

ARTISTIC AND THEMATIC APPERCEPTION ANALYSIS OF YORUBA MYTHICAL TRICKSTER DIVINITY SIMULACRUMS, 'ERE ESU'

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Abstract

Esu, trickster divinity, in Yoruba mythology, is believed to have been emanated from the Supreme Deity, Olodumare, as a maleficent supernatural being to fulfill the will of God in the theocratic administration of the earth. In Yoruba theology and pantheism, this deity represents a baleful creature and is also regarded as the most important deity among divinities in Yoruba theology with separate temples, shrines and priests. This could be associated with the belief in a non-physical entity of this deity and his certain essential characteristics. However, the visual and material representations of this Yoruba mythical divinity in terms of sculptural effigies and unified symbolic motifs are diverse in dialectical hermeneutics and are often christened differently by social groups and devotees to denote goal-directed representation. Studies of these sculptural renditions and tactual explorations of the attributed symbols have not been seriously considered using thematic apperception analysis. On this point, the artistic and literal interpretations of this deity demand conceptual discussion for material explication and palpation of Yoruba tradition and creativity. The paper therefore examines artistic perceptions and representational process of diverse trickster god, Esu, for interpretation of Yoruba cognitive expression. Direct field investigation, descriptive and analytical methods were combined for critical examination of the selected artifacts of the trickster divinity. The findings revealed that what characterize and exemplify Esu's simulacrum are symbolic representations, prevalent iconic-motifs and conceptualization by which the context is represented and all the effigies are morphologically similar to those used in the past.

Keywords: Artistic Analysis, Trickster Divinity, Esu, Tactual Exploration, Symbolic Representation, Yoruba Artistic Tradition

Introduction

Esu, the trickster divinity in Yoruba mythology, believed to be a baleful supernatural being, possesses harmful and evil qualities and at the same time, has attributes that are beneficial to human beings. This deity represents a mischievous creature and is also deemed to be the most important deity among divinities in Yoruba theology with separate temples, shrines and

priests. As a matter of fact, this deity is accorded much respect among other traditional divinities owing to his capability to perpetuate evil and bring fortunes to people. In the biblical context, Esu, Satan, is spoken of as a spiritual being who is in enmity with the Supreme God and capable of causing different kinds of diseases as a symptom of his nefariousness to mankind (Revelation 16:14; James 2:19; Job 1: 9-10).

Therefore, *Esu* is known to be an imputation of selfish motives in the biblical exposition and he is equally described as a god to man and man to God. The sacred writings of Islam revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad (Quran) describes *Esu*, Satan (Iblis) as a physical structure from fire, high-handedness and respite to the day of judgment on account of his refusal and haughtiness for he was of those who rejected theological virtues of God (Q2:34; Q7: 11-13; Q17: 61-62). The explications of the two religious doctrines about *Esu* affirm him as an intractable and high-haughty supernatural being that refused to bow before the Supreme God.

From Yoruba hermeneutics, theology and myth collections, *Esu* is recognized as an important deity amidst Yoruba deities; *Orisas*, and no rite of atonement can be offered to many of these divinities without an appeasement to this “trickster divinity”. Abimbola (1976) affirms *Esu*’s existence as a

neutral force in the conflict between the good supernatural powers and the evil ones. Also, the devotees of other divinities acknowledge the presence of *Esu* and seek his cooperation to guarantee their trouble-free-activities (Abiodun, 1994). In spite of his appearance both in structure and form, the divinity is often christened differently by dialectical hermeneutics, social groups and devotees to denote goal-directed missions.

The metaphysical study of the Yoruba origin exemplifies quartzite materials *Iyangi* (Plates 1-2) as emblem and simulacrum for trickster deity. In recent times, however, three-dimensional effigies from woods and steatites are used to represent this divinity in order to denote purposive representation. It is noteworthy that the figurative art works of the Yoruba tradition are products of the spirit, and indeed for religious and spiritual purposes, often used by some residents of each town and city (Van Beek, 1991).



Plate 1

Quartzite Material

Title: ‘*Esu*’s symbol in Yoruba mythology
Photograph by AJADI Michael

Plate 2

Quartzite Material

Title: An appeasement to “Trickster Divinity”
Photograph by AJADI Michael

These figurative arts by Yoruba traditional artists are often emphasized on head, *Ori*, as the most important symbol in human figure. No wonder, Yoruba classifies an exceptional being as ‘*Eniti Orisa da yato si elegbe re yoku*’. As pointed out by Abimbola (1975) in his book entitled “Sixteen Great Poems of ‘*Odu Ifa Merindinlogun*’ declares that head, *Ori*, is the most important of all the divinities, *Orisas*, and human achievements are according to the will of one’s head, *Ori*. This is more explicit thus:

Ifa, who amongst the gods can travel along

with his buff to a journey over ocean? *Ifa* stated ‘it is head’, it is head alone, only head can travel along with his buff to a journey over the ocean, *Orunmila* said, when an *Ifa* priest drop dead, his divination instruments may be asked to be thrown into the ditch, when a devotee of *Sango* drop dead, his *Sango* instruments may be asked to throw away... *Orunmila* said, “ever since men have been dying”, whose head has ever been detached from his body before burial? ...*Ifa* said, ‘it is head’, it is head alone, only head can

travel along with his buff to a journey over the ocean, if I have money, it is head whom I will tell ,my head, it is you...

As a result of these observations and beliefs, the rendition of diverse mythological “Trickster Divinity Simulacrums” types by many Yoruba carvers both in dialectical hermeneutics and social groups are usually images represented with over-enlarged heads in proportion to stunted torso and limbs. They are carved with a purposive horn, *Iwo*, and club, *Ogo*, curving backwards, and ornamented with cowry shells to form pantheon ideas of their certain essential characteristics. To whatever degree or extent, modernization and socio-cultural have dealt a great blow to the archetypical replication of some of these *objects d’ art*. Some of the typical iconic-motifs and symbols that could have explicated this deity have been modified to fit the purposive usages while goal-directed visions and prescriptions by the users have equally hampered pictorial production. However, studies of these effigies’ rendition and tactual explorations of their attributed symbols have not been seriously considered using thematic apperception analysis. The visual images and material representations of this Yoruba mythical divinity in terms of sculpturesque references and unified symbolic-motifs require proper documentations in order to acquaint researchers with more information about the concepts of tradition and creativity in Yoruba artistry on one hand, and thematic orientation-cum-stylistic trends of this divinity’s representation, on the other hand. On this point, the artistic and literal interpretations of this deity demand conceptual discussions for materiality explication and palpation of Yoruba tradition and creativity.

Scholars have widely studied Yoruba artistic tradition and creativity, Yoruba traditional divinities and their heroic deeds, the interplay of arts in Yoruba culture, and transactions, transitions and transformations of Yoruba art. Akinyemi (1998) describes the various forms of Yoruba oral and written literatures with emphasis on prose, poetry and play. The deities attributed forms, iconic consecrated motifs, quasi-religious symbols,

and particularly, what characterized their appearances in image representations have been extensively discussed (Dennis, 1974; Ajadi, 2014; Ajadi, 2017 and Ajadi, 2021). Writing along the same line, Drewal (1992) crystallizes the rituals that encapsulate and critically represent events and processes of daily existence of life’s experiences. Drewal (1980); Abiodun (1983); Abiodun, Drewal and Pemberton (1991) define complex forms in the ideas and skillful manipulation of media in Yoruba art decoration, design, or embellishment of form, creativity, completeness, appropriateness, visual playfulness, and design consciousness.

Ibigbami (1975) and Adepegba (1984) work on the traditional pottery in Yoruba culture with reference to the aesthetic essence of Yoruba sanctuary pots. The two articles make valuable contributions to the four highlighted types of sanctuary pots and the roles of these pots in traditional religion. The development of Yoruba indigenous religions and basic cognitive belief on different divinities were crystallized (Olomola, 1998; Opeloye, 1998). Drewal (1994), in his article entitled “Yoruba Art and Life as Journeys”, summarily defines Yoruba art as “evocative form”, serves as generative and transformative for both artists and audiences. Van Beek (1991) describes traditional art as an elastic heritage art in which Yoruba artists have always drawn upon ideas, symbolic representations and styles. Drewal (1994) examines the oral history and ritual of *Ifa* diviner “Kolawole Ositola” and his use of metaphor as a hermeneutic tool in the act of interpretation and representation.

Thompson (1976), Willet (1976), and Stevens (1978) explicate how enormous the Yoruba arts in quantity, the variedness in their materials and forms and how they provide remarkable information on many of these arts. Aside from remarkable information on style and tradition of Yoruba art, stylistic analysis of artists’ workshop in ancient Ife and *Opon Ifa*, oracle trays, from the Osogbo and Ijebu regions were examined to trace anonymity and iconographic images in Yoruba art and thought (Abiodun, 1994; Willet, 1994; Witte, 1994). A noteworthy fact for the frequent anonymity in Yoruba art is the nature of coactions among the Yoruba

artists in which the art works are known but little acknowledged, and the artists may deliberately suppress the extensively known fact of some effigies that are seen as manifestations of larger power (Van Beek, 1991).

It is on the basis of this that the paper attempts to investigate artists' perceptions and artistic approaches towards symbolic representations of the Yoruba mythological trickster divinity, *Esu*; its effigies in thematic apperception analysis (i.e., projective technique using picture to trace *Esu*'s personality) as sacred artifact. The study, however, examines representational ideologies of diverse trickster divinities according to their names for interpretations of Yoruba cognitive expression, contextualization by which the concepts are influenced as well as their cultural and thematic orientations. Pictorial examinations were carried out in order to visually discuss and interpret the perceived qualities of selected *Esu*'s simulacrum for basic cognitive process. This is to corroborate the related past experiences with perceived qualities and unifying ideas that are recurrent in artistic work of the selected effigies.

The objectives are: to examine deco-stylistic representations of the selected simulacrum for tactual explorations and contextual interpretations of the unified symbols, icons and motifs; to investigate cultural orientation of the artists towards artifactual representations and symbolic images of the selected sacred artifacts; and to provide needful information for perspicuous explanation of each selected effigy in order to erase vague impression towards their creation. In research design and methodology for the study, direct field investigation, descriptive and analytical methods were combined for critical examination of the selected trickster divinity's artifacts. Direct field investigation was employed for interactions with artists in Key Informant

Interview before taken photographs of diverse trickster divinity's simulacrum. Descriptive method was used for conceptual discussion and contextual interpretation of unified symbols icons, and image depictions. And analytical method was utilized to appraise the art form, style, theme and functions as well as the production process in terms of materials, techniques and stylistic trends.

'Esu' Effigies: The Context and Content

Looking at Yoruba historical deities' effigies, apart from sculptural images of masquerades, *Egungun*, that received the quality of being admired, the traditional arts that have preserved both the context and the content of older appearance are *Esu* effigies with a conspicuous and depictive aspect that explicate the distinctive features of their prominent attributes. The recent replications of *Esu*'s effigies are more repetitious than the older ones, and often seem overworked and exaggeratedly refined or virtuosic; perhaps emphasizing technique over conviction. Contemporary artists of the recent simulacrum have more choices than in the past and available to them now are more materials, more themes, more ideas and more disparate sources of inspiration. But essential characteristics of this divinity still persist in the renditions. The names given to this divinity in association with different Yoruba traditional deities and in accordance of rights decreed by the most Supreme Earthly Deity, *Orunmila*, who is reckoned as nearest to the Supreme God *Olodumare*, are *Esu Alaje*, *Esu Laalu*, *Esu Odara*, *Esu Ologo*, *Akurele Esu*, *Esu Sango*, *Esu Aseeta*, *Esu Elegbara*, *Esu Ebita* and *Afonfere Esu* (Plate 3). These names are issued for easy appeasement against evils on earnest and conscientious activities intended to do or industrious undertaking by the priests and devotees of diverse divinities. Some of the below sculpted images are for the glorification of this divinity and the adornment of religious appurtenance.

**Plate 3**

A Cross Section of Diverse Simulacrums of Trickster Divinity

Artist: Odekunle O. Olajide**Year:** 2021

'*Arira*' wood which is also referred to as *Ara* is the hard lignified substance highly designated for carving this deity amidst the Yoruba carvers. This asseveration can be traced to traditional knowledge of *Esu's* idiolect '*Ese Ifa ogbeaate*' through a legend that says:

The traditional lore of '*Esu idiolect*' exemplified *Ara* as a symbolic wood used to represent pretended interest of Most Supreme Earthly Divinity *Orunmila's* cadaver for affirmation of other divinities allegiance to him. *Orunmila* is reckoned as nearest to Supreme God, *Olodumare* and acknowledge with the creative power to form and shape man after man has been created from clay by *Olodumare*. The oral tradition corroborated that all deities dissembled to be truehearted allies of *Orunmila* whom they all feared most. *Orunmila* was admonished by eye of God (Oracle tray) with his household, a false annunciation of his departure into eternal life. *Ara* wood was used for his life-size effigy covered with white cloth in order to present his corpse for other divinities. All divinities expressed their displeasure, chafe, vexation and dis-satisfaction with the governance of this deity during his lifetime believing that *Orunmila* had already died. Among the divinities was *Esu*, the Trickster Divinity, who

proved his staunchness to the extent of committing self-annihilation after the announcement of the death. For this patriotism from *Esu*, *Orunmila*, declared *Ara* wood as the symbolic material for all divinities' effigies. In addition, before any deities can be propitiated, *Esu*, Trickster Divinity, must first be appeased for successful expiation (Oyeniyi, 2021).

However, hardness, identification possibilities and scarcity have accommodated different kinds of woods for artistic creation of those *Esu's* simulacrums. Dialectical hermeneutics and concatenation of divinities have equally contributed to the multi-christening of *Esu's* effigies for diverse purposes in order to achieve different missions. These effigies were made in diverse form to represent the users' visions in the spiritual realm and the exhibited icons, motifs and symbols explicate their visual percept. The supernatural power of this deity is used to conjure because of his authoritative power, *Ase*. Among the iconic-motifs are cowry shells, *Owoeyo*, which symbolize wealth and richness, *ogo* symbolizes death hammer, *Afonfere*, symbolizes *Esu's* trumpeter, and the long conical carved club curving backward *Ogo Esu*. The pictures of diverse effigy types and details of their symbolic motifs are conceptually discussed both in contextual and thematic apperception analyses.

Thematic Apperception Analysis and Identification of Contextual Symbols in Diverse *Esu's* Effigies

The basic cognitive process and perceived qualities of diverse *Esu's* effigies are given careful consideration in order to explicate the conceptual interpretations of their themes. The unifying ideas that are depicted on each simulacrum, both in the literary content and concept, and contextual representation of them in artistic thought, were tactually explored. All selected effigies were critically examined and appraised according to their appearance under apperception technique in order to exploit the contents both in aesthetic standard and sensibilities. The set of facts and circumstances that surround each representation were definitively analyzed, and contextual definitions of unified motifs are offered connotatively as obtainable from Yoruba technical origin (Ajadi, 2021). A fact noteworthy about Yoruba history is that apart from written tradition there is also oral tradition which is still alive till today and this is done through stories and poems being handed down by words of mouth from generation to generation (Akinyemi, 1998). Hence, all the variegated aspects that can contribute to effective actualization of facts were followed for in-depth discussion of each selected effigy.

From Yoruba cosmology, quartzite materials represent '*Esu's* symbol which signifies power, *Ase*, and often grows on the spots where the divinity's temples are sited. The spots are detected through constant accidents or baleful occurrence that necessitated appeasement. On the other hand, to exhibit the replica representation of this deity in three-dimensional effigy are wood carvings to depict unifying ideas and symbols that explicate his elements in literary and artistic works. For instance, *EsuAlaje*, (Plates 4-6), are characterized with elaborate decoration with emphasis on cowry shells and diverse range of decorative techniques and motifs. The decorative motifs which are set around all the effigies are invariably depiction of *Esu's* symbolic appurtenances and other related icons like *Esu's* club, *Ogo Esu*, cowry shells, *Owoeyo*, and *Esu's* hammer, *Oogo*. The effigies in Plate 4 are archetypical replications of *Esu Alaje*, in

Yoruba contextual concept and carved in genuflection. The heads of all simulacrum are given prominence by virtue of size in proportion to the body and by the details given to those effigies by the artist. The three possible reasons given to head prominence in African sculpture in another version of mythology are: the physical form of the head as an important part of the body that housed the four sense of human being including brain. Beside, the head is the seat of one's personal destiny. The heads are demarcated with cowry shells interwoven in necklace forms.

The two figures *Esu Alaje*, in Plate 5, are dance staff for *Esu's* priests and devotees. The works are carved in three-dimensional erectness pantheon ideas that reflect diverse designs. In this staff, emphasis is placed on elongated *Esu's* clubs, *Ogo Esu* firmly attached to the effigies' necks with neck-like reinforcement that position the cowry shells around the cervix. The curving clubs of the two effigies are decorated with various lines and patterns that exhibit anthropomorphic and zoomorphic ideas. The 'dance staff' is carved in Yoruba traditional proportion orientation with over-enlarged head to the torso and the facial expressions are visually depicted in details. The accuracy of the treatment is striking when critically examined, particularly, the eyebrow, the elliptic shaped heads and the superlative treatment given to the curving clubs. The arms that hold the trumpet in erectness form were given precise treatment to illustrate the deity in action with unique reflection that showcases assemblage of diverse *Esu* characters as a whole.

The artistic rendition of works in Plate 6, especially the rhythmical appearance of all the heads, show-cases great masterpiece of diverse art objects in erectness and genuflection. In both art and form, the work is naturalistic in Yoruba stylistic treatment and the facial features like lower and upper eyelids, noses and mouths are well treated. Artistically, all images are idealized in sizes of the heads to other parts of the bodies with mimetic Yoruba cultural imitation of hyper-visibility elliptic eyes, aquiline nose and oval supercilium (Ajadi, 2021). In context, all the *Esu Alaje's* effigies are purposefully designed for glorification and to appeal the spirits of

wealth in spiritual realms after rite of atonements have already been offered to the deity (Odekunle, 2021). Spiritually, Yoruba metaphysical study describe this divinity as an *avenueto* overturn fortune in favour of

wealth destiny when properly propitiated against unknown forces with right sacrificial materials because of his alternative power, *Ase*.



Plate 4

Esu Alaje

Artist: Odekunle O. Olajide



Plate 5

Esu Alaje

Year: 2021



Plate 6

Esu Alaje

The *Afonfere Esu*, (Plates 7-9), are other beautiful scrooch effigies sculpted to depict *Esu* and to herald the manifestation of Yoruba's belief in reportorial god of human activities. The geometrical motifs rendered on these effigies are varied in congruous combination and in interlace formats. The developments of these interlace motifs in Yoruba's effigies are the result of historical and environmental experiences, as well as the cultural and artistic interactions (Odekunle, 2021). Examples of these motifs are: intricate, *Onilawiniwini*, lame knee *Orunkunaaro*, hexagonal shape *Onikikan*, Cross hatched *Eletu*, fish bones *Eleguneja*, basketry *Alapere*, cockroach stylized *Alaayan*, rat tail, *Irueku*, wall gecko, *Omonile*, and pigeon eyes *Ojueyele*. The importance of motifs on effigies is significant to the trained artist because of their aesthetic consciousness (Odekunle, 2021). The *Esu* clubs, *Oogo Esu* of these simulacrums were

superlatively designed in anthropomorphic and geometric forms, the curves going backward from head to the back. The decorations are akin to those found on Yoruba wood-carved sculptures in terms of execution. The facial features are carefully carved, and accuracy in these sacred artifacts is striking, especially, the depiction of genial area, quasi-bulbous shape of the head with hook-like nose and elliptical eyebrow. Other significant observation from Plate 8 image is projected face at the end of the effigies' club. The stool and arms were properly treated, particularly the treatment of the fingers that holds the flute, line of the feet and squatted waist in sitting position. In context, *Esu's* trumpeter in Yoruba mythology is believed to be a reportorial deity of man's activities on earth for proper documentation. Hence, the deity gives appropriate accounts and rights records of individuals on earth as the abode of mortals.



Plate 7
AfonfereEsu



Plate 8
AfonfereEsu



Plate 9
AfonfereEsu

Artist: Odekunle O.
Year: 2021

What discernable effigies in Plates 10-15, *Esu Ologo*, are hammer, *Oogo*, which is the manifestation of death in spiritual realms. Plate 10, *Esu Ologo*, is an anthropomorphic dance verges and squatting monumentality on a pillar shaped pedestal which depicts the Yoruba hammer-carrying figures in three dimension. These sacred effigies are rendered in Yoruba idealized realism style with pointed horns and clubs curving backward. The heads of these simulacra are enlarged against the carved torso and limbs of the body. The heads are embedded with elaborate coiffure designs to give distinctive features of the horn and club. Torsos of these effigies were given proper treatment and the details of arms that bent-up to hold the hammer, *Oogo*, are exceptionally carved. One of the most striking things about this artist is the great diverse of styles in which he carves. For example, in Plate 11, he tried to recapture the *Esu* club and horn in another form and it can be noted that the rhythm was what he was seeking here. These effigies are highly typical of the Yoruba idealized carving technique. They must be considered as traditional art,

depicting like *Esu's* simulacra of the past mythic figures. Most of these images were, however carved on the recommendations of the devotees in response to a communication to the spirits (Odekunle, 2021). The effigies in Plate 14 differ with saw-like horn on the clubs curving backward. Cult requirements might dictate such features and the procedures to be followed during the carving (Vogel, 1991). To a far extent, however, the production of effigies were the result of a collaboration between artist and client, and occasionally the diviners. In this regard, the effigies that are seen as manifestations of larger powers, the user may deliberately suppress their widely known facts (Odekunle, 2021). The more important the work, the more likely it is to be carved in seclusion. The users of this simulacrum, whether individuals or society, almost invariably have more meaning, power and visibility in terms of contextual interpretation and the contextual implications of hammers, *Oogo*, in spiritual realm can only be explicated by the member of the society. The effigies may serve as a death instrument or in situation in which death requires it.

**Plate 10**

Esu Ologo

Artist: Odekunle O. Olajide **Year:** 2021**Plate 11**

Esu Ologo

**Plate 12**

Esu Ologo

**Plate 13**

EsuOlogo

Artist: Odekunle O. Olajide **Year:** 2021**Plate 14**

EsuOlogo

**Plate 15**

EsuOlogo

*"A baniwaoran bi a orida
O baelekun sun ekunkieru o baelekun
Elekun n 'sun ekunLaroye n seje"*
"Catalogue of troubles personified
He helps the weeper to state of fear
Weeper shed tears Laroye shed blood"

Esulaalu, (Plates 16-18), initiates evil provocation of other divinities on mankind and no cult group underestimates the power of this deity whose incantation and eulogy were rendered above. In the production of this effigy, users approach the artist with diverse ideas of the subject and the unified attributes to be depicted in the work. In this case, frequent requirements will be open-ended requested so as for the piece to be different from other known arts. For the goal-directed missions also, most artists fully accepted and complied with the demands of their users. Certainly, all the artists have distinct personalities and transmit received forms in their own styles, but purposive usages must be put into consideration during the productions. As described and discussed

in the eulogy above, complication and multiplication of *Esulaalu's* forms have been noticed in the effigies below and there are many instances of imaginative usage of imported symbols as replacement for traditional patterns. The purposive usages of these effigies are synonymous to *EsuOlogo* and what characterized the two effigies are hammers, *Oogo* in both hands. *Esulaalu* acts in pretended interest to console with excessive sympathy during evil affliction from his cult. Appeasements of this divinity determine his havoc in spiritual realms and whoever appeases first afflicts evil on the opposition. No wonder the representation reflects in its effigies below (Plate 16-18) and the way he has been characterized with this powerful panegyric: One who belongs to the right and left side of an issue without exhibiting any sense of shame, 'A s 'otun s 'osilaini 'tiju', (Abiodun, 1975). This is always manifested in his actions. In this process, the afflicted ones may find it difficult to identify the cause of their affliction. In spite of the fact that cults are reinvigorated in every generation in order to reintroduce new cult requirements, powers and sculptures, visual

links between the current and past effigies are surprisingly not hard to find and their

contents are of prime importance for Yoruba artists.



Plate 16

EsuLaalu

Artist: Odekunle O. Olajide



Plate 17

EsuLaalu

Year: 2021



Plate 18

EsuLaalu

As described above and discussed in the introduction, the traditional arts that have preserved both the symbols and functions of older cult practices are the Trickster Divinity's simulacrums, *Ere Esu*, with their rites of atonement that are conspicuous and widespread. The orientation of these sacred effigies are not significantly changed in terms of appearance, but modified slightly to fit goal-directed visions. The representation exist within users' prescriptions and demands and artists' cultural and thematic orientations. The trends of recent effigies are driven by the rise in individualism, interest in pattern, and on a technical level by the increase in demands. Nonetheless, all the effigies are morphologically similar to those used in the past.

Conclusion

The historical context of Yoruba mythical Trickster Divinity effigies, *ere Esu*; a recognition that is more dynamic in themes of these simulacrums; and a close look at their features leads to the examination of diverse Yoruba mythological Trickster Divinity simulacrums, *Ere Esu*, using projective techniques (thematic apperception analysis). Indeed, the basic functions and structures of these simulacrums are diverse in explications coupled with their modes and manifestations. It is also irrefutable that Yoruba oral traditions have equally enhanced an understanding of these Yoruba arts immensely as well as their contexts of use in cult practices. The paper, therefore, has proved crucial and important position of the

Trickster Divinity, *Esu*, as a powerful deity in Yoruba cosmology and this deity has assisted in maintaining the unstable balance between his malefic and benefic influences on the universe.

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