

BEAUTY AND COMMUNITY LIVING: AN INSIGHT INTO THE ONTOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EMOTAN SCULPTED ARTFORM

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Abstract

The worldview created by an African creativity is definable in terms of aesthetic qualities and continuum where contradictions and oppositions form a coherent whole. Consequently, cognitive and moral values interact in significant ways to provide us with a non-essentialist conception of art as showcased in Emotan (Uwaraye) sculpted artform. This paper examines the social-cultural significance of the object of artistic significance via the figural statute of Emotan artform and to explain the concept of beauty in Bini worldview, for the purpose of this study, the hermeneutical method is employed. The paper is of the view that the statues of Emotan erected in some strategic locations in Nigeria is not merely decorative, representational, formalistic or for entertainment, rather the artform of Emotan celebrates the fundamental moral category of African humanism, honesty, hard work, truthfulness, loyalty and hospitality. One central argument in this paper is that sculptural symbols and statutes constitute the insignia of cultural and aesthetic epitome of cherished African values. The paper is of the view that character-based ethics is one essential contribution Africa has made towards humanistic cultural universalism.

Keywords: African aesthetic, Beauty or Beautiful, Bini worldview, Ontology, value

Introduction

Plato assigns to the philosopher the task of attaining reality-the essence of things-rather than appearance of things as they seem to be. Since Plato's time, philosophy has meant "a reflective and reasoned attempt to infer the character and content of the universe, taken in its entirety and as a single whole, from observation and study of the data presented by all its aspect."(Fuller,1945:1) The full field of what might be called "aesthetics" is a very large one. Aesthetics as a branch of philosophy studies artistic values and concepts. In conjunction with ethics, it forms part of the division of philosophy known as axiology (the theory or science of values).while ethics is concerned with moral values and standards, aesthetics "is concerned with artistic values and with the nature of beauty and art."(Ome, 2012:1) The form in which the object of an art assumes and presents a symbolic depiction of its beauty patterns.(Olubunmi,2020:166) Through a display of the formal properties of an object, the appeal to sense experience is essentially relayed in the physical.

In line with the above, man's aptitude is capacitated to formulate, to interpret, among other things, his language and culture in general. The aesthetic interpretations of what happens around man have always led man to be described as "*homo faber* (a working animal), *homo religiosi* (a religious animal), *homo loquen* (a speaking animal and *homo*

symbolicus (a symbolic animal)". (Etim,2013:13) All these ascriptions are possible because of man's capacity to create and interpret his environment and the events that goes on in it aesthetically, which often have generated serious metaphysical, epistemological and logical issues given its esoteric nature and its association with symbolism and its integration with beliefs, be it in civilized, non-civilized, developed or underdeveloped cultures.

The aesthetic type of reaction to symbols of art and artifacts is practically a universal characteristic of human experience. Even the primitive man aspires towards the beautiful; he expresses his aspiration in decoration, ornamentation, dance, and music, and the civilized man objectifies this aspiration in his more artistic creations. (Cunnigham,2011:217) wherever a civilized society is found the aesthetic interest ramifies profoundly through the warp and woof of it.

Artistic value of artefacts can only be appreciated by a thorough understanding of the works that possess them. Thus if we are appreciating something as belonging to the art form-sculpture, we are ipso facto appreciating it as art. In an African setting, artworks are made for several purposes such as therapeutic, religious, cultic, cultural entertainment, educational, ethically explicit etc. This paper attempts to explore a non-essentialist conception of aesthetic value as we consider the aesthetic significance of Emotan sculptural artform. In essence, a summative understanding of the value of artefacts affirms the existence (non-aesthetic) artistic value.

The Idea of African Aesthetic

Why do we have to talk about African aesthetics? We are talking about African aesthetics because "philosophy seeks to establish order among the various phenomena of the surrounding world and it traces their unity by reducing them to their simplest elements"(Onyenwuenyi,1976/77:515) We can talk about African aesthetics because African culture has its own "standards of value in judging art"; its own "general principles" in explaining the value of any work of art.(Onyenwuenyi,1999:593) African has his own view of life which is regarded as the starting point of philosophy, Our knowledge of life is above all contained in certain and cultural views of the world which play a prominent role in philosophy. That philosophy of art is universal does not mean that all aestheticians should employ similar standards of value in judging art, To know how a people view the world around them is to know how they evaluate life and this provide a guide to their behavior, consequently, this is leading to discussing the idea of African aesthetics in this section of this paper.

African aesthetics perspective clearly or indirectly expressed partly in various forms of oral tradition that contains deep aesthetic insights which reflect the prevalent principles and canons of African's artistic creativity, criticism, and evaluation. And some African everyday words signifying sense of beauty are intertwined with what is normally adjudged good, proper and appreciable in the African world. By way of definition, therefore, Njiofor defines African aesthetics as a "branch of African philosophy—is the normative science of beauty in nature and art, in other objects, and in living experience in

line with African culture and tradition and ideals of the community for the well-being of all”(Njiofor,2018:32) .The term African aesthetic refers to the African perception and appreciation of the nature, beauty, and value of artistic expressions or representations of African origin. It is embedded in the plurality of African cultures and embodied in people's practices within their lived African societal contexts.

African aesthetics is drawn from the diverse geographical, environmental, historical, cultural, religious, or spiritual experiences of African peoples and which it also relates with. It is therefore a significant component of African people's tangible and intangible cultural heritage that simultaneously affirms their diversity and reinforces their cultural unity. (Ibid) It provides symbolic representations that communicate what it is to be an African to future generations on the continent and in the diaspora. Most Africans in the diaspora have retained some of their traditional aesthetic elements, which are exhibited in their dress, hairstyles, ornamentation, music (song and dance), and artworks. These various artefacts are symbolic elements defining and sustaining their identity and origin. In the African aesthetic mindset, many reasons undergird the African work of art whether visual, musical, kinetic, poetic, contemplative, spiritual or other non-visual arts. There is always a sense of purpose in whatever the African does. His paintings are informed by traditions, superstition, religion, folklores, conquests, history, etc. Art works whether as in building, dress, dance, carving, horticulture, tattooing, theatre, war, etc., are informed by concepts like peace, love, friendship, courage, toughness, strangeness, hospitality, vision, religiosity, harmony, unity, moderation, etc.(Ibid.) On the negative side, it may be to inspire fear, hate, rebellion, hostility, wickedness, blood thirsty-ness, aggressiveness, invincibility, etc.

The works of art are both emotional and expensive; they are also unique and individual, as they also gain spread and commonality over time. What I am trying to say is that whatever the Africans do in terms of arts creation is solely to satisfy some kind of need whether aesthetic, religious, moral or physical. The African concept of aesthetics is predicated on the fundamental traditional belief system which gave vent to the production of the art. Now art is usually seen as human enterprise concerned with the production of aesthetic objects. Thus, when a people in their leisure time try to produce or create objects that they consider admirable, their sense of aesthetic value is brought to bear. If we see art as being concerned with the production of aesthetic objects, then we can truly say of African aesthetic that it gives aesthetic awareness, knowledge and create a kind of sensitivity about the artistic expressions of the African people which is embedded in the feelings and imagery that these works of art presents and is immensely rich in African culture.(Bewaji,2012:243)

The Notion of Beauty in Bini Thought system

Beauty is traditionally and universally held as the central concept in an aesthetic experience. Different cultures hold different conceptions. The objects that are traditionally considered worthy of sustained appreciation and enjoyment in Benin aesthetics includes sculpture, music, dressing, dancing, carving and dancing. But they

include many more; that is to say, the focus of Benin aesthetics is wider, its concerns much greater. Benin aesthetics considers the beautiful to include more in the life of a person than events, scenes, and works of art; it deals also with the standards of value in appraising other aspects of human life and culture, such as humanity itself and morality.

Beauty is a combination of qualities that gives pleasure to the senses or to the mind. It is a pleasing or attractive feature about an object or somebody. Beauty is seen not only in works of art but also in the physical characteristics or qualities of the human being. It can be internal or external. The expression of aesthetics among the Benin's covers many artistic forms also. These include expressions that comes in sculpture, paintings, carving, metal works, and architecture, etc. the Benin conception of beauty can be understood both internally and externally, beauty has two realities, the outer /extrinsic beauty (*ose egbe*) and the inner /intrinsic beauty (*ekhoe ose*) Outer beauty has to do with the surface quality of things or outward appearance in general. Inner beauty (*ekhoe ose*) refers to the intrinsic worth of things. In man, *ose egbe* is frequently implied in the word “*uyinmwun*” meaning character, while in the object is implied in the word *ogialo* meaning functional utility.

In Benin aesthetics, *ose* (beauty) is synonymous with *oma* (good) what lacks *ose* (beauty) is simply *enwin nema*(something bad). *Ose*(beauty) in Benin thought system is attributed to *Osanobua* (God)who is believed to be the moulder of man's physical feature. As it is in most parts of Africa, Beauty in Benin thought system is interconnected and interrelated, whether to the physical or to the spiritual. This is because life force tends to link everything together. This is what Azenabor, referred to as the unitary culture of the people which shows that the society is a network of relations.(Azenabor,2002:62) The Benin's believe that *Osanobua* is the God of beauty. This is contained in the Benin story of creation which holds that *Osanobua* was vested with the power of creation and in the process created many things of which beauty was part of it.

The study of beauty as it is conceived in Benin can be explained easily when linked to the cultural experiences and worldview of the people. It is impossible and a futile effort for anyone to focus on a specific point when it comes to Benin cultural experience because of the vital relations among things. For anyone to understand Benin aesthetic experience one must understand properly and deeply Benin mythology, religion, ontology, language, social and political doctrines as well as the Benin theory of knowledge, hence to understand the concept of beauty among Benin people, one must have background knowledge of their culture. The Benin's do not see the world as something separate and detached, rather they see the world as a whole, a coherent unit where the spirits, the ancestors, the living and the dead interact.

The universe according to Momoh “is permeated with both the visible and the invisible beings such as God, man, ancestors, reincarnation, life after death, beliefs, institutions, practices and so forth.”(Momoh, 1998:30) Similarly, Dukor argued that Africans (Benin inclusive) believe that everything that exist is a force and that none of them can exists in

isolation. (Dukor,1994:20) For them there is a life- force that tends to link everything together, there is no way one can talk of any issue in particular as distinct from another issue, the African mode of cognition is said to be holistic. The ontological order is according to Mbiti, anthropocentric, it is a complete unity...an ontological holism.(Mbiti:1969:15)

The next section of the work will give a detailed explanation of how inner beauty connects with outer beauty in the life and times of Emotan, a Benin heroine.

Emotan Sculpted Artform: In Praise of Beauty and Power

Emotan is depicted in history as a not too successful personality in her life-time. She lived in the Benin City of the Fifteenth Century, in the reigns of Oba Ohen and his children. She died before Ewuare ascended the throne. She made no success of wife-hood, and was not known to have been blessed with the responsibilities of motherhood. She even failed to be re-accommodated by the family extended system of her village community when her marriage to her Benin City husband came to an end with his death.

Emotan was born in Eyaen village, not far from the present-day Aduwawa cattle market on the Benin-Auchi road in Benin-city. Her name at birth was Uwaraye. When she grew up she was married off to a Benin City Chief, Azama, of Ihogbe district. She was the second wife to the Chief. Azama's first wife was a lady called Arabe. Arabe was a capable personality in all the departments of wife-hood. She was the one who gave birth to all the children of the household. Her husband heavily depended on her for the good management of the home.

Young Uwaraye, on the other hand, did not make much of an impression on her husband. She failed to become pregnant, contenting herself with helping to tend the growing children of Arabe. She was also rather slow in the kitchen, forcing her husband to nickname her *EMITAN*: "Lazy-Bones!" The nickname stuck, and in the course of time metamorphosed into the word "*EMOTAN*".(Aisien,2015:90)

Emotan was good though at some other chores. She was an expert in the preparation of *evbarie*, the soup-pot seasoning prepared from fermented melon seeds. She was also a notable spinner, spinning the sheerest cotton threads from the cotton bolls which came from the farm.(Ibid.)

As Arabe's children grew up and lent helping hands to the two wives regarding the household's domestic chores, Emotan was able to devote more time to her trading activities at the Oba market. When her husband Azama died, Emotan was left with no other life than her already well-developed trading life. Her parents had long since died and she could not return to Eyaen village. She moved with her wares to the Oba market, and there, opposite the market created an abode for herself.

In addition to the *evbarie* condiment which she produced and sold she also became a dealer in the *kemwin kemwin* merchandise, keeping an "ODDS and ENDS" mart where were to be found all sorts of saleable items, ordinary and esoteric, including red parrots' feathers, dried python heads, fat from boa constrictors, and stones from the gall-bladders of elephants.

Mothers who came to the Oba Market with their young would frequently ask Emotan for her child-minding services while they did their buying and selling in the

market. Emotan would usually oblige them.(Aisien,2015:91) Occasionally such a child under her daycare would take ill. Emotan would thereupon become an emergency Paediatrician until the loudly grateful mother would surface from the recesses of the market.

It was there, in her abode by the Oba market that history caught up with Emotan, in the person of Prince Ogun, later Oba Ewuare the Great. She provided succour and shelter for Prince Ogun during the period of the Prince's pre-succession travails. Her abode became a listening post where Ogun gauged the prevailing public opinion in the town, in his efforts to gain the throne of his father.(Ibid.) It was in this house by the market that the conspiracy to topple the usurper Oba, Uwaifiokun, from power was hatched by Ogun and Emotan. From there the Prince sallied forth to meet Oba Uwaifiokun who was in a procession to the Oba market. Ogun slew his junior brother the Oba, a deed which cleared the path for him to take over the throne of Oba Ohen their father. The killing ended the crisis of succession to the kingship of the kingdom and Ogun marked it by giving himself the titular name: Ewuare: "The Heat Has Abated"(Aisien, 2015:92-93).

Emotan died soon after Oba Ewuare's accession. As a childless woman, her chattels were inherited by the Oba, who buried her in her house by the Oba Market. Later the king marked her grave by planting an *Uruhe* tree over it. The King ordained that honour be done at the site, to her memory, by any celebratory procession in the City.(Ebohon,2010:140)

The processions which do honour to Emotan, there at the Oba Market include those of the ennobled citizens, and the *Isoton* procession of the funeral ceremonies of a deceased citizen, obsequies by which his or her offspring transform their dead parent from a mere mortal to a god, complete with an altar in the home where he or she is henceforth worshipped and propitiated.(Ibid.)

The *AIKAERONMWON*, the Royal Jester, is the personage at present in charge of the Emotan Shrine, and to him belong the gifts made at the Shrine by the celebrants who call visiting.

The *Uruhe* tree which Oba Ewuare planted over Emotan's grave lived for over three hundred and fifty years. It fell with age during the reign of Oba Osemwende. Osemwende replaced the fallen tree with another *Uruhe* tree, about one hundred and fifty years ago, and supported the new tree with a companion *Iroko* tree. These two trees flourished at the Shrine for one hundred years until they both fell, during a severe storm fifty years ago.(Aisien,2015:93)

Oba Akenzua II, with the co-operation of the British Colonial authorities replaced the fallen trees with a life-sized bronze statue of a young woman, moulded after a miniature model cast in Igun Street, Benin City. The life-size figure was cast in Britain, and financed by the British Council. It was erected over Emotan's grave in 1954. (Aisien,2015:93)

Emotan Sculpted Artform: The Physical and Symbolic Celebration of Inner Beauty in Benin Aesthetics

The aesthetic judgment about one's beauty or the moral judgment about one's goodness is understood as something that supervenes on certain descriptive features or facts about a person, a person's character, actions or behavior. These features and facts define what it means for a human being to be beautiful as opposed to other objects. The Benin concept of beauty (*ose*) is synonymous to character (*uyinmwun*). As demonstrated by Uwaraye(Emotan).

By definition, character is the intrinsic goodness of a person, unfolding in actions that can be described as either good or bad. It is made of up of traits, that is to say, a set of stable qualities, virtues that are within, which influence outward actions. "Moral virtues that are (excellency of character) are the intrinsic qualities and the subject matter of character. They include the general virtues like honesty, courage, diligence, fellow-feeling, empathy, sympathy, humility, justice temperance and so on." (Oyebade & Azenabor, 2018:42)

Beauty does not end in the outer or physical features; there is a place for morality and responsibility which counts as beauty. Among the Benin's a beautiful person is admired but *ose*(beauty) is nothing without the inner beauty known as *uyinmwun*. *Uyinmwun* means character or essential nature, *uyinmwun* can also be called as (*ekhoe ose*) which means the beauty that comes from the inside, that is the inner beauty. This notion of inner beauty becomes more than metaphorical and itself takes on the character of a moral attributes. The person who is outwardly beautiful but inwardly ugly may be admired first, but as soon as the inward ugliness resurfaces the person becomes repulsive. The ugliness or beauty of the inner person is attributed to the nature of one's character. The external physical beauty is presumed to mean moral beauty until it was recognized by others as immoral. This could also be in coherence with the western saying of "not judging a book by its cover".

A person is morally evaluated according to his or her *uyinmwun*(character) whether good or bad. A miser(*oghwindamwun*) is an *uyinmwun nema*(bad character), a generous person (*oziemwinobo*) is an *uyinmwun noma*(good character). A gentle person is an *uyinmwun no giamudede*,(an attractive character worthy of emulation) a short tempered, aggressive person (*nohunmum*) is an *uyinmwun nowegbe* (harmful character)It is interesting though that each of these evaluations has an adjective attached, suggesting that *ose* may be good or bad, gentle or tough, generous or stingy. The original meaning of *ose*(beauty) is "the fact of being, living or existing". So *ose*(beauty) means existence, *ose*(beauty) as character is there a derivative from this original. In its original meaning the perfect ideal *ose* is *nehi iwu* (immortality).

Hence the saying "*neghi iwu gie ose ma*" (immortality complete existence or immortality is perfect existence). However, *ose* as character and *ose* as existence do not just have a homophonous relationship they are also related by etymology and one appear to be a derivation of the other *ose* existence, has a strong connection with *ose* as character. The Benin expression depicts their understanding of existence itself as constituting beauty, while the cognate expression *uyinmwun o ghe ughegbe egbe* (Good character – good

existence is an adornment to human being) depicts the significance attached to good character. Both concepts of *ose* are therefore important for our understanding of Benin moral ideas, and attention is normally paid to them in traditional pattern of moral education.(Gbadegesin,1991:303)

The saying that states that “*uyinmwēn o ghō ose*” meaning 'character is beauty' is usually demonstrated in Benin art forms such as in proverbs, music, poems, films, storytelling and oratory, all these are didactic in character as they represent beauty in their own forms. They are meant to inculcate in persons, good behavior both at personal and institutional levels. The illustration of the connection between goodness and beauty in African traditions with examples from the Benin cosmology and milieu is further buttressed with this understanding that “In ordinary, everyday Benin discourse the term most frequently mentioned of fundamental relevance to aesthetic concern is *ose*, which is normally translated into English as “beauty”. But rather than being primarily associated with the arts or craft, its most common usage, as might be expected, is with reference to human beings”(Hallen,2000:45)

This idea of beauty as it applies to humans, involves an aesthetic judgment, which is not simply a judgment on one's physical features, but a judgment about one's moral qualities and social ability to behave in acceptable ways in order to meet one's social-moral obligations. Such judgments are based on communal values and standards of behavior. The idea of beauty is morally constituted and embedded in a community, social environment, cultural beliefs or traditions, which indicate the normative standards, value commitments, social obligations, interpersonal relationships, and mutual dependencies. It is on the basis of these that one is identified and defined as a 'morally beautiful person' which makes one a person in a vigorous sense.

Thus the essence of the Benin view of the connection between the goodness and beauty of a person is that character is a normative necessary condition for a person to be truly and strictly considered beautiful, and to be evaluated as a beautiful person one can infer that such a person has element of character, and that one who lacks character cannot be described as a truly beautiful person. An individual's action or character is the 'artistic creation' that is responsible or sensitive to the community and its values. This-process of 'character creation' by the individual, which is shaped by the community and its values, requires acculturation and alteration of communal values. One's actions in relation to one's character are aimed at achieving communal goals and interests, on which individual interests and needs depends. As we examine the lifestyle demonstrated by Emotan, one can deduce that she possesses the character that is worthy of emulation which in many ways have endeared her to the hearts of the *Binis* because of her courage to stand for the truth with no string attached.

The Aesthetic and Ontological Significance of Emotan Sculpted Art form

The Emotan sculpted art form is very important in the artistic terrain of the Benin's; it is often grandiose, noble, intimate and intricate. It helps to record the history of the Benin's as they chronicle their times and epochs and it serves as momentous and memorials,

endearing monuments to and of the time, as well as commemorating for posterity and for self-achievements or the travails of the people as they journey through the ages – that is, as they undergo the necessary transition through space and time. This sculpted art form is very symbolic as it has influence the aesthetic and cultural lifestyle of the people. Culture plays an important role in the cognitive understanding of reality and “unless one is intimately familiar with the ontological commitments of a culture, it is often difficult to appreciate or otherwise understand those commitments”(Brown,2004:160) Therefore, it is important we understand the Benin cultural and ontological conceptions of reality to enable us understand the Benin's approach to aesthetics as depicted in Emotan sculpted artform.

Central to the traditional Benin thought system is the idea that there are ancestral spirits whose intentions we can know. Ancestral spirits are individuals who once lived in our physical world. Though they are now physically dead, they are still capable of initiating actions on their own; such actions of theirs have intended consequences on our physical world. Having the knowledge of their intentions “provides grounds for unending physical occurrences”(Brown,2004:158) This implies that for the Benin's there is more to reality than what is within the realm of empirical inquiry.

According to Brown, “a fundamental tenet of traditional African culture is that there is more to reality and to the realm of the experience than that which is readily accessible through empirical inquiry, and that one can acquire an understanding of natural phenomena by appealing to experiences whose characterizations are not empirically confirmable but are nonetheless warrantably accessible.”(Brown,2004:159) The point here is that there are spiritual components of nature that influence human experience and perception. Therefore, when a phenomenon is not readily explainable by empirical verification, it can be explained by the causal efficacy of the spiritual components of nature. By 'spiritual components of nature' we mean incorporeal components that have consciousness. That means they have an awareness of nature as much as humans have. And they equally have the capacity to respond to perceptions.

This analysis by Brown represents the African ontological cultural view of reality and by extension that of the Benin's which fundamentally is different from the Western ontological and cultural view of reality. The fundamental teaching of Western culture is that science is the primary determinant of what is real and what is not real. Anything that cannot be confirmed or supported by empirical means is considered a metaphysical fantasy or mere superstition.

The beauty of Benin Sculpted art works can convey various feelings and messages to the casual observer. However, true appreciation can only be arrived at through an understanding of the culture and environment that influenced the art. It is in line with this understanding that this paper engages in the examination of the Emotan sculpted art form and its holistic beauty upon which a safer moral belief is based, one that can form a better basis for human interaction with the object of artworks. It also highlights the nature and

fundamental assumptions of this artefact by evaluating the intrinsic and aesthetic significance of this sculpted art form. In Benin, aesthetic value has evolved through interpretation and representation of spiritual and religious iconography, art and relationships between the physical and spiritual state are manifested in many types of expression including painting, sculpture, literature, dance, dressing, architecture, and music. Benin creation stories and other spiritual myths are repeatedly portrayed across the genres of art and life and the resemblances of life and love to these stories are imbued with aesthetic beauty.

One significant and common feature of what aestheticians call works of art or art object have their expressive power, symbolic effects and functional importance, particularly as systems of information and communication among indigenous people. Aestheticians rely in some ways on sculpted art forms as aspects of visual arts in material culture that reveal the essence and sense of the being of a people and their practical experiences, exposing the different levels of identity and human beings relationships with spiritual beings and natural phenomena, That is, sculpted art forms or images tell the story of a people, express their lives and living experiences in communicating their sense and essence of their peoplehood, sculpted art form and images express their imagination, perception, religion, culture ,moral, social and political identities including the relationships of powers(gender, social and political).

Sculpted art form has become and can become a powerful instrument of constructing the history of the people. It is a hermeneutical tool for the aesthetician in interpreting and explaining the cultural lives of the indigenous people. These two perspectives express the values of historical consciousness and cultural self-awareness within a global context.

Conclusion

Though Emotan is long dead and is supposed to be forgotten, indeed, yet, owing to her contributions which have redefined the course of history, her story is very much on the lips of people of Benin in Edo State and the world at large. She has been immortalized and has become source of inspiration to our contemporary women all over the country and the world in general. She came in situation where men failed to provide solution. This was at a time when women were relegated to the background. She broke the usual convention and became the source of freedom to her people. Many other women have become inspired by her bravery and wisdom. She has been highly honoured in our contemporary period. King Ewuare immortalized Emotan so that all Benin people in the world at large can remember the brave woman who standing for the truth, helped him to become king.

In this paper, we can conclude that African knowledge system has a social context-symbol and meaning through oral history, place, names and spiritual relationship that constitute a distinct cosmology–relations based on reciprocity and obligations towards community members and other beings. Africans have a more humanistic and existentialist conception of knowledge that serves as part of the reflective apparatus for understanding, interpreting and harmonizing with reality. African aesthetics which is a branch of African philosophy

are bound up intimately with a people spirit and constitution and are a factor in their life history subject to the condition of race, culture and civilization.

Emotan(Uwaraye) epitomizes the ideals of 'aesthetic of character' especially in our contemporary times when people switch loyalties with reckless abandon, enduring values of truthfulness, empathy and loyalty should be emplaced as building blocks of our socio-political, socio-economic superstructure. Equally too, ideas about Emotan sculptural artform defines the relationship between morality and the beautiful, and eloquently testifies to the desirable place of women in the society.

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