

Between Beautification and Paranormal: An Examination of Ritualization in Some Yoruba Outdoor Sculptures

Akintonde, Moses Akintunde

Department of Fine and Applied Arts
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology
P. M. B. 4000, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

Abstract

Ritualism and paranormal experience in public outdoor sculpture art is already a concern for some Yoruba communities. The eerie occurrence, which is ephemeral in nature, is yet to be scholarly studied. Since the occurrence is also part of the history of the art within a social environment, it is necessary to examine it critically as it affects the development of the art. Outdoor sculpture ritualizations, the paranormal actions in them, the effects on the sculptures and the public have been examined in this study. The paranormal case of Iya-Ila statute in Ila-Orangun and the ritualization of Ajagunnla and other outdoor sculptures in some Yoruba towns were focused. The beliefs of the Yoruba about cross-roads were also examined in relation to the outdoor sculpture common location.

Keywords: Beautification, environmental adornment, Outdoor Sculpture, Paranormal, Ritualization

Background

Outdoor Sculptures are primarily objects of environmental adornment. They are purposely integrated in the general physical plan of towns, cities and metropolis to enhance order and beauty in the environment. Besides the prime function, it also serves as memoriam of certain personalities or an idea. When properly contemplated the sculpture subconsciously teaches the public some civic orders. Folarin succinctly described the functions of outdoor sculpture in the following statement;

Urban sculpture has often complemented man's effort in many centuries. Even since man has been living and congregating in urban clusters, town and cities he has used sculpture to commemorate important civic events and glorify worthy personalities (Folarin 1993:125-132).

He went further to enumerate sculptures used for urban beauty in some European countries. In the same vein Akintonde (2009) also observes the responses of the South Western Nigeria to the use of outdoor sculpture purely as object of aesthetics in public environment unlike in the past when they were confined to the shrines as sacred objects. He corroborated his claim as follows:

The Yoruba artists finding themselves within this context of constant state of power shift have positively responded to this dynamism of change ... this is being consistent with dynamics of their culture which conception of tradition, as embodies deliberate choice and permanent metamorphosis (Kalilu 1996: 15).

From the statements, it is possible to denote the shift in the use of sculptures by the Yoruba purely for secular reason, particularly for the embellishment of public environment: *o ti di asa titun* (it is a new culture). Right from the emergence of contemporary art in Nigeria in the early twentieth century, outdoor sculpture has been used by individuals, later by churches and subsequently, by government, private organization and corporate bodies in the zone for aesthetic reason.

The use of outdoor sculpture currently has now reached a larger dimension. But the new latitude, paranormal occurrence in outdoor sculpture, ritualization are gradually unfolding; yet outdoor sculpture produced for public use since the emergence of the art however, were not deliberately consecrated for religion or esoteric practices.

They were purely made for aesthetic pleasure. Even up till now, no patron, artist or sculptor of outdoor sculpture is known to have contemplated ritualizing public sculpture for any purpose.

However, ritualization of some of the sculptures has emerged. The ritualization is becoming weird and audacious in strength, when it comes to its mode of operation and occurrence. Some public outdoor sculptures in Osun and Oyo states are the focus of this study. The main subject of attention is the paranormal of *Iyala* statue in Ila-Orangun and in some other cases of sculptures in Ile-Ife and Ibadan. Currently, there are thirty seven sculptures in Osun State while twenty four are in Oyo State. Ritualization of outdoor sculptures in the states appears to be imposing another meaning (fetish in nature) on the sculptures. This however, may endanger public peace, particularly in such volatile, heterogeneous highly religious conscious people of Nigeria. Since this aspect of activities is relatively new in outdoor sculpture practice, it is worth investigating scholarly and set in art historical order. Effort like this is likely to provide more information on the aspect of ritualization of some art and further inspires studies on religion, artistic practice and the socio-psychology of a culture or people.

This study looks at ritual potency of outdoor sculpture and their uses. It also investigated the point at which ordinary sculptures becomes sacred or ritualized. It examined the cause and purpose for which they were ritualized and probe into the types of people who engaged in the practice as well as the effects and the control of the practice in the development of outdoor sculpture. The data for this study were assisted by oral evidence in Yoruba belief system and related publications. The practical experience of some people in paranormal issues and sacredness of some outdoor sculptures in Osun State were very helpful to this study. Significantly, the study perhaps a pioneering effort in the ritualization of the outdoor sculptures provides art historical information on the aspect.

Available publication in the ritualization and paranormal actions in outdoor sculptures of Southwestern Nigeria are still very limited and inadequate in focus and discussion. This is so as the study in the area is just unfolding. Scholarly studies available are only on similar area or based on related disciplines such as: Yoruba traditional religion, sociology, history and philosophy. They are however, relevant and helpful to the current discourse.

Studies were made on Yoruba traditional religion by Awolalu (1979:136-179), Atanda (1980:29), Wenger (1990:55-56) and Abimbola (2010: XXV). But Fadipe (2012:273) particularly discusses the Yoruba religion, which he focuses on the worship of Olodumare (the Supreme God) through the pantheon of gods (*awon orisas*); the importance of sacrifice, the types, the elements, place and modes of sacrifice are usually made for propitiation, invocation, appeasement and atonement sanctimoniously in order to maintain good relationship with the gods who in turn give answers to the petition of their devotees. The observed sacrifice requires set orders in presentation, frequency and correct timing of offering. The scholars mentioned variously the position of *Esu* (god of chance) as very important in any sacrifice made. *Esu* is said to administer the onward transmission of offerings to designated gods and convey acceptance to the petitioners. Awolalu (1979:179) also mentions the position of the crossroad junction as one of the main road intersections *Esu*, *aje* (witch) *oso* (wizard) and many other mysterious beings, esoteric groups and spirits can be approached with ritual offerings. Idowu (1977:108) opines rituals among the Yoruba follow set, fixed and traditional patterns. He states further, "when ritual is well conducted it has a magical virtue that perhaps makes it efficacious".

Akintonde (2009:95-108) observes that art works are used in the worship of god's ritual. They are also used in the shrine as utilitarian materials, altar decoration and spirit trap for mystical power. In addition, he discusses the type of potters that can make ritual pots. These people include a special class of the *Babalowo* (*Ifa* priest) and women potters who should be above menopause. Like Wenger (2000), Falaye (2000:65), Areogun (2000:60), Akangbe (2000:62) further claims, the appropriate offering and rule such as abstinence from defilement must be observed and consecration of ritual art objects must be discretely processed.

Some studies attempted on outdoor sculpture in the Southwest Nigeria are postgraduate theses by Odiboh (1987) Adelowo (1999) Akintonde (2009). The studies generally discuss the provenance of outdoor sculpture; as well as the style and theme, materials and technique, employed in the production of the art-works. Issues in the practice of the art such as patronage, commission mode, management and art abuse were also discussed. Akintonde however, observes the ritualization of some outdoor sculptures in Ile-Ife, Ila-Orangun and Ibadan. He opines that the act tends to reduce what ordinarily are objects of environmental beautification to fetish objects.

Akintonde's observation on the issue is not a detailed study but it appears to be a rare observation on ritualization of outdoor sculpture in the geographical zone.

Mystical Power and Sacredness of Ritual Objects

The Yoruba believes in the extra-terrestrial powers and actions of sacred objects specifically produced for the observance of peace and tranquility of their community. Sacred regalia, masquerade costumes and many cult objects are believed to be repository of high ritual potency in the display of some esoteric and spiritual powers. In many cases, these claims were not supported with scientific facts, but are enigmatic in nature. As incredible as they may be sometimes, they are real and weird in their occurrences. Stringent and perhaps devastating actions have been taken against culprits who either tried to steal sacred objects for monetary gain or who simply want to test the potency by breaking taboo associated with the objects. The Yoruba therefore, respect and revered the objects; never for no reason would sacred objects be desecrated. Oral evidence taken from various Yoruba communities would suffice in this discussion as paradigms of the incredible awesome powers of sacred objects.

In Ile-Ife, *Opa-Oranmiyan* (plate 1), a stone obelisk of three metres in height, believed to be the staff of Oranmiyan; the last of the seven children of Oduduwa (the progenitor of the Yoruba race) is couched in mythical powers. According to a Yoruba myth, the staff was said to have been used as sword by Oranmiyan against the enemies of Ife in battles whenever he was called upon to defend the Ife (that is, in the spirit realm). The calls for battle support however, were said to be hoax, which were spuriously made by curious Ife people. The implication was fatal on the town. In two other occasions when similar war cries were made, the Ife was said to have sustained heavy causality from the swift sword of Oranmiyan. Since then, Oranmiyan refused to answer any war cry again. Recently some Ife youths claimed they saw Moremi in the image of her statue erected in the Ooni palace assisting them to fight in the 1997 Ife-Modakeke crises.

A more affirmative occurrence was the theft of *Segede* (plate 2); a sacred royal garment, worn at the coronation rites of a new Orangun; the king of Ila-Orangun. The garment is only won once by every Orangun in life time. The revered synthetic fibre *agbada* according to Oba William Ayeni, in 1987, was said to be worn by Ajagunla, the founder of Ila-Orangun in 13th century A.D. It was stolen and attempted to be sold to certain European curio merchant in 1984. The action was stalled by the mystical power inherent in the garment itself. The garment was said to have wreaked calamitous venom on the culprits, forcing them to abandon it on the playground of St. Mathew Primary School, Ila-Orangun few days after the theft. Nevertheless, there are still many of these types of extra-terrestrial power in the Yoruba oral history. A good instance is the *Iyala* statue which was produced in 2004 and erected in the main courtyard of Orangun's palace in Ila-Orangun.

The Paranormal Act of Iyala and Its Ritualization

Ila-Orangun is an ancient city in Osun State, Nigeria. The town is the headquarters and the spiritual home of the Igbomina people who are a major Yoruba sub-group. The Ila speaks Igbomina, one of the numerous Yoruba dialects. Apart from farming, palm-wine tapping is the common vocation among the indigenes (Wikipedia, 2013). Wood carving, cloth weaving and other art thrives in the town. Ila-Orangun is also one of the Yoruba towns that appreciate and used outdoor sculpture for beautification in their public environment.

Iyala Statue in Concept: The concept of *Iyala* statue was borne basically as an object of beautification in 2004. Wale Adebowotan, then Director of Works in Ila-Orangun Local Government, had only approached Akintonde a sculptor to produce an outdoor sculpture to be integrated into the renovation project of Orangun's palace. The Orangun had just been installed and directed that his palace be renovated. Although, the Orangun was not briefed about the thematic details by the artist who worked directly with Adebowotan; when the work was eventually erected, he was delighted in the concept and the icons employed for the work. In retrospect, he praised the industrious Ila women who usually persevere and tenaciously hold their fort at the face of economic hostility, including those hardship faced in the lands of their sojourn in the cause of their trade.

In concept, the theme of the work is based on palm-wine selling. The vocation is the most common among Ila women. Obviously, hard work, perseverance, tenacity in business and shrewdness is easily discerned in any Ila woman in their selling enterprise. For this reason, the choice is a better representation for dignity of labour among the Ila women. The tittle; *Iya-Ila*, is borne out of the most common appellation ascribed to Ila women abroad, generally. Any Ila woman irrespective of their vocation or age is usually called "*Iya-Ila*", but the name is commonly used for Ila women selling palm-wine outside Ila town. Contextually therefore, the figure was produced to celebrate the hard work of the virtuous Ila women as well as to beautify the palace environment.

The figure is a mid-aged woman with Ila facial marks (*pele*). It holds a keg of “palm-wine” in the two hands, pouring the content in a bigger keg placed in front of the image. The liquid content, which is motorized continually in circulation, was powered by a one horse power water pump; concealed in the underground tank through which water is piped into the statue. The image had on a simple *iro* and *buba* dress as well as *suku* hairdo, peculiar to Yoruba women. This metallic bronze patinated figure has been technically rendered in good anatomical details with the drapery carefully done. The tactile quality is also subtle. The figure is placed on a sixty five centimetres high and two hundred centimetres wide pedestal, which complements the courtyard space.

Iyala statue was produced in 2004 and erected in the main courtyard of Orangun’s palace. Later in 2011, weird occurrence observed of the sculpture was reported to the Orangun by Adewumi Busari, the palace messenger. According to the Orangun, Oba Wahab Oyedotun, Bibire the first, the image moves physically from its site in company of two mysterious she-goats to few places in the palace several times in the night (plate 3). These goats were large and black haired. The strange occurrence was not initially taken seriously by Orangun and his cabinet chiefs. Seventeen days later, three elderly Ila men apocalyptically informed the monarch that the statue is no longer ordinary. Certain spirit was reported to have inhabited the sculpture and found permanent abode in it. The men further said the spirit requested for sacrificial items of some quantity to periodically propitiate it. These items include *Iyo* (salt), *epo pupa* (palm-oil) and *obi alawemerin* (four cotyledonous kolanuts). The *etutu* (propitiation sacrifice) as directed, must be done every seventeenth day continually to placate and invoke the spirit for the well-being of the Ila community.

Orangun protested toward the ritualization of *Iyala* statue. He told the strange men that the statue was produce at his request for environmental beautification primarily and secondarily to appreciate the Ila women who toil hard to manage their homes. He wonders why an ordinary image should become mysterious. But the monarch was warned to heed the advice; otherwise it would be catastrophic for the entire community. After proper deliberations and consultations with his cabinet chiefs, the *Aworo* (priest of the orisas) and others various consultative organs, Orangun consented. Since then, sacrifice had been made to the spirit inhabiting the statue. The spirit was pacified and no unusual occurrence about the statue was noticed again. Yet, the source of the power residing in the image still remains a mystery to many non-esoteric or spiritually minded.

Many questions on the veracity of the claims therefore remain unresolved. Question on when and how the occurrences manifested and some other questions are still difficult to resolve. It is not certain if the statue actually moved physically from the site it was erected, or it was only an apparition or the spirit that appropriate the sculpture for its receptacle that was seen. More confusing is the identity and meaning of the two she goats that they said constantly roam and feed around the statue. No one claims the ownership of the goats; their source is not also known. The goats are referred to by the people in the palace as the servants of *Iyala*. Mystically, animals, such as goat, dog, cat, owl, vulture and bat are believed to have supernatural powers. They have also been used by members of esoteric groups to run spiritual errands and as totemic symbols.

Perhaps, the said paranormal occurrence is laced with phantasies. But the Orangun and the Ifa testament and intervention cannot necessarily be a ruse. Ifa proclamation and discretion have not been doubted by the Yoruba. Matters like *Iyala*’s bizarre physical movement are however, beyond normal phantom. It requires experience and intervention of people who possess knowledge in traditional philosophy, spiritualism and metaphysics. Some of such people traditionally are the *babalawo* (the wise men) and the *orisa* votaries and devotees.

The palace messenger claimed the statue actually moved bodily with the spirit. However, no one could precisely recollect if the statue’s movement was ghostlike or physical. Whatever type of energy force, it is generally accepted that the figure physically shifted base. To some people, including the Orangun, it was an ominous sign, which calls for immediate control of the force. To others in the palace, it was awesome demonstration of power of the spirit, which could be deployed to positive development in the town. In whatever way the public may look at it, the sculpture has become an image of ritualism and ritual object. Since 2011 when the paranormal issue in the sculpture was recorded; large quantity of salt has been put at the foot of the statue from time to time, as stipulated by the three wise men and the Ifa oracle. The *Ayomo*, aged widows of the deceased Oranguns have now become the votaresses of the *Iyala* spirit. In not too distant time, the rites may grow in dimension, that is, in style and devotees, and even ceremonial attachment.

For extra-terrestrial power to reside in sculpture is not a strange occurrence among the Yoruba. Some sculptures were purposely made to perform certain mystical feat. For instance, art objects (not sculpture alone) are made under prescribed rules in specific. People of advanced age may be required only to undertake production of certain ritual art object. Women who still run menstrual cycle will automatically become barren if they undertake such vocation. Production of ritual art objects may also require special place and time. Certain taboos are usually observed (Wenger 2000:74). Again sanctification of the body is required for artist under such assignment and artist is forbidden to have sexual intercourse during the production of ritual art objects. For instance, Lamidi Oke, an Ife bronze caster and a *babalawo*, claimed that artist must abstain from sex when producing *edan Ogboni* (*Ogboni* brass image referred to as mother earth) and other cult objects of the society. Otherwise such caster will be doomed.

Claims made by Areogun, are similar to the observations of Kasali Akangbe and Segun Faleyeye on similar issue and sufficed that the observation be discussed. For instance Areogun claimed that;

Although, my father has been converted to Christianity, but he still observes some esoteric ritual before commencing any work. I have taken this from him and I observe it very religiously too (Areogun, 2000: 60).

Artworks for ritual purposes are usually consecrated either through the bathe of the objects in some sort of concoction or a specified sacrifice (Akintonde 2009:95-108). *Ere ibeji* (twin statuette) *sigidi* (a small statuette consecrated and used often for malevolent purpose) and *Osanyan* (god of medicine) images are similarly produced and consecrated after which they acquire spiritual and mystical potency. Interestingly, nothing of the ritual nature discussed above was employed during and after the production of *Iyala*. Where lies the source of the power then? Well, occasionally, people who are versed in spiritualism transmit ritual power into images by esoteric means, with or without having any physical contact with such objects. For instance, an Ila man approached this writer, who produced the *Ajagunnla* statue (plate 4), to allow him embed certain charm into the statue for ritual consecration, while the erection was on-going in September, 1987. The man's authority and purpose was questioned. He said, he wanted the figure to have a life force, some kind of primordial energy, that will enable it perform extra-ordinary feat for the town. The artist refused, on the ground that the action is capable of a re-enactment of the old power of *Ajagunnla*'s essence or an inducement of malevolent force in an ordinary object made primarily for beautification. The sculptor immediately reported the case to the Orangun in the presence of his two cabinet chiefs; the Obalumo and Ajiboye the *Elemona* of Ila-Orangun and Orangun's secretary Titus Awodeji. The monarch immediately organized a local guard to keep surveillance over the work, day and night until the installation of the work was completed. The power residing in the *Iyala* image may have been transposed on the sculpture by similar method; but by whom and for what purpose? These questions are quite difficult to answer. However, it is possible for the sculpture to have been bestowed with some spirit in such manner by somebody or a group of people who thereafter would be in control of the image paranormal actions for certain interest.

Ritualization of Outdoor Sculpture

Iyala is not the only outdoor sculpture ritualized in some Yoruba towns. There are other outdoor sculptures in Osun and Oyo States that are associated with ritualization. They have also been classified under paranormal sculptures as *Iyala* in this study. They are *Ajagunnla* statue (plate 4) also located in Ila-Orangun and *Sango-Timi* (plate 5) erected at Okegada in Ede. Others are the bust of *Awolowo* located at Enuwa in Ile-Ife; *Iba Oluyole* and the image of *Akinyele* (plate 6) erected at Beere and Molete in Ibadan respectively.

The crossroad location of these statues unlike *Iyala* statue, is worthy of note. The implication of the crossroad, among the Yoruba, is believed to be shrouded in mystery. The spiritual factor of the crossroad will be discussed later in this study. The importance of the personalities being represented in outdoor sculpture also needs to be considered, because of the spiritual efficacy of crossroad in Yoruba traditional belief system. This factor could inexplicably affect the works in their respective locations. Spiritual power is believed to be ever present at crossroads. Such powers are also believed to affect things, even people proximally located around them, when the power borne spirits are at work. For this reason, outdoor sculptures erected in roundabouts are susceptible to spirit attraction habitation. Thus, the images may be used as receptacle by spirits where they could be function from time to time. Such spirit may be in for several years until it leaves of its own accord or exorcised.

Crossroad, among the Yoruba, is also said to be abode of *Esu* (Yoruba god of chance). *Esu* is believed to have capability to effect positive or negative actions whimsically on anything of interest that is around him. Beside, other *malevolent* spirits the *ajogun* (the evil forces employed by *Esu* and *Aje*) also find abode at the crossroad. *Aje* (witches), *Oso* (wizards), *abiku* (children who died only to be mysteriously reborn by the same mother) *emere* (familiar spirits) *oro* and *ebora* (group of evil spirits) and members of occult groups who are believed to be accompanied with some kind of spirits, are thought to usually converge at the crossroads for meeting the dead in the night. It is those spirits that people with one form of spiritual problem or the other seek to placate or invoke, depending on the prescription for the remedy of their problems (Awolalu:1992). The ubiquitous spiritual or esoteric powers at the crossroad (Fadipe, 2012: 273), particularly, at mid-day, 1:00 p.m. and in the night between 12:00 mid night and 3:00am which are the active periods of the various spirits and members of esoteric groups, when they roam the crossroads is obvious among the Yoruba. This appraisal is a well-known oral tradition. Since people are susceptible to the danger posed by the various spirits at these periods, particularly in the dead of the night (*ajin*), strong warning is given against keeping late on the street at night. Hence, the Yoruba proverb; *Ijakunmo ki rin de osan, eni a bii're ki rin de oru* (a careful and responsible person should not indulge in street hiking in the night). The pregnant woman is forbidden on the street during these periods; otherwise, her unborn baby might be supplanted by an *abiku*, *emere* or any other spirits.

While it could not be scientifically substantiated at present that the extra-terrestrial powers earlier mentioned appropriate any sculptures erected at the crossroads for abode, it is sufficient to believe that the points are potentials spots for various spirits and ritualists and other people who seek spirits assistance for problem solving solutions. In effect, sacrifice usually placed at the location of outdoor sculpture environments could attract and induce spirit potency.

Aside from subconscious ritualization of the sculptures at the crossroad, deliberate adoration, placation and invocation are usually made on certain images of hero and heroines and even contemporary state men and nobles that are erected at roundabouts. The virtues believed to be replicated in the personalities who have transited into the realm of ancestral spirits are the source from which power is trapped to solve diverse human spiritual problems. For this reason, ritualists make sacrifices directly to the sculptures as a point of contact to the spirit realm. For instance, food items such as *ekuru*, (food made from bean) *epo pupa* (palm oil), *eko* (pap) and *eyin* (egg) have been found placed or sprinkled on the bust of Awolowo in 2008. Ritualized goat and food items were also found at the base of *Sango-timi*, (plate 7) Oke-gada, Ede, in the same year. Similarly, a small ritual pot containing sacrificial items was also placed at the base of *Bishop Akinyele*, (plate 8) in Molete, Ibadan while a large pot-shard containing sacrificial items was also laid at *Iba Ohuyole* pedestal at Beere, Ibadan, in 2008.

The possession of power in the spirit realm is well understood by the Yoruba. Through ritual sacrifice (through spirit receptacles to a particular spirits in this case, the sculptures), power need for human situations are reached and used effectively. Statemen such as *Awolowo* and *Akinyele*, who have transited into ancestral realm and whose images were made and erected at roundabout (crossroad), are believed to possess spiritual potency that could be trapped for diverse uses. For instance, Obafemi Awolowo, in his life time, was widely acclaimed among the Yoruba to have potent, spiritual power. He possibly became mystified by the Yoruba and thought to have efficacious power to subdue his political opponents during his active political days in the 1960s. He was acclaimed to have appeared in the sky in a fierce esoteric battle with Akintola, his deputy in the political party called Action Group. Of course, Akintola later became his political arch enemy. In the duel on the celestial plane, Awolowo was said to have vanquished Akintola.

At another time, Awolowo was also claimed to have been seen by the generality of the Yoruba in the sky holding a giant key to political success in the 1963 general election. At any rate, he lost the election. That notwithstanding, with all these phantasm planted in the heart of the Yoruba public, Awo (as he was popularly called) must have been thought to be more powerful at death than alive. After all, he had entered into the ancestral realm, which is believed to be the repository of benevolent powers (Awolalu: 1979: 61). The level of respect accorded his image as a receptacle of his spirit, which is available to those who could invoke it for desired success, is not new among some Yoruba people. From the foregoing, it is certain that some outdoor sculptures have been ritualized and used for various communal and personal needs in the Southwestern Nigeria.

Apart from this, there are sculptures that are deliberately ritualized. Palm fronds were tied to them during communal traditional rites. Sculpture bearing palm fronds; connotes ritualism and paranormal efficacy in deed and function, even when its production is basically for environmental beautification and memoriam. The case of ritualization of *Ajagunnla* image (plate 9) calls for thematic examination in this direction. *Ajagunnla* statue was purposely made for beautification and the remembrance of the historical feat, which he achieved in the founding of Ila-Orangun. The image was conceived based on the historical facts of the founding of Ila-Orangun. The contents in the statue represented what he brought from Ile-Ife to be used for his assignment, that is, the founding of the town. The action portrayed in the figure is a praise shout of the task accomplished after the rites of the founding of the town was concluded, as directed by *Ifa* oracle. The action is vividly represented in the statue. In the composition, *Ajagunnla* bears *ada ogbo* (ceremonial sword) on the right hand, firmly held up in victory. In its left hand is the *opa orere* (iron staff) held to the ground. Other paraphernalia, on the statue is the *ado* (small charm gourd) strung to the bead around the image's neck. According to Oba William Ayeni the late Orangun of Ila, the *ado* contained army of bees that could be dispatched as occasion demands, to sting to death, the enemy of *Ajagunnla*. There is also the *atepa*, worn on the two ankles. It is a small efficacious bead that neutralizes the potency of any evil charm placed along the path of *Ajagunnla*.

During festivals, palm fronds are normally tied to the waist of the image of *Ajagunnla* (plate 9) and around the *opa orere*. The tied palm fronds signified the sacredness of the image. It is also used to attract the essence of *Ajagunnla* physically into the community during traditional festivals. Once this is done, it is believed that the spirit of *Ajagunnla* is in attendance, superintending on the entire affairs of his children. His praise songs are sung directly to the image in reverence. His deeds during his life were also recounted in song by praise singers to the admiration of the people that were present in festivals, such as Ewe, Odun iwa, Egungun festivals amongst other.

Conclusion

Weird power expressed through some sculptures in some towns of Southwest of Nigeria calls for art historical consideration as observed in this study. The occurrences tend to impose another function on outdoor sculpture practice, which may not be totally accepted by the public, whose religions are at variance to the bizarre actions of some of the figures. The deliberate ritualization of the works through sacrifice and other surreptitious means jeopardizes the aesthetic values of the sculptures. The public are consistently denied enjoyment of the beauty in the works. The action also may portray the entire cities as fetish and crude.

The case of *Iyala* is exotic; powers that inhabit the sculpture are astounding. While the ominous possible negative implication to the public is worrisome, its gradual attraction of large number of people to wet their curious appetite is a welcome development for tourism in the state. Needless to blame the outdoor sculpture ritualists for infringement because the government fails to control the production and management of outdoor sculpture figures; there is no adequate structural plan for high pedestals for sculptures and the perimeter fencing of the entire site of each outdoor sculpture for security purposes. Surveillance equipment and personnel are not deployed into the public outdoor sculptures sites to save keep the images. Apart from this, public art law contraventions have never been punished as deterrent for possible future occurrence. That notwithstanding, ritualization and paranormal stance of some outdoor sculpture in the two states, have not adversely affected the development of outdoor sculpture in Osun and Oyo States, except the eerily atmosphere of *Iyala* statue in Ila-Orangun which the public pretend to be oblivion of; after all, Ila-Orangun is a traditional town where Yoruba culture is still very much practiced.

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Plate 1

Opa Oranmiyan (Oranmiyan staff),
Ile-Ife

Courtesy: http://www.ktravula.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Opa_Oranmiyan_r-13x300.jpg



Plate 2

Segede regalia, Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 1987, with the gracious permission of Oba Williams Ayeni, Ariwajoye 1st, The Orangun of Ila, displayed in preparation for the making of *Ajagunmla* statue.



Plate 3
Akintonde Moses, *Iyala*, fundu,
2004, Ila Orangun Palace.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2013



Plate 4
Akintonde Moses, *Ajagunnla*, cement,
height: 270cm, 1987, Ila-Orangun.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 5
Akah Bunak, *Sango-Timi*, cement,
height: 300cm, Okegada, Ede.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2004



Plate 6
Obiora Madu, *Bishop Akinyele*, cement,
height: 264cm, Molete, Ibadan.
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2004



Plate 7
Remains of ritual animal on the
pedestal of *Sango-Timi*
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 8
Ritual sacrifice remains under the
statue of *Bishop Akinyele*
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2007



Plate 9
Ajagunnla with ritual palm fronds
Photograph by Akintonde Moses, 2008