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IFÁ DIVINATION: PROTOTYPE OF YORÙBÁ DIVINATIONS

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Relationships in a cultural dynamic like, religion, account for wider patterns of relationships among human societies. Understanding the cultural dynamics of a society is an imperative in to understanding their value system. In a predominantly Yorùbá society, *Ifá* is believed to be the springboard of Yorùbá culture. Virtually every aspect of Yorùbá life- religion and culture - links to *Ifá* in one way or another. Previous studies have not related *Ifá* divination with some other divination forms. This study seeks to fill this gap, using works that relies substantially on *Ifá* literary texts, and *Ifá* literary corpus. Semiotics and prototype approaches are utilized for data analyses with relevant data samples carefully selected. By comparing *Ifá* divination symbols with *Ẹ̀rìndínlógún* (sixteen cowries), *obì dídà* (cola-nut divination), *Agbigba* (system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each) *olókun/omi* (water gazing), and *yanrìn títẹ̀* (sand cutting), it is observed that, *Ifá* divination features are employed in their system of divinations. The study found that, *Ifá* divination features influence some features of other divination types earlier. The shared features make *Ifá* to be the prototype of other forms of Yorùbá divinations.

Keywords: *Ifá* divination, *Odù*, Semiotics, *Ẹ̀rìndínlógún*, *Obì dídà*, *Agbigba*, *Omi*, *Yanrìn títẹ̀*

Introduction

The challenge of knowing the will or mind of God for human makes different people of various religions resort to divination. Therefore, there are various forms of divination associated with the Yorùbá people. However, five of these divination types serve as insights for establishing relationships with *Ifá* in this study. These are *Ẹ̀rìndínlógún* (sixteen cowries), *obì dídà* (cola-nut divination), *Agbigba* (system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each), *omi/olókun* (water gazing), and *yanrìn títẹ̀* (sand cutting). *Ifá* divination is mostly carried out by the use of *ikin* (sixteen sacred palm-nuts) and *òpẹ̀lẹ̀* (eight *òpẹ̀lẹ̀* seeds joined together with string or beads). Reliability on the *Ifá* divination type makes its spread over other forms of divination, not only among the Yorùbá people alone but, globally. As a result, *Ifá* is highly appreciated among different worshippers of religions.

In addition, every aspect of Yorùbá life- social, political, economic among others is keenly connected or associated in one way or the other with *Ifá*. It is generally believed that, the veracity of the peoples' custom and beliefs are verified based on *Ifá*. This is because; *Ifá* is described as the foundation on which the culture of the Yorùbá people rests. Therefore, the challenge of the links between selected forms of divinations among the Yorùbá is desirable. On one hand, the attempt will account for the divination types among the Yorùbá. On the other hand, it will show that, *Ifá* form of divination is the prototype of Yorùbá divinations.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to establish and account for relationships of *Ifá* divination with *Ẹ̀rìndínlógún* (sixteen cowries), *obì dídà* (cola-nuts divination), *Agbigba* (system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each), *omi/olókun* (water gazing), and *yanrìn títẹ̀* (sand cutting) forms of divination. The study attempts to demonstrate that, the religious influence of *Ifá* is felt on some other forms of divination among the Yorùbá people.

Theoretical Framework: Semiotics and Prototypes Approaches Symbol, one of the semiotic modes is adopted for this study. This is because, "symbolism underlies *Ifá* divination system. Each *ẹ̀sẹ̀ 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" (Ọlátúnjì 135). Symbols are employed as means of communication in the prehistoric period of development. That is, "symbols transferred our prehistoric ancestors into organized human beings within the context of

cultural livelihood and institutions” (Madubuike 325). In the prehistoric period, symbols serve as the basic means of expressions and worship; this is because of the absence of literacy knowledge. It is from the use of symbol that society developed into oral and written forms of communication.

Knowledge of semiotics covers different aspects of human and non-human lives. “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” (Olátúnjí 60). The use of symbol is keenly contextual and cultural. For example, “various kinds of symbols are used in communication. For example, men use amulets, confess sin, make laws, observes codes of behavior, explain dreams, classify relatives in specific categories etc. with the help of symbols. Without symbol there would be no culture. Man would merely be an animal” (Roy 672).

In symbol mode, there is no resemblance or connection between the signifier and the signified, which is, the object and what the object stands for or represents. 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 realized in form of *Àrokò* (symbolism), as such an object or something stands for something or somebody in real life. Other semiotic modes, as proposed by Peirce in addition to codes are icons and index. However, these other semiotic modes are outside the scope of this study.

As explained earlier, knowledge of semiotics covers different aspects of life. 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 201). The distinction between the semantic knowledge and world knowledge (for example, cultural and personal knowledge) is a doctrine of cultural semiotics. Proper interpretation of religious symbols cannot be undertaken outside the cultural components of religion.

The meaning of a symbol (including religious object or art work) is revealed by the code of that symbol. “A symbol is a representation of a meaning or a value, an external sign or gesture which by association conveys an idea or stimulates a feeling. All communication, whether through language or otherwise, makes use of symbols” (Maciver and Page 153). This means, communication is made possible by symbol. One can only comprehend meaning and differences between *Ifá* divination and other forms of Yorùbá divination through symbols.

The identification, description and understanding roles of symbols in the people’s beliefs, thoughts and manners of life cannot be separated from each other. The value of an object is proportional to its use in cultural expressions—symbolism. That is, “the essence of an object is that which finds expression in the concept which the object embodies, the concept under which it must be identified if it is to be or remain what it is” (Olájídé 9).

The symbolism of *Ifá* in relation with the Yorùbá belief is necessary for the comprehension of the meaning of symbol in religion and culture. For example, 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 (Adéríbigbé 60).

Ifá symbols are coded in *Odù*, realized in two forms. The sixteen major or principal *Odù* and the two hundred and forty minor *Odù*. These *Odù* are believed to be sufficient to encapsulate all human and non-human situations. Each of the *Odù* is connected or associated with human. The *Ifá* symbols are connected in various ways with the Yorùbá system of living. This is why *Ifá* is the springboard of Yorùbá culture.

Semiotics is adopted along with prototype approach because of the *Ifá* perceived shared features from *Ifá* when compared with other forms of Yorùbá indigenous divinations. The prototype theory states that, membership in a given category is a matter of similarity to the prototype... When thinking of applications, we will think comparing... in other for prototypes to serve as reference points of categorizations they must be defined by a set of crucial features. And it is these features that must be checked in order to judge the similarity to the prototype (Lobner 182).

According to this principle, features of the prototype are shared by the membership or class of others. In this case, some features of *Ifá* divination are compared with *Ẹ̀rindínlógún* (sixteen cowries), *obì didà* (cola-nut divination), *Agbigba* (system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each), *omi* (water gazing), and *yanrìn títè* (sand cutting). It is believed that, by doing these comparisons, one would eventually realize some symbol "association", in their 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 enough duration, or in an environment sufficiently free of distraction ... 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 Feedman 126).

The Yorùbá adopts this consciousness of pairing two similar things that share related features, values common. This is why Yorùbá do say that, "ohun tó bá jọ ohun ni a fí n wé ara won; ẹ̀ wo ẹ̀po ẹ̀pà bí i pòsì ẹ̀liri, àrán ọ̀pẹ̀ jọ ọ̀wọ̀ alábahun" (Şótundé 285). That is, what are similar are comparable, the peanut shell resembles the midget rat's coffin. While previous studies recognize the prominence of *Ifá* divination over other forms of divination, however there has not been any study that demonstrates or describes the feature of relationships between *Ifá* and other Yorùbá system of divination, the gap that this study is set out to fill. There are various forms of divination among the Yorùbá people. For instance, "like the other peoples of the world, the Yorùbá employ various systems of divination. These include *Ẹ̀rindínlógún* which involves the casting of sixteen cowries, *Agbigba* system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each and *Iyanrìn* (sand cutting). Others are *Obì didà* (casting cola-nut), *Omi wíwò* (water gazing), *Ọ̀wọ̀ wíwò* (palmistry) *Owó wíwò* (money gazing) *Atipa* or *Abókiúnsòrò* (necromancy) and *Wíwo ojú* (gazing at the eye)... Of all the methods of divination employed by the Yorùbá, *Ifá* divination is considered the most important, the most reliable, and the most popular means of divination" (Àjàyí 1- 2). However, the relationships of all these divination forms with *Ifá*, is desirable, the challenge that is taken up in this study.

In this study, despite the fact that, *Ifá* text is a culture bound genre, data is translated into English for the benefit of a wider audience. The Yorùbá data are interpreted as possible; but, in some cases, not interpreted, in order to retain the local value of the original texts, especially, *Ifá*, "since the indigenous language is more conducive to the interpretation of an indigenous genre" (Ilésanmí 111).

***Ifá* Divination among the Yorùbá People**

The messages of *Ifá* encapsulate the past, present and the future of the Yorùbá people in particular and the humanity in general. As a result of this, *Ifá* religion has gain prominence; not only among the Yorùbá nations alone; but in the world generally. "Variations of the *Ifá* System are found used in several other parts of Nigeria besides Yorùbáland and in some of the countries bordering on Nigeria" (Abimbólá 3). However, "the one practiced by the Yorubas, however, seems to be the most sophisticated and highly developed" (McGEE 99).

The Yorùbá system of *Ifá* divination majorly makes use of *Ikin* (sacred palm nuts) and *Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀* (divining chain). *Odù*, are channels of communication between the *Ifá* oracle and the *Ifá* supplicant(s) through the diviner- *Ifá* priest, known as *babaláwo*. All the cultural contents of *Ifá* have been 'codified' in one form or the other. These codifications are in *Ifá* symbols in forms of *Odù Ifá* (medium within which *Ifá* corpuses are coded into chapters and verses). Karenga opines that, nowhere is the profundity and beauty of African spirituality more apparent than in the Odu Ifa,

the sacred text of the spiritual and ethical tradition of Ifa, which is one of the greatest sacred texts of the world and a classic of African and world literature. Its central message revolves around the teachings of the Goodness of and in the world; the chosen status of humans in the world; the criteria of a good world; and the requirements for a good world (4).

These *Odù* corpuses are believed by the Yorùbá people in particular and *Ifá* worshippers in general to contain the capacity to solve all existential problems of man. *Ifá* epistles have certain codes attached to them which form the basis of *Ifa* traditional spirituality accounting for the basis of all the Yoruba systems of divination.

In any Yorùbá community, *Ifá* consultation is the first step that must be taken by the community or individual regarding any of their proposals like installation of new king, priest, village head, and wedding, choice of a business or trading. The settlement or location of most ancient Yorùbá towns and villages were based on the directives of *Ifá*. Ògúndèjì noted that, "rite and the rites done for the foundation of a town (títẹ̀ ilú dó) or marketplace (dídá ojà silẹ̀), the *odù ifá* that emerge at such occasion are also taken as special symbols of such individual, town, or marketplace" (Ògúndèjì 272–3).

This divination by *Ifá*, especially by the use of *ikin* is the most reliable and dependable of all media of divinations. Because

Òpẹ̀ ò sẹ̀rú

Onìkin ni ò gbófá

Ohun a bá bifá Nifá á sọ (Abimbólá 6).

Òpẹ̀ (Òrúnmìlà) is not dishonest.

It is the chanter that is not versed in *Ifá*

Whatever we ask *Ifá*,

Is what *Ifá* reveals:

According to Àjàyí in his inaugural lecture, "There is hardly anything people of a traditional Yorùbá society would do without seeking support and approval from *Ifá*, the god of wisdom" (Àjàyí 8). This is because; *Ifá* provides instruction and guidance about the future and/or the cause of an action. This is done, to seek the endorsement and sanctions of the ancestors, divinities and supernatural agents whom *Ifá* serves all as spokesperson.

The recognition of symbol in *Ifá* is known as *Odù*. This means, *Odù* has denotation value with *Ifá*. That is, *Odù* only occurs in *Ifá*, or in *Ifá* related context. Importance of the use of *ikin* and *òpẹ̀lẹ̀* in divination is expressed by Àjàyí that, "under no circumstances does a *babaláwo* divine without using either the *òpẹ̀lẹ̀* (the divining chain) or the *ikin* (sacred palm-nuts); for he will not guess the dictate of the *Òrìṣà*" (4). This is why *ikin* and *òpẹ̀lẹ̀* are described as "most prestigious" (Adéèkó 286) within divination.

Ifá has been internalized not only as a religion of the Yorùbá and Africans, but, Yorùbá language as well. For example, in recent time, Yorùbá language is adopted as one of the official language, in addition to Portuguese in Brazil. This is informed by the Yorùbá language as the language of *Ifá* worship and divination, just as Greek and Hebrew languages are to the holy Bible and Arabic is to the holy Qur'an. According to Vargas Llosa "Yorùbá people and the culture have helped the universe, IFA has proven his existence in the beings of mankind right from the inception and IFA is still very much alive and needs to be recognized even more than it is today" (Oláiyá 2). On one hand, this opinion is a challenge for the preservation and sustenance of African heritages in general and the Yorùbá cultural heritage in particular. On the other hand, it demonstrates the central roles of *Ifá* to humanity in general.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Preamble

As explained earlier, five divination forms are examined in relation with *Ifá* divination. The features shared with *Ifá* are discussed as links between *Ifá* and the form of divination compared. The associated objects of each of these forms of divination are examined. This shows the roles played by *Ifá* among other forms of divinations and establish *Ifá* as the source of these other forms

of Yorùbá divinations. The act of divination arises out of people's uncertainty or ignorance about future endeavors. Thus, in an attempt to have an insight into the future, people resort to divination, that is consultation of divinity for a revelation of what the future holds in stock. Every society has its own divination forms. The need to overcome future anxieties call for divination, according to Akinyemi, "in all ages, in all civilizations, and in all cultures, human beings have generally had recourse to one form of divination or another when making decisions regarding practical, and often critical, matters- especially when in doubt as to possible consequences of various strategic actions; The belief that underlies the divinatory institution and practice is that human destiny or fate is by no means haphazard" (126).

Èrindínlógún (sixteen cowries) in relation to *Ifá* divination

Èrindínlógún is a form of divination that makes use of sixteen cowries. This medium of divination is mostly employed by the women. It is here observed that, *Èrindínlógún* form of divination is related with *Ifá* divination, as they both consist of sixteen major signatures. The methods of *Ifá* divination and *Èrindínlógún* are basically the same. There are also similarities in signatures of both as well. For instance, *Èrindínlógún* makes use of *Odù* code as in the case of *Ifá*; but with few areas of differences in referent. Both *Ifá* divination and *Èrindínlógún* are similar in *Odù* signatures except *Èjì òkò*, *Èjìlá sẹbora* and *Òpìrà*, the names in *Èrindínlógún* are similar to those employed in *Ifá* divination system (Àjàyí 50). For instance, in *Òpìrà Méjì*, the divining instruments turn their faces downward. It is equally observed that there are differences between *Ifá* and *Èrindínlógún* in the objects of divination. *Ifá* divination form employs the use of *ikin* (sacred palmnuts), while *Èrindínlógún* exclusively makes use of cowries. Men are mostly involved in *Ifá* divination; while women are most associated with *Èrindínlógún*. However, *Ẹ̀ṣàngó* the deity of iron and thunder uses *Èrindínlógún* refers to as *Ẹ̀ṣàngó's* Divination system. "It is not common knowledge that the *Ẹ̀ṣàngó* cult has its divination system. *Ẹ̀ṣàngó's* Divination system is called *Èrindínlógún* or simply, *Ẹ̀ṣàngó* has *Odù* like those of *Ifá* but has only twelve *Odù* most of which sound like *Odù* of *Ifá*" (Ìṣòlá 153).

This study observes that, cowries play a complementary role in the process of *Ifá* divination through the use of *ikin* and *òpèlẹ̀*. For instance, cowry is used as object of lots (*ibò*) to symbolise 'affirmation', while bone symbolizes negative. And, if *òpèlẹ̀* divination form is employed, the presence of two cowries at the edge parts of the divining chain plays a complementary role as well. Cowries at the base of *òpèlẹ̀* chain serve as compass to determine which leg is "right or left." The right leg is usually read first. This means that, *Ifá* divination forms (*ikin* and *òpèlẹ̀*) make use of cowries as complementary objects of divination in the divination process. The reliability of divination system by *ikin* makes its use to be restricted to some important matters and events in Yorùbá culture. The use of *ikin* is associated with matters like ritual (which involves the supernatural forces), installation of a new king, or selection of a new king. However, there is a remarkable difference in the training of *Ifá* and *Èrindínlógún* divination. This is noticed in the training and freedom (initiation) of apprentice. The training of *Ifá* diviner is tedious and the freedom elaborate; while in the case of *Èrindínlógún*, the training is simpler and the freedom is not elaborate (Àjàyí 54).

Olókun/Omi (water gazing) In relation to *Ifá* divination

This is a form of divination that makes use of water. Different meanings evolve from the use of the terms, *òkun/olókun* (sea/owner of the sea) by different authors. However, water is the general name. For example, the Yorùbá do say that "òkun ni olóri omi." Literarily meaning that, sea is the main source of all water. The related meanings are also associated with the context of the use of the word(s). On one hand, *omi wíwò* (water gazing) is here connected with *Ifá Olókun*. On the other hand, *Olókun* is known to be one of the wives of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*, the *Ifá* progenitor. This may suggest why the practice of *Ifá Olókun* divination system is dominated by women. For example, Adéoyè reports that, "Olókun náà jẹ́ Ifá kan tí ó l'ágbára nítòrí gbogbo èniyàn ni n wọn mò wí pé iyáwò Ọ̀rúnmìlà ni Olókun nṣe" (227). Meaning that, *Olókun* is a form of *Ifá* divination. It is generally known that, *Olókun* is a wife of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*. Dáramólá and Jeje assert that, the symbol of *Olókun* is

also represented with *Òrúnmìlà's Ejìogbè* (260). While Adéoyè referred to the same symbol as *Ogbè-Atè* (230). Adéoyè further says the deity's place of abode is under the sea (230). Friendship between *Òrúnmìlà* and *Olókun* was initiated as a result of *Ifá's* divination to *Olókun* in a period of confusion, as a result of which *Olókun* prevailed and overcame (230). Eversince, *Òrúnmìlà* has been visiting *Olókun* to divine for her. The manifestation of their relationship can be seen in *Òrúnmìlà's oríkì Ìwòrì Méjì* verse one that:

Ifá re ilé Olókun kò de mó o!
Ó ni ẹni tí ẹ bá rí
Ni ẹ máa pè ní baba! (230).

Ifá went to *Olókun's* house unreturned!
 He said "whoever you see adopts as a father!."

Adéoyè further gave a form of *Òrúnmìlà's oríkì* that is independent of friendship between *Olókun* and *Òrúnmìlà*. He is known as:

Ifá Olókun
A sò ọ̀rọ̀ di ayò
Òrúnmìlà dúdúkẹ̀rẹ̀ (230).
Ifá of Olókun
 A changer of fortunes
Òrúnmìlà, the dark complexioned

Adéoyè reports that, the *Oríkì* above refers to the names given to *Ifá* when he was on the earth. The death of one of the twins is not announced directly but symbolically. While *Òrúnmìlà* never used *omi* (water) to divine, his relationship with the divination form with *omi* (water) diviner makes one of his appellations to be related with *omi* (water).

***Agbigba* Divination in Relation with *Ifá* Divination**

Agbigba is a form of divination by the use of a seed called *Agbigba*. This medium of divination is called by this seed. Daramólá and Jéjé classified *òpèlẹ̀* and *Agbigba* modes of divination to be related. It will be recalled that *òpèlẹ̀* is an object of *Ifá* divination. According to them, *Agbigba* is described as "Èso igi kan tí a ńpè ní Agbigba ni àwọn babaláwo máa ńgbé tí nwón sù máa ńfí ọ̀wú tí ó bá nìpọ̀n so pọ̀... Eyo agbigba mērin ni ó máa ńwà lára Ọ̀pèlẹ̀ kòòkan" (259). That is, *Agbigba* contains seeds of a plant called *Agbigba* is carved by babaláwo and tied together with a strong tread. Four *agbigba* seeds are in one *òpèlẹ̀*. The structure of *òpèlẹ̀* shows the presence of four *òpèlẹ̀* seeds by the left and right, making a total number of eight *òpèlẹ̀* seeds in a string.

Èso ọ̀pèlẹ̀ méjọ ni wón máa ń sìn ní ọ̀wó kan, mērin fún ègbé ọ̀tún, mērin fún ègbé ọ̀sì. Ọ̀kòòkan nínú àwọn èso yìí ni ó sì ní ojú àti eyìn. Bí a bá fẹ́ fí ọ̀pèlẹ̀ dá Ifá, a ọ̀ò ka ojú, a ó sì ka èyìn láti rí ìtumò mērìndínlógún tí èso ọ̀pèlẹ̀ méjọ yìí ní. èyí dúró bii 'iyá odù' mērìndínlógún tí ó wà nínú Ifá (Adéoyè 184).

A row of *òpèlẹ̀* seed is tied in eight, four at the right, and four at the left, each of these seed-nuts has the front and the back. If we are employing *òpèlẹ̀* method of *Ifá* divination, we will count the front and the back in order to arrive at sixteen different meanings that this *òpèlẹ̀* seeds have which symbolize sixteen 'major odù' that are in *Ifá*.

The identification of symbols in *Agbigba* is *Odù*, like in *Ifá* divination. This is one of the major linking features between *Agbigba* and *Ifá* forms of divination. Those that make use of *Agbigba* to divine are refer to as *Alágbigba*, and not *Onífá* as in *Ifá* diviner. *Agbigba* is structurally closely to *òpèlẹ̀*. However, *Agbigba* symbol is equally coded in *Odù*, the symbol code of *Ifá*.

Ilẹ̀-títẹ̀ (sand cutting) in Relation with *Ifá* Divination

Sand cutting (*Ilẹ̀* or *yanrìn títẹ̀*) is also identified by Daramólá and Jéjé that: "Babaláwo pérete lo mọ̀ èyí. Ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀pọ̀ èniyàn l'ó sì ní igbàgbọ̀ wí pé Ifá tó nìpọ̀n gidigidi ní Ifá ilẹ̀-títẹ̀" (259). This means that, not many *Ifá* priests know this form of divination. Many people find this medium

of divination by sand very difficult. This system is considered to be reliable, as everything has a contact with the ground (sand). The sand divination or cutting is said to be the oldest form of *Ifá* divination system before the advent of tray (*opón*). *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* himself attests to this in *Ìwòrì Méjì* that, "Ìlẹ̀ nì mọ̀ tẹ̀ tẹ̀ tẹ̀ kí n tó ó tọ̀pón" (Abimbólá 3). Meaning that, it's on the ground I first divine before I divine on the board. This means, *Ifá* divination was first performed on the ground using sand before the invention of *Opón* (board) due to the societal development.

Of all the divination forms, *Ifá* divination has gained more popularity than others. For instance, the divination practice by *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* is as old as the Yorùbá divinities on earth. The use of 'sand cutting' has been the oldest and complex form. Indeed, the main *Odù* for initiation in *Igbódù* is usually done on sand. 'Ikin' (sacred palm nuts) and 'Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀' have also been reliable instruments in the *Ifá* divination system. Divination by *ilẹ̀ títẹ̀* is related with *Ifá* because, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* made use of the medium of *ilẹ̀ títẹ̀* in the ancient time. The association of *Ifá* with *ilẹ̀ títẹ̀* demonstrates relationship.

Obi (cola nut) form of Divination and Ifá Divination Another form of *Ifá* divination is by the use of Cola nuts (*obi*) form of *Ifá* divination. The type of kola-nut is specified: must be with four lobes (Munoz 4). "The kola nut is also used, generally the species *obi àbàtá* (cola acuminata), with four cotyledons" (183). Cola-nuts form of divination is closely related in 'structure' and 'signature' to *Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀* (divining chain). According to Abimbólá, "the structure of *Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀* and colanuts resembles and are both employed for *Ifá* divination with the same *Odù* signatures and reading and interpretation of *Ifá* messages" (Abimbólá 6). That is, in cola-nut form of divination, "only a kola which breaks up into four valves is employed. The convention for interpreting the results is the same for all *òrìṣà*" (Fádípẹ̀ 276). It is discovered in this work that, the cola-nuts form of divination is still in use till date. For instance, *Ìbikúnlé* reports that a twins' mother in *Igbóorà* of *Ọ̀yọ* state affirms that:

Èmi nàà maa n ẹ̀ se orò ibejì nítorí àwọn ibejì maa n bínú.... àfi kí n dé ojù ìrèbí wọn. Tí mo bá débẹ̀, ma a ra obi àbàtá olójú méréin lọ, wọn á bá mi fi wò ó kí wọn le mọ nnkan tí ẹ̀lẹ̀dàà àwọn omọ yẹn fẹ̀, a sì gbọ̀dọ̀ fún wọn ní nnkan nàà (32).

I do worship *ibejì* deity as well; because, the twins do get annoyed at times... I do visit their shrine with colanuts of four lobes to inquire what their destinies desire through divination. And, we must provide whatever they demanded for.

It is observed from the opinion above that, the cola-nuts form of divination is still in use till date. This form of divination can be carried out by an uninitiated individual, unlike *Ifá* divination that is carried out by a professional *Ifá* priest.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *Ẹ̀ẹ̀rìndínlógún* (sixteen cowries), *obi didà* (colanut divination), *Agbigba* (system which employs a set of separate strings with four markers each) *olókun/omi* (water gazing), and *yanrìn títẹ̀* (sand cutting), it is observed that, *Ifá* features are employed in their system of divination. It is discovered here that, all of these forms of divination use *Odù*, as a code, which is a major *Ifá* coding symbol. *Ifá* has been established to be the foundation of the Yorùbá divinities. While *Ifá* makes use of *ikin* and *ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀* as media of divination other forms of divination make use of different media of divination as indicated above. These media are however, related with the *Ifá* media of divination, *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* (the *Ifá* diviner) or the *Ifá* code, *Odù*. For instance, in an interview given by a renowned 'babaláwo' diviner and 'Ifá' scholar, *Ẹ̀lẹ̀buubon*, he observed that there are different ways of divination in Yorùbá tradition; but the 'babaláwo' uses 'Ikin' and 'Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀' as means of divination. 'Ifá' is also the source of all other forms of divinities. "Sùgbón Ifá ló kó gbogbo ẹ̀ tán pátápátá. Nínú Ifá nì wón tí yó gbogbo wón. Ifá ló kó gbogbo ẹ̀ pò" (40). Meaning that, 'Ifá', clears all from the ground. They were all taken from *Ifá*... 'Ifá' combines them all. This means that, 'Ifá' divination is the basic form, while other forms of divination are variants.

From the forgoing, one can describe *Ifá* divination as the one that, have different modes of divination through *Odù* code. This is why *Dáramólá* and *Jéjé* say that, "ohun kan tí a fẹ̀ kí a ẹ̀ àkiyèsì rẹ̀ dáadàá nipé, iwọ̀ nì Ọ̀rúnmìlà, iwọ̀ nì Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀, iwọ̀ nì obi, iwọ̀ nì Olókun o, Odù kannàà nì

gbogbo wọn nlò pátápátá. Ohun tí ó yàtò nìbè nìpé, ènì tí ó mọ Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀ didà lẹ̀ ẹ̀sàimọ̀ obi didà... bíótìlẹ̀jẹ́pé, Odù kannáà nì gbogbo wọn mbá ẹ̀sẹ̀” (259). Meaning that, one thing to be certainly noted is that, whether it is Ọ̀rúnmìlà, Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀, Obi or Olókun forms of divination, they all employ *Odù* code. The only difference is that a diviner that is versed in a mode of divination may be novice in other modes of divination, even though, they all make use of *Odu* code, they are differentiated by their names, symbolized by their media of divination. It is relationships that make some of the divination forms to bear their names with *Ifá*, though, their media of divinations are different from *ikin* and *ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀*, the media of *Ifá* divination. For example, it is by marriage relationship that makes a woman to be identified by the surname of the husband, though, both the husband and the wife are physically different individuals. *Ifá* can therefore, be described as the prototypes form of Yorùbá divination.

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