

The role played by humans in the din bahane, the enuma elish, and the yoruba myth...

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The Role Played by Humans in the Diné Bahane', the Enuma Elish, and the Yoruba Myth, The Descent from the Sky

In Diné bahane', the human soul takes shape depending on the set of social and ceremonial conditions that it is subjected too. Humans are presented as being under the control of a pantheon of gods some of who are persuadable while others are undependable. While the undependable deities are known to be evil, they occasionally do good to humans. Myths in Dine as told by ancestors are narrated to younger generations as they come and go. As humans tell the myths, they are replicated by rites, the former being at the conceptual level while the later being at the action level. The gods in this culture prefer to be honored by humans through rituals and the performance of certain actions.

According to Enuma Elish, as believed by Babylonians, creation was accomplished by the action of cosmic chaos and order. The deities involved in the creation resemble humans in the sense that they have gender and the capacity to recreate like humans do. The deities also do good and evil just like it is in the case of Diné bahane'. The evil that is done by some deities is evident in the sense that the sometimes they fight and kill or main one another in a state of disorder.

According to the Yoruba myth that references the descent from the sky, the high god, Olodumare, requested Orishala to descend from the sky so as to create the first earth. Because of Orishala's delay, it is his brother Oduduwa who performed the work. Later 16 other orisha (dieties) descended from the sky and created humans, accompanying them in their dwelling place, earth. Humans in this case are seen to be friends of the gods, their role being to

follow specific orisha as prescribed by an act of divination. The Yoruba deities who come in their hundreds are to be worshipped by humans through rituals. Divinities according to Yoruba creation myth also come in the form of natural phenomena such as mountains which the people are bound to revere.

The relationship between the deities and humans in each of the creation myths is one in which humans are subordinates to the deities or divinities. This is so considering that the deities do the work of creation and recreation. The humans always have to worship or ask the deities for help and in some cases to overcome bad divinations. The difference that exists in each myth with respect to the manner in which creation took place is the level of order or disorder. While in some cases, chaos and order coexisted, in one case, there was almost absolute order in the creation of man. Whenever deities do acts worth of praise, they are regarded by the people as heroes. Similarly, when humans accomplish tasks assigned to them by the good deities, they receive the statuses of heroes or heroines.