

The International Journal of African Catholicism, Winter, 2020. Volume 10, Number 1

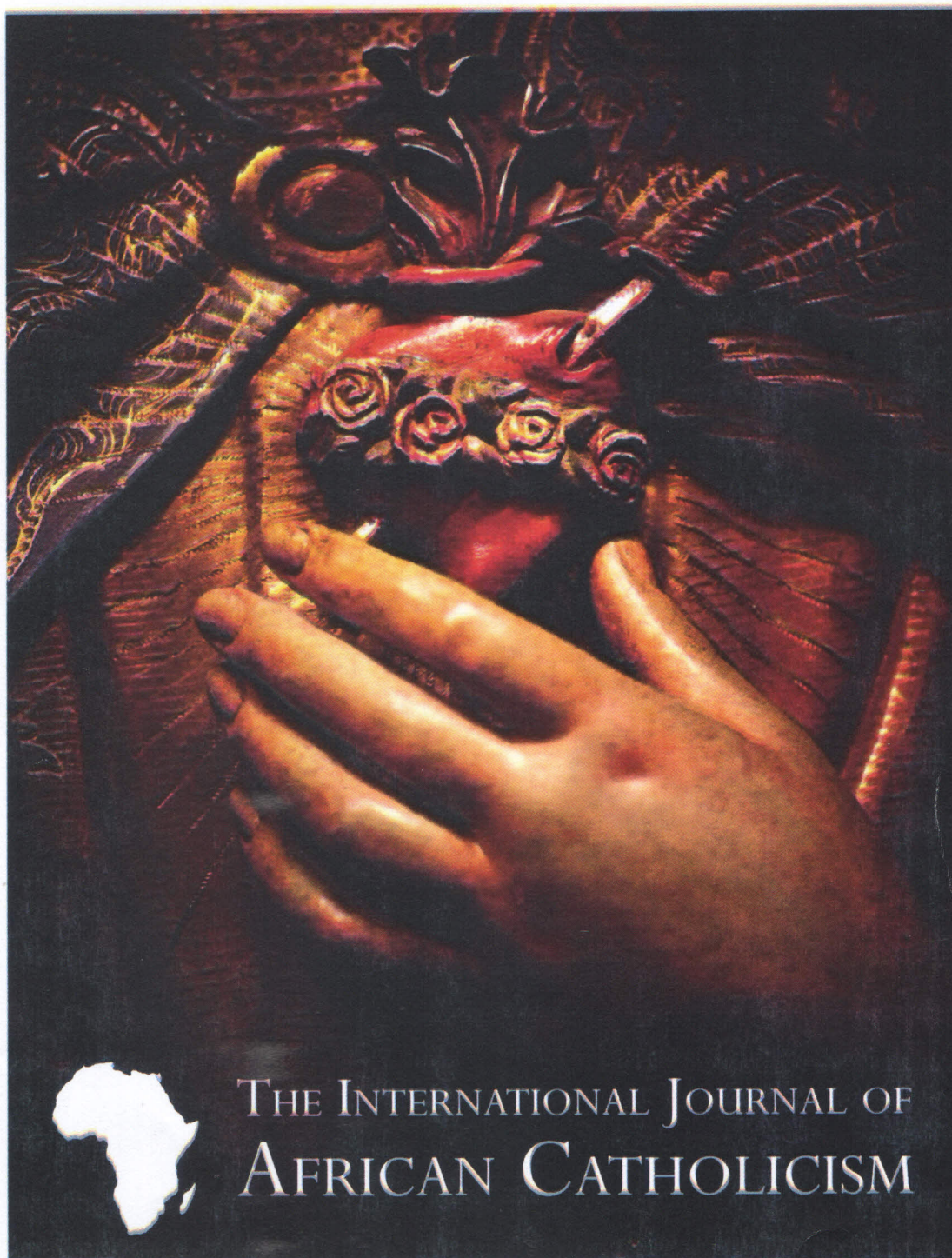


Table of Contents

THE DILEMMA OF CHILDLESSNESS AMONG THE LUO CATHOLIC FAITHFUL OF WESTERN KENYA By Ephraim Ochieng and Susan Mbula Kilonzo. Page 4

HUMANAE VITAE AT FIFTY: A NIGERIAN MORAL THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE By Rev. Dr Raymond Olusesan Aina (MSP). Page 25

A SEMIOTIC INVESTIGATION OF *IFA* SYMBOLISM IN RELATIONS WITH *ÌBEJÌ* AND SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN OF CATHOLIC FAITH By ÒKÉWÁNDÉ, Olúwolé Tẹ̀wógboyè. Page 40

IFÁ SYMBOLISM AND THE CONCEPT OF REINCARNATION: A CHALLENGE FOR THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS BY OLÚWOLÉ TẸ̀WÓGBỌYÈ ÒKÉWÁNDÉ Page 71

JUSTICE FOR THE RICH, JUDGMENT FOR THE POOR: 'ELITE IMMUNITY', RAMPANT IMPUNITY AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN NIGERIA By Mike, OMILUSI. Page 97

THE EARLY CHURCH CONROVERSIES AND THE PROBLEM OF ECUMENISM IN NIGERIA By Rev. JOHN OKWUDIRI OBINECHE AND NWAKA, CHIGOZIE SAMUEL Page 122

CHRISTIANITY AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA By Adolphus Ekedimma Amaefule, SDV. Page 143

PRE-MARITAL PASTORAL COUNSELLING/*GO LAA* ON ISSUES OF GENDER AND HUMAN SEXUALITY: NAOMI//LABAN SHOWERS IN GABORONE, BOTSWANA By Madigele Tshenolo Jennifer, Dube Musa, Motswapong Elizabeth, Kebaneilwe Mmapula Diana, Gabaitse Rosinah, Setume Doreen, Modie-Moroka Tirelo, Kgalemang Malebogo. Page 177

FIRST SUNDAY WORSHIP IN THE PLACE THE LORD HAS CHOSEN AS HIS OWN: READING DEUTERONOMY 12:13–19 IN HONOR OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL DOMINIC EKANDEM OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF IKOT EKPENE By Michael Udoekpo. Page 202

'YOU CANNOT STOP RECEIVING THE BODY OF OUR LORD': THE EUCHARIST IN CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS* By Adolphus Ekedimma Amaefule, SDV. Page 219

MEDIOCRE BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION: A CRITICAL EVALUATION By Rev. Fr. Dr. Gerald Emem Umoren. Page 232

APPRECIATING RECENT SCHOLARLY INTERPRETATIONS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 15:8 By Christopher Naseri Naseri. Page 254

A Semiotic Investigation of *Ifa* Symbolism in Relations with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic Faith

ÒKÉWÁNDÉ, Olúwolé Tẹ̀wógboyè, Ph.D.

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin. Nigeria.

Email Address: oluwoletewogboye@yahoo.com

Abstract

Relationship in cultural pattern, including religion, accounts for the relationship among human societies generally. The understanding of cultural dynamics of a society is an important way of understanding the value system. Essentially, *Ifá* is believed to be the springboard of Yorùbá culture because virtually every aspect of Yorùbá religious and cultural life has one link or another with *Ifá*. Previous studies on the cultural element of *Ifá* have neither related *Ìbejì* with *Ifá* nor *Ifá* with Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap of *Ifá* symbolism- pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice in relation with *Ìbejì* (twins) among the Yorùbá people and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism. The study examines the pre-*Ifá* divination symbols realised as *ẹ̀bọ* (sacrifice). *Ifá* symbols are investigated to be related with human symbolism in both *Ìbejì* among the Yorùbá people and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith. This work relies substantially on Yorùbá oral literary texts, especially, *Ifá* literary corpus. Semiotics, which is the science of signs, is adopted for the analysis of the data, because, symbolism underlies *Ifá* divination system. Bio or zoo semiotics, which studies symbolism in living organisms, including human beings, is explored. It is found out that, *ẹ̀bọ* is a universal religious implementation order. This universality in the order of religious sacrifice generally and *Ifá* in particular, is however unique with human symbolism in both *Ìbejì* in Yorùbá belief and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith. The work concludes that, the presence of the divinities, and supernatural beings are symbolised in human. In other words, the relationship or connections of *Ifá* symbols are felt on *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism.

Keywords: *Ifá*, *Ìbejì*, Saints Cosmas and Damian, Catholicism, *ẹ̀bọ*, symbolism, semiotics

Introduction

This paper is a continuation of the first part⁵⁵, which attempts to establish the cultural links of *Ifá* mythic code with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian. The work demonstrates that, the magical and supernatural power possessed by both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are derived from Yorùbá (*Ifá*) mythology relating to monkey. The study investigates that, medicine, which is a major scope in *Ifá*, is related to the healing or supernatural power possessed by *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian. In addition, the medical ethnical code of *Ifá*, purely based on

⁵⁵ See Òkéwande (2017, pp. 2-33). A semiotic Investigation of Mythic Relations between *Ifá*, *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic Faith. In *International Journal of African Catholicism*, summer, (9)1. From www.saintleo.edu/academics/schools/school-of-arts-sciences/international-journal-of-african-catholicism

humanitarian service is enforced on *Ibeji* and Saints Cosmas and Damian. However, the present paper examines the relationship between pre-*Ifá* divination symbols- *ẹbọ idáfá* (*Ifá* divination sacrifice) with *Ibeji* symbols among the Yorùbá on one hand and Catholic twins- Saints Cosmas and Damian on the other hand. This will further demonstrate that, the relationship of *Ifá* and *Ibeji* with Saints Cosmas and Damian is not in doubt.

Ifá has been defined by scholars in different ways that establish the inexplicable and unlimited scope of its knowledge, wisdom and values. Indeed, it is regarded as the bedrock of other aspects of Yorùbá life. The entire life of the Yorùbá people is connected in one way or the other with *Ifá*. "The Yorùbá regard *Ifá* as the repository of their beliefs and moral values...In traditional Yorùbá society, the authority of *Ifá* permeated every aspect of life because the Yorùbá regard *Ifá* as the voice of the divinities and the wisdom of the ancestors" (Abimbólá 1977a, p. v). The implication of these statements is that, the *Ifá* nomenclature transcends Yorùbá religion to other aspects of the Yorùbá life. In other words, *Ifá* encapsulates all that relates with the entire Yorùbá life and to other people's religion or culture that are related with *Ifá*.

Ifá is known to different people by different names throughout the world. Its nomenclature has cut across nations and tribes around the world. For instance, *Ifá* "is considered as the god of divinization in Igala culture. It is believed that, *Ifá* carries messages from the other world to this world. It is also a medium of dialogue between the living and the ancestors" (Negedu, nd, p. 5). *Ifá* communicates in symbols. The symbolisation of *Ifá* is realised in signs, objects, and in animals; including human beings (higher animal). *Ifá* symbolism is also expressed in the physical, spiritual, and the supernatural, living and the dead.

Communication between the human and supernatural agents is made possible by *ẹbọ*. Every religion of the world recognises vital role played by *ẹbọ* in their religious (spiritual) service to God- the Supreme Being. In Yorùbá religion, sacrifice is realised as *ẹbọ*. *Ẹbọ* serves as "spiritual glue" that binds or connects the physical world with the spiritual (unseen) world. *Ẹbọ* is also experienced in other peoples' culture and religion, especially, those that relate with *Ifá*. For example, Igala people of Nigeria believed that:

ẹbọ connects *Ojọ* to the world symbolized by earth (*ane*) and the ancestral reincarnate human spirit (*ọjọ*). In the phenomenological sphere, *ẹbọ* manifests the divine outpouring of intuition and inspiration of the Supreme Being. **It is the basic participatory character of the human in the divine**, without which the glimpse into the hallowed and holy becomes an illusion. Simply put, **ẹbọ is the gateway to mystical experience and consciousness of the divine presence in the Igala world, creating the pathway**

for healing and wholeness through destiny (*okai*) and charisma (Ahiaba 2016, p. 107) (bold mine).

The opinion of this scholar buttresses that, *ebò* opens way for “spiritual network” to perform supernatural events, especially healing- spiritual dispensation known with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian; the attribute that has been established to be derived from *Ifá* (Òkèwándé 2017b). It is equally noted in the above opinion that, it is impossible to dissociate *ebò* from human beings and the supernatural beings, because, *ebò* stands between the gap of human and supernatural being and *Olódùmarè*- the Supreme Being. In other words, *ebò* is complementary divine dispensation of power. “Consequently, in some religions, symbols are a reminder of sacrifice, or of a savior symbol, while in others they are the physical representation of the divine, and in still others, they constitute important lessons to help facilitate and sustain goodness” (Aderibigbe 2016, p. 61). The symbolisms of religion indentified above are relevant to the understanding of the *Ifá* symbolism in *Ìbejì* on one hand and in Saints Cosmas and Damian on the other hand. In other words, the sacrificial, divine and facilitators of goodness, in this case, symbolism of *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are related with *Ifá* symbols.

The relationship of the Yorùbá with the Igala has been addressed by scholars in the areas of social, linguistics and history among others. However, affinity of the Yorùbá with the Igala, extends to religions (*Ifá*) as well. For example, among the Igala people, *Ifá* “is considered as the god of divination in Igala culture. It is believed that, *Ifá* carries messages from the other (invisible) world to this world (earth)”. The present investigation of *ebò-Ifá* (pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice) in relation with *Ìbejì* among the Yorùbá and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith is desirable, the gap that is filled by this study. In other words, both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are supernatural beings. For instance, the Yorùbá believes that, *Ìbejì* are supernatural beings with supernatural power.

Twins are therefore given special names and believed to detain special preternatural powers...Among Yorùbá traditional beliefs and lore some twin-related themes are represented which are also found in other parts of the world. Basic features of the original Yorùbá beliefs have found their way into the religious traditions of descendants of Africans slaves imported in the West Indies and South America (Leroy et al 1995, p. 1).

This opinion recognises the supernatural being nature of *Ìbejì*. It equally established the spread and internalisation of the religious beliefs on *Ìbejì*. Such belief is the human symbolism of *Ifá* on

Ìbejì-Táyéwó, Kéhíndé and Ìdòwú, Àlàbá and Ìdògbé and Catholic twins- Saints Cosmas and Damian and Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus.

The birth of *Ìbejì* in the Yorùbá belief is associated with special names given to them. For example, among such special names that make *Ìbejì* supernatural beings are *oba omọ* (kings among children), *olú omọ* (unique children) and *òrò omọ* (children loaded with words) among others (Òkékándé 2017a). The above opinion about *Ìbejì* shows that, the belief on the Yorùbá *Ìbejì* is the basic, while variant of this belief about *Ìbejì* is realised as a form of “cultural diffusion”- cultural spread; as in the case of Saints Cosmas and Damian in the Diasporas. In other words, the beliefs on *Ìbejì* have been incorporated to other religious beliefs as a result of culture contact. As a result of this, the spread of *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian in the Diasporas is not in doubt.

The population of the West Indies and the Eastern coast South America largely originates from the previous African “Slaves Coast” corresponding to the present-day coast of Nigeria and Benin. It is therefore not surprising that traditional Yorùbá twin beliefs have been transposed in Latin America. Such is the case of Brazilian traditions of the Candoble and Macumba on the region of Salvador de Bahia and of the Umbanda in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. These traditions have maintained the Yorùbá Orishas including the sacred Ere Ibeji. In the Umbanda, the sacred twin Saint Cosmas and Damian... are celebrated at the end of September in a feast especially devoted to children (Leroy et al 1995, p. 136).

It is clear that, the influence or spread of the *Ibeji* on Christian beliefs such as that of Saints Cosmas and Damian cannot be overemphasized. The supernatural nature of *Ìbejì* demands for celebration and worship. It is equally noted that, Saint Cosmas and Damian are celebrated along with the children who are twins; just as in Yorùbá twin beliefs tradition. For instance, one of the myths about *Ìbejì* reveals that, children who are twins with their family members gather in Badagry annually for the twin festivals. “Ìtàn sọ fún wa pé àwọn oníbejì máa nṣeibẹ̀wò pàtàkì sí ilú kan nítòsì Àgbádàrìgì (Badagry) níbí tí nwọn gbà pé òrìṣà ibejì ti bèrẹ̀ tí ó sì tayọ̀ ti àwọn ará ilú yòókù ní orílẹ̀-èdè Yorùbá. Pẹ̀lú ijó àti ayọ̀ ní àwọn oníbejì máa nfiwọ̀ ilú yìí” (Dáramọ́lá and Jéjé 1967, p. 281). (Myth informs us that the relations of twins do gather in a town near Badagry, where it is believed that, the *ibejì* divinity started and which is prominent than other towns of the Yorùbá nations. The relations of the twins enter this town with dance and joy). This means, both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are honored, referenced and celebrated as special children even from birth.

Ìbejì is one of the most powerful Yorùbá divinities. *Ìbejì* is classified and regarded as one of the senior deities that descended along with other Yorùbá gods. “Ipò irúnmoḷẹ̀ ni àwọn baba òlá wa tò wọn sí láti igbà iwásẹ̀” (Adéoyè 1985 p. 350). (They are classified as a god by our fore fathers from the ancient time). *Ìbejì* (twins), belongs to the spiritual world. “*ÌBEJÌ* is actually a spiritual entity, which originally manifested itself in human form as twins, within the indigenous traditions of the Yorùbá tribe, *ÌBEJÌ* is in fact the Yorùbá word for ‘TWINS’” (Bólá 2011 p. 1). The spiritual being (nature) of twins is associated with the Yorùbá belief. The spirituality and supernatural virtues possessed by twins make them to be regarded as one of the major Yorùbá divinities that is referenced and worshiped throughout the Yorùbá land. To this effect, *Ìbejì*, in the Yorùbá belief, symbolises dualism- soul and body, physical and spiritual, heaven and earth among others.

When twins are born, “the spirit double has been born on earth. Since there is no way of telling which the heavenly being is and which the mortal is, both are treated as sacred from birth.” In case, any of the twins dies, an image is carved by professionals “to serve as a repository for the child’s spirit so that it may return to this world and resume its journey to adulthood” (Curry 2010, p. 25). This is because, “Twins do not have individual souls, and they share one soul. When the soul is divided half in ‘òrun’ and ‘ayé’, it causes an extreme unbalance... twins share the same soul, they are call twins “èjiré” or two who are one” (Dieffenbach 2010, p. 18). In other words, “Soul is the addition of powers of body, it cannot exist without the other, and they both constitute a symbiosis in an organic whole” (Valbuena 2005, p. 19). The inseparable nature of body and soul symbolised, by *ayé* (earth) and *òrun* (heaven), which, if threatened by death, demands for *ère-ìbejì* to maintain a balance.

However, this study investigates the relationship of *Ifá* symbol of pre-divination sacrifice with the Yorùbá *Ìbejì* symbols on one hand and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism on the other hand. The tripartite symbol connections will be another “meeting point or ground” between *Ifá*- “the corner stone” of the Yorùbá culture, *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian. This is aimed to show that, the relationship of *Ifá* with *Ìbejì* among the Yorùbá and with Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith is discernible and, therefore cannot be underrated or jettisoned. The investigation of the interrelated symbols between *Ifá*, *Ìbejì* and Saints-Cosmas and Damian is aimed to establish that, the religion of Africans, especially, the Yorùbá is universal; and can be branded, tagged as African indigenous Christian faith.

Ẹbọ Symbolism in Ifá Divination

“Symbols have become significantly functional in the practice of religion...Religion makes the use of symbols as communication linkages imperative” (Aderibigbe 2016, p. 60). The roles played by *ẹbọ*, especially, in *Ifá*- the religion of the Yorùbá people, cannot be overemphasized. It serves as a means of interaction and peaceful co-existence between the human (visible or physical) and the supernatural beings, divinities and ancestors (invisible or spiritual) world. “From religious perspective, the world can be said to be divided into the physical (visible), and the metaphysical (or the spiritual) levels. Both realms have binding and interactive forces exchanging between them to function harmoniously” (Salami 2002, p. xiv). *Ẹbọ* serves as Holy Communion- an interactive forum or gathering between the human and the spirit (other world), “without which the glimpse into the hallowed and holy becomes an illusion” (Ahiaba 2016, p. 107). One of the contents of *ẹsẹ Ifá* is *ẹbọ*. There is no one exempted to perform sacrifice.

It is compulsory for every individual to perform sacrifice no matter whether the *ori* he chose in heaven is good or bad. The divinities will not support anyone who refuses to offer sacrifice since this is their only reward for their ceaseless watch over human life...Thus, sacrifice is presented in *ẹsẹ Ifá* as the means whereby a man makes his peace with the divinities and improves upon the defects inherent in his own life. (Abimbólá 1977a, p. 33).

No human being can live a peaceful and meaningful life or exist without *ẹbọ*. *Ẹbọ*, must be carried out within the specified period of time. In other words, sacrifice offered outside the specified time by *Ifá* is as sacrifice not offered at all. Therefore, “Timing is very crucial under any prevalent circumstances in the Yorùbá custom, religion, deity, and tradition. All as limited under sacrificial difference between the person that refuses to offer sacrifice on time and one that did not offer at all. Spiritual resonance and intonation changes with time” (Salami 2002, p. xv).

In Yorùbá religion, the prescription of the sacrifice order is exclusively given by *Ifá*. The prescription in regards to the time the sacrifice must be offered, how the sacrifice must be conducted, who is charged with the sacrifice obligation and where the sacrifice is to be carried out, are prescribed or ordered by the *Ifá* priest to the *Ifá* client. In addition, the order of the sacrifice must be given or directed by an initiated *Ifá* priest- *Ifá* priest through *Ifá* divination.

Therefore, the consultation to the *Ifá* priest must be the first step towards the implementation of the sacrifice order. In addition, such consultation is associated with financial obligation (mostly in form of cowries as it was a medium of exchange in the olden days). For example, cowry shells were introduced in the seventeenth century as a means of exchange. "The cowry shell fulfilled to the local people practically all the requirements of money. It served as a medium of exchange, a standard of value, and a store value" (Fádípè 1970, pp. 157 & 8). The fees are prescribed and specified in *Ifá* epistles (corpus), fixed (non-negotiable), received by the *Ifá* priest on behalf of *Ifá* oracle- *Òrúnmìlà*. This is realised as a form of *ẹbọ*. This is described as pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice in this study. This sacrifice is referred to in the context of *Ifá* as *èrù-Ifá* (*Ifá*'s portion or gift).

The use of the pre-*Ifá* divination money as sacrifice is not to satisfy the personal interest of *Ifá* priest; but specified or rendered by *Ifá* oracle on how it must be used. Therefore, the money realised through this form of sacrifice (pre-*Ifá* divination) is sacrilegious. This amount is five (5), referred to as *áárùnún idáfá* (five for *Ifá* divination). This is in two divisions. Two (2) for lots cast- *eéjì adìbò* and Three (3) for mat spreading- *ẹ́ẹ́ta itẹ́nì*. On one hand, the lots cast is symbolised by 'cowries', symbolises 'yes' (positive) and 'bone' symbolises 'no' (negative) in *Ifá* divination context. On the other hand, the mat spreading fee symbolises the provision for the mat on which *Ifá* priest conducts the *Ifá* divination. However, the symbolism of this sacrifice is in this study investigated beyond objects or monetary symbols but extend to human beings. Because, the *Ifá* system of divination seems to depend on the interpretation of the random,

behavior of physical objects, called instruments of divination... **This random behavior is somehow related to the wishes and/or behavior of the gods by the diviner.** Only the *Ifá* priests seem to know how this is done. In contrast, the divination system based on astrology **depends on the behavior of celestial bodies. This is the most striking difference between the *Ifá* and several other divination systems** (McGEE 1983, p. 109) (bold mine).

The implication of this opinion is that, the celestial bodies are symbolised, including their behaviors or characters in *Ifá* divination. This is pre-divination sacrifice in *Ifá* as numerically coded in two (2) and three (3) are implied and enforced on Yorùbá *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism. Sacrifice serves as a unifying force between the human and the supernatural.

The psychological function of sacrifice in the community is rated very high by *Ifá* priests. **They maintain that sacrifice helps to unite all the forces both natural and supernatural that operate in the Yorùbá society.** Broadly speaking, these forces are four in number namely the gods, the ancestors, witches and other supernatural powers, and human beings. The function of sacrifice is to enlist the support of these four forces for whatever one may want to do so that none of them may work against ones purpose (Abimbola 1976, p. 37) (bold mine).

The unification, co-operation and integration roles or functions of *ẹbọ* between the human and the supernatural beings and in the ultimate, to God, the *Olódùmarè* is negotiated or actualised by *ẹbọ*. *Ẹbọ*, is inevitable to the *Ifá* clients or supplicants. It is a means of exchange of material things for his or her life.

The Yorùbá believe that, the invisible agents (earlier identified above), will be appeased when certain material things are offered to the *ajogun* (a group of Yorùbá supernatural agents) in form of sacrifice, they would take or receive those things and leave the supplicant untouched. Therefore, *ẹbọ* is a material means of exchange between the human, supernatural and the God.

Sacrifice, in its ritual or ceremonial use, means “a making sacred, an offering that becomes divinized.” Whatever is sacrificed crosses from humans to the divine, and objects are empowered to facilitate the process. Indigenous Africans speak and think of sacrifice essentially as a religious act, which takes the form of rendering something to the supernatural being or beings, and with various intents and purposes (Adogame 2009, p. 75).

Therefore, “Sacrifice is a means whereby man can influence the supernatural power so that the ‘good’ powers may co-operate with him and the evil powers will leave him alone in the execution of his plans on the earth” (Abimbola 1977a, p. 33). *Ẹbọ* is a means that, opens channel or network of communication or interaction between man and the ancestors, divinities, supernatural agents and with God the *Olódùmarè*. While the provision of the sacrificial materials can be waived by the *Ifá* priest if the client is incapable of fulfilling all the requirements. However, the pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice, otherwise known as *ẹbọ idáfá*, cannot be waved. It is obligatory. This is because, it is offered to the spiritual world and agents. Its negotiation or waiver is beyond human beings (either by *Ifá* priest or client).

The obligatory nature of pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice, *ẹbọ idáfá*, is evinced from *Ifá* corpus. In the ancient *Ifá* divination, the *Ifá* consultation (symbolised by two for lots and, three for mat spreading- *eéjì adibò* and *ẹ́ẹ́ta iténí*) are mandatory for all categories of clients of *Ifá*. *Ifá*

epistles affirm that, there is no waiver for pre-Ifá divination sacrifice. *Òrúnmìlà* himself paid this pre-Ifá divination sacrifice before divination. The wife, the children, friends and the entire family of the *Ifá* priest must observe the payment, as contained in *Sàlámì* (2002)

Òrúnmìlà vehemently warned that, *Ifá* practitioners should not spend *Ifá* consultation fees, *èrù-ifá* wilfully, even for their family members. It is unethical for *Ifá* priest to perform *Ifá* divination for anybody without the payment of the pre-Ifá divination sacrifice. Whoever does this, will not prosper in *Ifá* divination profession. The pre-Ifá divination obligatory charges are sacred for *Ifá* priest. More importantly, the money must not be spent recklessly or carelessly as contained in *Ìká Òbàrà* contained in *Salami* (2002). In addition, the pre-Ifá divination money and other prescribed items of sacrifice are not to be diverted for use on personal or non-provitable things.

The offering of sacrifice cannot be dissociated from *Ifá* divination. In other words, the *Ifá* divination process is incomplete without sacrifice.

Sacrifice is therefore central to *Ifá* divination and to Yorùbá religion as a whole. Sacrifice keeps the belief system going and links the client, the diviner, the divinities and the ancestors together through a system of service and reward. When the client refuses to perform sacrifice, he makes it impossible for this system of action and reaction be completed. Such a client therefore commits a rape of the belief system since he has exploited the divinities by inviting them to identify and solve his problem for him without providing them with their stipulated reward (*Abímbólá* 1977a, 11).

To this effect, pre-Ifá divination sacrifice is a “stipulated reward” for divinities and supernatural beings who have been invited by the *Ifá* client to solve his problem for them. Therefore, the sacrifice is sacred.

Theoretical Framework

Semiotics is adopted for this study because, “symbolism underlies *Ifá* divination” (*Olátúnjì* 2005, p. 135). Semiotics, which is the study of science of signs, is better understood through symbolism. Semiotics can be traced to the pioneering works of Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher and Ferdinand de Saussure, the Swiss Linguist. According to Saussure, semiology is the study of signs as part of social life. He focuses on the functions of social and cultural phenomenon within semiotic system. Saussure (1974, p. 60) classifies signs into two entities: “signified and or sign-vehicle or meaning.” He refers to the signified, mostly in

form of materials (objects, images, sounds and so on). Saussure is credited with structuralism approach. To him, language is formed by signs which are related in multiple ways. A sign or a word consists of two parts: one part is its form; the other part is its meaning. The association between form and meaning of a sign is fixed by conventions of language use. The link between the form and meaning are inseparable.

According to Peirce, Semiotics is an abstract entity. Sign is something which stands to somebody or something in some respects or capacity. This relation of "standing for" is mediated by an interpretant. According to Peirce (1931, p. 35), "a sign is anything which determines something else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object) in the same way the interpretant becoming in turn a sign." This means anything can be adopted as a sign. Peirce model is adopted for this work as the elements of the model are sufficient and appropriate for my analysis.

Three modes of significations are regarded to be sufficient to describe any form of sign. These are icon, symbol and index. However, the symbol mode is adopted for this study. In symbol mode, there is no resemblance or connection between the signifier and the signified, that is, the object and what it stands for. A symbol's connection with its object is a matter of convention, rule or agreement between the users. Such symbols, rules and convention between the signifier and the signified must be learnt. In Yorùbá tradition, it can be realised in form of *Àrokò* (symbolism), as such an object or something stands for something or somebody in real life. Symbolism can be realised in different forms. For instance, the Yorùbá believe that 'fish' stands for negative and 'crab' for positive or to determine the 'yes' or 'no' of an interrogative statement such as *ẹja n bákàn?* (fish or crab?). It is culturally accepted that 'fish' symbolises (stands for) 'no' or 'negative' and 'crab' symbolises (stands for) 'yes' or 'positive.' In *Ifá* (lots cast) context, bone symbolises 'no' or negative while cowries shell symbolises 'yes', positive or affirmation (Abimbola 1977a, p. 7). In human symbol significations in Yorùbá religious beliefs, *àfín* (an albino) is regarded and respected to be related with *Obàtálá*, who has his color code as white. *Afín* (an albino) is honored and respected because of his/her relationship with *òrìṣà*. To the Yorùbá people, *òwò òrìṣà lá fì ń wọ àfín*. Literarily meaning that, honor of god (*òrìṣà*) is bestowed on an albino). This means, symbol is contextual and cultural.

As explained earlier, knowledge of semiotics covers different aspects of life. This work adopts the cultural semiotics, which is concern with the use of cultural objects or signs associated

with cultural meanings. A sign can create multiple meanings, depending on the culture in which it exists. The application of the cultural categories depends on the individual or personal knowledge. "But we are all some ways apart from commanding all cultural knowledge, as we all have little experience in many areas of everyday life" (Lobner 2002, p. 201). The distinction between the semantic knowledge world knowledge (for example, cultural and personal knowledge) is a doctrine of cultural semiotics. Proper interpretation of literary piece cannot be undertaken outside the cultural components of the text.

The methodology employs descriptive with comparison, since the symbol elements of *Ifá* are related with that of *Ìbejì* on one hand and Saints Cosmas and Damian on the other hand so as to establish their interrelated symbols. *Ifá* divination numerical symbols- two (2) and three (3) or five (5), realised as pre-*Ifá* divination symbols in this study are paired with one another including their functional symbols in order to establish their level of relationship. "The basic strategy in using a symbol as a cue is to pair something with the thing that it is to cue. Depending on the particular person, if this pairing is done often enough, with enough intensity, over a long duration the person will come to associate the two things with each other; such a symbolic association allows one thing to be used as a cue for the other" (Comb and Freedman 1990, p. 126). The method of pairing of human symbols through the influence of *Ifá* symbols between or around *Ìbejì* symbols among the Yorùbá people and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith is aimed to establish their elements of agreement, association or co-operation through their investigated symbols. Interpretation and association of symbols with meanings has to do with the knowledge of the individual intelligence. Such association and interpretation should also be backed up with evidences and facts to substantiate such links between the two elements in contrasts in terms of their semiotic relationships.

Cyril (2015, pp. 297-8) advocates for the use of semiotics to the Theology of inculturation. The knowledge of semiotics is required because the church exists in cultural forms. Semiotics also removes impediments of Theological and conceptual in relation with the "practice of inculturation." Likewise, semiotics mediates the role of language in relation to religions and culture. Cyril opines that, emphasis should be placed on hermeneutics in analysing some stories and the application of cultural interpretation of symbol as propounded by Charles Pierce and Susan Langer. From his opinion, the adoption of semiotics to the Theology of inculturation cannot be overemphasized. It is discovered from his opinion that, culture including language and

interpretation of discourse; which hermeneutics is concerned should break some barriers relating to Theological inculturation.

This approach- semiotics is adopted because, *Ifá*, with which its symbols are related with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are connected in this study communicates in signs and symbols through the interaction of divination objects. "Symbolism underlies Ifa divination system. Each *ẹsẹ Ifá* represents man in his eternal struggle for a *modus Vivendi*. The individual client in his symbolic identification with this primordial man takes the symbolism full cycle" (Olatunji 2005, p. 135).

Symbol can be regarded as the basic and basis of communication, because, symbol forms the writing system in the prehistoric period of development. "Symbols transferred our prehistoric ancestors into organized human beings within the context of cultural livelihood and institutions" (Madubuike 2005 p. 330). Knowledge of semiotics covers different aspects of human and non-human life. This work adopts the cultural semiotics, which is concern with the use of cultural objects or signs, including human symbolisation associated with cultural meanings and beliefs. However, zoo/bio (semiotics a subset of cultural semiotics), which is based on the communication of information in living organisms (including human beings), on which this study investigates and establishes relationship in symbols of *Ifá* with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism symbols. "We have two meanings of 'semiotics': semiotics as a discipline or general science of signs and semiotics as specifically human semiosis" (Petrilli and Ponzio 2007, p. 3). The human semiosis is what this study employs as it relates with human symbolism in *Ìbejì*, Saints Cosmas and Damian in connection with *Ifá*.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to establish relationship between, *Ifá*- the springboard of the Yorùbá culture, *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith. The existence of *ẹbọ*- the pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice, as a spiritual links between the physical and the spiritual worlds symbolised in human is to be demonstrated. This is aimed to show that, the universality and the internalisation of *Ifá* is enforced on *Ìbejì* on one hand and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith on the other hand.

Pre-*Ifá* divination Sacrifice as Symbolism in *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian

“Symbolism means to attribute more than its superficial value to a word or action through the way the word is used or action is presented. The entire system of Ifá divination is based on symbolism” (Olatunji 1982, p. 60). To this effect, the Ifá symbolism of pre-Ifá divination realised as two (2) and three (3) or five (5) in relation to *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian is to be examined in this section. The adoption or application of symbolism is not limited to a word, animals or things alone but equally to figures and human beings. Some cultural figures stand for belief system of the people. Some individuals also symbolise some cultural beliefs beyond ordinary understanding of the society as earlier explained with the cultural belief of the Yorùbá people on *àfín* (an albino).

In the ancient Ifá divination poems, the requirement of two (2) and three (3) are earlier mentioned in this study as prerequisite of Ifá divination. In fact, there is no one consulting Ifá that is exempted from giving these sacrifices to Ifá oracle. According to Adéoyè (1985), the gods: *Ògún* (p. 252) *Yemoó* (p. 118) *Ọṣun* (p. 206) *Òkè* (p. 166) *Ọbàtálá* (pp. 113 & 144) and *Orò* (p. 145) all paid this Ifá propitiation fee. Thus Adéoyè (1985, p. 227) asserts that, “*Olókun fún Ọrúnmìlà ní eẹ̀jì adìbò àti ẹ̀ẹ̀ta itẹ̀nì ó ní kí ó yẹ òun ní ọ̀wọ̀ kan ibò wò...*” (*Olókun gave Ọrúnmìlà two cowries for lots and three for mat spreading that he should cast lots by divination for him...*). *Ọrúnmìlà* himself offered this obligatory pre-divination fee before he could divine for himself to know a way forward in times of troubles and confusions (Adéoyè 1985, p. 133). The children of *Ọrúnmìlà* observed this form of Ifá sacrifice as well (Abimbólá 1968, pp. 40&1). Abimbólá (1968, p. 32), as contains in *Ọyèkú Mèjì* explains these symbols of Ifá pre-divination fees as prescribed by the Ifá corpus that:

Eẹ̀jì: èrù tí ibò ifá ó gbà.

Ẹ̀yí jẹ́ ara owó tí babaláwo n gbà gégégé bí erù.

Ẹ̀ẹ̀ta itẹ̀nì ní owó tí babaláwo ó gbà, kó tóó tẹ̀nì látí dá Ifá

Two: for lots is received from client by Ifá priest.

This is part of offering that *babalawo* receives as gift.

Three: for mat spreading is money that *babalawo* receives before he spreads mat to perform divination.

The sum total of these symbols is five (5), as a pre-divination obligatory offering or consultation fee that must be paid for Ifá divination. The two (2) is a symbol for lots, while three (3) is a symbol for mat spreading during the process of Ifá divination. Babalólá (2000, p. 90) asserts that, “*Èlò l’a mú rée dafá nlé Olúsadé? Aárùn ún oko awo ló bá lẹ*” (How much did we take along in Olúsadé case? Five (5) were used for divination). Şówándé and Fággbémí (1969, p. 61) affirm

that: “Mo dúró ọwọ mi kò tó isin, mo bèrẹ ọwọ mi kò tó isin. Mo mú ẹẹta itení, mo mú eéjì adibo. Mo mú aárùún ida’fá. Mo wá re oko aláwo. Àwọn àgbà- kan- àgbà kàn...wá ní ki n’ dá bù yèkẹ” (I stood up, my hand could not reach *isin*. I bent down my hand could not reach *isin*. I took along three for mat spreading. I took along two for lots cast. I took along five for *Ifá* divination. I went straight to *Ifá* priest. Some elders told me to bend down). The five (5) symbols ($2 + 3 = 5$) are pre-*Ifá* divination symbols of sacrifice offered to the *Ifá* oracle. The *Ifá*’s terminologies as well as their symbolic names for these sum of two and three ($2 + 3 = 5$) symbols are given by Adékéyè (2010, p. 81) as:

One (1) symbolises *Oókan ifidan*

Two (2) symbolises *Èjirete*

Three (3) symbolises *Èta Ògúndá*

Four (4) symbolises *Èrin-Òra*

Five (5) symbolises *Àrún Òsìn*

These five symbols are very important in *Ifá* divination system. These symbols are here observed to extend to the five symbols (names) associated with *Ìbejì* among the Yorùbá people and Saints Cosmas and Damian in the Catholic faith. The symbols are associated with their names which identify and describe each of the symbols (names) and their classifications. The five symbols are classified into two with their specified functions.

Name generally, is associated with semiotics, as it is a signifier (name) of the signified (individual or thing). Much value is associated with individual names in Africa generally and to the Yorùbá in particular. “Nobody exists in African society without a name and such names are often symbolic” (Ọlọba 2005 p. 37), such a name is associated with African culture and beliefs. “African names are derived mainly from the people’s beliefs, culture, season or circumstances surrounding the child’s birth. These names are easily identified; associated or linked to tribes and languages” (Nwanaju 2003, p. 5).

To the Yorùbá people, *orúkọ ọmọ níí romọ* (the name of a child influences the child’s behavior). “The name to the Yorùbá and to Africans in general, is a double plane semiotic system. On the first plane, the name as an indentifying signifier denotes the person or character (the signifier) when answers to the name. This plane of name semiotics is a universal one. On the second plane, the name is also believed to be the signifier of the historical, sociological and psychological behavioral patterns of characters” (Ògúndèjì 1988, p. 79). The two planes of

semiotic system associated with names by Ògúndèjì are relevant in this context. In another context, Africans value their name as such is associated with symbols in their culture. The behavior of an individual is influenced by the individual's name. The behaviors of this divinity are equally felt on the celestial- beings, who are, mostly associated by their celestial names. In other words, a name, in Yorùbá tradition, has impact and influence on the behaviors and attitudes of individual. "Yorùbá bò, wón ní orúkọ ní í roni, iwà a sì máa ro èèyàn. Orúkọ ẹni sì ni Ìjánu ẹni" (Mustapha et al 1986, p. 68).

The Yorùbá believes that, a name is proportional to a child behavior, likewise, character of individual is connected to his or her name. In Yorùbá tradition, names are realised in different forms, such as *orúkọ àbísọ* (personal name), *orúkọ idílẹ̀* (family/surname), *orúkọ ẹ̀sìn* (religious name), *orúkọ inagijẹ* (nickname), *orúkọ àmútòrunwá* (celestial name) among others. These categories of names serve as identification in one way or the other among the Yorùbá people. For instance, this study relates to religious names- *orúkọ ẹ̀sìn* (religious name) and *orúkọ àmútòrunwá* (celestial name) as the individuals examines are associated with *Ifá* religion, *Ìbejì* and Catholic beliefs. In addition, all the names under study are celestials (from heaven). The names and their symbolism are connected with their birth situations. In other words, twins in Yorùbá beliefs, are named as *Táyéwò* (the first born of the twins), and *Kéhìndé* (the second born of the twins) and in Catholic faith, Saints Cosmas (the first born of the twins) and Damian (the second of the twins). This means, the position of a child among the five children is fixed, constant and proportional to his/her name. In addition, the names of the three children born after the twins in *Ìbejì* and Catholic faith follow this order as well. In other words, the positions from the first to the fifth (1-5) of these children are fixed and these positions and their behaviors are determined by their names.

Name, or naming, is one of the Yorùbá ancient forms of writing (identity) associated with individual in the society. It can be used to establish an individual history in relation with family religion, work or profession, chieftaincy or royalty among others. In some cases, "omọ a máa fi Òrìṣà (ẹ̀sìn) ìran tàbí ẹbí hàn. Eléyíí ló mú kí orúkọ jìjẹ nílẹ̀ kááárò Oòòjìfẹ yàtò gedegbe sí orúkọ tí àwọn ẹyà m̀ìràn, pàápàá àwọn ẹyà aláwọ̀ funfun" (Mustapha et al 1986, p. 68) (A name shows the god (religion) of family or lineage). In this instance, the relationship between the five names in *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are derivation of religious names connected with *Ifá*. Names, understudy in regards to *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian serve as trace

elements. This function (trace element) makes name among the Yorùbá to be unique and different from other traditions, especially, from the White people). However, there exist cultural (religious) affinities between the five names of *Ifá* divination, *Ìbejì* and twins of Catholicism. Their relationship in the roles and symbol significations are discernible.

In most African societies, newborns are named based on specific situations surrounding their birth. Naming a child is taken very seriously because it is believed that a name can make or mar a person. Thus a name that conveys no concrete meaning, no links to a spiritual source, and evokes neither narrative nor link to any historical events and landmarks is perceived as meaningless. To most Africans, a name represents an essential component of human spiritual anatomy and could serve as an indicator of destiny. Names are often circumstantial, and historical narratives are woven around them. The symbolism, meaning, and power of naming, and several elements of the indigenous naming ritual have been transposed within indigenous and Christian worldviews in Africa and the African diaspora. In Africa and the diaspora, names not only give meaning but also serve as an identity marker in a new multicultural context. Further, they connote personality and build ties to culture and ancestry (Adogame 2009, p. 88).

Names or naming in Africa are trace elements as they have cultural, historical and religious connections among people. To this end, the relationship of individual, group, family and tribes can be established and accounted for in their names.

The spirituality essence of names is also associated with naming in Africa. Names evince the tribes, family history including religion and future aspirations on the individuals with the names.

In Yorùbá philosophy and religion, name given to a child at birth often times designate among other things tribal or clan affiliations, family ties, religious/deity affiliations, or even the hopes of the family for the child. These names tie neatly into family praise singing known as *oríkì* (Ọdẹyẹmí 2013, p. 7).

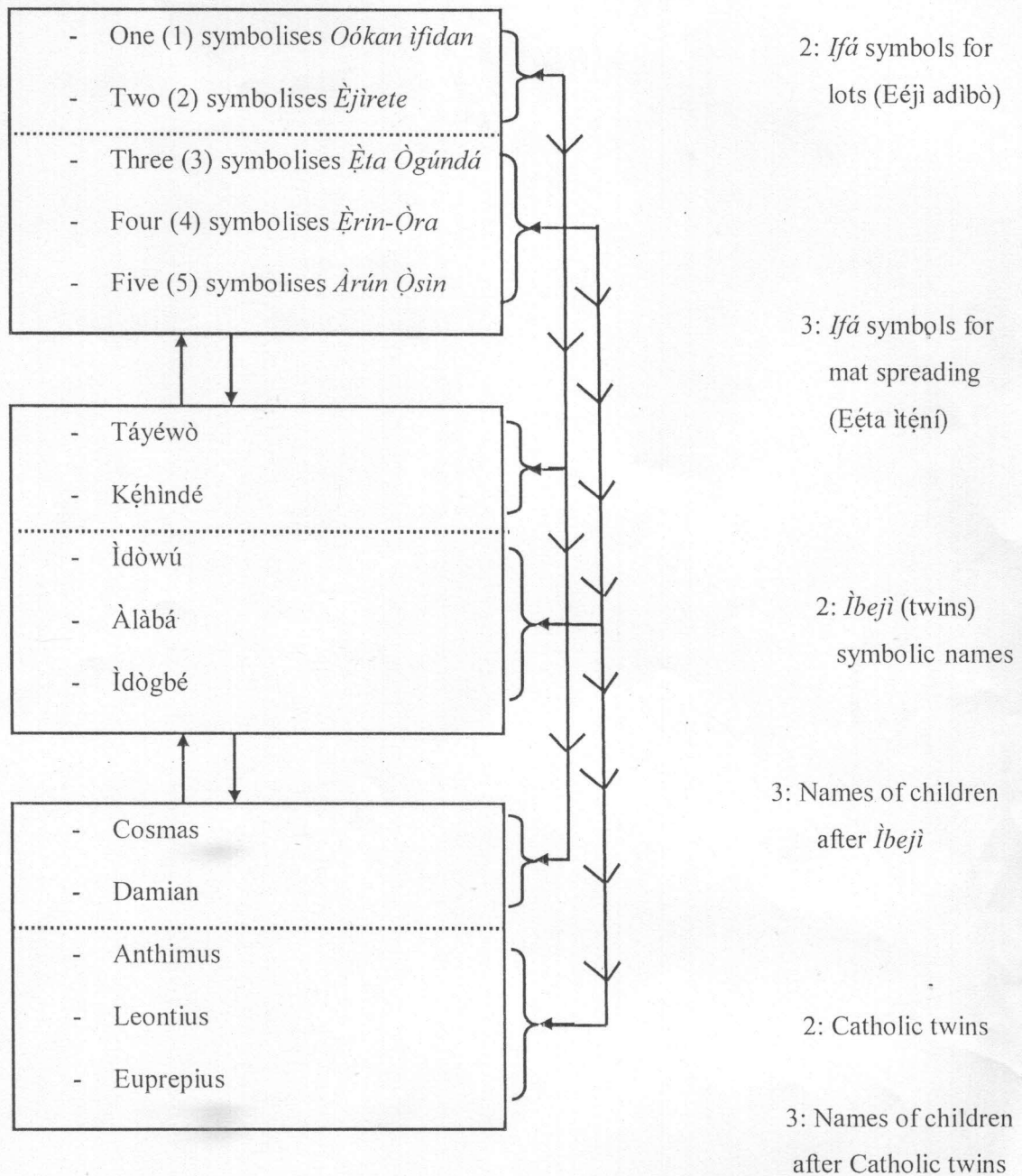
The above opinions on names equally show that, *Orúkọ* (names), are clues to the comprehensive account about such name. Such name is also connected with past religious, social or attitudinal of the related name. Names associated with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are symbolic and are suggested here to be related with *Ifá*.

The association of the Yorùbá people with the highest rate of twinning cannot be contested (Leroy et al 1995). The association of the Yorùbá with the highest twinning rate globally is influenced by *Ifá*- the religion of the Yorùbá people as well (Òkékándé 2017a). This

means the understanding of the mystery behind the associations of the Yorùbá with the highest twin birth can only be explained, understood and comprehended spiritually.

Likewise, in Yorùbá religious belief on *Ibejì*, the three children born after twins are associated with their celestial names. These are: *Táyéwò* (a male or female first child of twins), *Kéhindé* (a male or female second child of twins), *Ìdòwú* (a male or female child after twins), *Àlàbá* (a male or female child after *Ìdòwú*) and *Ìdògbé* (a male or female child after *Àlàbá*). The associations of *Ìbejì* with Saints Cosmas and Damian have also been established. For instance, the three children in relation with Saints Cosmas and Damian are Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus (Catholic encyclopedia). According to Mikelle (2001, p. 114), in the Diaspora, especially, Brazil, Cosmas and Damian have three children born after them “demonstrate an iconographic Yorùbá influence on Luso-Brazillian depictions of Catholic saints.”

The model showing the relationship of *Ifá* with *Ìbejì*- *Táyéwò*, *Kéhindé*, *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá* *Ìdògbé* and Catholic twins- Cosmas, Damian, Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus is presented in this study below:



Ifá Symbolism in Relation with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism

From the above model, the names in *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are in two categories. The first division under *Ìbejì* (Táyéwò and Kéhìndé) and Catholic twins (Cosmas and Damian) symbolises *eéjì* (two) for lots in *Ifá* divination as explained earlier. The groups under *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian derived their names and behaviors from *Ifá*. It is observed that, *Ifá* oracle is consulted in times of problems or confusions. Therefore, the first stage of solving problem for the *Ifá* client or suppliant is *Ifá* consultation. Process of *Ifá* divination cannot be on course without this sacrifice (for consultation) with the *Ifá* oracle. *Ìbò* (lots), in *Ifá*, is for problem solving and solution to human challenges. It will be recalled that, *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are known for solving human problems; as physicians, healers, magicians and miracle performers. These attributes are believed by this study, to be derived from pre-*Ifá* divination symbols. In other words, the values and attributes are shared by *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian from *Ifá* symbols of pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice.

The investigations of these names within and among these religious beliefs (*Ifá*, *Ìbejì* and Catholic faith) demonstrate some level of connections among them. This means, one can establish the history of an individual by the categories of these names. Before now, no level of relationship has been established to have existed between the *Ifá* symbols and *Ìbejì* on one hand and *Ifá* symbols and Saints Cosmas and Damian on the other hand. For instance, their (*Ìbejì* and Cosmas and Damian) symbolism is believed by this study to be connected with *Ifá*; as *ìbò-Ifá* (*Ifá* lots), is:

used to find **answers to the problems** which may arise in the process of interpreting an *Ifá* poem. **They act as a means of quick communication between *Ifá* and the client.** Without the *ìbò*, it will be impossible to determine all the minute ramifications of each divination. **But the client is interested in this minute detail in order to gain the satisfaction and confidence that he has identified his problem and offered the right solution** (Abimbola 1977a, p. 8) (bold mine).

From the opinion above, *ìbò* (lots, usually in two) is instrumental towards problems solving to *Ifá* suppliant(s) on one hand and on the other hand *ìbò* serve as “binding force”, “glue”, and “a conductor.” *Ìbò* serve as facilitators of implementation order. As explained earlier, the essence of religion is to seek peace and satisfactions between a believer and the supernatural

beings and in the ultimate the supreme God. *Ifá* serves as a major divination god to identify and solve problems confronting human beings. This objective can only be achieved through the use of *Ifá* symbols. The bold words and statements associated with *ibò* that symbolises two (2), for which the twins in *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian symbolised. The Theological functions of *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian is to solve people's problems. Their spiritual qualities and attributes realised in form of *ẹbọ* (sacrifice) makes "spiritual communication" possible through them; just like that of *Ifá* and his client(s). The output of spiritual communication in *Ìbejì* is miracles and wonders. The miraculous power associated with *Ìbejì* is not limited to the Yorùbá communities alone but also in the Diasporas. According to Curry (2010, p. 26) the power of *Àṣẹ* (sanction, authority or implementation) resides in *Ìbejì*. The twins possess "*Àṣẹ*, the "life force," or "spirit" ... *Àṣẹ* is defined as "that divine essence in which physical materials." Therefore, Pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice- *ẹbọ*, opens gate for solving human problems.

Medicine is a major profession that connects *Ifá* with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian. It is believed in this study that, both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian derive their ethical value from *Ifá*. For instance, medicine is an important aspect of *Ifá* divination. All Yorùbá indigenous medical scope of specialisations- pharmacy, ophthalmology, gynecology, orthopedics, pathology, general medicine and others are derived from *Ifá*.

Medicine, however, is the science or art of prevention, treatment, and cure of disease. The art of medicine is important because man recognizes that health can be lost and medicine helps the body return to its normal state... This is why medicine men, known as traditional doctors, abounds in Africa. They regard their power as a gift from God through the divinities. They claim they are given the art of medicine by divinities (Aderibigbe 2016, pp. 201&2).

In Yorùbá religious belief, *Ifá/Òrúnmìlà* and *Òsanyìn* are the divinities that are associated with medicine and related knowledge. However, *Òsanyìn* possessed his knowledge of medical practice from *Ifá/Òrúnmìlà*. The intimacy of *Ifá/Òrúnmìlà* and *Òsanyìn* on one hand was of servant-master from heaven. "*Òsanyìn* was "*Ọmọ ọdọ Ọrúnmìlà lẹrun*." (The house maid of *Ọrúnmìlà* in heaven) (Adéoyè 1985, p. 214). On another hand, the relationship between the two divinities was described as "a brother, friend, partner or servant of *Ọrúnmìlà*" (Simpson 1980, p. 7). This association between *Ọrúnmìlà* and *Òsanyìn* extends to the world. This means, *Ifá* is the custodian of medicine in Yorùbá belief.

Among the Yorùbá people till today, traditional medicine is rated very high, even in the face or presence of the Christianity and Islamic religions. This is informed by the efficacy of healing received from the indigenous medicine. "Traditional medicine is acceptable and popular in the nooks and crannies of Yorùbáland in spite of the Christian against it... In Nigeria, about 80% of the people who are sick consult the traditional doctors" (Ọmọtoyè 2012, p. 90).

In Yorùbá communities, all the medical knowledge and scopes evolve from Yorùbá indigenous medical profession- *Ifá*. In the *Ifá* poetic code, contained in Ilesanmi (1998, pp.10 & 11), no any divinity is associated with medicine, other than *Ifá*.

Ọwọ Ifá ni gbogbo oògùn ti wá.

Ọwọ Ifá nìkan ni gbogbo oògùn ti wá pátápátá poro-n-godo..

Òòsà ni Ifá, nìkan ààlò ni

Òògùn tún ló jẹ fún aráyé

All medicine came from *Ifá*.

All the medicine related things only came from *Ifá* in its entirety.

Ifá is a divinity; it is equally an instrument being used

It is equally medicine for the world.

This aspect of *Ifá* (medical) specialisation is so important, that no *Ifá* practitioner can have a successful practice if he does not know anything about medicine. This means, medicine is a general basic knowledge in *Ifá* profession; even though, it is a specialised discipline by some *Ifá* practitioners.

In the traditional Yorùbá society, *Ifá* priest were the physicians, psychiatrist, historians, and philosophers of the communities to which they belonged...even before initiation. The would-be priest must learn something about medicine so that he could cure his clients of minor ailments. No *Ifá* priest can have a successful practice if he does not know anything about medicine since many people go to *Ifá* priest to seek help in curing their ailments (Abimbólá 1977a p. 13).

Ìbejì, in Yorùbá beliefs are known with words of authority and sanctions *àṣẹ*. This value is equally shared by Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith. Both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are known for miracles, magic and wonders, the attributes that are shared from *Ifá* (Òkékándé 2017b). Saints Cosmas and Damian were "early Christian physicians" (Catholic Encyclopedia). These have relational attributes known with *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and

Damian derived from *Ifá*. It will be recalled that, *Ìbejì* are vested with authoritative words or power of sanction; which makes miracles and wonders occur. It is noted that, medicine and the work of healing, which are central to *Ifá* knowledge and the ministry of Saints Cosmas and Damian are akin to divination. For instance,

divination is an important activity and the role of the diviner is widespread. "Divination represents the central organizing mechanism through which the world of Yorùbá practitioners is understood." **Africans employs divination through the diviner, medicine man, and healer. It involves, in many cases, the enactment of sacrifice. The diviner or medicine man is a pivotal force for order and rapprochement between humanity and the spirit world...** *Ifá* is the most widespread means of Yorùbá divination (Adogame 2009, p. 80) (bold mine).

The *Ifá* priest is trained on how to cure different illnesses among the Yorùbá people. "The diviner, medicine man and healer" are professions that, connects *Òrúnmìlà* (*Ifá* progenitor), *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian together. These professions are closely associated with *ẹbọ* (sacrifice), which paves way for the connectivity between the human and the supernatural forces. However, *Ifá* serves as the main source of these medical professions.

In traditional Yorùbá society, *Ifá* priests were the physicians and chemists of their various communities...Healing is, however, such a profound field that only *Ifá* priests-specialists on healing are in a position to heal the more dangerous- disease like madness and epilepsy. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that *Ifá* are very competent at healing some very terrible diseases such as certain kinds of nervous disease. A detailed study of the methods of *Ifá* priest healers...claim that they are able to heal such disease as leprosy, nervous diseases, epilepsy, tuberculosis and other dreadful diseases. Indeed, *Ifá* priests even today still claim that their methods and medicines are more efficient in the cure of certain diseases which modern medicine has placed within the hopeless brackets of "incurable" (Abimbólá 1983, pp. 1&2).

This opinion shows that; medicine is a basic or general knowledge that must be acquired by *Ifá* priest. In other words, "*Òrúnmìlà* himself received the power of healing and support for mankind from the beginning of time" (Lijadu 1908b, p. 107). Furthermore, in *Ifá* ethnics just like the practice of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the medical services are rendered free of charge. For instance, "They accepted no pay for their services and were therefore, called *anargroi* "the silverless" ...Saints Cosmas and Damian are regarded as the patrons of physicians and surgeons and are sometimes represented with medical emblem" (Catholic Encyclopedia). Saints Cosmas and Damian were honored, as a result of this, some churches built in their memory because of the work of healing- cure of different illness. For example, The Emperor Justinian 1 (529 – 568)

honored them for the diseases they cured. In reciprocating them, those that benefited from their ministry Saints Cosmas and Damian, "having been cured of a dangerous illness by the intercession of Cosmas and Damian, Justinian, in gratitude for their aid, rebuilt and adorned their church at Constantinople, and it became a celebrated place of pilgrimage." This is the same with Pope Felix IV at Rome (526 – 530) (Catholic Encyclopedia).

The symbolisation of Saints Cosmas and Damian is here observed to be derived from *Ifá*. For instance, in the ancient *Ifá* divination practice, the *Ifá* priest must not charge his client. Their services were rendered on humanitarian ground. For instance,

in the ancient times in Yorùbáland, *Ifá* priests were usually very poor. This is because **they were not paid directly for the services they rendered to the community. For their livelihood they had to depend entirely on certain parts of the offerings given to *Ifá* and sometimes on gifts from clients...**No *babaláwo* should use his position to enrich himself in any way, he must not refuse anybody his service on account of money...**It seems, in fact, that the *babaláwo* is under a vow of poverty, to spend himself in the service of the community, making just enough to keep himself, his real reward being in the service of *Òrúnmìlà***" (Abimbolá 1976, pp. 17&8) (bold mine).

However, the pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice realised in this study as *ẹbọ idáfá* (divination sacrifice), is one of the indirect ways or means by which *Ifá* priests were compensated or rewarded and not directly by charging for the professional services rendered. This is also the case, "following the Jewish observance, they take care to remain a good part for themselves. Goats, fowls, pigeons, dogs and sometimes cows and horses are offered up while human sacrifices are almost unknown" (Clarke, 1972, p. 279).

Ìbejì is equally adored because of their supernatural power to help the poor in Yorùbá belief. It is noted that, twins are rarely given birth to by the rich or wealthy people. They associate (by birth) with the poor. This is expressed in panegyric code of *Ìbejì* that:

Èjìré sọ alákiṣà di aláṣọ

Ó sọ alágbe di olóunjẹ

Ó sọ òtòsì do ọlórọ (Dáramólá and Jéjé p. 282).

Twins turn the rag users to users of two hundred cloths,

turns the beggar to food owners.

turns the poor to the rich.

The fame of the unpopular family is “announced” by the birth of twins to that family. The parents are simply called by the majority by the name *iyá* and/or *bàbá ibejì* (mother or father of twins). The other children names are “assimilated” or monopolised by the twins.

The *Ìbejì* are believed to be special advocates of the poor. This attribute is believed to have been derived from *Ifá* as explained earlier. The symbolism and spirituality in *Ìbejì*, is not only associated with Yorùbá religious belief alone, but also with Saints Cosmas and Damian. Twins, serve as connecting beings between the human and spiritual world. They act as “spiritual intermediaries and advocates.”

The symbolism of twins as ancestral figures that inhabit transitional spaces where the worlds meet becomes a central example as Bellegarde-Smith aptly notes, “Houlberg’s essay situates itself at Kongo, Haitian, Cuban, and Brazilian mythology, embedded in diasporic narratives. Haitian Vodou is one of the many African religions in the New World that Venerates twins in Brazil, the Yorùbá attitude toward twins is salient in the Afro-Brazilian religious of Candomblé, Mucumba, and Umbanda, where twins are called *beji* (ellipsed from the Yorùbá *Ibeji*). Twins are also sacred in the context of the Afro-Cuban religion Santeria, which closely follows the Yorùbá model (Adogame 2009, p. 93).

This opinion accounts for the reason behind praying or interceding with the names of *Ifá*, *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian. The possession of their supernatural attributes is regarded with both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian.

The second division, as shown from the model above comprises of three (3) names identified in *Ìbejì* as *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá* and *Ìdògbé* and in Catholic twins as Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus. On one hand, it is observed from the structure of the names under *Ìbejì* that, they all have the same linguistic features. For instance, these three names- *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá*, and *Ìdògbé* have three syllables with low-low-high (LLH) tones. On the other hand, the three names after Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism- Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus have the same final syllables- “us.”

The three names after *Ìbejì*- *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá* and *Ìdògbé* came into being as a result of the birth of Yorùbá *Ìbejì*. Likewise, the three names after Saints Cosmas and Damian- Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus came into being as a result of Catholic twins. Therefore, in both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian, the three individuals are inseparable from the twins in Catholic faith and in Yorùbá *Ìbejì*. In other words, their lives or existence is meaningless without the twins, in both Yorùbá *Ìbejì* and Catholic twins- Saints Cosmas and Damian. For instance, the

Catholic Encyclopedia reports that, “three brothers, Anthimus, Leontius, and Euprepus” were children born after Saints Cosmas and Damian and “were inseparable from them throughout life.”

The names under *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are human symbols, believed to be supernatural beings associated with *Ifá* implementation order and agents. This opinion is supported by the beliefs of the African generally and Yorùbá in particular that ancestors, gods and supernatural beings are not dead as they reincarnate to the families they belong. “Ancestors from previous generations, who have died, become spirits and yet who retain an interest in their families.... They can influence living members of the family (Robinson, 2008, p. 2). To the Africans, the ancestors, gods and supernatural beings are regarded as “living dead” as their presence are felt in various aspects of the living family members (Òkèwándé 2016). “The attitude of the Yorùbá reinforces the belief that the dead are alive and have an interest in the affairs of the living” (Amponsah 1977, p. 108). This belief equally influences the beliefs of the Yorùbá people that have religious affinity with the Yorùbá people. For example, it has earlier been established in this study that the Igala people of Nigeria share the same belief with the Yorùbá about *Ifá*. The pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice, *ẹbọ*, in *Ifá* divination connects individual or *Ifá* client or supplicant with the ancestors, gods and the supernatural beings, to God the Supreme Being. The spirituality of *ẹbọ* is implied as symbolised with human in this study. The Igala people believe about *ẹbọ*, “as divine principle, *ẹbọ* connects the Supreme Being (*Ojọ*) the ancestral spirits (*ojọ*) and the earth deity-*anẹ*” (Ahiaba 2016, p. 1).

The names under *Ìbejì* and Catholic twins are symbolic and memories of the individuals connected with the spiritual (religious) events. In other words, the memories of the individual names, regarding the five names under this study are brought into reality among the Yorùbá people and the Catholic faith. “The Yorùbá concept of existence transcends the time when the individual is on the surface of the earth. It goes beyond that period and includes the memories which a man leaves behind after his death” (Abimbola 1975, p. 417). However, *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian possess supernatural powers; the attributes that makes *Ìbejì* to be regarded as divinity and Saints Cosmas and Damian as Saints-the holy ones. “Yorùbá deities were preserved under the names of Catholic saints” (Abdias do Nascimento 1977, p. 74). In other words, *Ifá* and *Ìbejì* divinities are preserved under the names of Catholic saints such as that of Saints Cosmas and Damian.

Till date, among the Yorùbá people, *Ìbejì* are celebrated and worshipped just as Saints Cosmas and Damian among the Catholic believers. For instance, the Catholic encyclopedia reports about Cosmas and Damian as an “early Christian physicians and martyrs whose feast is celebrated on 27th September” of every year. However, *Ìbejì* (*Táyéwò* and *Kéhìndé*), *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá*, *Ìdògbé* and Catholic twins (Cosmas and Damian), Anthimus, Leontius, Euprepus are related with *Ifá*. In other words, the religious influence, values and impacts of *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian and their related characters emanate as a result of *Ifá*.

The global dimension of indigenous African religions is manifest in varied forms, being introduced to new geo-cultural contexts through migration, tourism and new communication technologies. The African Diaspora influences cultures in Brazil, Cuba, and Haiti; partly leading to the development of African-derived religions across the Americas. In 1981, the act of parliament in Trinidad and Tobago raised the Yorùbá religion to the status of the official religion. In the diasporic context, *orisa* veneration has developed on different levels. While the veneration of a singular *orisa* may have produced a distinctive group or clientele linked to Ogun, Shango, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, *Ọ̀ya*, or *Ọ̀ṣun* there is a certain tendency in which *orisa* veneration, as compared to that in Africa, is becoming increasingly institutionalized and universalized (Adogame 2009, pp. 85 & 6).

One of such veneration of *òrìṣà*, in this case, *Ifá* (*Ọ̀rúnmìlà*) is “institutionalized and universalized” by *Ìbejì* and Saint Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism.

Summary and Conclusion

Ifá symbolism in form of *ẹ̀bọ idáfá* (*Ifá* divination sacrifice) is a consultation fee offered by the *Ifá* client to the *Ifá* oracle through the *Ifá* priest. The sacrifice opens channels or lines of network to address the issue(s) that brought him or her to the *Ifá* oracle through the *Ifá* priest. Sacrifice makes client to be connected with the invisible agents. This is why it is referred to as pre-*Ifá* divination sacrifice. The sum of this fee in number is five (5) realised in two forms. On one hand, two- *eéjì adìbò*: (2) for lots cast. This is symbolised by *Táyéwò* and *Kéhìndé* in *Ìbejì* and by Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholicism. On the other hand, three- *ẹ̀tá itenì*: (3) for mat spreading. This is symbolised by *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá* and *Ìdògbé* in *Ìbejì* and in Catholic twins as Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepus. The works (functions) played by these individuals is proportional to what they “signified” in *Ifá* divination. These semiotic significations indicate that, the names under both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith are related. The functions of the associated symbols in monetary form are extended to the roles of *Ìbejì* among the Yorùbá people and Saints Cosmas and Damian among the Catholic faith.

The symbolism of *Ìbejì* in the Yorùbá belief and Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic faith are evinced from *ibò Ifá* symbolism.

In achieving these objectives, symbols in religion discharge two unique roles, signifying what they mean in religion and its practice. The first is functioning as something that “represents,” “stand for,” or “signifies” something else.” The second is functioning as “the means by which the people orient themselves to the symbol’s referent” In combining these two inclusive functions, religious symbols provide religious followers the pathway to understanding and negotiating the meeting points between the mundane world and the ultimate reality – thus encompassing corporate and individualistic connotations in relation to the two spaces (Aderibigbe 2016, p. 60).

This study concludes that, the pre-Ifá divination sacrifice symbolised by humans is brought into memory by the presence of the individual associated with these names. The five individuals under *Ìbejì*- *Táyéwò*, *Kèhìndé*, *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá* and *Ìdògbé* and Catholic twins- Saints Cosmas and Damian, Anthimus, Leontius and Euprepius are human that possess spiritual attributes. In other words, Saints Cosmas and Damian of Catholic saints such are preserved under the names of *Ifá* and *Ìbejì* divinities. These names are “human in divine” (Ahiaba 2016, p. 107). “It is necessary to recall again that, the past is not a mystery and that although the future (the unborn) is yet unknown, it is not a mystery to the Yorùbá but co-existent in present consciousness...The stage of transition is, however, the metaphysical abyss both of god and man” (Şoyinka 2009, p. 368).

The divinity power of *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian is connected and derived from *Ifá* symbols as demonstrated in this study. For example, both *Ìbejì* and Saints Cosmas and Damian are celebrated just like any other divinity among the Yorùbá people and *Ifá* worshippers as demonstrated in the study. Symbolism entails “standing for” or “representing” something in some capacity. In this case, Yorùbá *Ìbejì* (*Táyéwò* and *Kèhìndé*), Catholic twins (Saints Cosmas and Damian) are symbolised by *Ifá* symbols of Pre-Ifá divination sacrifice-*eéjì adìbò* (2 for lots) as well as *eéta iténí*-three for mat spreading: *Ìdòwú*, *Àlàbá*, *Ìdògbé* and Catholic twins (Cosmas and Damian), Anthimus, Leontius, Euprepius are the *Ifá* divination oracular sacrifice.

References

- Abdias do Nascimento. (1977). “The functions of Arts in the Development of Afro-Brazilian Culture: Antecedents.” In O. Oyelaran (ed.) *Seminar Series*, Department of African

Languages and Literatures, University of Ife (Now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ilé-Ife, 1(1): 65-113.

- Abimbola Wande. (1983). "Ifá as a Body of Knowledge and as an Academic Discipline." In *Culture and Idea* 1 (1): 1-11.
- (1977a). *Ifá Divination Poetry*. New York: Nok Publishers.
- (1976). *IFÁ: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- (1975). "ÌWÀPÈLÈ: The Concept of Good Character in Ifá Literary Corpus." In *Yorùbá Oral Tradition*, edited by Wande Abimbola, 389-420.
- (1968). *Ìjìnlẹ̀ Ohùn Ènu Ifá*. Apá Kíní. Òyó: Aims Press & Publishers.
- Adékéyè, Y. (2010). 'The Performance Nature of Yoruba Traditional Ifá Festival Worship: A Case Study of Iká Ìrètè (Ìká Èlẹ́ja) Ifá Festival in Ibadan.' A B.A. research work submitted to the Department of Performing Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.
- Adéoyè, C. L. (1985). *Ìgbàgbọ̀ àti Èsìn Yorùbá*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria Publishers.
- Adéríbìgbé Ibigbolade. (2016). *Contextualizing Religion Study and Practice*. Ilorin: University of Ilorin Press.
- Adogame Afe. (2009). Practitioners of Indigenous Religious of Africa and the Diaspora. In Graham Harvey (ed.) *Religions in Focus: New Approaches to Tradition and Contemporary Practices*. New York: Routledge Tylor and Francis Group Limited. Pp 75-96.
- Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.ng/books?id=DrxsCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA93&lpg=PA93gdq=cosmas+and+damian+and+yoruba+ibeji&soui...>
- Ahiaba Martins. (2016). Reading *Èbọ* as Spirit: The Foundation of Authentic Christian Pneumatology among the Igala in Nigeria. *International Journal of African Catholicism*, Winter (7)2. Retrieved from www.saintleo.edu/academics/schools/school-of-arts-sciences/international-journal-of-africa-catholicism/past-issues.aspx.
- Amponsah Kwabena. (1977). *Topics on West African Traditional Religion*. Volume one Legon-Accra: Adwinsa Publications Limited.
- Babalola Adébóyè. (2000). *Àwọn Oríkì Orílẹ̀ Mètàdínlògbòn*. Lagos: Longman Publishers
- Bola, O. (2011). *ibeji Poetry*. Retrieved from www.randafricanart.com/yorubaibeji2.html

- Clarke William. (1972). *Travels & Explorations in Yorùbáland* (1854 – 1858), J. A. Àtandá (ed). Ìbàdàn: University Press.
- Combs Gene and Jill Freedman. (1990). *Symbol, Story, and Ceremony: Using Metaphor in Individual and Family Therapy*. New York: Norton and Company.
- Curry, J. (2010). 'Materials used in the creation of *Ere-ibeji*.' In seminar papers on Yoruba twins, spring, 2010, university of iowa. Retrieved from <http://www.iowa.edu/2africat/8bej7/%20for%20web/web/list%20of%20research%20papers.html>.
- Cyrl Orji. (2015) A Semiotic Approach to the Theology of Inculturation. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/611789>
- Dáramólá Olu. and Jéjé Adebayò. (1967). *Àwọn Àṣà àti Òrìṣà Ilẹ̀ Yorùbá*. Ìbàdàn: Oníḃon-Òjé Press and Industries.
- Dieffenbach, A. (2010). 'Ere-ibeji Artists and their works.' In seminar papers on Yoruba twins, spring, 2010, University of iowa. Retrieved from <http://www.iowa.edu/inafricart/8bej7/%20for%20web/list%20of%20research%20papers.html>
- Fádípè, N. A. (1970). *The Sociology of the Yorùbá*. Ìbadan: University Press.
- Leroy Fernand, Taiwo Olálẹ̀yẹ-Oruene, Gesina Koeppen-Schomerus, and Elizabeth Bryan. (1995). *Yoruba Customs and Belief Pertaining to Twins*. Retrieved from www.randafricannart.com/Yorubacustomsandbeliefsptainingtotwins.html. 5 (2): 132–6.
- Lijadu, E. M. (1908b). Translated into English by Emmanuel, A. *A Prophet Called Òrúnmìlà*. Lagos: West African Book.
- Ilésanmí Thomas. (1998). *Aroko Létí Ọpón-Ifá*. Ilé-Ifẹ: Amat Printing and Publishing Ltd.
- Lobner Sebastian. (2002). *Understanding Semantics*. London: Hodder Arnold Publishers.
- Madubuike Solomon. (2005). "The Role of Language in Socialization and Culture." In *African Culture and Civilization*, edited by Ademola Ajayi, 325–44. Ibadan: Atlantis Books.
- McGEE Albert. (1983). "Some Mathematical Observations on the Ifá Belief System Practiced by the Yorùbá People of Nigeria." In *Culture and Ideas* 1: 95–114.
- Meir, G. (1908). Sts. Cosmas and Damian. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved from <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04403e.htm>

- Omótóyè Rótímí. (2012). Inter-Religious Dialogue as a Panacea for National Development in Nigeria. In A. Adégòkè (ed) *Centrepoin Journal*. Humanities Edition 15(1) Pp. 57-76.
- Peirce Sander. (1931). *Semiotics*. Retrieved from <http://www.singnosemio.can/peirce/semiotics.asp>,
- Petrilli Susan and Ponzio Augusto. (2007). What is semiotics? Retrieved from <http://vip.db.dk/signs/WIS.htm>.
- Robinson, B. A. (2008). 'Ifá: The Religion of the Yorùbá People' Retrieved from <http://www.religioustolerance.org/Ifa.htm>
- Sàlámì Ayò. (2002). *Ifá: A Complete Divination*. Lagos: NIDD Publishers.
- Saussure de Ferdinand. (1974). *Course in General Linguistics*. London: Collins.
- Simpson George. (1980). *Yorùbá religion and Medicine in Ibadan*. Ìbàdàn: University Press.
- Şówándé Fẹ̀la, and Ajanaku Fàgbèmi. (1969). *Orúko Àmúntòrunwá*. Ìbàdàn: Oxford University Press.
- Şoyinka Wọ̀le. (2009). The fourth Stage (Through the Mysteries of Ogun¹ to the origin of Yorùbá Tragedy). In T. Ọ̀laniyan and A. Quasyson (eds.) *African Literature; An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, pp. 364-374. Malden, USA: Blackwell Publishing Limited.
- Valbuena, S. M. (2005). *Philosophical, Scientist, Moral, Ethics and Religious Analysis in the Juridical Compared Science in the law of cloning*. New York: Daklass Publishers.

Olúwọ̀lé Tẹ̀wọ̀gboyè ÒKÉWÁNDÉ has been lecturing in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, since 1998 to date. His research interests are into fields of African Religion, Culture, Oral Literature, Semiotics and Stylistics. His Doctoral Thesis, "A semiotic Investigation of Links between *Ifá*, *Ìbejì* and *Ayò Ọ̀lópón*" is study that establishes *Ifá*'s relationship with *Ayò Ọ̀lópón* and *Ìbejì* around codes, symbols, icons and indices. He has published in local, national and international reputable journals.