

Ritual Efficacy in Traditional African Environments

by

Richard A. Ogunleye, Ph.D.
oguntunbi@gmail.com
Department of Religion and African Culture
Adekunle Ajasin University
Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract

Ritual, a phenomenon that covers a wide range of African spirituality, is a religious expression that has been in existence from time immemorial in Africa, and in the Diaspora. And thus, its efficacy is never in doubt as its cosmic significance is recognized. However, from the colonial era in Africa, religious understanding has been influenced by Western thought, and therefore, any religious phenomenon that could not be subjected to its rationality was simply regarded as superstition. In contrast, this paper is a rejoinder to some skeptics who argue that ritual is ineffective because it cannot be subjected to a systematic scientific investigation. However, this brief survey suggests that rituals in traditional African environments represent a complex and invaluable phenomenon that enables communication and communion with the spiritual world that proposes tentative explanations about phenomenon or phenomena observed relevant to the cosmos and the natural world.

Keywords: ritual, efficacy, traditional, African, culture.

Introduction

Ritual is an essential aspect of religion and nearly all religious adherents acknowledge its importance in human affairs. It is a phenomenon that has formality, dramatic quality and sensuality which provides an intriguing contrast to ordinary behavior.¹ hence, ritual is a performance of ceremonial acts prescribed by tradition or by sacerdotal decree in a specific observable context demonstrating a mode of behavior exhibited by all societies, and in short, it defines and describes human activity.

And as Sundermeier has rightly put it, there is no known religion without ritual.²In Christianity, for instance; offering, tithe, thanksgiving, penitence, etc, are important rituals that are observed. In Islam, ablution and Zakat are recognized rituals while in African religion, a rite-de-passage, i.e. a ritual event marking a person's transition from one status to another, otherwise known as a 'life crisis' takes care of a person's existence from the cradle to the grave. Hence, its power/ability to produce a desired or intended result or effect (efficacy) is a reality that does not generate any argument or controversy in acknowledged (traditional) African settings. Various writers have written on ritual and have discussed it extensively. Prominent among them is Sax,³ who writes on the tension and contradiction that ritual and its efficacy carry. He observed that it is not uncommon to see researchers who have conducted research, taught and wrote about ritual but later begin to think that 'ritual is something out there in the world.' Second, Brody,⁴ sees ritual as conscious, intentional, often repetitive bodily action that attempts to impose meaning on aspects of the world. And next, Beyers, described ritual as the symbolic actions that define the relationship in which humans stand with the divine, society, nature and everything therein.⁵ And furthermore, in an interesting and unexpected related fashion, an unshaken confidence in ritual efficacy has manifested among in vitro-fertilization (a process wherein eggs and sperm are united in a laboratory to allow the sperm to fertilize and egg) practitioners in Ecuador.⁶ Thus, according to Roberts,⁷ in vitro-fertilization practitioners engage rituals in their laboratory work so that they can secure and control an uncertain outcome, and declares that the ritual process works for them because they humbled themselves in front of the power of God. Yet, in contrast, others ignore such claim and hypnotize its ineffectiveness because it does not conform to an accredited Western centered systematic/scientific paradigm.

Statement of Problem

In spite of the various works confirming the ritual process, the power/ability to produce a desired or intended result or effect of ritual has been doubted by some ritual theorists and therefore, it has generated a range of responses. While some insist on the efficacy of rituals and defended them against skeptics and heretics, others denied it in the name of science and claimed that it could not be effective since it does not conform to a systematic (scientific) paradigm, as mentioned above. And more, they are of the opinion that those who believe in them are 'victims of ignorance, superstition or even the devil.'⁸ And in unity, the leading ritual efficacy antagonists was Wilfred C. Smith (1916-2000), a professor of comparative religion (1964-1973) at Harvard University simply described ritual as 'thing out there in the world.'⁹ Cantwell Smith in his argument maintained that 'ritual is a disciplinary practice that aided cultivation of Christian virtue'¹¹ while J.S. Uberoi was of the opinion that 'ritual symbolizes rather than what it does'¹² and therefore he described ritual healing as an embarrassment to the medical sciences because to him ritual healing is associated with a lack of development and superstition while bio medicine is associated with development and rationality.

And in an attempt to gain a clear picture of the position of the power/ability to produce a desired or intended result or effect of ritual, a conference was held in June 2007 at the University of Heidelberg with scholars from various disciplines in attendance. At the end of the conference, the issue became more complex than it seems at first glance.¹³ However, a book was produced titled *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy* (Oxford University Press, 2010) asking how rituals work, because little has been written explicitly on the topic. Hence, in the book nine scholars ranging from history, anthropology, medicine, and biblical studies try to answer the question that results in a review of debates between positivists, natural scientists, and religious skeptics on the one side, and interpretive social scientists, phenomenologists, and religious believers on the other as some contributors advance a particular theory of ritual efficacy while others ask whether the question makes any sense at all.

Thus, the hasty conclusion that ritual is ineffective because it cannot be subjected to a set of organized methods and principles that agrees with 'scientific' verification is what motivated and prompted my discussion. And in this context, I argue that ritual like other religious matter is a spiritual phenomenon that cannot be subjected to empiricism, and that the failure of science to verify spiritual matters, do not necessarily mean that it is ineffective, and do not exist.

Ritual in African Perspective

In traditional African environments, ritual expression is a frequent occurrence that punctuates the stages of life from the cradle to the grave. Ritual rites are forms of procedure and sacrifice necessary to appease God or the gods in a particular form of treatment or situation. When someone is sick, ritual is expected to be made, as done among the Dogon people on the central plateau of the nation of Mali in West Africa, and many other parts of Africa. And as mentioned in *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community* by Ray (2000), a man can perform ritual sacrifice for his sick mother, brother and his son, and even though they may not living together, it is believed that the ritual can still work for them from wherever they are.¹⁴ Thus, ritual is more than mere symbolic action, it is hieratic and the use of personal role and identity is crucial to ritual. And as Eliade has shown, ritual is shaped by archetype, by the first gesture and dramas from the beginning of time which must be re-presented in the ritual and re-experienced by its participants.¹⁵ Thus, in ritual, people voluntarily submit their bodily existence and assume very specific roles with highly patterned rules.¹⁶

Ritual therefore forms a major part of the religious expression of traditional African adherents, and is made to expiate one for sins committed, show gratitude for blessing received, and to gain permission or license to avail oneself of certain national facilities such as farming and fishing¹⁷.

Furthermore, ritual, in some African communities follow a regular cyclic of repetition. For example, ritual in the Osun Osogbo festival in Nigeria held along the banks of the Oshun River outside the city of Osogbo in Osun State which usually takes place in August of every year.¹⁸ Thus, there are herding and hunting rituals, rhythm of agriculture and human life rituals, craft rituals (such as in smiting, in building new homes) based on community leadership roles. And additionally, there can also be ritual to redress a calamity or an affliction which has brought a crisis in local affairs¹⁹.

Ritual and its Categories

There are different levels and categories of ritual in African communities with the most common being annual festivals, healing rituals and rites of passage festivals all which exhibit a characteristically ritual sayings, artistic imagery, and action (dancing)²⁰. In some annual festivals the whole community meets to honor and give thanks to the Supreme Being (God), their divinities and the ancestors.

For example, among the prominent annual festivals in Nigeria is the *Ogun* festival held between October and November. *Ogun* is a Yoruba god of iron and the festival is very popular throughout the Yoruba kingdom. The Yoruba people (approximately 35 million) are one of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria and throughout Africa, they can be found in the southwestern part of Nigeria and in the southern part of Benin in West Africa. At the commencement of the festival, the *Ogun* priest will come to the shrine with ritual materials such as Kola nut, roasted yam, a bottle of palm oil, a gourd of palm wine and a dog. In the presence of the community members, the priest will pour libation of water or palm oil, then follows by invocation through individual and collective requests made known *Ogun*. After this, the lobes of kola nut will be cast and the positions of these lobes will determine what *Ogun* has in stock for them. Next stage the sacrifice of the dog is performed, an attendant is handed a scimitar by the priest, the dog is held at opposite ends by two other attendants that pull the dog so that its neck stretches out tight, the attendant who holds the scimitar takes position, lift up the scimitar and shout the ritual words while all those in attendance shout back the appropriate response, and by the end of the third response, he brings down the scimitar with full force and beheads the dog in one stroke as the two parts are lifted, dripping blood on the shrine.²¹ Then the priest will cut a yam into pieces and lay some on the shrine and the rest on are shared by the people in attendance. Next, the priest strikes an emblem as he did during the invocation and says pray for the entire community and the Yoruba kingdom in general. The festival is a significant because it marks the end of an old year and beginning of a new year; presents/acknowledges a cultural understanding and affirm a religious practice which may link to, although they are aware of other religions from other parts of the world.²²

Healing Ritual

Another category of ritual that common in Africa, especially in Nigeria and among the Zulu, the largest ethnicity in South (estimated population 11 million) is the healing ritual. In Nigeria, from time immemorial, the people discovered that health is wealth and thus, they do everything possible to preserve it. And the aggressive nature of preserving health often is seen in their willingness to obtain healing from any source, even those outside their religious leaning.²³

Washington (2010) thus informs us that healing among the Zulu center around *uMvelinqangi* (God), the *amadlozi* (ancestors), nature and a person's connection to these spiritual forces in a deep and profound manner, hence the person is called a traditional an always greatly respected person in the community, and therefore a medium with the *amadlozi* (ancestors) and *uMvelinqangi* (the first creator) based on the research of Ngubane (1977). Hence, traditional healers connect with the presence of *uMvelinqangi* (the first creator) that exist within the universe and radiate the expression of what operates in opposition to *uMvelinqangi* which requires the healer to present a substance in the form of medicine or to provide a healing environment (divination) for *uMvelinqangi* expressed within the sick person and the community. And of course, people who visit the traditional healer are required to engage in specific communally beneficial ways following an effort to restore order and balance within self and the community. And because *uMvelinqangi* exists within everything, the healer must simply connect with the universal force to manifest the full power of *uMvelinqangi* which empowers the ill person (or empower the powerful collective presence within the person) while concomitantly over powering the destructive forces outside of the person.

Furthermore, throughout Zulu history, traditional healers have played a host of roles in Zulu society, such as: diviner/priest, accepted medium with *amadlozi/abaphansi* (ancestral shades) and the *uMvelinqangi* (first creator), religious head of society, prominent at all major *umsenbezi* (rituals); protector and provider of customs, sociocultural cohesion and transformation, legal arbiter at public divinations, ecologist and rainmaker; and as apecialists in preventive, primitive and therapeutic medicine including the use of traditional pharmacology (Edwards, 1987). Consequently in a systematic treatment, according to Buckland and Binger (1992), Zulu practitioners of divination, sorcery, and healing fall into the categories of:

- *Sanusis* - A sorcerer, who can be male or female but is generally male; the title is sometimes applied to a healer.
- *Znyange Zokwelapha* - A healer.
- *Znyanga Zemithi* - A specialist in tribal medicine.
- *Znyanga Zezulu* - A weather worker.
- *Sangoma* - A counselor or diviner; usually female sometimes male.

And in articulating the complexity of Zulu healing ritual, Edwards (1987) suggests that there are three broad overlapping categories in South Africa, i.e. *inyanga* (traditional doctor/herbalist) *isangoma* (diviner/counselor), and *umthandazi* (faith healer). Here we see that there is much to know and learn about Zulu healing ritual, and even with the few living persons like Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, a living national treasure of South African culture who currently lives at the Shamwari Game Reserve in the Eastern Cape where he has founded a traditional healing centre, the full essence of such a person whose expertise spans a significant number of different subject areas as a sangoma (shaman), the full story of Zulu healing rituals may be only at a preliminary stage of human understanding (Mutwa 1996).

Hence, returning to our general discussion concerning healing, from an African perspective, diseases and their causes are housed in three categories. First are physical ailments, thus illnesses that fall within the range of physical plane of reality and understanding such as a headache or a fever, and the like. Second are the mystical ailments that according to Babalola,²⁴ belong to the corridor of spiritual. And the third category is what Lambo called astral influences. Thus, influences that the radiation of cosmic agents such as the sun, and moon has on people, e.g., the moon is said to influence the brain and it is said that for this reason, lunatics become wild and act abnormally when the new moon appears. Although, how this happens is not very clear, but Lambo confirmed its possibility in occult science.²⁵ Yet, in traditional African settings the physical and spiritual worlds interact whereupon the spiritual controls the physical.

And in retrospect, it must be noted that of all the above categories of ailments, the physical is usually the only well known ailment known by orthodox doctors, hence, the Western trained doctors whereas the other categories of illness are considered treatable only by a means of ritual. Thus, people seek the efficacious solutions to their health problems at the feet of herbalists and traditional healers who provided them with adequate rituals for trio-purposes of prevention, protection and cure.²⁶ Ritual therefore signifies a re-enactment of a primordial existence which revitalizes the structure of a community. And indeed, a typical example of ritual in healing often manifests during the collection of herbs and leaves. Leaves are normally collected in the morning and afternoon, but in exceptional cases, when there is an urgent need for them; leaves are plucked in the night. It is interesting to note here that among some of the Yoruba people in Nigeria and in other parts of Africa, believe that leaves sleep at night; hence sleeping leaves cannot be efficacious, this it is imperative to wake the sleeping leaves if they are really needed. And it is in the process of waking them up that the issue of ritual comes alive and the ritual procedure of the herbalist or the intending user start with chewing of seven seeds of alligator pepper, and after chewing it, they would spit on a palm, and then use the palm to collect some sand from the ground and throw the sand on such leaves, and it is then that the incantation will follow:

Dew fall!
Dew fall!
When the dew falls, leaves of the forest wake up
Dew fall!

After this, the leaves will be picked up, and they will work as expected.

The next type of ritual is the rites of passage, a process of life, according to Awolalu and Dopamu that connotes meaningful transformations in the cycle of human life.²⁷ From the African point of view, the cycle of life starts from conception and ends at death. Thus, birth, puberty, marriage and death are significant turning points in human life. And ritual in the birth of a child starts from conception of pregnancy, and the expectant parents will perform the necessary rituals that will assure the safety of both the mother and child. At birth, the condition of the child will determine the type of ritual needed for its wellbeing. To cross from one stage of life to another therefore requires a series of rituals, and through these rituals, according to Ray:

People are psychologically and socially remade into 'new' persons with a new set of moral and social roles, newborn infants are made into human persons; children are made into adults; men and women are made into husbands and wives; deceased elders are made into spirit ancestors.²⁸

It is during ritual rites therefore that transformations take place and are done according to a three-fold ritual process consisting of separation, transition and re-incorporation. For example, puberty and marital rites transform children to young adults with new status and social responsibility. In this way, a society not only moves the young into social roles but also transforms them by molding their moral disposition towards new levels of social responsibility. Through these rituals, whose symbols and procedure are meant to be mediated upon the initiates, young people are placed upon the path of their parents and ancestors. This is regarded as the path of self-discovering as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, family and community leaders are developed.

The African Efficacy of Ritual

Ritual is an important phenomenon in African religion and its power/ability to produce a desired or intended result or effect is recognized in its cosmic significance. And in speaking of African religion, some view it as multiplicity of oral traditions and beliefs while others contend that there is only one religion with several common rituals (libation, divination, ancestor veneration, the embracing ecology, etc.) to represent an array of denominations, a phenomena that creates confusion for those who believe that there are more than one African religion in Africa (Asante and Nwadiora 2007).

Hence, Turner sees the notion of ritual as a dramatic process whereby normal social structure is transcended and temporary unity is attained beyond all usual social distinctions.²⁹ And in returning a bit to the *Ogun* (god of iron) festival among the Yoruba in Nigeria that marks the end of an old year and ushered in the New Year. During this festival, rituals are made to show gratitude to *Ogun* (god of iron) for giving them good health and strength to do their work effectively throughout the previous year. The occasion is also used to pray for prosperity in their undertakings in of a new year and to ward off bad spirit from their farms and homes. Ritual therefore, signifies a re-enactment of a primordial existence that revitalizes the structure of a community.³⁰

Besides, ritual performance during annual festivals serves as means of purifying the land in case of desecration. It is believe if human beings upset the order in nature, its consequences will be catastrophic. Hence, ritual is performed each time there is an infraction on the inherent harmony in the universe because harmony in nature is meant to be stable unless something interferes and alters its balance. Thus, libations are poured and prayers offered against drought, pestilence, diseases, and road hazards such as accidents, armed robbery and theft while on business trips. In some cases, rituals are made to appease the angry gods because of a failure of crops, famine, protracted illness, sudden death or similar calamities that are attributed to the anger of gods, machinations of evil spirits or to some ritual errors and defilement committed by humans. Thus, the major means of winning back the favor of gods is through ritual.

Furthermore, ritual enables the participants to communicate with the spirit world for the sake of human well-being. This is possible through the intermediary of priests or ritual leaders who will consult the divinity on behalf of the participants and relate the message from the spiritual realm to them. Apart from this, rituals are performed for a variety of reasons, e.g.: to cure illness, initiate the young, diagnose problems and to restore social harmony. According to Yengulu, a Dogon person in central Mali, rituals explain the causes of human misfortune and enable the participant to obtain blessing from the spiritual realm.³¹ And more specifically, we have the unique and first-hand account of the myth, religion, and philosophy of the Dogon presented by blind Dogon elder Ogotemmêli who explained the main symbols of the Dogon religion to the French anthropologist Marcel Griaule in October 1946 which has a system of signs which ran into the thousands, including systems of astronomy and cylindrical measurements, methods of calculation and extensive anatomical and physiological knowledge, as well as a systematic pharmacopoeia (Griaule 1975). Hence, in one of their most important rituals, the women praise the men, the men thank the women, the young express appreciation for the old, and the old recognize the contributions of the young. And second, the custom of elaborate greetings wherein one Dogon meets another that is repeated over and over, throughout a Dogon village, all day. Thus, during a greeting ritual, the person who has entered the contact answers a series of questions about his or her whole family, from the person who was already there. The answer is *sewa*, which means that everything is fine. Then the Dogon who has entered the contact repeats the ritual, asking the resident how his or her whole family is doing (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogon_people).

In addition, rituals express moral values, reinforce social unity and provide psychological therapy. And generally, rituals in an African sense give meaning to life and help people to cope with the problems of existence. Ritual therefore is an action expressing human unity with the universe.

Moreover, Brody asserts that ritual is capable of giving an adequate explanation of a serious illness, and thus provides an ability to offer an explanation, coupled with a display of care and compassion to counteract the demoralizing aspects of serious illness.³² And he added that the sufferer commonly feels as if no one else has ever suffered in that way before; that no one else could possibly understand the suffering and therefore the victim is effectively an outcast from the community, cut off from the understanding and sympathy of fellow human beings. The performance of a healing ritual also becomes a bodily enactment of reconnection with the community. Since the community can explain what is happening and can select the proper ritual for it, the sources of the suffering cannot be as opaque as was feared. Thus, ritual reasserts control and brings substantial comfort and indeed an essential aspect of African spirituality is efficacious and beneficial to participants if correctly conducted, and therefore, it is one of the various ways of maintaining good relationship between human beings and his/her object of worship.

In addition, ritual offers psychological comfort to the victim of illness, a relief derived directly from the manner in which the ritual alters the meaning of events for the participants. And in the same vein, one can say without mincing words that, rituals offer a tool that promises a community a higher level of control over the world, and the conjoint participation in the various types of ritual by all parties concerned amounts to a common declaration that the natural events that led up to the illness and other unfortunate occurrences are open to human mastery. From this, one can see that ritual phenomenon is not an abstract entity but instead, a concrete identity, conducted in a vivid and explicitly African ethos that brings the spirit and body of people man with broken hearts together, to effect healing. And moreover, according Somé (1998), ritual helps us to understand that the life of indigenous and traditional people in Africa is a paradigm for an intimate relationship with the natural world that surrounds us and is within us.

Conclusion

In this study, effort has been made to react to the arguments of some ritual theorists who were of the opinion that ritual is ineffective and could not be effective because it is not in conformity with a 'modern scientific paradigm'. Ritual is a religious phenomenon that cannot be subjected to an organized way that agrees with the methods and principles of 'science', and hence, it is perhaps a phenomenon or a set of phenomena observed in the natural cosmos/world open to the primary features of a scientific hypothesis consisting of testability or falsifiability?

Unfortunately, some scientists have failed to understand the relation between means and end and in their inability to bring ritual rites under the empirical microscope of research and thus doubt its efficacy as suspicious and thus as a mere symbolic and uninformed expression of culture. However, in traditional African environments, people in many cultures and traditions hold tenaciously to the efficacy of rituals without an iota of doubt. And thus, this unshaken belief in ritual via the power/ability to produce a desired or intended result or effect manifests in annual festivals, rites of passage, during healing processes and when people or a certain community is trying to enter into a cordial communion with the super- sensible world.

Therefore, ritual from an African perspective signifies a re-enactment of a primordial existence which revitalizes the structure of community. It also strengthens and re-affirms the groups' beliefs, strengthens the bonds of society vis-à-vis the individuals, gives adequate explanation on a serious illness and offers psychological comfort to the victims of illness. Indeed, a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and performed according to set sequence (i.e., ritual) which cuts across all religious traditions and covers a wider range of African sacred practices such as: circumcision, sacrifice, healing, prayer and public festival will obviously face a series of challenges from the community of scientific hypothesizers, big and small. However, the role of ritual remains complex and invaluable in the sense that it can channel spiritual forces into the world for the renewal of life and simultaneously engage human culture in a forward motion.

References

- Asante, Molefi K. and Emeka Nwadiora. *Spear Masters: An Introduction to African Religion*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007.
- Awolalu, J. Omisade *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. Boston: Athelia Henrietta Press, 1996
- Buckland, R. & Binger, K. *The book of African divination*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 1992.
- Edwards, S. D. (1998). *Healing the South African psyche: Community Psychology in Zululand*. Paper presented at Second European Congress of Community Psychology, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Griaule, Marcel and [introduction] Germaine Dieterlen. *Conversations with Ogotemmeli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975 [originally published in 1948 as Dieu d'Eau].

Janzen, John M. "Self-Presentation and Common Cultural Structures in Ngoma Rituals of Southern Africa" in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol.25, no.2, January 1995, pp.141-162.

Ngubane, Harriet. *Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine: An Ethnography of Health and Disease in Nyuswa-Zulu Thought and Practice*. London: Academic Press, 1977.

Olupona, Jacob K. 'Dialectical Sociology of Religion as Applied to the Yoruba of Nigeria', A paper presented at the XI World Congress of Sociology, (New Delhi, India: 18-22 August 1986).

Omachuonu, B. 'African Traditional Religion (ATR), Informed World view of an Established Harmony in Nature: A Model for Global Warming'. A Conference paper presented at the 4th International conference of African Association for the Study of Religion. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Nigeria. 17-21, January, 2010.

Mutwa, Vusa' mazulu Credo (edited by Stephen Larsen; foreword by Luisah Teish). *Song of the Stars: The Lore of a Zulu Shaman*. New York: Barrytown Limited, 1996.

Somé, Malidoma Patrice. *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through Nature, Ritual, and Community*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1998.

Washington , Kevin (Mwata Kairi) .“Zulu Traditional Healing, Afrikan Worldview and the Practice of Ubuntu: Deep Thought for Afrikan/Black Psychology” in *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.3, no.8, June 2010, pp.24-39.

Endnotes

1. D.O. Ogunbile, 'Yoruba Cultural Identity: A Phenomenological Approach to Osun Festival, E.A. Odumuyiwa (Ed), *Religion, Science and Culture*, (Ikenne Nigeria: Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion, 2001), 118.
2. Sundermeier, in J. Beyers, 'What is Religion? An African Understanding,' *HTS Theological Studies*, (66,1, June, 2010), 347.
3. W.S. Sax, 'Ritual and the Problem of Efficacy' William, Sax, et al, (Eds), *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1.
4. H. Brody, 'Ritual, Medicine and the Placebo Response' William, S. Sax, et al (Eds), *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy*, 153.
5. Beyers, 347.
6. E.F.S Roberts, 'Ritual Humility in Modern Laboratories or, Why Ecuadorian IVF Practitioners Pray,' William, S. Sax et al; 131.
7. Roberts, 131.
8. W.S. Sax, 'Ritual and the Problem of Efficacy' William, Sax, et al, 1.

9. S.W. Cantwell, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, (New York: The new American Library, 1964).20.
10. G. Jack, 'Against Ritual: Loosely structured Thoughts on a Loosely Defined Topic', in S.F Moore and B.G. Myerhoff, (Eds), *Secular Ritual*, (Assen and Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977), 25-35.
11. Cantwell, 20.
12. J.P.S. Uberoi, *Science and Culture*, (Delhi: O.U.P, 1978).16.
13. Sax, 1.
14. B.C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual and Community*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000), 47.
15. M. Eliade, (Ed), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 11 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 406.
16. E.M. Zuesse, 'Ritual', M. Eliade, *Pattern in Comparative Religion*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1959), 406.
17. O. Imasogie, *African Traditional Religion*, (Benin City, Nigeria: Imasogie Publishers, 2008), 73.
18. Ogungbile, 118.
19. V.G. Arnold and V. Turner, *Celebration: Studies in Festival and Ritual*, (Washington D.C: Smith Sonian Press, 1982), 42.
20. Ray, 49.
21. A. Ajayi, *50 Q/A on West African Traditional Religion*, (Ado- Ekiti, Nigeria: Omolayo Standard Pres, 1981), 39.
22. Ogungbile, 113.
23. E.O. Babalola, 'A Comparative look at Healing and healing Methods in Islam, Christian and Yoruba Religion,' E.O. Babalola (Ed), *Christian Muslim Encounter in Modern Nigeria*, (Lagos: Eternal communications Ltd; 2002), 121.
24. Babalola, 121.
25. A. Lambo, cited in A.D. Mustapha, *The Essentials of African Studies Vol. 2*, (Lagos: Unilag, 1998), 149.
26. I.S. Aderibigbe, 'The Yoruba Christian and the Dilemma of Cultural Identity: a View point', E.A. Odumuyiwa (Ed), *Religion, Science and Culture*, (Ikenne, Nigeria: Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion, 2001), 151.

27. J.O Awolalu & P.A. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Onibonoje Press, 1979), 171.
28. Ray, 59.
29. V. Turner cited in D.O Ogungbile, 118.
30. V. Turner cited in D.O Ogungbile
31. Yangulu, cited in B.C .Ray, *African Religions*, 47.
32. H. Brody, 'Ritual, Medicine and the Placebo Response' William, S. Sax, et al (Eds), *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy*.