

As an imaginative expression of knowledge and fruit achieved by human beings during the early exploration of nature and society, mythology has shown the process of early human life and their primitive cultural concepts (Yan, S., 2008). All cultures have different beliefs around the world explaining their existence and their daily activities. In general, the people from Africa give respect to the earth as they consider it as a mother of all the people and creatures. It leaves and generates new generations of beings. The earth will force all the plants to grow, provided that heaven, which is regarded as the father, provides her with rain. Therefore, a number of regions in Africa have to leave with a dry season when there is no growth of any plant and death reigns. But life returns to normal when the new rains begin. The frogs croak, grass sprouts and the flowers open from the earth that hid them. Therefore, the earth covers up life and guards it against dehydration and revives it during the better times. This indicates that without the gift of the earth, no one can live. Many people from Africa have believed that their ancestors lived within the earth, in the houses that are similar to the ones they have today, on the earth's surface (Doyle, 1998). They also owned cattle and goats as they have.

These mythical beliefs mostly talk on the African's traditional lifestyle. For instance, the creation theory of the African people, mostly the Yoruba from the Southwest of Nigeria explains their origin and the existence of their ancestors. Riordan (2000) illustrates that the goddesses took control over the pantheon of superior being and this myth has existed for quite a long time. The following is a story of the Yoruba's origin. This story comes from the Nigerian people, mostly the tribe of Yoruba. In the Yoruba religion Olorun is the Supreme Being. The Orishas are the assistants of the Olorun. The story was written by Riordan John, who got the lesson from his father and the mother, and so on the back through the people of Yoruba.

*The people of Yoruba tribe believed, in the beginning there was only sky above and water. Obatala, another God, reflected upon this and decided to ask Olorun a permission to create dry land for all kinds of living things creatures to inhabit. He was granted a permission to do so, but first he had to seek advice from Orunmila, the God of prophecy and older son of Olorun. He was asked for a gold chain long enough to reach below, a snail's shell filled with sand, a white hen, a black cat, and a palm nut, all of which he was to carry in a bag. When all was ready, Obatala hanged the chain from a corner to corner of the sky, placed the bag over his shoulder, and started the downward climb. Now realizing he was drunk, Obatala returned to his task of fashioning new beings; because of his condition he fashioned many imperfect figures. Without realizing that he was drunk, he called Olorun to give some life to his creatures, through breathing into them. The following day, Obatala decided to take care of those who were deformed after swearing never to drink again. This gave him a title of the Protector of the Deformed. The action made people to build huts by following the footsteps of the Obatala, thus making the Ife to become a city. The gods were much pleased with what happened and they went ahead of visiting the land every now and then, except the Olokun, who was the ruler of all.*

## **Identification of Mythic Elements**

History records it that Obatala was the ruler of the indigenous people of south-western Nigeria when they were conquered by Oduduwa. The exact date of the encounter remains problematic, owing largely to the nature of the source of information, oral tradition. At one level of interpretation, therefore, Obatala myths represent the struggle for the dominion of the autochthonous groups, but there is another dimension (Johnson, and Oyinade, pp, 13-21). Although Oduduwa's image and achievements came to overshadow and dwarf Obatala's role in history, the latter has persisted as a

deity, appropriated into the Yoruba pantheon as a symbol of peace. As the adage goes, the peacemaker shall be favoured by the gods. What is intriguing about Obatala's saga is that he is one of the few Yoruba gods and goddesses who are represented as being non-violent. In this way he symbolizes a rare quality, something the Yoruba want but rarely ever have. This is a story that contains an element of divine in it. The story gives la meaning to existence and ensuring that the people within the community do not lose of its justification for the existence (Riordan, 2000). The story above also indicates that the Yoruba people hold some concern regarding the human helplessness some given conditions (Beier, 1966). Conversely, it also conveys the people's assurance that human existence is not on a meaningless mission in this world, but they have a duty to fulfil, as well as the message to convey – which is their main reason of existence – and the task has been approved fully by the creator. Having a look closely at the myth that expresses the thought, it seems that the spotlight is on the clarification of failure or success in personal endeavours.

### **Comparison to other Myths**

The situation of the Oriseeku, Afuwape and Orilemere in Odu Ifa, is a clear indication in this. The three had a journey of their earth-bound from their pre-natal way of life. The choice of destiny (ori) was the last rite to be performed. Orisa-nla gave them a warning illustrating that they should go straight to the Ajala's house without changing course. Afuwape, who was the son to the Orunmila decided to go back and see his father before having a choice, while the others did as they were told. In the father's house, he met two of his father's foretelling priests who advised that he should offer some sacrifice (Yan, pp, 288). The sacrifice was to tell him of what to do so that he can have favour from the Ajala. Oriseeku and Orilemere were not supported in their choice. They found that things were going on well for Afuwape on their arrival in the world. But on their side, it was difficult for them.

### **Summary**

Analysing the critical philosophy of the concepts and culture regarding the Yoruba people, and basing the facts that the backbone of their philosophy is based on the teachings of the Orunmila, the philosophy of Ifa has resulted as an excellent figure in the world's diversity of the human origin philosophy. It is therefore reasonable that the story be given a policy of reality in the interactive space of reputable and established philosophical of the African Traditions.