COSTUME AND MAKE UP IN CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Costume is an essential feature of any dramatic production and with make- up constitutes the total visual appearance of the actor. Costume is an important fact of acting; therefore it is not mere covering for an actor. Thus its essence is rooted in the fact that the actor wears it, moves and speaks in it and is continually within the attention of the spectator. Costume assists characterization so that whether in film or on stage, the audience can determine age, social status, personality, nationality, dislikes and likes before the character utters a word. Costume also helps to establish the relationship between characters. The actor and the costume interpret the character. This in essence means that the proper coordination of the production elements contribute in boosting the cultural image of the people whose lives are reflected in the stories being dramatised on stage or in films. Costumes and make up could therefore become effective tools for cultural promotion and development if well manipulated. It then means that film transforms all subjects and objects into new signs which

communicate to the audience. In essence, film is rooted in the communication and promotion of ideas, and ideas serve as a veritable instrument of enlightenment and education.

Introduction

'Actors and actresses are seen before they are heard'. This is a common phrase used in the theatre to reflect the significance of costume on the set during production. It is to this that (Martin Banham 247) asserts that 'actors often find costumes more important than scenery…many performance traditions throughout the world and many golden ages of theatrical history, have eschewed scenic display while lavishing resources on clothing, accessories, masks and disguise. This is indicative of the high premium placed on costume and make up because of its essential role in character creation and delineation. Besides characterization, they contribute in no small measure to the total visual design. While one admits the aesthetic importance as well as the spectacle of costume and make up, one agrees to their aid in character interpretation. Costume is particularly associated with the moving actor and therefore, the most dynamic and living of all visual designs. Besides, it can tell about a people or culture and even the times in which they lived. Furthermore, actors' social status, and tasks are revealed which aid the audience or viewers, in understanding the dramatic presentation. Therefore, the embellishment in form and colour of the actor's bodily image intensifies his character and personality. Costuming becomes the extension of the image of the human body. The position however is that costumes basically reflect characters in relation to the indigenous or traditional cultural dictates of a people which has implications for development.

Costume is an essential feature of any dramatic production and with make- up constitutes the total visual appearance of the actor. Costume is an important fact of acting, therefore it is not mere covering for an actor. Thus its essence is rooted in the fact that the actor wears it, moves and speaks in it and is continually within the attention of the spectator. The first impression a character makes upon the audience depends on appearance. This is perhaps why William Shakespeare contends that apparel often proclaims a man. It is imbued with the language of design so much so that it could reveal so much about the person wearing it.

Albright, et al assert that 'costume is a living thing if only for the duration of the performance in which it appears. But during the performance it is in continual motion from the breathing and movement of the actor who inhabits it' (275). During any given performance, it is through the quality of the costume's movement and the way it looks in motion and its appropriation in defining character that the final measure of its effectiveness is determined. Given the 'moving' character of costume it therefore stands as the strongest element of the visual scene in any production.

Make-up on the other hand plays a complimentary role to costume so that to some practitioners, make-up is also considered as costuming. It is perhaps due to this conception of make-up that many practitioners have paid little or no attention to it as an essential art in its own right. It has an innate connection with the actor's appearance. Cambridge international dictionary (1995) defines make-up as a coloured substance used on the face to improve or change one's appearance. This concept is narrow in conception. Brocket (615) asserts that make-up is normally used to cover all parts of the actor's body not concealed by his costumes. However, this is to say that make-up is not only limited to the face of the

actor. Make-up helps in the understanding of a play thereby expressing the quality of the production as the actor's facial and colouration are analysed and compared with the ideal character for the production.

Types of Costume and Make-up

Costume could be classified into everyday costumes, period costumes, professional costumes, gala costumes, contemporary costumes and fantastic costumes. These categories range from casual clothes which are worn every day, to those worn to depict past eras and periods. These types of clothes reflect casual out door or indoor outfits. They are ordinary and not serious or flamboyant. Everyday costumes could translate into stage costumes used to interpret the age of characters, locale, time and even class in the play.

The Place Of Costume And Make-up Art

Costumes work in the same way as other elements of design in all theatrical productions. This may however differ in scale in relation to the style of presentation. This is as a result of the expressive nature which may vary in terms of intensity. Costume assists characterization so that whether in film or on stage, the audience can determine age, social status, personality, nationality, dislikes and likes before the character utters a word. Costume also helps to establish the relationship between characters. To this Brockett (376) asserts that costume can establish or clarify character relationship…in Shakespeare's history plays in which warring factions are significant, members of the same faction can be related to each other and contrasted with members of rival factions through colour schemes.

Costume individualizes the character. By the colour and style of the costume and make-up, a character is set apart from another character. This means that major characters can be made to stand out from minor ones by manipulating any or all principles of design. Costume serves to enhance the visual effect of movement by falling into graceful and pleasing lines in the various positions which the actor may take. Make-up also enhances characterisation by depicting the health of a character, the race and age of the character being portrayed and so on.

Costume and makeup contribute to the total artistic effect of stage or film productions. In film, costume and makeup are not imitations of reality. The visual representation of film is largely influenced by costume and makeup. Nwadigwe (292) commenting on costume and makeup in Nigerian films and films in general submit that they are "an integral part of the actor's personality, costume and makeup act as moving scenery in film production, thereby attracting attention and conveying information and intensifying the narrative action".

Costume And Make-up In Cultural Development

Costume and makeup are central to the projection of dramatic action whether on stage or in films, thus the essence to cultural development will be credited, as these reflect the culture of a given people. Film is one of the mediums which project the culture of a given people. Looking at the potentials of the film medium in Nigeria, it is obvious that film as a cultural agent exposes people to the diverse rich cultural heritage of the nation. In essence this means that films which are produced in Nigeria and exported to other parts of the world make positive impact on the consumers as they learn more about Nigerian culture and values. As a means

of communication and cultural expression, film explores material elements such as costume and makeup among other elements like architecture, and artefacts in set design. These elements when properly utilized portray the cultural norms and values of the environment. Costume and makeup as part of the total design material of a stage or film enriches visual productions, thereby reinforcing its communicative potentials as strong elements of cultural productions. It is in this light that Nwadigwe views the essence of film design and visual elements and observes that in reality cultural materials such as mosaic, murals, collage, sculpture, status, portraits, bronze casting, terracotta's, archaeological excavations, beads headgears ornaments adornments and objects form part of our interior and exterior environment. As strong elements of cultural promotion, they can be used as dominant materials in costuming, set design and decoration which will make powerful statements about the film locale (291).

Presently the use of these materials is in the increase. Designers include these materials in the costumes designs and try to promote Nigeria's rich cultural heritage. This in essence also boosts the tourism industry with its attendant development in Nigeria. Costume and make-up contribute in advancing the aesthetics of films in the reflections of the traditional cultural life of Nigerians. This explains why a costume design is always linked to the character and lifestyle envisioned by the writer as well as the human form of the actor. The author creates the character in a certain style. Be it realistic, allegorical or symbolic. The actor and the costume interpret the character.

This in essence means that proper use of the production elements contribute in boosting the cultural image of the people whose lives are reflected in the films. This also means that the use of traditional costumes and make-up contribute in promoting Nigerian culture.

Stylization refers to the use of specific compositional elements characteristics of a particular style or period to create the essence of that style or period. This however translates that costume and make-up give meaning, in essence they symbolize history or period as these contribute to the general communication of films or stage productions. Semiotics to (Enahoro 26) means the science of the production of meaning in society as concerned with the process involved in the generalization and exchange of meaning or of significance and communication. As an agent of communication, film however becomes a medium through which two or more active persons enter into communication through the help of shared signs. Film is made up of linguistic spatial, gestural, stenographic and illumination codes among others. Any dramatic performance is a set of signs and codes that serve to characterize and advance dramatic action. This however means that in films, signs are organized into code systems governed by rules, which are consented to, by members of a community using the codes. It is in line with this that Leach contents that it is just as meaningful to talk about the grammatical rule, which govern the wearing of clothes as we talks about the grammatical rule that govern speech utterances.

It then means that film transforms all subjects and objects into new signs which communicate to the audience. In essence, film is rooted in the communication and promotion of ideas, and ideas serve as a veritable instrument of enlightenment and education. Thus, film is a vehicle for cultural presentation and preservation not only in dialogue, but most importantly through the elements and materials of design. Besides location and setting,

which should be embellished with cultural artefacts, costume and make-up are constituents of the production infrastructure, which is a core element in both stage and film productions.

Conclusion

The wide distribution of African artwork through films to other parts of the world can enable appreciation of the cultural essence of a people. Costumes and make-up and other material elements of culture could be easily promoted through films for Nigeria's advantage. Such an approach to culture appears quite dependable while giving priority to the preservation of the people's cultural heritage.

Through the manipulation of local or cultural materials, costume and make up are employed in productions for cultural promotion and sustenance. Costume and make up designers could therefore explore indigenous textile materials to support local industries, generate employment, inspire cultural development and promote the spirit of nationalism through their art.

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Carthage was another ancient city-state that was perpetually at war with the Greeks and the Romans after them. One supposes that the choice of the city-state of Carthage for this part of Mee's play has multiple implications, one of which is that Aeneas could have aimed at aligning with another enemy of the Greeks in order to avenge the massacre of his city. On the other hand, Mee could be alluding to Carthage, Missouri which is one of the cities that took the most casualties during the American Civil War (1862-1865).

Hannah Arendt fled her native Germany in 1933 to France to escape the Nazis, and migrated to the US in 1941.