

English E3-19 September 27, 1996 Assignment: Mythology Research Project In The Yoruba and Madagascar myths of creation, the beginning of the world was a formless Chaos which was neither sea nor land. Orisha Nla, also called the Great God, was sent down from the Chaos to the Chaos by Olorun, the Supreme Being. His obligatory mission was to create solid land and to aid him in the accomplishment of this task, he was given a snail shell, a pigeon, and a five-toed hen. After the earth and land were separated, a chameleon was sent with Orisha Nla to inspect his work and report to the Supreme Being. Olorun was satisfied with the good things reported to him and sent Orisha Nla to finish. He planted trees, Olorun made rain water fall from the sky and grew the seeds into a great forest. The creation of earth took four days and on the fifth Orisha Nla rested from his work. Orisha fashioned the first people from earth for Olorun, but only the Supreme Being was able to give them life. Orisha Nla hid in his workshop trying to watch him, but a spell of deep sleep was cast onto him so that only Olorun knew the secret. He made the first man and woman and their daughter and her husband. The rest of the human beings descended from them. As time passed, the Creator noticed that as humans multiplied and prospered, they gave thanks to Mother Earth but forgot about him. He decided thenceforth to take the souls of half the humans signifying a tribute. In the myth, Why Men Must Die told by the Zulu's of Natal in South Africa, we are told how because of a slow moving tiny animal man-kind suffered and still does of mortality. The first man on earth, also a god, sent the chameleon to give humans the message that they will be like the gods and never die promptly. Because he took too long to travel to mankind and spread the good news, he sent a viper out of annoyance with the message that he changed his mind and they will not live forever. In the Egyptian creation story my group has studied, everything descends from Nu, the sea. His son Ra, becomes the Creator and makes a god for everything in our world: Shu, the wind god, his consort Tefnut, "The Spitter", brought rain, Seb, the earth god, Nut, goddess of the firmament, who were the parents of Osiris and his consort Isis, and Set and his consort Nephthys. The story also tells about sins that people had since their earliest existence, such as desire, impatience, deception and lying. Isis, who is greedy for power, goes as far as poisoning the Creator, in order to obtain his secret and sacred name, which is the symbol and holder of the Creator's powers. A short legendary history of some customs (such as those of the New Year's celebration) is given. By reading these stories, one can see some of the similarities present between the myths of Christianity (mainly Roman and Greek) and those of Africa, such as the story of the creation, the deceiving of the God, his anger with the people and the punishment he gave them in order to teach them a lesson and his forgiveness, etc. Death is first introduced in the form of punishment, which Ra is giving the people, with the help of Hathor, who is doing the actual slaying. Ra also divided the world between two of his gods: Osiris, who will rule the dead, and Horus, who will rule on the "island of the fiery flames." Once people die, they enter Osiris' kingdom, where they are divided between those who can stay and those who will be taken by the serpents, "dragging them away, while they utter loud and piercing cries of grief and agony, to be tortured and devoured; lo!"

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