

***Ifa* Mythology on Human Variations and Global African Identity and Global Contact**

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Abstract

The idea of genetic variation as typified in Malthus and Mendel cannot be divorced from the problem in human evolution and historical development. This idea, to say the least inspired Nazism, racism and separatism: an argument that human variation can be epitomized in the categorisation of people into superior-inferior categories and that superior people have a right to dominate the supposedly inferior and in fact, eliminates them. This in Nazis' school of thought is the only way society can experience progress. This is what engenders cultural hegemony and global competition reinforcing slavery, genocide, holocaust and all forms of inhumanity to humanity. The argument of this study therefore, is predicated on Ifa as a template for understanding the global African identity. In this study it is argued that other than western oriented and seemingly scientific explanation, Ifa oral corpus has a number of mythological explanations for human variation and global contact.

Key words: Africaness; Blackness human; Culture

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INTRODUCTION

How valid is the idea that human beings are inherently different? That is, variation is everywhere, and ethnic

groups are not homogeneous. Environmental account of human variation from Malthus and Mendel is based largely on external markers of cultural differences or biologically superficial traits such as hair and skin color and the like. There is the all important need to revisit the debate on human variation and global contact. This is simply because western science has restricted human variation to biological and geographical explanations, which in turn fix humanity to specific space and promote cultural hegemony and separatism. Thus, competitions and conflicts ensued in the global arena in such a way that threatens humanity. It has been argued that these patterns of variation provide justification for racism. There is the urgent need to see how Ifa can be mainstreamed into the debates on global issues such as racism, global warming, terrorism and many other issues that trouble humanity. The Yoruba deity Orunmila, and its system of divination Ifa, is arguably the most globalized indigenous religious tradition in West Africa. The deity and its system are known from Igboland in the East to Eweland in the West. The linguistic evidence of the globalization of this aspect of Yoruba religious tradition is undeniable, although it calls for urgent comparative studies. Thus Yoruba became the language of religious and intellectual discourse in the area (Sandoval, 1627; Ya, 1992). Conversely, many verses in various languages of the area occur in the Yoruba corpus of odus, as is attested in most collected texts (Maupoil, 1943; Abimbola, 1968).

The works of Bascom (1969), Abimbola (1987), Jegede et al. (2010) have triggered considerable interest in Ifa divination. The interests of these scholars, I argue hinge so much on the therapeutic, linguistic and religious aspects of Ifa. Even where mythological accounts are narrated, they are not employed to address global issues. To initiate a remarkable evolution of African epistemology, recourse has to be made to Ifa; the Yoruba oral and literary corpus, the logos of Africa, recognised

by UNESCO (2008) as “oral and intangible heritage of humanity”.¹

Ifa is a corpus and divination systems with mathematical formulae practised among the Yoruba in the Southwest of Nigeria. It is full of Yoruba wisdom and deep knowledge reflecting Yoruba history, language and cosmo-vission and contemporary issues (Jegede, 2007). It is generally known to be a system used by Ifa priests or Babalawo to investigate issues or problems that confront individuals, families and communities. Ifa priest, during divination sessions is able to dig deep into the past, present and future. The diviner is capable of explaining issues on environment, drought, famine, history, politics and many other issues in life. Ifa can be said to be an oral literary corpus; a literature that is full of information regarding healing and counselling about life and living, issues of the myths of origin of town and villages are also included (Abimbola, 1983). Issues concerning migration of human being and international relations are also contained in Ifa literary corpus. This is the reason why in this paper, I employ Ifa mythology to explain human diversity and global contact. The Ifa mythological account of human variation is not border fixed and goes beyond biological explanation of genetic variation due to bio-environmental determinism.

These are some of the greatest intellectually engaging issues in contemporary African Studies. The works of Ivan van Sertima (1976) and Rashidi et al. (1987) bear eloquent testimony to this problematique (Legrand, 2003). Although, there are unanswered questions which have deep roots in debates on citizenship and identity—yet, they strongly influence the definition of rights, entitlements, duties, and responsibilities. The complication is typified in the dynamic interplay of race, ethnicity, gender and religion in the structuring and exercise of power and opportunity (Giddens, 1991). The questions of course, are, not uniquely African. As a matter of fact, both historically and contemporarily, similar issues have been discussed and debated with considerable passion in other parts of the world. Also, contestations that surround the issues of citizenship and identity have often been played out in the event of violent communal confrontations, civil wars, and inter-state conflicts.

The common sense understanding that *blackness* has come to be a significant identity of an African person has been contested by (Mbebe, 2001) and if one can trace his root to Africa especially within the map as designed by geography which was handed over by colonialists, the person is an African; this has become the understanding and common sense. Unfortunately, common sense is often a bad product of stereotypical ideas which lead toward dogmatic proclamation bereft of objectivity.

Hence Owomoyela (1996) reasoned that the imperative of an African-centered perspective through which to imagine alternative practices and policies insisting that immersion in Western language and culture has distracted African intellectuals from developing peculiar normative identities. Following this position, I deviate from the use of Eurocentric historicity as a theoretical basis to articulate this argument which, has been sufficiently captured in (Sentwali Bakari's, 1997) epistemology from an Afrocentric perspective. Thus this significantly explains why the focus of this paper is on my significant first-hand experience as an apprentice and observer learning the art of Ifa divination among the Yoruba, an example of people that have been codified as “Africans” according to imagine boundaries.

1. AFRICA, BLACKNESS AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

The common assumption, which for many years has gained wide acceptability, suggests that an African is a black person who lives in Africa or Africa diaspora. This definitive conjecture though plausible is inadequate to define who exactly is an African because there are other conceivable variables such as culture, religion, moral and others. Africa is an ideological phenomenon; it is a belief system, not complexion nor boundary. Contrary to popular stereotypes, complexion is not necessarily a determinant of Africanness. For instance, Black American activist Angela Davis is not African, whereas White Anti-apartheid crusader, Nardine Gordimer is. Many Africans are westernised and many westerners are equally Africanised. By implication neither being Black nor living in Africa are satisfied prerequisites in assessing someone's Africanness. Insight into this seeming knotty issue is through the advancement of the globality of Africanness. To all intents and purposes, it is imperative to note that advocating this cause will not engender nor foster nativity. Fostering nativity is capable of precluding the place of Africanity in the enhancement of full participation in the current globalisation forces as epitomised in the search for global peace and development.

Mbembe (2001) in his work provides new parameters that can help in moving beyond the inadequacy of common perceptions of self and other identity labels. His contestation is that African identity cannot be gauged only in terms of complexion because there are more complex issues issue in African Studies. Black-Africans represent the majority but by no means the whole of Africa's population and they are not the sole producers of African arts and cultures. Through the ages, many other groups who came from Asia, Arabia, Europe etc. have sojourned on the continent and a large percentage of their population consider themselves full-blooded Africans, regardless of having roots extending to other

¹ UNESCO. (2008). *Representative lists of intangible heritage of humanity*.

parts of the world. Reciprocally, for centuries, it has been acknowledged that for centuries, flux to and from Africa has been multi-dimensional: Invariably, there are several people of African origin who have settled through out the world who consider themselves citizens of their host countries, even though they have roots reaching to black Africa (Mbembe, 2006). One result of this mobility is the dispersion of people of common ancestry and a permanent evolution of culture. Challenged by alterity, no collectivity ever remained immune to outsiders' continuous influences and challenges. This interactions foster increase in intercultural penetration and hybridity. Again it is worth reiterating that traditional practices and cultures of peoples are not bestowed wholesale. It is in this light that this paper aligns with the argument of Kenneth which articulates that the notion of intercultural exchange can lead to an emergence of and invention of Africa through the circulation of ideas via cross-cultural encounters. This explains why the question of who is and who is not an African project some measures of naivety while questions such as what binds individuals to the African continent are also complex. There are broader and more engaging questions that are critical to the understanding of this phenomenon. For example, how strong is this bond? And how can this bond be mainstreamed into the global search for peace and development.

Another attempt at comprehending the riddle regarding Africanity generated a lively debate among scholars in the field of African Studies. The agenda was designed by the postmodernist and/or antinationalist discourses of the day. Pertinent issues were raised to question and downplay the importance of geography, borders and history. On the other hand, as people move in and out of the geographical space, notions of cosmopolitanism and creolisation in the process of the formation and reconstitution of African identities are highlighted.

2. AFRICA: BOUNDARY AND IDENTITY

Ambiguities and inconsistencies characterize the definition and identity of Africa (Molefi, 2007). According to the world population,² Africa is the world's second-largest and second most-populous continent, after Asia (United Nations, 2006). At about 30.2 million km² (11.7 million sq mi) including adjacent islands, it covers 6% of the Earth's total surface area and 20.4% of the total land area. With a billion people (as of 2009, see table) in 61 territories, it accounts for about 14.8% of the World's human population. The continent is surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, both the Suez Canal and the Red Sea along the Sinai Peninsula to the northeast, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the

Atlantic Ocean to the west. Not counting the disputed territory of Western Sahara, there are 53 countries, including Madagascar and various island groups, associated with the continent. In line with geographical analysis as handed over, this is Africa (A. A. Gordon & D. L. Gordon, 1996). African countries have often been hampered by instability, corruption and violence. Borders and territorial disputes were also common (Aborisade, 2007, p.137).

Nevertheless, there has been huge debate on borders, boundary and complexion. Odugbemi (1995) and Clapham (1996) argues that everywhere borders are artificial and the case of Africa is not an exception. Scholars of boundary studies have recently attempted to identify the conceptual differences and similarities among the terms, boundary, frontier, and border. Though most of the time these terms are considered synonyms and are used interchangeably. In spite of this, attempts have been made to analyze their conceptual differences and similarities (Rankin & Schofield, 2004). Anderson (1996, p.10) employed the term "frontier" to denote an international boundary, and "boundary" to designate divisions at the sub-state level. .

Caflisch (2006, p.2) defines international boundary as "a line dividing land territory over which states exercise full territorial sovereignty." According to Shaw (1997),

International boundaries fix permanent lines, both geographically and legally, with full effect within the international system, and can only be changed through the consent of the relevant states. Such boundaries have important consequences with regard to international responsibility and jurisdiction.

Korkor (2001) offers a deep perspective in order to further appreciate the concept of boundaries. Accordingly, he divides boundaries into "general" boundaries, and "fixed" boundaries. In general boundary the exact line of the boundary is left undetermined, whereas fixed boundary is the one that is accurately surveyed and guaranteed. Smith (1995, pp.475-484) also identifies two types of borders: bona fide borders, and fiat borders. Bona fide borders are physical boundaries such as river banks, coastlines and they exist in the absence of delineating activity. In other words, they exist independently of all human cognitive acts. On the other hand, fiat boundaries are the creations of human creations.

There have been many controversies and arguments concerning the arbitrary nature of African boundaries. For Davidson (1992) the arbitrariness of the colonial borders and the dissection of ethnic groups and tribes (and even sometimes families) in the colonial era are the major causes of African conflicts. In other words, instability in the continent was primarily motivated by the arbitrary nature of African boundaries. Griggs (1995a, 1997) argues that the mismatch between nations and states are responsible for the continent's instability, civil war, and genocides. The evolution Nigerian states appear to be a perfect case study as there has been continuous

² World Population: The 2006 Revision United Nations (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, population division).

contestation and disputation on the claim of Nigeria whether as a country or a nation.

For Loisel (2004, P.4) these borders are not only arbitrary but they were also the product of continental and global rivalries among European powers. Therefore, according to Loisel (2004, p.4), boundaries were drawn essentially according to the geopolitical, economic and administrative interests of the colonial powers, often taken into account at a global scale. The most often cited example is that of the division of the Hausaland, between today's Niger and Nigeria. The Franco-British treaties of 1904 and 1906 redrew the border in favour of the French side, in compensation for France's renunciation of fishing rights off the coast of Newfoundland (Miles, 1994, p.68).

According to Nugent (1996) and Bach (1999), though African boundaries are arbitrary they have also advantages. Herbst (2000) reinforcing this position argues that African boundaries are assets for state consolidation. In a similar vein Touval (1969) and Ottaway (1999) the arbitrary nature of African boundaries has only few disadvantages. Arguing in the opposite, scholars like Barbour (1961), Griffiths (1996), Bayart (1996) and Young (1996) advocate for the status quo of African colonial boundaries despite their arbitrariness because attempting to reshuffle states is more costly than the hypothetical benefits. Bello (1995); Herbst (2000); Sambanis (1999) are among the scholars who advocate for territorial reconfiguration of African boundaries.

Though from the beginning the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) which metamorphosed into African Union (AU) acknowledged the imperfections of the national boundaries of African countries (which were the by-products of Colonialism). Nonetheless, the continental body decided to accept the inviolability of the national boundaries in its 1964 resolution (DFID, 2001, p.6; Atzili 2004). According to Francis Borella, cited in Wembou (1994, p.16),

Many resolutions adopted by the OAU continually strengthen the territorial foundation of the African States and their respective frontiers. Resolution A.G.H/16.1 of July 21, 1964, to cite just one, incorporates the rule of *uti possidetis*: "All the member States are committed to respect the frontiers existing at the time of their independence."

Therefore, after the disintegration of colonialism all African governments except Morocco and Somalia agreed to maintain colonial boundaries (Englebert et al., 2001). The problem with geography which I refer to here as demarcation theory of Africanness comes into the fore. The fundamental question borders on the identity of the Arabs in North Africa, one wonders whether in view of the predominant notions of Africa as Black, North African Arabs who are predominantly white or yellow could still consider themselves Africans. By implication the demarcation theory has no foothold as the African continent itself cannot be said to be black continent since

there are people with white, yellow or red skin who are origins of the geographical space of Africa. Ethiopia and Sudan share a very long boundary of 1,600 km length. Apart from their relations as neighbours, Ethiopia and Sudan have many common features (Bahru, 2002). As Yacob (2007, p.193) noted, the term "Ethiopia" is a Greek word for "dark" or "black". Similarly the term "Sudan" is an Arabic word for "dark" or "black". Tribes such as Nuer, Anwak and Berta can be found in both Ethiopia and Sudan along the border areas. Many rivers from Ethiopia such as Atbara, Blue Nile (Abay), Mereb and Sobat flow to Sudan. If Ethiopia is a Greek word for Black and Sudan is an Arabic word equally for dark or black can this be interpreted to mean that all Africans are Sudanese or Ethiopians because all Africans are "Black" how logical is it to conclude that all Africans are "Black"?

This is important as the true Africanness cannot be limited to African map and Black colour. Just as Europeaness or Asianess is not seen only in terms of colour and boundary but it is *al binitio* synonymous with advancement, decency, technology and civilisation. The over concentration on colour and boundary call for a fundamental question what is the influence of a person's skin on his or her intelligence? Can it be argued that Africa is regarded as backward just because it is located within the geography or map of Africa? There are four ethno-linguistic formations in Latin America. People of African descent constitute the majority in Brazil, Panama, Cuba and the Dominican Republic and indeed a third of the entire population of the region. Africa is globally connected: there are 150 million people of African descent in Latin America, 90 million of them possess strong African features. They also constitute 40% of the poor (Johnston, 1969). Most have little political consciousness of their being black but nonetheless suffer the social discriminatory consequence of their ancestry (Jackson, 1970, p.341).

The politics of identity, in its relationship to multiculturalism, is also exhibited in the movement launched by Jesse Jackson to designate Black Americans as "African Americans." This represented the third shift in the self-designation of Black Americans -from "Negro" to "Black," to "African American." (Spencer, 1994). In this, we see the politics of identity as it downplays the issue of colour as being of no significant relevance. Each of these shifts can be understood as a choice of an identity, signified by the choice of a name, which is the most fundamental act of self-identification that a group can engage in. In calling for this shift, Jackson explicitly referred to what he regarded as the inadequacy of the designation "Black" to describe the historical location of the African- American community (Martin, 1991, pp.102-103).

The other side of the historical aspect was the role of social philosophers and thinkers of the era who substituted their own prejudice and supremacist beliefs

for scholarship. They wrote that Africans were inferior people. They called for a policy to rid their society of African presence [genocide] if possible and massive immigration from Europe. Progressively, from the 19th century, the Africans were rendered invisible by denying their contributions to the development of the society, erasing them from books and historical accounts as well as making them nonexistent reality in the scheme of things. The contradiction here is that it has been established that not only were native Americans present when he reached the New World, but also Africans, Asians and Europeans, among others, had been sailing to the Americas thousands of years before Columbus ventured reached the New World. Of the various people who reached America before Columbus, Black Africans appear to have made the most contacts and to have had the greatest impact.

3. YORUBA DEITIES AND GLOBAL CONTACT

For millennia Africa had a rich tradition of interaction and movement-trade, ideas, and people-with western and southern Asia and the Mediterranean world (Harold, 1962). Ifa transverse the world; he went as far as Australia. Apart from the fact that Africans were taken as slaves to the Americas, even the gods were in America before and after the era of the slave trade. By implication, most of the African deities are transatlantic deities as much as they are African deities. This may not be divorced from the reasons that account for the reason behind African religion and culture gaining proper traction in all the diasporas. More telling is Ifa's reference to Orunmila's itinerary which exemplified the fact that Orunmila the Yoruba deity for wisdom was a glob trotter travelled to the western world to perform divination.

The Yoruba religion became global by sharing its Orisha with the immediate, West African neighbours of the people who have come to be collectively referred to as Yoruba for the reason that they have adopted some of their deities (Babalola, 2008). Thus, the Edo, Yagba, Itsekiri, Nupe, Ibariba, Igbo, Igala, Fon, Gun, Aja, Ewe, Akan etc, all belong to the same religious leaning as the Yoruba. The case has been made for Ogun as the paradigmatic West African globalizer deity in Barnes (1989). But one could identify virtually any Yoruba orisha in the pantheon of the above mentioned ethnic groups. The Yoruba gave and freely took deities in this area. In the realm of religion, social theory is certainly an historical fact (Akinjogbin, 1967). Sango and Oya are as Nupe as they are Yoruba. Nana Buukuu is most likely Akan in origin. Before it was adopted by Pre-Oduduwa Yoruba and subsequently travelled throughout Yorubaland. Oduduwa, Orisa, yeye Mowo, Ogun, Elegba, Sanpanna, clearly Yoruba orisha, have been adopted as Fon deities or vodun under the

following audibly recognizable names respectively: Duduwa, Lisa, Mawu, Gun, Legba, Sakpata. In their new locale they are both Fon and Yoruba, issues of origin and nationality being of little interest to practitioners, even as they may preoccupy academics. A case in point is precisely Sanpanna: A deity erroneously referred to as god of smallpox, who is believed in parts of Yorubaland to be of Fon origin while the Fon themselves emphatically affirm its Yorubanness by calling his devotees Anagonu that is Anago (Yoruba citizens).

4. ORUNMILA AND TRANSATLANTIC MIGRATION

Kini Ifa wi? What did Ifa say?

According Ifa literary corpus, Oturupon'guda.

Oturupon guda, Oturupon gedeOturupon guda, Oturupon gede

Gedegede lomode jefo elegede

Arabale n tawodi

A dia fun eebo oloja

Omo a me re e kankun

Omo a la gbudugbudu wosa

Ara teebo n da ki i baje

Loju 'fa rekete ni n gun loju won

Orunmila ogudu yanda

Je ke eebo oloja o je fawo

Oturupon guda Oturupon gede (an ancient Babalawo)

Gede gede lomode n jefo elegede (an ancient Babalawo)

Arabale n tawodi (an ancient Babalawo)

Performed Ifa divination for the enterprising white man)

Who travelled across the ocean

And traveled over the rivers

Whatever the white man design is never got spoilt

On Ifa tray, it is always accurate

Orunmila Ogiriyanda, let the Whiteman patronize me.

Orunmila by his nature was an itinerant healer. In this odu, Orunmila transmigrated to the western world through *Apa Okun, Ilameji Osa* which can be translated to mean that he went overseas or to the western world, a transmigration and transatlantic healing expeditions. He settled close to the ocean where *Ofirigi gedu* was their king. The king came to Ifa seeking that Orunmila should help to make his people prosperous. He prescribed sacrifice of 200 rats, 200 birds and two hundred of many other sacrificial elements. The people struggled so hard to get all the items prescribed for the ritual, and Orunmila was so enthralled by their commitment. After the sacrifice was offered, Orunmila also prepared pomade for the people to apply on their bodies. According to Ifa, like every other homo sapiens, the peoples over

the seas were predominantly black. In other words, it was the pomade that bleached the blackness in their complexion. The above argument can be substantiated with the Yoruba word for the “white” people-Oyinbo. The word Oyinbo is sentential, clausal and phrasal; it is not a word for colour; unlike *dudu*, a word which means black and that is a color. The word oyinbo as coined implies an influence on the original complexion. By its structure of the word oyinbo, it implies that it has undergone some forms of transformation, a condensation by way of deletion (Fashina, 2008). Thus we can talk in terms of possible semantic and semiotic meaning as follows:

Oyi bo or *eni ti oyi bo*: a person that has the “air” remove the colour of his or her original skin. The word can accommodate any other meaning but it cannot replace or reinterpret the word *bo* that is “bleach”. This implies something happened that brought about a change in the original colour of the skin. The question is who did the bleaching? The Yoruba say it is the “air”, or “wind” that is responsible.

This is why it is inaccurate to say that the biblical Adam and Eve were Oyinbo.

The odu Oturupon’guda says it was what Orunmila gave them as pomade that was accountable for the change in their complexion to white or yellow. The pomade was Awure which is meant to lighten their skins, make them attractive and acceptable to every people. There are all kinds of pomades in the market that can be used to lighten from black (with which Olodumare covers the humans to protect against cancer and all forms of skin illness) to white and that person will become white. Orunmila settled there, got married and had children among them. By implication, many of the Europeans are children of Orunmila. All the odu from Ejiogbe to Ofu’s speak about how Orunmila globe trotted healing people without minding any consideration for racial and natal influences. Here we see that Orunmila had no consciousness of human variation, rather he would offer assistance when needed without minding color, race or boundary.

5. OSUN AS A GLOBAL DEITY

Oturupon “fu speaks about how Osun became global deities:

Oturupon’fu

Oku eja ni nse nu werepe e si igba alate

A difa fun awoyo onile e kaa omo akuru be be be

Nijo tin lo re e ba won tede si Ijumu Ile

Nlo re e tede si ijumo ile

O nlo re e lagbo oro

O lagbo opa

O la ona gbo ro ro ibi ese n to

O gba arira kotopo ti n be ni Ijumu Ile

O tun Iwa okunrin se

O tun Iwa Obinrin se.

Oku eja ni ns’nu werepe e si’gba alate

A difa fun awoyo oni le e ka a omo akuru be be be

When he was going to settle at Ijumu city

He was going to make way through the thick forest.

He was going to make way through bamboo forest.

He was going to construct the narrow as a walkways.

Settled in Ijumu city

To redeem the life of men and women

The odu Ifa Oturupon’fu speaks about how Osun became global goddess. Osun by etymological explanation means *O sun* that is, the source where everything is springing from. Therefore, Osun means the sacred drinkable water that sustains humanity. Osun is the personification and sacralisation/deification of water which sustains humanity and every other creature. Osun can therefore be said to belong only to Yoruba if its water is drunk by the Yoruba. This odu speaks about how Osun became a global goddess. Recent studies and exposures have shown that Osun is not an Orisa exclusively meant for the Yoruba; she is found all over the world. Intriguing is the fact that Osun’s colour is yellow which is the complexion of a European. Whereas, Orunmila her husband is black Edu (*ope Ife*) that is, black the palm tree of the source (Ife). The marriage of Osun and Ifa is a proof of the affinity or the interconnectedness of black and white which in turn signifies the interconnectedness of the whole world. Though white can exist without black and black without white, they are not necessarily dependent on each other. Nevertheless, they have more effect more beauty when they are combined. Ieda Machado dos Santos (2001) refers to the Bahia Brazilian saying “the power living in water does not distinguish between colours”. She further asserted that African deities reach everyone among the Bahia of Brazil no matter the ethnic roots and social levels.

Another aspect of the odu was that Awoyo; the king of Kaa (an ancient city) offered a sacrifice meant for the stability of the city. The taboo was that water should not be poured on the sacrifice. The enemy broke this taboo by pouring water on it, it was the water that turned into river, and it the river, according to this odu that turned to Osun. Awoyo was very angry and because he could not withstand this, he transfigured into stone (ota) upon which river (Osun) flows through the world. Here, in this odu, we see how Africa is globally connected. According to this odu, like Orunmila, one can say that Osun traveled round the world. Though according to Yoruba tradition, there are many river goddesses and each with its peculiarities: Yemaja according the Yoruba tradition is the goddess of the depth of the river; Olosa among the Yoruba of Lagos is the goddess of the big flowing river that can be navigated upon. While Oya was assumed by Oya River in Nupe kingdom is the goddess energy in the storm and wind. Nevertheless, all these goddesses are symbolized

with water; the differences are only vivid in the different kinds of waters.

Nevertheless Osun is the spring, pure water that can be used for drinking, bathing and other uses and above all it is inherently therapeutic. This explains why among the Yoruba, water is a living being, energetic, accommodating, profoundly productive and feminine in nature. More evidently, water is the essential, indispensable being without which no one on the planet earth can survive. Water (Osun, that which springs or drinkable water) therefore is generous for she sees herself as being so important and indispensable hence she has to flow everywhere so as to make herself available for human satisfaction and healing. For this reason, the fact that everyone drinks water is enough reason for the oneness of humanity

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is evident that the conceptual framework of Africanness is not limited in scope to skin color and geographical space. Rather, this paper has argued that *Africanness* is an *essence* that defines a people based on, but not limited to such conceivable variables as culture, religion, mores and other complex attributes. This fact is further reinforced by the fact that we live in a global community where the perceived differences in the physical conception of human beings are circumstantial. Therefore, the African identity is truly global as opposed to that which the colonial overlords thrust on Africa.

Africanness is an imperative in the quest for the pursuit of the new world order which is exemplified by the phenomenon of globalization. It is unthinkable to imagine the realization of the Health for All initiative without incorporating African medicine into the orthodox medical practice. The problem of climate change typified in global warming as well as other environmental challenge without African indigenous input is very likely to be a mirage. How can the world think of technological advancement without due consideration for African technology and African morality? The adoption of western model of participatory democracy and good governance would still prove inadequate to solve our perennial political problems without borrowing from the African political philosophy. Therefore, Africanness remains a potent force in achieving global peace and development. With the forgoing analysis, it can be deduced that all human are one and bound together by common destiny. Unlike Judaism where those who are non-Jew who are converted to it are called proselyte. In Ifa anyone who is initiated and ability to follow the tenets of Ifa automatically becomes an adherent. This is evident in the increase in the number of Europeans, American and Asians who are initiated into Ifa. Language, color and boundary are no barrier, for in Ifa, all humans are one.

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