

Objectification and Deification of Images: A Spiritual Interrogation of Cultural Motifs in Yoruba Theatre Performance

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Abstract:- Aside figure of speech or objectification of an object, the act of turning an object to another thing or god is peculiar to all tribes the world. This act is called Apotheosis among the “ἀποθέωσις”, "todeify". In Latin "making divine"; also called divinisation and deification is the glorification of a subject to divine level and most commonly, the treatment of a human-like a god. This act is not an uncommon activity among the Yoruba deity images and objects such as carvings, properties, photograph, and so on. ori. The study adopts as a theoretical framework and employs a mix methodologies to investigate the study's intention. It study use of elect performances a ncludesas,a .the Yoruba make use of motifs in their cultural consciousness to and deifies man and objects.

Keywords:- Cultural, Deification, Images: Objectification, Interrogation, Motifs, Theatre Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Essays on Yoruba pointed out the importance of culture and tradition to the existence of the people. This has in many ways been the spring of artistic prowess of the people, tracing Samuel Ajayi Crowder's *Yoruba Prime* and Samuel Johnson's *History of the Yoruba*, and many recent books and journals on the Yoruba scholarship, particularly on the history, religion, language, literature, arts, music and performing arts by natives and non-natives have received tremendous attention. Their works have also inspired many other scholars through the years. The focus of the research had vistas on the of the race. Scholars have argued that the name “Yoruba” was an original of the people of Oyo by the northern neighbours and that it became an ethnic identity/logo for people sharing the same boundaries and tracing similar myth/historical sources from around the 1843—1856 (Fadipe 29—30). However, Samuel Johnson argues that the early history of the Yoruba country is almost exclusively that of the Oyo division, the others being too small or too insignificant to be of any importance, but that in later years this state of things has been somewhat reversed so that the centre of interest and sphere of influence is moved southwards, especially since the arrival of Europeans on the coast (Johnson xxii). In any case, the Yoruba as a race has an origin that dated far beyond this assumption, as several types of research and studies have shown.

The term which includes several sub-cultures such as the Ijebu, Ijesha, Egba, Egbadò, Ketu etc., that are equally identified with the same original mythical/historical source occupies the South-western parts of Nigeria and boast of ancient empires and territories which extended as far as Dahomey (now the Republic of Benin), and Togo. The Yoruba mostly engaged in farming, weaving, pottery, trading, smithy, and other occupations which projected their notion of arts and motifs as explained later on. According to Frank Willet, the Yoruba have a history of urbanization that marked them out from other pre-colonial civilizations of the sub-Saharan region of Africa. They are particularly famous for their ancient towns such as Ile Ife and Oyo, which archaeological excavations have put their dates of pre-eminence to around 800 C.E (Willet 1967). Additionally, the Yoruba boast of ancient towns and complex political and social structures that derived from a unified language, religious belief system, and a shared ancestry that is personified in Oduduwa. The people's unity is also complemented by a rich artistic heritage of bronze and brass sculpture traditions, naturalistic terra cotta, stone, and castings dating back to 1100 C.E. Shared with the popular prehistoric Nok civilization that was believed to have been in existence from around the 6th century C.E unique heritage suggests that the Yoruba culture is an ancient one (Murphy 145). Similar to other notable tribes, the Yoruba divided into age grades and guilds. These grades and guilds are responsible for different and diverse trade forms, including copper, mask making, hunting, smithy, oral poetry, to mention a few. Reflecting on the objectification and deification of images, within a community, one can look through the culture, norms and civilization identity, style, significance and the people's arts form respectively. One of such culture could be found in the people's Ere, “mask”. Mask according to Gilbert Tarka Fai 2012, is a piece of sculpture that is both artistic and functional. It fulfils one or more of several functions—sacred or profane, personal or communal, serious or satirical. As an object, it has only its relatively insignificant quota of vital energy that is found, according to African ontology, in all matter and substance of the visible world—animal, vegetable and mineral. 1).

Ere or aworan as the word is sometimes interchangeably used for an image according to Abraham 1958 is wooden masks worn by Egungun, masquerade, p. 71. argues in his *The Essence of the Image in the Religious Sculptures of Yoruba Nigeria* that: images or could be both

“object of the memorial” and “object of worship”. To look at ere as an object of the memorial is to it Why to look at it as an object of worship is it deification. From his argument it could be deduced Yoruba cherish the Ere highly, and that:...*a person’s good qualities are never appreciated until he dies. The image to which he is compared is thought of as admirable, beautiful or praise-worthy, an object of appreciation.* P. 16.

Ojoti a bakuni a di ere Eniakosunwonniaayep 15-16

It is not out of place then for a man to be raised to a status of the gods if such persons good qualities merit such accolade even though such instances are rare. In *Ojuola*, the character, Ojuola was immortalised for her motherly deeds through the masquerade Gelede. To raise oneself is another thing altogether. Just as King Adejebu tries to do in *Ade Ire*.

Adejebu: Spare me the honour. I am the King, second to none.

Ere mask, (as there could be other types of masks) has a effect of transforming the wearer and the ambivalence of serving good and evil ends. This indicates that the Yoruba mask apart from its spiritual essence is a symbol of great complexity and ambiguity. And many writers such as Wole Soyinka, Wale Ogunyemi, EsilokunKini, Ben Tomoloju, Ahmed Yerima, Olalekan Oduntan, Lekan Balogun and so many other playwrights have emerged good plays from the ambivalent quality of the mask as image and symbols. This paper argues the multi-facet use of objects and the deification of cultural motifs among the Yoruba via an interrogation of both Ahmed Yerima’s *Ade Ire* and Lekan Balogun’s *Ojuola*.

II. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Citing Tylor in Spencer-Oatey 2012, Culture is: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” P. 1.

Deification: other words for deification are exaltation, apotheosis and worship. It is the act or process of deifying one that embodies the qualities of a god.

Images: is an artefact that depicts visual perception, such as a photograph or other two-dimensional picture, particularly one that resembles a subject. In the context of signal processing, an image is distributed amplitude of colour.

Objectification: is when a person is treated as a thing or an idea is represented by a concrete object. An artist might use *objectification* when she paints a tree that represents "nature" or a bird that stands for "freedom. When you take a vague, abstract concept like "love" and give it a solid form (especially in a work of art or writing), you objectify it — that's objectification. A different kind of objectification happens when people treat others like objects, or as nothing more than their physical bodies:

"The *objectification* of women in music videos — using them as props — is one of the least appealing things about the music industry."

Objectification the act of representing an abstraction as a physical actualisation, realisation making real or giving the appearance of reality a concrete representation of an abstract idea or principle a creation that is a visual or tangible rendering of someone or something. According to Immanuel Kant, (a social philosopher), is the act of treating a person, or sometimes an animal, as an object or a thing. It is part of dehumanization, the act of disavowing the humanity of others. Sexual objectification, the act of treating a person as a mere object of sexual desire, is a subset of objectification, as is self-objectification, the objectification of one's self. In Marxism, the objectification of social relationships is discussed as "reification". The act may include the act of self-aggrandisement or the exaggeration of self.

Interrogation for this study is the systematic process of using an approved approach to question or defined person to obtain reliable information to satisfy requirements, consistency with applicable law and policy. Our focus is to examine the impact of accusation versus information garnering approaches on the elicitation of confession.

Motif: according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014), motif means a “single or repeated design or a recurring salient thematic element in work of arts, especially a dominant idea or central theme”. Egunlae argues that motif is “the general theme of a painting, or the predominant feature in architecture, sculptures of painting which recurs or holds together the composition. is also the unit chosen for a design” (303). The latter concept or definition is more appropriate to this work; that is, the element of an image repeated in a pattern or design, frequently, or may just occur in work. It may be an element in the iconography of a particular subject or type that is seen in work. It is common in decorative art, ornamentals, textile, and crafts generally. Motif is any recurring element that has a symbolic significance in a story. Through its repetition, it can help to produce other narratives aspect or reinforces theme or mood. John and Martins explain in *Literary Terms and Criticism* that “the type of incident or images that frequently occur in a text” (154). It is seen as a fountain or spring of inspiration of which designers can better their arts. It has been found to contribute to the wealth of most scenic designs.

Spiritual is often a conscious appreciation of the ultimate mystery that is life, the universe and everything in it, that characterizes the spiritual seeker. According to Maya Spencer, 2012, spirituality means: knowing that our lives have significance in a context beyond a mundane everyday existence at the level of biological needs that drive selfishness and aggression. It means knowing that we are a significant part of a purposeful unfolding of Life in our universe. Spirituality involves exploring certain universal themes – love, compassion, , life after death, wisdom and

truth, with the knowledge that some people such as saints or enlightened individuals have achieved and manifested higher levels of development than the ordinary person. Aspiring to manifest the attributes of such inspirational examples often becomes an important part of the journey through life for spiritually inclined people.

Theatre Performance: is an act of presenting a play, concert, or other forms of entertainment. At the heart of this study is performance.

III. DISCUSSION

Plays are written to be produced, or it is recording on peoples past, written to be reflected upon the state of being. This study indigenous plays where objectification and deification of materials borrowed from traditional sources among the Yoruba. both the new and the old forms, thereby identifying similarities and differences between the two forms for either contextual or deliberate changes. This is bearing in mind Aristophanes assertion in the forward to the *Frog*, that: “a good artist has a message to teach.” Iv. Most of the early playwrights from Yoruba, make use of indigenous source as a spring for their works as a contribution to functions and stylistics classifications. Notable among these playwrights are Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, Wale Ogunyemi, Bode Sowande, Femi Osofisan, Ahmed Yerima, Ben Tomolaju, Yemi Oduntan, and Lekan Balogun to mention but few. (the ancestors are worshipped through the egungun mask. The egungun is a cult of ancestors. The egungun society is a special custodian of the ancestral spirits. It is an attempt to reassure people about individual immortality and to diminish the fear of death through the dramatic appearance of the ancestral spirits within the world of men. It should be noted that not all ancestors have masks dedicated to them. When a particular ancestor is selected for worship, a mask is carved in his honour.

Ahmed Yerima is one of the contemporary Nigerian who distinguishes himself a renown playwright of the time. He has over seventy plays to his credit, among the plays is *Ade Ire* written 2005. The play is set in Yoruba land in Nigeria. The play centres’ on mans lust for power and deification. The play “*Ade Ire*” questions the sit-tight syndrome amongst African leaders. The play is typical of Yerima’s exploration of contemporary issues, but using traditional motifs, and through which he often reflects the plural traditional, religious, and political situation in Nigeria, in particular. The work serves as a springboard for the present study. *Ade Ire* is based on fictitious Yoruba culture and traditions, which Yerima considers being his way of demythologising the myth of the people. This implies that *Ade Ire* is Yerima’s self-created myth based on an existing one that he is familiar with: the Yoruba mythology. In the play, Yerima dramatizes the issue of power tussle and succession brouhaha in a purely hegemonic structure, which is the major thematic preoccupation within the body of the text. The conflict culminates in murder and the desecration of culture, as well as their attendant effects.

Apparently, the issues of power tussle and succession commotion that the play dramatises, also inform the concept of the deification, arrangement, construction and details. Suggestive realism is the adopted design concept for the set design of *Ade Ire*. The idea, as the term implies (Suggestive realism), presents characters on stage that are close to real-life human beings, with almost realistic settings and staging, as against realism, which was a movement in the 19th-century theatre that developed, as a set of dramatic and theatrical conventions, with the aim of bringing a greater fidelity of real life to texts and performances. Suggestive realism is broadly referred as the faithful re-representation of reality and was based on the philosophy of objective is focused on showing everyday activities of life, primarily among the middle or lower class of the society, without romantic idealisation or dramatisation.

However, the purpose of suggestive realism in the production of *Ade Ire* aims to direct attention to the social and psychological complications, emotional trauma, and other numerous human ordeals of ordinary life through Semiotics, which is defined as the study of signs and symbols, especially as means of language or communication. Man can only be man, any attempt for his immortality can only but breeds chaos. Lekan Balogun is another notable playwright in Yoruba Nigeria, a reaction against the way Ojuola is treated in *the gods*, an adaptation of Ola Rotimi’s *The Gods are not to Blame*. It exalts woman (Ojuola) as object worthy of worship as a cultural continuity, as the community celebrates and rejoices with womanhood.



Plate 1:- Mat and patterns as motif for aesthetic artefacts in Ojuola The elderly character is deified as Gelede as designed by Ayodele, Vincent, 2018.

Ojuola: We shall do all things to celebrate our mother p. 39.

Gelede is one masquerade which the Yoruba used in celebrating womanhood.

Gelede in the traditional Yoruba society celebrates woman as an inestimable value. Lawal explains that Gelede is a form of advocating respect for motherhood, as well as using the performance to entertain the general public and, in the process, sensitise the public on the virtues of social living and good citizenship. The Gelede spectacle is a means of educating, amusing, and inspiring worship, all at the same time. At this ceremony, colourful masks are displayed, in addition to arts and ritual dance. “The Gelede society also endeavours to maintain good gender relations by advocating respect for motherhood within a patrilineal culture, such as that of the Yoruba, where men dominate the institution of kingship” (Lawal 1996: xiv). The Gelede costume includes big breasts reflecting motherhood. Interestingly, the wearers of the Gelede masks with big breasts and big buttocks are always men. The explanation given for this was that since the performance is in honour of women, it will be inappropriate for women to wear the masks as that may be interpreted to mean that the women are the ones honouring themselves (Lawal 1996: 78)

The highest value is given to woman as a mother. A woman in the Yoruba culture occupies various positions. That is why the Yoruba culture makes most women look forward to motherhood as she is even deified thus: “Orisa bi Iya kosi” meaning;” there is no deity like mothers.” Motherhood is considered to be very important in Yoruba culture because the preservation of humanity depends on the role of mothers in society (Lawal 1996).

EdanOgboni, (the totem of Ogboni): the EdanOgboni comprises a dual image (male and female) meaning equity/equality among the sexes. The totem stands for a system of morality and discipline, on the practice of , , , ,and (the doing of good) with complete absence from any taint of Malfesance (the doing of evil) in any shape or form. The use of “Edan” motif in Ojuola is to stress “gender balance,” which Balogun tries to depict in his play. How the tilting of that balance creates the conflict that is dramatised.

Performance of Ahmed Yerima’s *Ade Ire*.

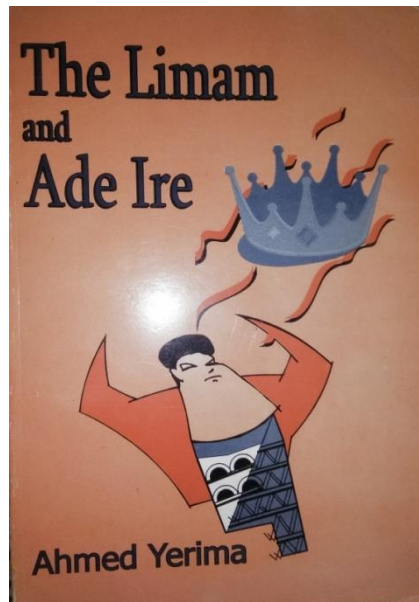


Plate 2:- The cover page of *Ade Ire* shows a crown and the wearer. The two are significant motifs in the play.



Plate 3:- A scene from the performance of *Ade Ire*. Notice the crown as the motif of authority and death. Odu-Ofun and the weapons are objectified on the set.

Balogun, the director of *Ade Ire*, emphasises that he is attracted to the play because of “how the play addresses issues of fate and leadership. These are also subsumed in ritual consciousness that is displayed by the protagonists. Moreover, what is most significant about the play’s exploration of the thematic thrust is how it blends traditional perception with the modern, in terms of the belief and worldview of the Yoruba with the contemporary realities that ultimately speak to the collective and familiar experiences of the audience” (2019).



Plate 4:- the sign on the wall of Oba AdisaAdejebu’s palace, showing OduOfun, underneath of which are placed the machete and the guns with which the king shields himself. The combination of the two is a motif of conscience.

The motif on the wall represents the presence of gods and man, and wherever the two cross paths, there is the likelihood of conflict. Unless in mutual recognition of responsibility.

Weapons, (cutlasses and guns): The weapons are used as shields of protection from evil deeds. Important here is the kind of weapons; the dane gun and the machete.

Chameleon; symbolises multiple personalities and is common among (wo)men with dubious intentions. It is used in the play to shed light on the nature of Oba AdisaAdejebu as an unreliable and fickle person.

Essentially, the set design for *Ade Ire* points to the king and the nature of his person. This, I think, is drawn on the front cover of the and dramatised powerfully at the National Art Theatre, under the direction of LekanBalogun.



Plate 5:- shows the motif used in the above scene comprises of “OduOf”, guns which stand for authority and a chameleon showing the multiple/illusory nature of man (the King).



Plate 6:- A scene in the play showing the full set and the motif used.



Plate 7:- The scarifies scene in *Ade Ire*, dominant in the scene is the shrine made from cutlass and palm fronds, items signifying Ogun whose chant opens the play. Salem touch production, as directed by Lekan Balogun.



Plate 8:- A ritual scene in *Ade Ire*, notice the palm fronds, calabash, cutlass, and the choice of colour which are typical indigenous motifs deployed in the scene.

Design Concept and analysis of *Ahmed Yerima's Ade Ire*.

Motif as symbol should not be confused with the Saussurean concept of semiology, which is a subset of semiotics that includes the study of signs and sign processes, indication, designation, likeness, analogy, allegory, metonymy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication. symbol is something that represents an idea, a process, or a physical entity, something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance, semiotic is slightly, and markedly different.

To start with, semiotics and symbols both have close meanings and are often interchangeable, and can also be represented abstractly. Because in semiotics, a sign is something that can be interpreted as having a meaning, which is something other than itself, and which is, therefore, able to communicate information to the one interpreting or decoding the sign. Signs can work through any of the senses visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory or taste, and their meaning can be intentional such, as a word uttered with a specific meaning, or unintentional, such as a symptom is a sign of a particular medical condition. Symbol, on the other hand, it may have different connotations on separate levels and at different times, cultures, even situations etc. In short, sign is more conservative, why symbol is more democratic, which is itself symbolic. With symbol, one gets that elusive, over generalised idea of what conservative or democratic is (long list of related qualities, examples), but with sign one hardly get any specific meaning, if it is not represented

boldly or visually e.g., a photo or movie, or real object.

The set design of *Ade Ire* is a structural pattern that gestures toward semiotics. For example, the Ogun sacred hills used at the centre stage left (audience point of view), in the production, is a symbolic representation of a specific hill, which is located somewhere in Yoruba land. Again, attached to the hill is the , decorated with , splashed with some touch of colours, to give it some semblance to Yoruba traditional shrines where sacrifices and other traditional ritualistic ceremonies are performed. At the stage right (from the audience point of view; upstage right), is a small shrine planted as a symbolic representation of Ogun. It should be noted that Ogun is the god of iron in the Yoruba pantheon of gods. The focal point of the conversation between Ifakunle and Lisa in the scene is that of religion. All these portray the sociological background of the play.

Moreover, the strokes of repeated line pattern at the top of the set, that run from the top left to the top right (audience point of view) in white colour, against a laterite red background, are signs with meaning. As such that, while the characters in the play repeatedly fight over power, the society suffers peace (king versus priest; and wife versus wife, etc.) In addition to these are the silhouette drawings of the traditional local gun and a machete, which suggest the cultural occupation of the people - farming and hunting, alongside two decorative set elements, framed and hung on the left and right sides of the background wall, which do not only add beauty to the set but also throw insight into the political and traditional "sit-tight" syndrome as reflected within the body of the play (see image below).



Plate 9 is the picture frame placed in the palace to unite the overall scenic composition. The picture as furniture props serves motif for all that happens in the play; in terms conflict and counter conflicts, hydra-headed human, shield, effigies, charms, guns, cutlasses, cowries, talisman etc.coated in heavy earthen colours. The props is a good case of objectified image.

Lastly, there are the traditional mats used to decorate the entrances of the inner chambers of the palace. Yoruba are ancient household materials that are, often, sine-qua-non to identifying as Yoruba traditional homes. Its use extends to the most cultural function of the Yoruba people. They are either used as curtains by doors and windows or as sleeping or seating materials, as the case may be. It is used in the play, not only as a curtain but also as a symbolic representation of a typical Yoruba setting. It also adds beauty to the general set.

The Designer's position:

"Traditional Yoruba theatre occupies a significant position in the socio-cultural, political and religious milieu of the Yoruba people." Prince Oyakhilome (2018).

These fascinating facts have been the motivating factors which informed the entire design concept. "At the end of the project, there is unquantifiable artistic satisfaction explored through pragmatic resources inherent in the play *Ade Ire*, an exemplary piece of African literature" (2018).



Plate 10:- shows a triumphant moment of Oba AdisaAdejebu in the play.



Plate 11:- shows the triumph of Ogun over Oba AdisaAdejebu, the tyrant.

OduOfun: In traditional Yoruba society, karma is a law that warns people against the step, action, and decision that they may want to take. In fact, it is widely believed that whatever one sow one shall reap. This is a metaphor for Oba AdisaAdejebu. In *Ifa* divination, "OduOfun" is a text that seems to expatiate on notion of karma, especially in relation to *Ade Ire*. Since OduOfun symbolises retributive power in the traditional Yoruba world, the *Ifa* divination for Oba Adejebu's quest for longevity is considered a reinforcement of the doom which looms over him from the moment the play begins. "Karma", as a word, originated from Sanskrit meaning "action." It is equivalent to Isaac Newton's law of 'every action must react'. When we think, speak, or act, we initiate a force that will react accordingly. This returning force maybe modified, changed or suspended, but may never be stamped out. This is captured in verse of OduOfun as translated into English:

"It is the big rod that torments the gong Torrential rains reduce the ant-hill to mud Osun Ewuji, desirous of eating and drinking Crawled stealthily into the ocean Cast IFA for Eyin-Iwa (Thereafter) Who is the senior of Oni (Today) You people of Isinpe It is because of Eyin-Iwa That we should be benevolent to Oni (Today) For whatever seed we plant today We shall reap the fruits tomorrow."

"Sow well and honestly today for a blissful harvest tomorrow."

The summary of the divination is that "one should sow honesty today in order to reap happiness tomorrow". The motif of "Ofun" on the set indicates that the King has default humanity and must pay dearly, irrespective of the armour with which he surrounds himself.

The Performance of LekanBalogun’s *Ojuola*.

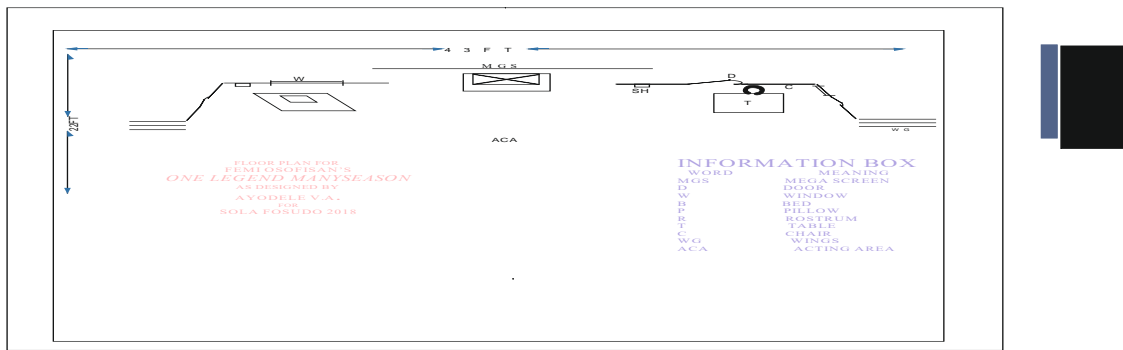


Fig 1:- The floor plan for Balogun’s *Ojuola* showing the set details (entrances and exits, throne placement, and different apartments that are present in the play), as directed by Isaac Onipinla and designed by Ayodele, Vincent Adesina, November 2018.

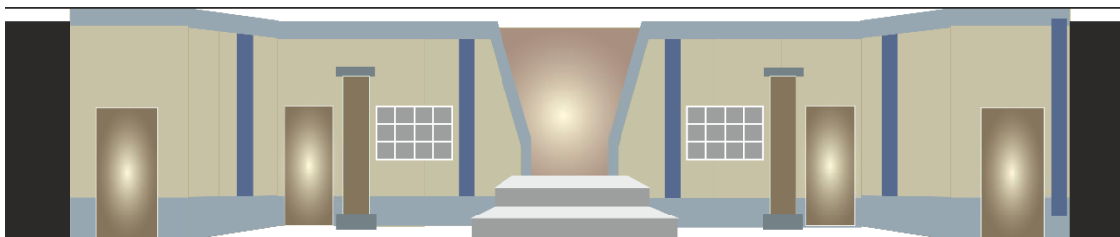


Plate 12 is the perspective drawing for Balogun’s *Ojuola* as directed by Isaac Onipinla and designed by Ayodele, Vincent Ayodele, 2018.



Plate 13:- 3D design of both the perspective and floor plan in figure 6 and plate 43



Plate 14 is the Set design for Balogun’s *Ojuola*, directed by Isaac Onipinla, set design by Ayodele Vincent. The multiple setting accommodates the palace, the priest house, market scene with minimal scene shifts.

One of the prominent themes in *Ojuola* re-echoes the supremacy of the gods over (wo)man, and this, in turn, sets the precedence for the religious undertone that concerns (wo)man’s (im)moral relationship with the gods. Taking an evident indication from the performance, *Ojuola* expresses position among the Yoruba and is ultimately preoccupied with religion or ways in which the characters see life through their own repeated experiences. Subsequently, the play is soaked in religious imageries. In the

performance, less attention is given to Odewale, the protagonist of Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame* which Balogun adapts. In fact, he doesn't until scene six. This means that the play is not from his point of reference. The concept in the performance remains fate, while images such as loyalty, conscience, destiny, disobedience, betrayal, greed, truth, and worship underpin the performance. The performance's directorial interpretation is (wo)man as the subject of the gods. The set concept is cast in suggestive realism with specific motifs set in motion to knit together the play's multiple themes.



Plate 15:- Efe Orhorha as Gelede, Segun Dada as Odewale and Victoria Buseni as Ojuola in *Ojuola*. In the scene, Gelede unravels the mystery that befalls the town. In the play, there is the human "Gelede" as well as pictorial "gelede." Odewale's foster mother, Mobike, is one while the picture at the foreground is another.

Design Concept and Analysis of *Ojuola*.

According to the design, motifs such as the Gelede mask, Edan Ogboni, mat, roof, earthen colour are used in the play. Speaking in an interview after the performance of his play, *Ojuola* and comparing it with Yerima's *Ade Ire* that he directed, the playwright, Lekan Balogun says: "Even though the play is written in 2018, its presentation is set in the ancient Yoruba land. The plays touch on some of the most emotional aspects of our lives in many ways. For instance, cathartic sense is kindled in the audience that saw my play, *Ojuola*, which is itself an adaptation of Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame*. The discovery of the crimes of incest and patricide committed by the protagonist is heart-wrenching and psychologically demoralizing. Similarly, is the unnecessary death caused by the

protagonist of *Ade Ire*, who tries to extend his life through ritual and thus, perpetuate his tyrannical reign. At the resolution of the two plays, one is both emotionally drawn into the tragedy that is dramatised, and the lessons contained the society. Balogun, 2018).

The motifs were used to create a sense of history, to tell the audience that the Yoruba civilization is all-encompassing, well structured and that women are never marginalized. That is why society honour women with such powerful masquerade as the *Gelede*. The motifs project the culture of the people in traditional society. Visual components of the motif are utilised to complement the mental and psychological demands of the drama, both for the actors and the audience.



Plate 15:- shows the Gelede's image at the foreground. The same plate captures Mobike, Odewale's foster mother and "Gelede" incarnate who also represents symbol of truth and Ojuola who is Odewale's biological mother and victim of circumstances. Directorially, the plate shows rejection as other characters turn their backs on Odewale. 15. The plate also shows the use of Edan Ogboni as a motif for equity among sexes and a subtle gesture toward the supremacy of women in the Yoruba society.



Plate 16, the image of the “Gelede” mask used. The mask shows a woman with a baby on her back, adopted as a woman tending to a baby. This is similar to how Mobike nursed Odewale.



Plate 17:- shows a dissected image of “the Edan Ogboni” (totem of the Ogboni fraternity). The image is drawn from plate 3. Although the meaning is diverse, depending on the occasion of use. It is used or adopted in this context to mean, “it takes the pair of a man and woman to make a society”. In the play the object is deified.

The play was well-received by the audience. Stephen Ogundele, a veteran actor and staff of the National Arts Theatre, said after the performance that: “I have never seen any captivating adaptation of *The Gods are not to Blame* such as this in my entire life.” While some members of the audience believe that the play speaks directly to their larger contemporary experience of family life, politics, culture and the like, some even want the play to be available for more people to see and learn from.



Plate 17:- The plate shows the fall of both King Odewale and the agony of Ojuola. However, there is shared heroism here, between Ojuola and Odewale, as well as the community.



Plate 18:- Celebration dance in honour of womanhood in the performance, it is a typical instance of human deification. Choreographed by Yeside Dosumu-Lawal. Significant here is the use of white colour as a motif for peace. 2018.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study exams such word as “Agemo”, “Odu Ofun”, “Gelede” and “Edan Ogboni” in both Yerim’s *Are Ire* and Balogun’s *Ojuola* as cultural material objectified and deified among the Yoruba and come to prove that: these objects make it possible for the playwrights/ play their desired roles of judge, protagonists and antagonists. Furthermore, Yerima uses the crown and king to underline the difference between rulers and the subjects and the havoc that greed can cause among humanity. Similarly, Balogun uses the objects of both Edan Ogboni and Gelede to affirms Yoruba position on the issue of woman, that the Yoruba do not undermine the role or power of a woman. The insensitivity of the councillors to the totem’s intrinsic meaning and purpose consequently exposes their desire to return to the glory of past empires for cosmetic rather than metaphysical reasons, a hollow wistfulness rather than a serious commitment to tradition and culture. The comments above confirm writers distaste for hypocrisy and man inhumanity toman. Information from the plays is free of personal bias especially through the use of words from the plays and the interpretations given to them. For instance, as the various objects and deified use have shown, it is obvious that Yoruba objectified and deified images to authenticate their position in their society. Their role is in the spirituality of such words or objects the way they see life through their repeated experiences in other to adorn the prestige of their community, with the primitive strength of its motifs held to fascination contemporary artists and designers in anticipation to influence modern art. African art according to Frederick Lamp is holistic;

This concept of holism applies not only to the arts, but pervades all of traditional African thinking about the nature of things and of human behaviour. Holism does not divide, as in Western compartmentalization and categorization (p. 1).

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