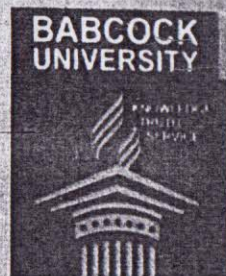


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THE CULTURE OF THE SOUL IN EDO RELIGION: A BIOETHICAL APPRAISAL

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I. Introduction

In September, 2008 we were in a burial ceremony of one of our colleagues' late father. After the interment, some discourse on the African dead arose and in the process of intellectual and thought-provoking debate, it was said that the soul does not have culture no matter the type of burial accorded the dead.¹ However, this fundamental statement was easily accepted by a handful of us, but I quickly objected to it because accepting it would make mockery of African metaphysics and the religious concept of man. The above statement quite compounds some multi-faceted problems on the ontological and eschatological understanding of man in African sense of the world. It is against this background that this paper would objectively examine the culture of the soul by employing Edo metaphysical, eschatological and religious understanding. A bioethical appraisal would be tersely made to show the human will, conscience, respect, choice and culture in determining the African and perhaps Edo dead.

II. Edo Religion: An Overview

It is expedient to understand the people of Edo before exploring their beliefs and practices. The Edo of Nigeria are found in Central Southern

Nigeria. Edo people are identified as the "Ivbie Edo" meaning "the children of Edo." As an inland state, its capital is Benin City. Its climatic area is 17,802km square with population of 3,497,502 million (2005 estimate).² Edo State shares boundaries with Delta on the South, Ondo on the West and Kogi on the North East. The State is made up of the following ethnic groups: Bini, Esan, Etsako, Owan and Akoko-Edo. There are seventeen languages spoken as first language in Edo.³ Currently, Edo State has 14 local government areas. Thus, the State is renowned for its proficiency in sports, farming and a culture of intellectualism. In essence, Edo consists of these several clans, which are bound together by traditions and ancient religious beliefs and practices. These are the bases of Edo philosophy.

It is important to establish that religion has a powerful, motivating and controlling influence in human existence and relationship. It is thus co-extensive with the life of the people who believe in the supernatural world. Religion is not created in isolation nor does it set out to fill a vacuum. In other words, religion is not an abstract idea but the uncertainty of the world drives humankind to look into religion as a link between two worlds – the supersensible and the sensible. As a matter of fact, there is no society bereft of religion. Dopamu is apposite when he states that no known society exists without religion⁴. In fact, Abe argues that religion is the provenance and the consummation of all things. According to him, "In the beginning, it was religion; and in the end it shall be all religion"⁵. In realistic terms, religion has explained the world and human understanding of nature. Significantly, religion has been defined by a handful of scholars. However, the various definitions of religion thus far proffered have not been able to satisfy the definitive quest for a universally acceptable definition. Though a new definition is not given here, it is worthwhile to examine some of them in order to establish the religious worldview of the Edo.

Kenny aptly describes religion "as any system which relates man to ultimate values, whether God or something else, and which embodies a creed, a code, a cult and a communion"⁶. In another development, Kegley distinguishes three basic features of religion as belief, feeling and action⁷. It is pertinent to note that what is pivotal to religion is belief in God or gods, the nature and meaning of history and the end. In the same vein, Ejiofor also attests to the fact that: "Religion is the complex of beliefs and behaviour of man in the supernatural sphere and realities and the dynamic linkage of the supernatural with the natural."⁸ The above shows that religion is a very deep factor in the lives of humankind. In point of fact, religion identifies itself with the consciousness of the individual in his or her environment as well as an aid for self-preservation. "Men take off from religion; men march along with religion and they arrive at religion with a minute-to-minute phenomenon." Ejiofor further buttresses that religion is:

The pride of the mind, the strength of the will, the relish of human emotions, a coveted object of delicate sentimentality; in short, it is the comprehensive resumé of man's spiritual, rational and corporate existence.¹⁰

These definitions reveal certain essential elements as relating to Edo Religion. Thus, the concept of God, gods, relationship of man to ultimate values, a creed, a code, a cult; belief, action, feeling, supersensible world, social order, the relish of human emotions; the pride of the mind among others are indispensable to Edo Religion.

It suffices to support Idowu that religion is the keynote of their life. To the Edo,

Religion forms the foundation and all-governing principle of life for them. As far as they are concerned, the full responsibility of all the affairs of life belongs to the Deity; their own part in the matter is to do as they are ordered through the priests and diviners whom they believe to be interpreters of the will of the deity. Through all the circumstances of life, through all its changing scenes, its joys and troubles, it is the Deity who is in control.¹¹

The foregoing portrays that the Edo people believe in the existence of God, divinities, spirits, ancestors, reincarnation, witchcraft, sorcery, and death. They call the Supreme Being *Osanobuwa* – the Owner of the universe. However, Etsako and Akoko-Edo call the Supreme Being *Oghena Osinegba*, or *Omolua* and *Oshiomshi* or *Adayebe* respectively. Awolalu and Dopamu have explicitly explained the coalescing meaning of *Osanobuwa* as *Osa* which implies "the source of all beings." *No* means who or which, *B* means "carries or sustains" and *Wa* or *Uwa* means the "world or the universe"¹². The Supreme Being with slight different names from other people of Edo is still recognized as the Creator of all things and the Sustainer of the universe. He is supreme over all and is eternal, having known the end from the beginning.

Therefore, the Edo derive their existence from *Osanobuwa*. Their belief in God resides in their religion. However, these beliefs are not fully documented; rather they are couched in oral tradition. This oral tradition is transmitted in songs, folklores, proverbs, aetiology, pithy sayings, myths, and liturgies. Religion, to the Edo, is a matter of course. They are worshipping beings; they worship *Osanobuwa* and venerate divinities like *Olokun*, *Ayelala*, *Ashigidi*, *Oole* and *Adaobi*, and ancestors like *Uda*, *Obazu*, *Okosan*, *Oyangbe* and *Ogholodio* as means to an end.

Religion to the Edo has a pride of place for the people and they

subsequently derive satisfaction from it as well as sense of security. Without any equivocation, in their spiritual, rational and corporate existence, their religion becomes their will and précis of their life and possession. Realistically, the tenets of their religion provide the people with shared values, cultural altruism and responsibilities. Indeed, Edo religion accounts for the peculiar features of the individuals concerning the universe, which encompass the physical reality. The wonder of the thick forest, the power of the rivers, the magnificent rocks and high mountains with the corresponding mystery of the human person all manifest a supreme power behind these physical realities¹³. Edo strongly believe that *Osanobuwa* is the Creator of the world and he is the final arbiter. The universe is under the total control of *Osanobuwa* and His method of rule is essentially theocratic. This is evident in the headship of every community in Edo. Every community leader is seen as possessing both spiritual and political power and his subjects revere the king as one having divine authority. The people believe that the kings are the representatives of *Osanobuwa* in the here and now. This also reflects in their beliefs.¹⁴ However, the import of kingship as God's representative was not as pronounced as it is today. The influx of inculturation among the Nupe and Yoruba has popularised this among the Edo.

Not only that, Edo Religion infuses discipline and social order in the society. Thus, Edo celebrate life; they converge to celebrate great festivals as part of religion. The celebration of life does not necessarily connote that festivals are celebrated, but rather even at death, because of the continuum of existence, great celebrations still follow the dead. Therefore, religion is a cord that binds people together in order to promote social solidarity and communal well-being as well as binding the living and the dead.

Edo Religion is basically rooted in its nature and traditions. It is as old as the people themselves. The religion seeks the fulfilment of human existence and the goal of life. In fact, through the religion of the "Edoid"¹⁵ or Edo group, they are able to understand the incomprehensible, and face the reality that goes beyond the realm of the physical. Thus, Edo Religion is replete with the elements of spirituality, redemptive values against evils.¹⁶ Furthermore, Edo Religion seeks to bring to the fore the knowledge of *Osanobuwa* and an emotional practical relationship with Him. The principal aim of Edo Religion is to know the unknown in the orbit of the known; to observe the unobservable in the sphere of the observable; to see the unseen in the world of the seen; and to activate faith in the faithless at the level of belief.

Edo Religion imbues in human individual the will-power deeper than his/her senses and intellect. As a matter of fact, Religion to the Edo is native to

human mind and pivotal to human nature. It is quite revealing that Edo Religion is a possession of the worldview and aspiration to which faith is built as well as creative force of life. Like other religions, Edo Religion derives sustenance from constant devotion to a Supreme Being, which is fully revealed as major truth. To this end, Edo Religion becomes the law of life, pathway to God-realization, absolute value, truth, living power, justice, and morality. It is expedient to support Bharathi's observation of religion with regard to Edo Religious thought:

Religion is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the maker of itself...No man can live without religion.¹⁷

In a nutshell, Edo Religion speaks the language of the people. "It exists in the very air they breathe and in the water they drink. There are no founders in this religion; and so there are no cults of personality and no creeds to fight for".¹⁸ In practical terms, Edo Religion is not individualistic in nature despite the fact that there are no often-public gatherings. Rather, it is people's parliament and collectivity. Of all the religions practised, Religion of the people of Africa in general and Edo in particular is the most accommodating and tolerant. The Religion is never keen in missiology and its tenets are never misrepresented in the scheme of things. "Its hierarchy needs no fear loss of members or encroachment on its territory by rival religions. In fact... (it) could boast that it draws its adherents from all walks of life, all confessions and all professions within the society".¹⁹

In some respects, Edo Religion, like the African Religion in general, does not have documents to popularize the set beliefs and practices like other religions. It has suffered some setbacks for this lack of documentation of holy or secret books, hymnal and books. Also, the death of traditional custodians always cast a heavy blow to these beliefs and practices, because a handful of them make these beliefs and practices mystic and without reach. However, in recent time, the Holy Aruosa Church in Benin has helped in no small measure to popularise these set beliefs and practices. Interestingly, during Igwe festival as well as other traditional celebrations, Holy Aruosa Church becomes a rally point to showcase the orthodox beliefs and practices, and to offer thanksgiving to *Osanobuwa*.

The influx of the Western conceptions, civilization and inculturation has been sadly responsible for negligence and abandonment. Be that as it may,

one thing is certain, namely; "the religion thereby made itself so readily accessible that anyone could come to it without feeling alienated... In this way, the...religion lends itself readily to use; one did not have to go to school in order to learn it, or to be an educated person in order to understand it; and one did not have to master anything in order to be admitted to its membership".²⁰ Of a truth, this religion has not been preached to the people from without; it is not imported from abroad; Edo have not been proselytized into it; rather it is the normal way of experiencing life itself.

III. The Culture of the Soul

Like the other Africans, the Edo believe that Osanobuwa has endowed humans with inherent potentials. In fact, some of these inherent potentials are immaterial in humankind. These immaterial potentials are described in philosophical parlance as metaphysical phenomena. Thus, these metaphysical issues are predominant in Edo world view. From the African perspective, Edo believe one world of visible and invisible dimensions. This is because the people believe that all these beings dwell in the visible world and act on it but are unseen by humans. Therefore, the unity of the universe and the complementarity of its different aspects are unarguable. Hence the important and fundamental aspect of most traditional African perspectives in creation is that every physical reality that we experience has a metaphysical dimension.²¹

To the Edo, metaphysical issues are attempts to understand the universe by means of investigation of reality, rather than an empirical inquiry or appearance based on sensory evidence. Eliade captures the African, perhaps the Edo strand of metaphysics as "rationally coherent and logically consistent system of thought.... believed to reveal the way the world really is."²² Suffice it to state that the soul, death, reincarnation are some metaphysical issues. In strong terms, these metaphysical issues supersede physical issues. Humans possess both the material and immaterial composites. Thus, the physical part of humans is *Egbe*-the body, while the immaterial is the soul or the spirit is *Eti*. The soul is the seat of consciousness and will.²³ Edo Religion strongly believes that there is *no finis* to human existence. The soul (*Eti*) as an immaterial entity of the human being survives death and is thus separated from *Egbe*. Without fuss, "*Eti* is endlessly, indestructibly and essentially permanent. Therefore *Eti* is the spark of God in human being with the divine origin couched as the essence of human. This *Eti* returns to the creator when the person dies."²⁴ "The soul speaks of the spiritual through critical reflection. This intangible is the household of metaphysics."²⁵

Like Edo, Descartes admits that there is interaction between the body and the mind-soul.²⁶ However, it has been logically established that the

Supreme Being is the enabler of this interaction. Meanwhile, the immortality of the soul preoccupied the minds of Plato, St Augustine, St Bonaventure and others. For instance, Plato argued that the soul is eternal, immutable and immaterial.²⁷ St. Augustine argued also that the soul desires true or perfect happiness. However, his perfect happiness is unattainable in this life but in the hereafter. This soul or man's inner "self" is free to every action.²⁸ Therefore, the soul or mind thus acts on the body, meanwhile, the mind is immortal, immutable and indestructible, possessed with freedom to desire perfect happiness.

Apart from the foregoing, *Eti* is immanent on earth to guide individual's behaviour, lifestyle and conduct. All these are coded in the soul, which make the soul to have culture. It is appreciable that *Eti* (soul) has various choices of life experiences in the attainment of human vocation.²⁹ Essentially, culture means the way of life of the people and the way they act, feel and behave in a given community. It is not out of place to state that human action, feeling, reasoning and behaviour are in the psyche soul – the seat of consciousness and will. They are only expressed in the tangible *Egbe*. Even, human conscience is one of soul's essences. As a matter of fact, action, feeling, conduct, impression among others have, and cultivate their root from the soul before the body expresses them. The soul is an ethical force with cognate rights and rewards, roles and duties. Interestingly, the culture of the body ends with the pattern and mode of burial in any given community. Virtually all religious traditions have cultural pattern of attending to the dead during burial. In fact, the culture of the body does not transcend the grave. Therefore, the culture of *Eti* which is changeless and imperishable supersedes the *Egbe* that is perishable. The metaphysical consequence of action of the soul is believed to have stirred the Edo to right living or behaviours. "Life does not consist of abhorring wrong deeds but it requires people to consciously pursue right behaviour".³⁰

The culture of Edo is intertwined with their religion. Thus, the religion is not just a philosophical explanation of abstract views but indigenous experiences that resonate from their forebears. The way of life and thought-pattern portray deep spiritual import, meaning and truth that defy rational and secular analysis. The sense of significance and meaning they convey is satisfying.³¹ Edo teach that life is a self-repeating cycle which is not meaningless but of great significance to the course of ultimate salvation. This is the essence of the human soul which is endless, continuous, ceaseless and world-affirming. The essence of the soul is a kernel for validity of a reality. The soul is consigned to the realm of religion, and morality. As pragmatic and ethical religion is, life is viewed from the locale of action either good or bad. The spirit or soul- *Eti* is like a "sim" of a headset which carries into the new body the moral good or guilt of its previous existence.³²

The sociologists have impressed upon us that moral standards differ from culture to culture; what the natural light of reason reveals to one people may be radically different from what seems obvious to another. This, of course, has been known for a long time. However, none of these sociologists has established the moral standards of the soul. The moral standard of the soul is identical. Thus, Skinner speaks of positive reinforcement: the individual is positively reinforced (rewarded) when he performs certain act, and so tends to repeat that behaviour; he is negatively reinforced (punished) for other acts, which he subsequently tends not to repeat.³³ The concept of good and evil becomes attached to the two kinds of behaviour.

The concept of soul's value-reality cannot be consigned to biological explanation and meaning alone but must embrace scientific, metaphysical and religious views because of the fact that the soul has choices of life. The following statements of Parkes are apposite here:

Short of identifying the proper subject of ethical consideration in a basic bio-genetical subject- which itself might not be quite evident; thing traditionally believed in; it might seem that there is a problem or issue of identification of the ethical subject at some lower, more selective level.³⁴

Again Parkes argues that "the evidences across cultures appear to indicate a widely distributed recognition of the soul of men as autonomous and at the same time made as it were for society. Men are autonomous both with respect to their sense and to the sensitivity capable of suffering and capable of anguish. Capable of effort and choice and desire and capable of sympathy and sacrifice, capable of honour and respect"³⁵ The foregoing reveals that the soul cannot do without the notion of choice, truth, freedom and conscience. These are very crucial to human conditions that pre-eminently invoke the concept of society.

The soul concept of a person and its correlative culture showcases moral value and norm as its voice of existence *from* creation and not *towards*, in the settlement of practical moral issues. The culture of soul is logically rational for good faith, honesty and conscience and the justification for their being of prevalent application in inter subjective relations. The soul embedded in an ethical culture pervasively informed by the notion of person. Therefore, human soul is shown to sustain and be sustained by the ethical system already written in the human psyche.

To this end, the culture of the soul is the consent of good and bad already written in the psyche of the individual which is capable of aiding to live a fulfilled life and as well renders good account to *Osanobuwa* and being admitted to the ancestral world for a life of bliss. The human soul "passes from

the terrestrial world to the celestial world where moral conduct of men in the physical world will be judged. These moral conducts thus prepare themselves for the lured cosmos of the physical end."³⁶ No wonder, the Edo explain *Eti* as transcending the *Egbe*.

IV. A Bioethical Appraisal

It is significant to note that bioethics describes the ethics of medical research and treatment or the study of the moral and ethical choice faced in medical research and in the treatment of patients, especially when the application of advanced technology is involved. By extension, bioethics is the study and application of moral values, rights and duties in the fields of medical treatment since all medical decisions involving moral issues are made.³⁷ Howell and Sale see bioethics as "the application of moral reasoning to issues raised by medical treatments, technologies, and the life sciences. Bioethical decisions are quite simple life choices--choice regarding the meaning of life, its beginning, the quality of its continuation, and its end."³⁸ Bioethical issues include:

The allocation of health care resources, life prolonging treatments, organ transplantation, euthanasia, physician assisted suicide, abortion, new reproductive technologies, and recent advances in genetic diagnosis and therapy.³⁹

By and large, bioethical issues raise moral issues and choices on human life, continuation and human end. These moral choices or "life choices" are targeted toward the cultural significance of the soul and its attendant outcome. Every medical ethics or bioethics is a pointer to either the good or bad persuasion of the soul. As a matter of fact, the soul is the consciousness of individual encapsulated in religious or ethical tradition to provide an avenue for values in human thinking. At times, this human consciousness situated deeply within the confines of religion—moral values spring out a commitment to a higher being or a higher set of laws. These values act as an umbrella, a "sacred canopy" in over all other values⁴⁰ in the lives of the religiously committed individuals. Even "creedal statements and sacred scriptures affirm these values over time and give structure to enduring religious institutions."⁴¹ In deed, ethical traditions which emphasize character—virtues or traits that constitute the highest good in human life and moral law generally based on reason that provided justification for moral choices reside in the soul of the individuals. In fact, character, moral law, emotions, passion, even motivation

to clear ethical thinking are moral choice-coded and have permanent seat in the soul of every human being. All these are intangible which cannot be relegated to the background. Without any equivocation, emotions energize the ethical quest, providing motivational appeal for ethical thinking and action. Others turn to social custom for moral values that have so long endured in the life of a community that they appear self-evident. So also, other scientific discovery and technological innovation have created a new "voice of authority."

However, this voice of authority on the part of the bioethicists cannot contradict or explain away the relevance of soul-value ethics. The soul records every decision either pleasant or unpleasant. Hence the soul accounts for the deed of the body that is perishable. Edo believe that during the burial of the deceased, invisible divine beings are released to undertake the task of gathering people's views as regards the deceased. "Although, opinions vary, it is however said that if those who hold good views of the dead outweigh those who have negative views, it means that the journey to the life of matchless bliss becomes smooth and serene. This random sampling by the invisible human beings forms the swarm of cloud of witnesses and thus becomes the insurance cover or permit into this new mode of existence. In the same vein, if otherwise holds, it means the dead will wander permanently in the abode of the damned."⁴² The foregoing reveals that the "swamp or cloud of witnesses" dispatched to harvest human ethical life depicts that the soul possesses culture that attracts witnesses of one's behaviour while on earth. This effect of the soul does not dwell on technologies and their corresponding good, rather the good works of the soul *Eti*.

The concept of good and bad is meant for the redemption or otherwise of the soul since the tangible can perish as technologies fade away. The moral evils human being face today is the work of their hand. Perhaps moral guidance which is the conscience coded in the soul is most needed when moral choices amidst alternatives are the peak.

Bioethics also applies moral values, rights, duties and respect to the life of the human person. Suffice it to say that the practice of medical ethics has drawn on a variety of philosophical concepts. One of the concepts is deontology; a branch of ethical teaching centred on the idea that actions must be guided above all by adherence to clear principles, such as respect for freewill.⁴³ Autonomy is the right of individuals to determine their own fate, and live their lives the way they choose, as long as they do not intrude into the rights of others. Utilitarianism is championed by bioethicists as moral framework in which actions are judged primarily by their results. Utilitarianism holds that actions or policies that achieve good results are meant for the greatest numbers. Virtue is also central to Bioethicists which holds that those who are taught to be

good, honest and forthright will do what is right.⁴⁴

Thus, in Edo moral life, the soul has a culture and the culture is the concept of good and bad. The soul in Edo tries to live a good and better life as "life choice" that would enable one to be admitted to the abode of the departed or ancestral world. A woman had a cancer of the breast and her son wanted to fly her abroad for operation which she objected on the ground that in her next reincarnation, she would have scars in her breast. In fact, she had her choice to make which she did. It is in line with the above that the offspring of the departed clamour for the return of the departed to the family and continue to live with them. This paves way for reincarnation. Mbiti refers to them as the "living dead."⁴⁵ They are dead, yet they partake in what is going on in their immediate family. In Edo ethical life, the soul does not land in hell as understood in the Christian tradition rather life is cyclical and the soul comes back to right the wrong in the successive reincarnation.

Like the theosophical writers, Edo ridicule the doctrine of hell, and tries to show that it would be most absurd and irrational for God to condemn man to perpetual hell fire on a single life experiment. Christe-Murray as quoted by Etuk asserts that

Reincarnation is the only system that shows God as just and loving. It is the only "thing" that successfully explains the conviction of every believer that God is absolutely just and loving...without reincarnation, there would be no basis to speak of justice and loving in God's relationship with man.⁴⁶

Sequel to the above, Christe-Murray argues that any soul lost to hell on the basis of one life experiment of Christian judgment after death would diminish God. In Edo, it is logically and impressively established that giving man many opportunities through many reincarnations to perfect himself and then fit himself for reabsorption would be acceptable.⁴⁷ Since Osanobuwa cannot suffer any setback or diminution, it therefore follows that no soul will be lost when everything comes to be considered. The idea of recycling souls until every single one is perfected and purified to return to the Maker offers a better solution to aid the concept of reincarnation. To this end, reincarnation in Edo is not a pagan concept. It is the process of "canonization" of the "saints" in Edo eschatological narratives. *Eti* - the essence of human life is a remainder of eschatological destiny which is incontestable in Edo Religion.⁴⁸ *Eti* is the link with other humans and God and the continuum of unbroken kinship ties in solidarity with the visible and the invisible.⁴⁹

V. Conclusion

Our excursion so far has revealed that the soul in Edo belief has a culture and the culture is consigned to morality and religion. It has been established that the body *Egbe* and its attendant culture end in the grave. But the *Eti* which transcends the beginning and the end of a human life is deontological. This concept of deontology is central to bioethics. As a branch of ethics, it depicts that actions must be guided above all by adherence to clear principles such as respect of the soul, freewill and autonomy. Autonomy in this regards is the right of individuals to determine their fate and live their lives the way they choose, as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others. The soul – *Eti* talks about life choice. Virtue is also central to bioethicists, which holds that those who are taught to be good will do what is right. Thus, cultural trend is well recognized in the history of death and dying which finds expression in the soul.

This has become possible for a person facing death to consider what role he or she has played concerning his or her life, even through his or her final days, and to make the *Eti* matter of consciousness culminating in choice of life to live in the hereafter. Finally, in Edo metaphysical strand, it is not possible for *Egbe* to live in the ancestral world except *Eti* which this paper has revealed. The moral belief of the culture of *Eti* is conceived as the perception of truth among the Edo, its connection with conduct remains mysterious and its judgement imperative.

Notes and References

¹This discussion ensued during the trip to the Cemetery in Ijebu-Ode on the 13th September, 2008 of which Mr. Oyeola, Mr. Odeh and myself were involved.

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³<http://www.google.co.za/search>

⁴Ade P. Dopamu. "The History of the Relationship between Religion and Science" *CORES: Journal of the Confluence of Religion and Science*. LSI, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, VOL.1, No. 1, 2005. 1

⁵G.O. Abe, "Yahwism Tradition Visa-a-vis African Culture: The Nigerian Milieu" The first Inaugural Lecture delivered at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, on the 17th March 2004. 3

⁶I.A.B. Balogun, (ed), *Religious Understanding and Co-operation in Nigeria*, Cited in J.K. Ayantayo "Application of Dialogue to the Contemporary Nigerian Multi-religious Society" *Mimeograph*, University of Ibadan, 2002, 4

⁷For details, see also J.K. Ayantayo, 4

⁸L.U. Ejiofor "Religion and a Healthy Political System" *Nigerian Dialogue*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (July 1974) 63

⁹L.U. Ejiofor.

¹⁰L.U. Ejiofor

¹¹E.B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, (London: Longman Ltd, 1996.) 5

¹²J.Omosade Awolalu and P. Ade. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, (Ibadan: Macmillan Press, 2005) 40

¹³C.A Omonokhua, *The God of our Ancestors: An Approach to Etsako Contextual Theology* (Benin: City: Hexagon, 2005). 34

¹⁴J. Omosade Awolalu and P. Ade. Dopamu, 166

¹⁵The term "Edoid" linguistically connotes the languages and dialects of Edo people. For details, see Z.I. Oseni, *Afenmai Proverb, Collected, Translated and Annotated*, (Auchi: Darun-Nur, 2003) x. However, previous endeavours by Elugbe, Egbokhare, and Oseni have studied the socio-linguistics, annotation,

thematics or structure of the various dialects in Edoland. In view of the above, I decided to adopt the word "Edoid" to describe the people since we cannot confine the usage of this word to the dialects and language of the people. Within the context of this work, Edoid therefore goes beyond the dialects and situates the people in the position of their gamut of dialects as one entity hence the nomenclature.

¹⁶K.S Bharathi, *Socio-Religious Thoughts of Mahatama Ghandi*, (Nag Pur: Dattsons Publications, 1989) 24

¹⁷K.S.Bharathi, 32

¹⁸Udo Etuk, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, (Ibadan: Hope Publications 2002) 35.

¹⁹Udo Etuk. 36

²⁰Udo Etuk

²¹Justin Ukpong, "Enivironmental Degradation in Nigeria and the Christian Theology of Creation". *ABJS: African Journal of Biblical studies*, vol. xx. No.1, April 2004.84

²²Mircea Eliade (ed) *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol.9, (New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1987) 485

²³A.G.Alamu, "Edo Eschatology and the Scientific Cosmos" in Ade P. Dopamu et. Al (eds) *Science and Religion in the Service of Humanity*, (Ilorin: LSI, 2006) 346

²⁴A.G.Alamu. 349

²⁵A.G.Alamu, "Metaphysical Medical Appraisal of Death in Owan: Any Meeting Point?" *IRORO: Journal of Arts Ambrose Alli University*. Vol.11, No 1&2, 2006. 313

²⁶A.G.Alamu

²⁷J.Omoregbe, *Metaphysics without Tears: A Systematic and Historical Study*, (Lagos: JERP, 2004)39

²⁸J.Omoregbe, 40

²⁹J. Omoregbe, 41

³⁰J. Omoregbe,

³¹I.O. Umejiesi and B.O Igboin, "Karma and Arialusi in Hindu and African Metaphysics: An Appraisal" (enroute) 6

³²I. O.Umejiesi, 8-9

³³I. O.Umejiesi, 10

³⁴J.H. Howell and W.F. Sale, (eds). *Life Choices, A Hastings Center Introduction to Bioethics*, (2nd ed) (Washington D.C: George Town University Press, 2000) 7

³⁵R.J.Parkes, "The Concept of Person" *Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol IX, Nos 1&2 (Jan/July 1980) 21

³⁶A.G.Alamu, "Edo Eschatology and the Scientific Cosmos" 354

³⁷*Encarta Dictionary 2008 Microsoft*

³⁸J.H. Howell and W.F. Sale, (eds), 1

³⁹Howell and Sale

⁴⁰Howell and Sale

⁴¹Howell and Sale, 2

⁴²Howell and Sale,

⁴³*Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2007*

⁴⁴*Microsoft Encarta Dictionary, 2007*

⁴⁵J.S. Mbiti, *An Introduction to African Religion*, (London; Heinemann, 1995) 65

⁴⁶Udo Etuk, p.118, D. Christe Murray, *Reincarnation: Ancient Beliefs and Modern Evidence*. (London: David & Charles, 1987) 109.

⁴⁷Udo Etuk., 2

⁴⁸A.G. Alamu, "Edo Eschatology and the Scientific Cosmos", 348-349

⁴⁹A.G. Alamu, "Edo Eschatology and the Scientific Cosmos", 357