmbò to mention a few. For example, the Àbàjà were drawn vertically in fours, and sevens, on both sides of the cheeks of indigenes to indicate their origin while the fínfín cuts were permanent tattoos made into groups to form geometric patterns on most part of woman's body to indicate beauty and fertility in Yoruba culture among others. Nevertheless, due to civilisation and acculturation, in contemporary times, many people in Yoruba land no longer engage in the highlighted body decorations again, they are seen as old fashioned and painful. But, surprisingly, many youths

now patronise western tattoos as current fashion trend regardless of the pain and health hazards involved.

Apart from body designs other types of temporary make-up used in Nigeria among the Yoruba people and the people of old Oyo empire specifically was *Osùn* also known as *Urie* in *Igboland*. (Burkill,1995) asserted that traditionally this cosmetic icon is primarily prepared from red cam-wood extracted from the bark of *Baphianitida* tree which is known for its efficacy at smoothening and soothing the rough edges of the skin without any skin imperfection and diseases thus making the skin to look supple and beautiful. On the other hand, *Efun* (Talc), *Àdín* (palm kernel oil), *Òrí* (Shear butter) and *Tìróò* (Galena eyeliner) were highlighted and described by (Imoukhuede, 1991) as traditional make-up that enjoyed great patronage among the Yoruba people in particular amongst other ethnic groups in Nigeria. He explained that for aesthetic appeal, *Efun* was usually rubbed all over the body as beauty agent that kept the skin smooth, fresh and clean from negative effect of heat and sweat, while the oils obtained from *Àdín* and *Òrí* trees was processed and applied to effect glowing skin and healthy hair, aside their primacy as treatment of sprains and swelling of the body. The mentioned attributes did not however limit their function as decorative and spiritual embellishments applied on the faces of maidens and priests during marriages and festivals. *Tìróò* on the other hand, was native antimony of galena eyeliner used in Yoruba land long before the advent of western eyeliner into the Nigerian society (Shuaib, 2014). To date in *Òyó* town, and Yoruba land in general, it is still engaged in outlining and emphasizing the eyelids, eyebrows, and eyeballs of wearers to reinforce their beauty and for attractiveness. Beyond that it is also believed to cure various eye ailments such as ophthalmological infections (Chukwuma, 1997).

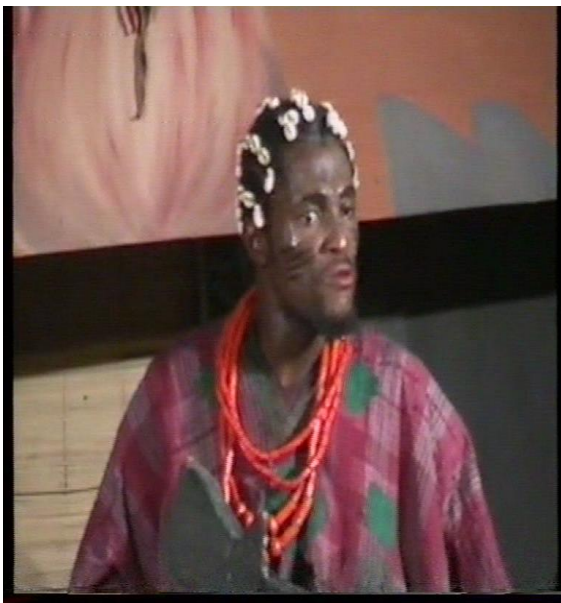
Hairdressing is equally an important aspect of body decoration among the *Òyó* community till date, apart from body designs and make-up materials. This is because the head is

regarded as "Èlédàá";(divine essence)capable of determining fortune or calamity of individuals in Yoruba cosmology. Hence, different temporary and permanent hair styles were and are still incorporated into its design repository to beautify the head and attract positive fortune. (Adeoye, 1980) submitted that such female traditional temporary hairstyles were visualised in Kòlèsè (a style of hair woven from the front to the back), Ìpàkó-Èlédè (the hair woven from the back to the front),Sùkú (hair woven from the front of the head to the crest of the head), Mòremí (hair plaited up and tied with local thread to the centre and sides of the head),Ògúnparí(spiral plaits with thread to the back of the head), and Láyípo(the style of plaiting the hair to the sides of the head) and so on in order to accentuate beauty and elicit attraction from their male counterparts. The highlighted hairstyles were nonetheless different from other temporary modification and alterations of hair done by men described in Irun dídán (scraping of the hair),Irun gígé(barbing of the hair) for beauty enhancement and personal hygiene. Except in some cases where men weave their hair for religious and spiritual purposes such as odósù(a style of hair where braids radiate up from the hairline and culminate in a centre longitudinal crest of the head) to mention a few.

### **Costume and Make-up in ỌbaKòSo Production as Agents of Cultural Revival and Transmission**

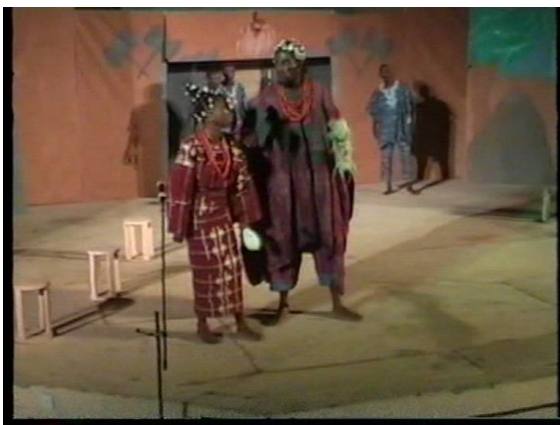
In designing the costume and make-up of King Sango in ỌbaKò So, great attention was given to historical epoch and the symbolism of his attire according to the Yoruba culture and the mythology surrounding his existence. To this end, Sango's costumes in various scenes of the play consisted of different colours of three-piece traditional Aso-òkè costumes namely;Agbádá, Dánshíkí and Sòkòtò(a flowing robe, inner gown with trouser) found in Sányán, Ètu and Àlààrì with beads that indicated affluence and royalty. He also wore a red tunic top sewn creatively with cowries, gourds, shells and combs with a layered skirt in predominant red hues of his

devotees which highlighted his religious belief system and position of power to the audience; particularly the symbolism of the red colour associated with his fiery nature. On his head he wore a braided hair-dress outlined to the back with cowries and beads, as a mark of his spiritual leaning, beauty and symbol of authority of one who occupied higher traditional, political, spiritual and social position in the Òyó society as against the popular beaded royal crown synonymous with most Yoruba kings. Also, in his hand he held his double-headed axe and horse whisk to symbolise justice and balance synonymous with his personality and his royal status. While the Òyó marks gracing his cheeks called Àbàjà were used to espouse his ancestral lineage and reveal his identity and equally project his facial features to reflect his fierce but handsome outlook. Thus, costume, accessories and make-up given to Sango in the play were diligently and creatively harnessed to portray his personality, royal ranking and cultural and religious affiliation in the Òyó society at that time to the audience.



**Fig.1&2: Sàngó costumed in Maroon and Green Asọ-Òkè and Red Top and Multi-layered Skirt. Photo Credit: The Researcher on the 18th October, 2010.**

Oya; wife of Sango in the play, was attired in dark burgundy and cream Àlààrì Aso-Òkè fabric, secured into Bùbá and wrapper and wrapper with waist band designs assymbols of her marital status,royal background and spirituality. To substantiate the choice of colour of the costumier in line with Oya’s mythology,(Onílù, 2017)affirms that “Oya’s colour varies from place to place, but the main one is purple or dark burgundy or maroon”. Aside that, her hairstyle known as (Sùkú) was intricately woven to the centre of her head and decorated with cowries and beads to beautify her looks, the profusion of the red beads on her ears, neck, legs and ankles also validated her beauty and showcased her exalted position of power and prestige in the society as the wife of the king. In the same vein, the Pele marks on her cheeks was a reflection of her ancestry and an enhancer of her beauty. Similarly, make-up materials like Tíròd used on her eyes for coloration and to outline her eyelid, eyeballs, eye lashes and the perimeter of her eyes elicited aesthetic effects and made her eyes more noticeable to the audience. Whereas the shear butter used on her body to make her skin and lip supple, glow and radiate sensuality, independence and fertility, highlighted the cogent traits of her personality as the protector of womanhood and patron of feminine leadership,fiercely loving but wildly unpredictable when provoked to the audience (Onilu, 2017).



**Fig. 3&4: Oya in ÀlááríBùbá and wrapper with Sango and also decked in wrapper with the Maidens .Photo Credit: The Researcher on the 18th October, 2010.**

The Ọyọ Mèsì also called the King makers are Sango's Chiefs, they were the seven principal councilors of the empire and they possessed the legislative powers to carry out their duties as the voice of the state and protect the interest of the empire as well as advise the king and legitimise his decision. Hence, they were costumed in Assorted Aso-Òkè designs creatively sewn into long Gbáryè tops and trousers with matching caps to reflect the dress culture of old Ọyọ empire and also as a status marker depicting their high ranking positions in the society in different scenes of the play. The Àkún beads on their necks and wrists were also reflective of their chieftaincy titles in line with their hierarchy. Tribal markings seen in kéké, àbàjà, gòmbò from varied ethnic groups were also adopted as make-up to depict their lineage to the audience. Efun was also applied on their hair to articulate their age range through the ageing effect. In the same way, shear butter was rubbed on their skin to smoothen the surface and as foundation base for easy removal of make-up after production.





**Fig. 5: The Ọyọ Mèṣì in celebration mood in the play**

**Photo Credit: The Researcher on the 18<sup>th</sup> Of October, 2010.**

Gbónkà and Tìmì - the two war lords during Sango's tenure were also given costumes in line with their ancestral deity and occupation in the play. Gbónkà Èbìrì for instance was given deep blue short Dánshíkí with àdìrẹ knickers to showcase his Ọgún deity lineage, which apart from being a warrior has a link with hunting occupation while Tìmì of Ede's costume also depicted his occupational background of warrior and blacksmithing. To this end, spiritual fortification was noticeable on their costumes, through accessories made from local combs, snail shells, cowries, cow horns 'and others particularly at the war scene in order to ward off evil spirits and protect them from external destructive forces. The fabric for their war costumes was crafted from Àdìrẹ(tie and dye) a low quality durable fabric because of the peculiarity of their responsibilities which has to do with leading battles, mobilising and training soldiers as well as conquering enemies and territories. Indigenous cosmetic substances such as Tìróò was also used for opening their inner eyes to see invincible forces while charcoal was engaged as agent of disguise and camouflage during wars.



**Fig.6: Gbònkà and Tìmì the two Warlords in Òyó Empire**

**Photo Credit: The Researcher on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010**

The Maiden costumes and make-up in the play were also used to portray their various age grades and the cultural significance of their attires during celebration scenes according to the Yoruba world view. Uniform and colourful Aso-Òkè Aláró was worn by the maidens to showcase their spiritual unity, the festive mood and beautify their bodies. Beads were also generously adorned on the ears and necks, of the maidens as decorative covering that portrayed the innocence and chastity of a maiden, these beads were also used to evoke positive emotional responses from onlookers besides projecting their femininity to the audience in a mesmerising manner. The make-up substances found in Òsun, Èfun and Adin were also applied by the maidens as beauty regimens to make their body smooth, attractive, and alluring to behold by the audience. While, traditional fínfín tattoos with concentric motifs and sùkúò lógèdè hairstyles were employed to connote beauty and fertility to the audience.



**Fig. 7: The Òyó Maidens dancing at the Sango's Palace.**  
**Photo Credit: The Researcher on the 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.**

## CONCLUSION

On the whole, this paper has highlighted costume and make-up as two cogent agents of cultural transmission and rejuvenation in theatrical engagements via espousing Duro Ladipo's *Oba KòSo* as case study. This is because costume and make-up of the production have been effectively used to characterised the appearance and actions of the actors of the play and invariably convey the message in it to the audience. To this extent, they have become veritable tools of promotion of a people's culture, by situating the play not only in Nigeria but in Òyó State among the Yoruba people and as such projecting the Òyó people as one of the most productive and skilled craft men of Africa descent who engaged and maximised the trade mark of their culture exemplified in bead making, weaving, glass making, blacksmithing, hairdressing, agriculture among others, to project, promote and exhibit attributes of their historical legacy as well as artistic and cultural practices to the world.

The observations above clarify the fact that, when theatre costume and make-up are adequately explored, they can ensure the renaissance and promotion of the rich indigenous cultural heritage of different societies of the world by transmitting the virtues in their traditions to their future generations and the world at large through theatrical outlets exemplified in live theatres, televisions, films and internet media. By so doing, imprinting and reinventing the cultural nuances inherent in such productions on the minds of the viewers for posterity. This paper therefore recommends that Nigerian indigenous clothing and body decorations such as *Asòkè*, beads, hairdressing styles and cosmetic products amongst others should be revamped, preserved and promoted for local and international use by engaging and encouraging more textile, fashion and cosmetics industries via strategic and conducive government policies and funding as well as proactive private sector intervention to vigorously research into the rich cultural heritage of the Nigerian people and adopt modern technological approach in the mass production of these artifacts. In this way, they will be able to cater for the cultural and social

needs of Nigerian people, attract cultural tourism and also improve the economic status and social image of its citizens and the nation through exportation of these goods to other countries.

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