Defining the Focus and Expanding the Frontiers: Emerging Trends in the Study of African Traditional Religion (ATR)

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Abstract

African Traditional Religion or African Indigenous Religion was in the past and still in the present misrepresented and mishandled by foreign investigators, western missionaries, explorers, travellers, traders and some uninformed African writers. Some drew erroneous and misleading conclusions based on hear-say because they did not set their feet on African soil. Some of the investigators, who really visited African people to undertake a study of their religion and culture, came with pre-conceived and ethnocentric ideas and as such refused to see the facts on ground as they ought to be. This paper, therefore, attempts to reconstruct the African religio-cultural heritage which was hitherto seen to be inferior to other foreign religions. The work adopted phenomenological approach which underscores the fact that African Indigenous Religion is a religion that is practiced in Africa by the Africans and beyond the shores of African continent, (Africans in diaspora). The work therefore, focuses on defining the focus and expanding the frontiers: emerging trends in the study of African Traditional Religion (ATR). The findings of the paper reveal that African Traditional Religion is among the comity of world religions, it is a religion that uses African cultural heritage to interpret meaning, and explain reality to the traditional African people and their devotees. The work also recommends that this African Traditional Religion should be incorporated in the school curricula from the primary, post primary and tertiary levels for them to learn from the foundation about this religion and culture because culture and religion permeates and pervades the whole of human existence. The work concludes that the Denigrators of this religion should allow this religion to take its rightful position because it is a religion that is pragmatic and existential to the Africans.

Keywords: African Traditional Religion, Africa, Cultural Heritage, Norms and Values.

Introduction

When we speak of African Traditional Religion according to Idowu (1973), we mean the indigenous religion of the Africans. It is the religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forebears of the present generation of Africans. It is not a fossil religion (a thing of the past) but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practicing it. This is a religion that has no written literature, yet it is "written" everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the people's myths and folktales, in their songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines and in their proverbs and pithy sayings. It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped. It is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young or old. It is a religion that has been transferred from generation to generation.

Ejizu (1986), argues that by African traditional religion in this paper, we refer specifically to indigenous religious forms and systems which the different peoples of Sub-Saharan Africa cultivated as part of their total experience of life within their particular ecological environment, society and history. The indigenous religious pre-date any other forms and articulations of the sacred that have been brought into the continent from outside. The vision of reality as a whole which they engender is very similar indeed. They possess an essential holistic vision of reality, traditional Africans perceive life as an integral whole with the sacred flowing into all facets, underpinning and significance. There is no dichotomy between the visible, and super-sensible world. Spiritual beings and cosmic forces manifest their presence and power through visible events and experience of life. African traditional religions are equally oral in nature.

The first and most evident of these unfriendly distortion of African people and their religion involves the kind of widespread representations of Africa which are based on the so-called 'common sense' of western countries, that is, those cognitive contents which are triggered, so to speak, 'automatically', every time a given subject is brought up or a given question is approached. In the case in point, when speaking of Africa, an image of a beautiful and exotic country - with its nature and unsullied landscapes - but 'inevitably' plagued by natural and human catastrophes - floods, famines, wars, coups, etc. - which Africans would not be able to dominate, is easily evoked. This representation - which has repeatedly been addressed in African Societies and which will be taken up again in the next issue - has remote origins and is continually reinforced and, so to speak, updated by the convergence of the mechanisms specific to the mass media and the lack of professionalism of many media operators - who are always on the lookout for easy and convenient stereotypes - as well as by geopolitical strategies at a transnational level, and

by the everyday conduct of teachers, politicians, researchers, university lecturers, essayists, religious persons, tourist agencies and even - at times - solidarity NGOs and many other actors who - often involuntarily - contribute to furthering an image of Africa as a country perpetually in trouble and unable to cope without external help. The representation of Africa as a country devoid of its own profound spiritual dimension or of a religion worthy of its name goes to complete, and in some measure to justify, this picture made of unfounded generalizations and distorted or omitted information; a picture which describes a continent whose inhabitants and communities - mostly considered to be rural - would be entwined in an inextricable tangle of often cruel and bloody ancestral rites, superstitions, absurd and childish beliefs and atavistic fears which block their personal capacities, initiative and development possibilities.

Another level at which a real stigmatization of Africa occurs, in particular with regard to its spiritual tradition, is that of scientific research, specifically with reference to human and social sciences. The history of research on African peoples - as Basil Davidson, among others, has demonstrated - is indeed rife with incomprehension, theoretical and methodological errors, and forced and inert interpretations which have taken on different forms. One of these is Evolutionism, which defines African traditional religions as being the most 'primitive' stage of the spiritual evolution of peoples, featuring practices it terms derogatively as 'animist', 'fetishist', 'pagan', 'totemic', 'idolatrous', etc. This without even considering the clamorous blunder whereby Africans were considered for centuries to be polytheists, while in actual fact the spirits or other entities which their religions refer to are considered to act as intermediaries between a single supreme being - who has various names - and human beings. In many ways, all this has actually resulted in African religions simply not being considered to be religions at all. Another one of such interpretative approaches involves a mono-disciplinary view, in this case the exclusive, and moreover often purely descriptive, use of ethnology and cultural anthropology. This has resulted in African religious phenomena often been locked behind a kind of interpretation cage and viewed as if they existed in a historical void or, at best, as an expression of spirituality which, although 'authentic', limits itself to wearily surviving in today's world. In addition, there has always been a widespread tendency to interpret and assess African traditional religions starting from 'local', or specific, practices, which are then generalized without a valid reason. This is the case with certain magical rites - which, incidentally, many such religions are opposed to - and of figures such as the *feticheurs*. Something no one would dream of doing with other religions; no one, for example, would define the essence of Christianity by the excessive devotional practices towards a given saint found in rural areas or - to mention a recent case - by the holy water jinx which the trainer of the Italian

football team performed for the whole world to see on television. Nevertheless, this is what has happened, and continues to happen, with regard to African traditional religions.

There appears to be a very close relationship between the representation of African religion and that of the continent as a whole. This means that a reductive representation of this people's spirituality always tends to reverberate on the entire history of African peoples and, conversely, that a poor interpretation of Africa and Africans is often strengthened and justified by common stereotypes on African traditional religions. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this mechanism profoundly affects the African continent's position on the world scene and produces important consequences in terms of its economy, society, political scenario and international relations, as well as affecting the self-esteem of Africans at home and in the countries of the diaspora. A misinterpretation of the value and potentials of African traditional religions, moreover, prevents a perceiving the spiritual, cultural and human energies which would be precious in the search of an African modernity and for the continent's development.

Upon a more in-depth analysis, therefore, it seems that the current interpretative approach to African Traditional religions- and to all things African in general - is a deeply irrational one, both as regards stratified common notions and more erudite ones. This means that this approach is influenced and distorted in uncontrolled fashion by a series of covert assumptions and judgements, which are rarely critically assessed. This despite the fact that the 'intentional' nature of many of these assumptions and judgements is easily detectable, and is linked to - as was pointed out by, among others, the Nigerian researcher Christopher Ejizu - colonial and later post-colonial policies whose very existence tended to be justified by 'scientific proof' of the presumed spiritual and cultural inferiority of African peoples and of their inability to govern themselves.

Therefore, the question needs to be asked as to whether we shouldn't re-establish some basic, definite and shared interpretation criteria for African traditional religions, in order to recover, so to speak, their 'moral dignity', at least as has occurred in the past decades for the religions of Native Americans. The process of reinterpretation of African traditional religions began, as Ejizu claims, about sixty years ago - although unfortunately too late to reverse the deep-rooted process of stigmatization we have referred to - when the first works of a generation of African writers and scholars, such as Danquah, followed by Boulaga, Ela, Mbiti and others, appeared. This process continues today also thanks to the by no means secondary contributions of several intellectuals of the diaspora. More recently, this practice has seen the participation in northern countries of other researchers - lay and religious - and of the representatives of several Christian confessions. Suffice it to

consider, for example, the abundance of studies and web sites (see the special section in this issue) devoted to the enhancement of the spiritual contribution of African Traditional religions within the context of Christianity, or even - a fact which is symbolically very important - the official presence of the high priest of Benin, Amadou Gasseto, of the Avélékété Vodoun community, among the representatives of world religions at the Day of Prayer for World Peace held in Assisi on January 24th, 2002.

As can be intuited, this process does not simply address a problem of image, but involves a real cultural and scientific undertaking of wide scope, both in view of the commitment it requires and in terms of its possible impact. Moreover, it seems appropriate to also ask what came of - or what could come of - more specifically sociological research carried out in this field. As regards the contribution of African Societies, we have identified at least three strategies which could help to better define the composition, characteristics, complexity and changes in the 'religious field' comprised by African Traditional Religions, thus helping to restore their dignity - in the sense intended above - as well as promote their more adequate representation and interpretation.

The first is to place African traditional religions within a comparative context, granting them equal dignity with respect to the other great world religions. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that, from the moment researchers took an interest in them, African traditional religions have usually been classified as "primitive", or in any case as the expression of a spirituality which had later developed into more evolved forms (see above). In addition, the Tanzanian theologian, Laurenti Magesa, lists a series of specific objections which have been raised against those who attempted to claim the equal dignity of African traditional religions (Magesa, in reality, as we will see, prefers to use the term in the singular) with respect to other religions. These objections can easily be seen to be unfounded. The first of these refers to their lack of "scriptures", as these religions are indeed based solely on oral sources. However, this objection, the author claims, does not take into account the fact that Judaism was passed on orally for a long time before it was set out in writing and that the same occurred - albeit for a shorter time - for Christianity and Islam. A second objection concerns the fact that they are not "revealed" religions. However, if we take a closer look at the so-called African 'independent' churches - which at times present strong components of traditional religions - it will be noted that revelation is a continuous and recurring element with these churches, and manifests - rather than through scriptures - through dreams, possession, ecstasy, trances, reincarnation, or specific events such as, for example, calamities. Undoubtedly, Magesa states, the fact that revelations are constantly "present" in religious life means that this type of religion has a much stronger ethical component than religions based on doctrine. A third objection is the scarce tendency towards

proselytism of African religions; however, this is a tendency which is also shared by Confucianism and Hinduism.

Continuing in these considerations, Magesa highlights an important criterion on the basis of which, on the contrary, African traditional religions are entitled to feature among the great world religions. It is the fact that African traditional religions provide their own specific vision of life which is intimately connected with other areas of human experience and therefore directs substantially the intelligence, emotions and existence of individuals within their respective communities. In defiance of the Portuguese explorer who stated with certainty that "these people have no religion", we find, conversely, a deep religious feeling rooted in African culture; or rather, in a "black" culture which not only is not an "insolvent debtor" towards history but, as Cheikh Anta Diop and more recently Martin Bernado, among others, have shown, has contributed in decisive fashion - particularly through the black civilization of ancient Egypt - to later developments in mathematics, philosophy, and the theological thought of the Middle East and of Greece, and as such of western civilization as a whole.

It should be noted that the question as to whether we should speak of a multitude of African traditional religions or of a single religion is still being debated. It is hard to establish a valid criterion in this respect. The Kenyan theologian John Mbiti claims that we should speak of as many traditional religions as there are African peoples, who have different religious systems although they share a basic religious philosophy common to the entire Sub-Saharan area . Other authors, such as the Nigerian expert Bolaji Idowu and Magesa himself, on the contrary, insist on the thesis of a single religion - which can also be found in the countries of the diaspora, for example in Central and South America. Such a religion would have then branched out in several 'variations', exactly as occurred with Christianity - with its Catholic, Evangelist and Orthodox branches, which are in turn highly structured -, with Islam - suffice it to think of the difference between Sunnites and Shiites - and again with Buddhism, Hinduism and the other world religions. It should be noted that this picture is made more complex by the fact that Christianity and Islam can by now be considered in fair measure to be part of the African 'tradition' themselves, as they have now been present and established in the continent for centuries.

In any case, without entering into the philosophical and theological complexities of this difficult problem, and limiting ourselves to a purely sociological approach, in a previous issue we attempted to distinguish between three levels of expression of African traditional religiousness: at one level this religiousness is expressed as a spiritual background shared by African peoples; at another it is formalized as a real 'positive religion' - or religions; and,

finally, there is a level at which it creates new forms of religious syncretism, by blending with elements from Christianity or Islam. In this respect it seems important to stress the difference - as proposed by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth - which exists between the dimension of faith - exclusively concerned with God and His relationship with man - and that of religion, which concerns the organization of the forces which govern the life of a society according to a perspective of ultimate finality and the so-called transcendence of man's physical being. In this sense, religion tends to overlap with culture, or better, with the various cultures in which a same faith can be expressed, while remaining true to itself. If this is true, a faith, for example the Christian faith, will be compatible with "local" rites which may even be at great variance with each other, on condition that it does not fail its essential core of faith.

Thomas Blakely, Walter van Beek and Dennis Thomson's consideration on the epistemic level of an analysis of African traditional religiousness is also very interesting. These authors propose to carry out such an analysis by examining the "religious action" of Africans, rather than what might be called the ahistorical institutional elements of these religions or the relationships between these elements. By adopting this approach it seems possible - and this will be explained in more detail further on - to restore the historical dimension of a phenomenon which, conversely, has often been assigned a kind of museum exhibit status. This historical dimension should also undoubtedly include the actors of African traditional religions - priests, prophets, worshippers, managers of religious organizations, etc. - who should be made the object of a more careful and in-depth study, particularly in the view which we will shortly propose, of analysing the dynamism of such religions and their relationship with modernity.

A second strategy which might contribute to restoring the dignity of African traditional religions and to their more adequate representation and interpretation could be to highlight - as some authors have done - in an "empirical" and phenomenological rather than prescriptive perspective, the dynamic, variable and flexible character of African cultures and the diaspora, of which religion is a fundamental element. This character appears evident if we consider both the key elements of the cultures and religious expressions of African people and the social, cultural and political processes of change which are intimately connected with such cultures and expressions. One particular example of this, as cited by Davidson, can be seen to be emblematic in this respect; the religious systems of Sub-Saharan Africa, this English author claims, are characterized by a "dual" symbolism, such as, for example, that of Heaven and Earth, that the Bamanam - or, in slang, "Bambara" - sages of Mali call respectively Pemba - who represents the strength or essence of things - and Faro - who models the world, as he also rules water and speech.

Therefore, this interactive dialectic pair in a sense corresponds to the concepts of Being and Becoming. It follows that the well-being of these people - according to Davidson - requires that both the order created by ancestors and the dynamic power to change be respected.
In this respect, it is worth pointing out that, among other things, from the sociological point of view African religions are undoubtedly anthropocentric in character and, consequently - as Blakely, van Beek and Thomson state - instrumental, hence their capacity to solve often complex social problems. An interesting case is for example that cited again by Davidson, of the "compromise" struck between the Oduduwa and Orishanla spirits, symbolizing the integration of the Yoruba tradition of Nigeria and that of the original inhabitants of the land later occupied by the Yoruba. This religious integration, which involved a reciprocal spiritual reconciliation and acknowledgement, gave legitimacy and justified a situation of cohabitation between two very different human communities which would have otherwise been impossible.

The phenomenon of the so-called "independent African churches" and other local religious movements formed since the second half of the 19th century is highly significant in this context. These movements were born in response to a need for cultural, spiritual and political autonomy from European populations, if not of actual liberation from colonial dominion. Possibly the best known of these movements is Kimbanguism, founded in 1921 in the ex Belgian Congo by Simon Kimbangu, a member of the Baptist Mission Church. This movement presents strongly millenialist and apocalyptic elements and has played a fundamental role in the decolonization process. Having formed as the "Church of Jesus Christ on Earth by the Prophet Simon Kimbangu", since 1969 it has been part of the World Council of Churches. It should be noted that many of the ecstatic and healing practices which were typical of the movement in its beginnings were eliminated with time and substituted by rules and rites in response to the new and emerging needs of the Congolese society. Other important cases, cited for example by Davidson, include, among others: the Tembu Church founded in South Africa in 1884 by reverend Nehemia Tile; the Ethiopist Church of James Mata Dwane, founded again in South Africa in 1892; the Mumbo cult - founded by the Luo of Kenya in 1913 and which exercised an anti-colonialist function; the community of the Israelites of the South African pastor Enoch Mgijima - born and immediately suppressed in South Africa in the 1920s; the Watchman's Society - led by Kenan Kamwana - which operated during the early decades of the past century in Malawi, and others. The formation of African independent churches and new religious movements is, in a sense, a continuously evolving phenomenon, which to date is little studied, misinterpreted and certainly underestimated.

Yet such experiences clearly highlight - as Blakely, van Beek and Thomson state, the pluralistic, non-dogmatic and action-oriented character of such religions, as well as their capacity for combining a certain 'ideological ambiguity' with a "bricolage" of old elements within new models.

Aside - but not too far - from these considerations, it is worth mentioning the observation of the social anthropologist Wyatt MacGaffey, according to whom too often a negative connotation is assigned to terms such as "syncretism" and "bricolage", when these are used with reference to independent African churches. Again, this is yet another form of stigmatization of African issues; when we speak of syncretism and bricolage with reference to elements of western societies, we tend - not without a certain amount of satisfaction - to refer to a kind of creative post-modernity. Conversely, when such definitions are applied to African religions, it is almost always in order to evoke a kind of "confusion" in spirituality, of symbolism and of rituals, which is seen to be disorderly, deviant, ambiguous, obscure and disquieting. Nevertheless it is precisely this "combining" capacity, as authors such as Davidson point out, which has enabled African peoples to construct a spiritual dimension which is deeply in tune with their needs and able to respond to the challenges of a "borderline" country where life has always been more difficult than elsewhere. The "religious action" of these peoples can therefore be considered to be the dynamic and innovative expression of a capacity for adaptation, survival and growth which, given their starting conditions, possibly knows no equals in the history of the human species.

A third strategy to "restore" not just the moral, but also the interpretative dignity of African Traditional religions- or in any case to the African expression of other religions, such as the Christian or Muslim religions which, as mentioned above, have now also become part of the "tradition" - could be to further extricate them from the established stereotypes which cloud their image. Such an analysis should focus on the profound link which connects African religions to the dynamics of modernity, or better, to what could be defined as an "African modernity".

In this regard, an entire phenomenology exists - mostly found in urban environments, in defiance of the usual exclusively "rural" representation of African social reality - which deserves greater attention on the part of researchers, decision-makers, and the managers of international and development co-operation organisations. A few more or less recent brief examples can be provided in this regard:

- the connection - already mentioned between the syncretist and millenialist movements of the past 150 years and the diffusion of the ideal of liberation (not only in a political sense) - with important repercussions in terms of the creation of national leaderships and on the decolonization process;
- the connection between the charismatic movement of Jamaa in Congo - and later in ex Zaire - between the 1950s and the 1980s and the growth of small and medium sized enterprise;
- the newly-found popularity of African traditional religions with the continent's middle classes, as is recorded, for example, in Gabon;
- the growth in interest in African traditional religions among the intellectuals of the diaspora, who see them as a useful element for the 'construction' rather than just 'conservation' of African identities in contemporary societies;
- the birth of political and cultural organizations founded on the rediscovery and re-elaboration of traditional religious phenomena in a modern framework - as occurred, for example, for 'Bossonisme', championed during the 1980s in Ivory Coast by the writer Jean-Marie Adiaffi, who died recently;
- the current, dynamic policies of legitimization of African traditional religions and, conversely, the legitimization of policies on the part of exponents of the traditional religions, as has occurred recently in Benin, where reciprocal forms of acknowledgement have been exchanged between political powers and the religious leaders of what has by now become the Vodoun "church";
- the birth of African NGOs - often linked to international networks - which promote local development programmes inspired by African Traditional Religions; one example being the organization "Echoes of the Ancestors, Inc.", founded in Burkina Faso;
- the involvement of African religious leaders in United Nations forums and summits, as occurred for example on the occasion of the Millennium World Peace Summit for Religious and Spiritual Leaders, held at the United Nations in New York in August 2000.

Even from these few examples, it is basically possible to surmise the current flavour and vitality now being experienced by the traditional religious expressions of Sub-Saharan Africa. These expressions appear to be all the more directed towards the future, rather than towards the past of the continent, the more they are intimately linked with the representations, emotions, experiences and capacities of the more qualified and responsible African actors.

Obviously the above are simply a series of points to reflect upon, which however might also become working hypotheses for a wider and more systematic research which this paper will strive to promote. This it hopes to do with the support of all of those who have the destiny of the African continent at heart and want Africa to continue to give its contribution to human history.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude this paper, it is important to draw some thought-lines from Ejizu (2010) on the imperativeness of African Traditional Religion. According to Ejizu (2010), argues that neither the artists nor the most far-sighted of the spectators of that scene could have imagined the nature and magnitude of the social, cultural and religious revolution that was soon to follow that eventful appearance. Their horizon was still limited to the uninvaded traditional background in which the arrival of some new deity was generally welcome. And the price for any new lease of spiritual energy and benefits which might accrue from the acceptance, and enshrining of its cult, did not usually go beyond the introduction of a few more taboos and ritual prohibitions. The basic cosmology which gave meaning to the various facets of life, as well as the fundamental structure and pattern of society were normally not affected. The line between politics and economics, social life and religion still wore very thin, just as role differentiation was minimal. Social sanction hedged all important aspects of life, and the gods took full charge of all vital life-interests, social integration and control rested firmly on the basic ancestral view and ordering of reality. And in spite of some mal-functional aspects of the system, a considerable measure of stability continued to prevail in traditional African society. New structures and symbols have been introduced and a new order of values reigns. Social transformation is more or less a fait-accompli with massive destabilization, and complex adaptational problems as well as their attendant feeling of tension and frustration.

Religion is still very much an integral part of the new social order it helped to create. And even though its features are also changed and its role slightly different, the indigenous African society still place much hope on religion's ability to assist them in achieving personal balance and social reconstruction. He further argues that this African traditional religion is down but not out.

African traditional religion is this worldly religion. It is a result-oriented religion. It is pragmatic, practical religion. It is a religion that promotes corporate existence, African community as unity of two worlds, promotion of community-living among Africans. African traditionalist belief in this religion for protection, respect for truth telling as a noble

principle of life, emphasis on achievement motivation and the spirit of industry and respect for age and seniority.

Anthropomorphism and existentialism are the core elements of African traditional religion and the above tendency in turn applies that man's life on earth takes centre stage. Life in African religion and culture is aimed at obtaining divine favours, and in real terms, the divine becomes means to ends-ends set by the worshipers themselves. The multiplicity of deities bespeaks of the divergence of human needs, each of which is brought to the doorsteps of different deities to satisfy. That is to say, the myriad of deities in each African culture interpret, predict and explain space, time and events. Each deity is in-charge of each department of life or portfolio in life in order to meet the needs of African in the contemporary African society.

Again, it could be reemphasized that the imperativeness of this religion finds expression in Pentecostal churches today where a lot of African metaphors, idioms and African medicine, charms and amulets are borrowed in form of syncretism in the Pentecostal churches by the so-called general-overseers. This fundamental issue is the reason for the high patronage of Pentecostal churches in African shrines where they consult them on daily basis to meet their existential challenges in life and explain reality.

Hence, Gifford (2004:84), observes that "for the common man, African traditional religion is very largely the means of reinforcing life. Consulting at shrines serves normally to discover why individual persons or communities are suffering particular afflictions; the causes usually are dividend in specific terms, and almost always are connected to the supernatural.

Consequently, the theory of collective effervescence (Emile Durkheim) can be a potential for the mobilization of social capital in Africa, because

(i) Emile Durkheim believed that religion played an important role in societies, because it binds people together through its beliefs and rituals.
(ii) Durkheim argues that religion with its rituals and beliefs achieves these functions because it provides societies some agreed upon values or norms, such as solidarity and cohesion (or "collective effervescence").
(iii) One of the ways this religion achieves social order and solidarity is by ritualizing experience of collective effervescence. For example, when people gather for the performance of a religious ritual, like the festivals associated with funeral, new yam festivals etc., in this case, the mood in this rites is heightened effervescence as generated through contact with other likeminded individuals, who are gathered

together for the same purpose. Those participating feel bond of community and unite and at the end the members feel morally strong. It is this human interaction that can be exploited by religious groups to generate wealth, development and other things of common goods or welfare of the society as well as co-operate existence.

Another emerging trend this paper wishes to consider is the issue of seeing African Traditional Religion as a fossil religion which was misconstrued to mean "traditional". For the fact that African Traditional Religion is a traditional and ethnic religion in heterogeneous culture in Africa, does not make it a thing of the past, something that has refused to change. African Traditional Religion is a dynamic and not a static religion, it changes as African societies and culture change in order to meet with the changing trends. Therefore, it will be wrong as misconstrued by Nollywood, Hollywood and Bollywood industry players as demonstrated in their dramas that African Traditional Religion is not a dynamic culture, rather it changes to meet up with the contemporary era.

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