

“ORI” AS THE SOLE DETERMINANT OF HUMAN PERSONALITY IN TRADITIONAL YORUBA – AFRICAN THOUGHT

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is a follow up to my earlier paper titled “The Concepts of “Ori” and Human Destiny in Yoruba thought: A Soft Deterministic Interpretation”¹ where I argued implicitly that it would be tantamount to a baseless argument if we conclude that “ori” (inner head)² is the sole determinant of human personality in Yoruba thought. The paper argues that the concept of “ori” (inner head) alone cannot be regarded as the sole determinant of human personality because “ori” (inner head) as it were is only limited to issues of material success at a general level in relation to human personality. Furthermore, it shall be pointed out in the paper that an exploration into the ancient Yoruba scriptures such as “*ifa* literary corpus”, “*ijala*”, “*Iwi*” and “*Esa egungun*” reveal that moral character which is an essential component of human personality in Yoruba thought cannot be predetermined by one’s earlier choice of “ori” (inner head). Finally the paper submits that it is the combinations of the functions of “ori” (as symbolized by both physical and inner head), “okan” (as symbolized by both physical and spiritual heart) and “ese” (as symbolized by both physical and spiritual leg) that jointly determine and constitute human personality in Yoruba thought.

COMPONENTS OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

The components of human personality in traditional Yoruba thought have been extensively discussed by various scholars in the field, with no definitive conclusion to be reached as to which of these components can be regarded as the sole determinant of human personality in traditional Yoruba thought.

Bolaji Idowu had earlier identified the tripartite conception of man (eniyani) in traditional Yoruba thought. He believes that man is made up of “ara” (body), “emi” (the life force of a person) and “ori” (inner head).³ In his own submissions, Idowu argues that out of the three components, “ori” (inner head) is the element responsible for a person’s personality and represents human destiny. He argues further that it is responsible for the actuality and worth of man in the material world⁴. For the Yoruba, “ori” (inner head) is believed to be not only the bearer of destiny but also the essence of human personality which rules, control and guides the life and activities of the person⁵. From the analysis of Idowu, it is glaring that “ori” (inner head) is the sole determinant of human personality in

traditional Yoruba thought as every event of man in the world is solely determined by his earlier choice of “ori” (inner head), thus, the temptation of thinking “ori” is the sole determinant of human personality is very obvious. This kind of temptation is even more higher in Barry Hallen and Sodipo analysis than that of Idowu’s analysis. Barry Hallen and Sodipo recognize the tripartite conception of person in traditional Yoruba thought when they assert:

For the Yoruba, the essential element of the person (eniyan) when in the world (aye) are the body (ara), the vital spirits of the body or sour (emi) and the destiny (ori) that which determines every significant event doing the particular life time.⁶

To Hallen and Sodipo, the essential components of a person (eniyan) are “ara” (body), “emi” (the vital spirit of the body) and “ori” (inner head).⁷ In looking at the explanation of Hallen and Sodipo, it is obvious that out of these three components identified by them, “ori” plays a major role because according to them, it is that which determines every significant event during the particular life time, (perhaps including the functions of the body and that of emi (the vital spirit). In other words, the temptation to think that “ori” (inner head) is the sole determinant of human personality in traditional Yoruba thought is high.

Olusegun Oladipo also pitched his tent with the tripartite conception of man (eniyan) in traditional Yoruba thought. He asserts that the essential components of man in traditional Yoruba thought are “ara” (body), “emi” (life giving entity) and “ori” (the inner head).⁸ In his analytico-philosophical discourse, he pointed out that while “ara” belongs to the realm of the material, both “emi” (the life giving force) and “ori” (inner head) belong to the realm of the immaterial.⁹ In his analysis of the Yoruba concept of person, Oladipo rightly and carefully pointed out that the water tight distinction that exists between body, a material entity and mind, an immaterial entity as it is the case with Cartesian dualism, does not exist in the Yoruba concept of human person. Oladipo is of the opinion that there is no way any organ can be solely taken to determine human personality in Yoruba thought because opolo (brain), “okan” (physical heart), ifun (intestine) which are all parts of the body (a material entity) also have some mental and psychic functions to perform. He concludes that one way of interpreting the attribution of psychic function to almost all the internal organs of a person by the Yoruba is to construe it as a demonstration of the realization that a person is an integrated physico-chemical system whose conscious activities are products of the harmonious interaction between the various elements of subsystems. From the above, it could be seen that the temptation to think that a single component like “ori” (inner head) is the sole determinant of human personality in Yoruba thought is inherently absent in Oladipo’s analysis.

Segun Gbadegesin in his own analysis of the Yoruba concept of person, considers the following as the prominent components of person (eniyan), “ara” (body) “okan” (heart) emi (life giving entity) and “ori” (inner head).¹⁰ To Gbadegesin, “ara” (body) is

the physico-material part of the human being and its internal organs like “opolo” (brain) “ifun” (intestine) are conceived to have their roles in the proper functioning of the person.¹¹ Such roles include mental and psychic activities. Unlike Oladipo which categorises “okan” as part of the internal organs of “ara” (body), Gbadegesin avers that “okan” (heart) is another element in the structure of the human person, with a dual character.¹² On the one hand, he agrees with Oladipo that “okan” (heart) can be regarded as physical heart since it is the organ responsible for the circulation of blood and it can be identified. On the other hand, he differs from Oladipo in arguing that “okan” is not just a physical heart that can be seen as performing some mental and psychic functions but there is a non-physical “okan”, invincible “okan” which is responsible for all forms of conscious identity.¹³ In other words, Gbadegesin believes that beyond the organ called “okan”, (physical heart) there is a source of conscious identity which is construed to be invincible and more or less spiritual. Beyond the little variations given to “okan” (physical heart) by both Oladipo and Gbadegesin, I think the most important thing is that the two scholars aptly recognize that “okan” (heart) has a vital role to play as seat of thought or consciousness in determining part of human personality in Yoruba thought.

The other components of a person which is non-physical according to Gbadegesin are “emi” (life giving entity) and “ori” (inner head). “Emi” (life giving entity) is construed as the active principles of life, the life giving element put in place by the deity and can also be regarded as part of the desire breath. Gbadegesin strongly believes that “emi” (life giving entity) as the active element of life, is thus a component common to all human beings. It not only activates the body by supplying the means of life and existence, it also guarantees the conscious existence of a person as long as it remains in force. The other component is “ori” (inner head) which is vital in the makeup of the human person. To Gbadegesin, “ori” (inner head) has a dual character like “okan” (heart).¹⁴ On the one hand, it refers to the physical head, the seat of brain and its importance cannot be over emphasized. On the other hand, it refers to spiritual head (inner ori) which is recognized as the bearer of the person’s destiny as well as determinant of personality. On the importance of “ori” as a component of human person, Gbadegesin declared that:

“ori” is therefore the determinant of personality of the individual. The “emi” as the active life force supplied by the deity is a common denominato... it cannot be the basis for identifying persons as individual selves because it is common to all.¹⁵

As surface look at the above declaration by Gbadegesin may bring in the temptation that he feels that “ori” is the sole determinant of human personality in Yoruba thought, however a proper understanding of his analysis negates the above because of his earlier assertions that “okan” especially as a seat of thought has a vital role to play in determining human personality. He asserts:

“ori” is identified with each person; it is an essential component of human personality. However, this does not

make it the locus of conscious identity. Due to its spiritual dimension, “ori” functions as a remote controller of the person’s fundamental activities including thinking; but it is not itself the centre or seat of thought.¹⁶

Kola Abimbola seems to go beyond the views of Hallen and Sodipo, Olusegun Oladipo, Bolaji Idowu and Segun Gbadegesin when he added the fourth element to the tripartite conception of man.¹⁷ To Kola Abimbola (2006:73) the fourth element is “ese” (leg) which is also dual in character. Literally translated, “ese” means physical leg but within the context of human personality, it means strife, handwork and struggle.¹⁸ According to Abimbola, “Ese” introduces the principle of individual effort, strife or struggle before the potentialities encapsulated on one’s “ori” (inner head) can be actualized. Abimbola strongly believes that “ese” (leg) is a vital part of human personality both in the physical and spiritual senses.¹⁹ The point being made by Kola Abimbola is that “ese” (physical leg) just as “ori” (the physical head) has a spiritual counterpart which is manifested in the context of strife, struggle and handwork. Kola Abimbola argues that three major kind of blessings are very essential to the progress of every human being. They are “Ire Owo” (blessing of riches) “Ire Omo”, (blessing of the children) and “Ire aiku to pari iwa” (blessing of a long and prosperous life).²⁰ The argument of Kola Abimbola is that in most cases the choice of a good “ori” (inner head) has a lot to do with material blessing that is success which is called “ire owo” (blessings of riches) and if a person is to acquire the other “ires” (blessings) which are “ire omo” (blessings of children) and “ire aiku to pari iwa” (the blessings of a long and prosperous life), the activity of “ese” (i.e. struggle, strife or hardwork is often required for such success as in life, or at least to complement the efforts or “ori” (inner head). In sum, Kola Abimbola asserts that the essential elements of human personality can be divided into two broad spectrums, the physical and the spiritual.²¹

Wande Abimbola in his earlier works argued that “ori” (inner head) can be regarded as a major determinant of human personality in Yoruba thought²². He believes that once a person has chosen destiny by the selection of an “ori”, (inner head) ultimately the “ori” (inner head). Determines his personality in the world. Wande Abimbola argues that in view of the nature of the selection of “ori” in orun (spirits above world) and the consequences of this irrevocable choice for every individual. What will be regardless of whatever happens will be as it relates to human personality.²³ While there is the temptation of classifying Wande Abimbola as one of those who believe that “ori” can be regarded as the sole determinant of human personality, I think his later work especially “Iwapele: The concept of Good character in “Ifa” Literacy Corpus”²⁴ has exonerated him from this kind of allegation. In this work, Wande Abimbola argues that when a person chooses a good or a bad “ori” (inner head), he or she needs to complement it with the use of “ebo” (sacrifices) and utilization of his “ese” (leg) which involves decisive struggle and handwork to achieve a desirable personality. Thus Wande Abimbola avers, it is not only “ori” (inner head) that solely determines human personality in Yoruba thought, but the combinations of the functions of the components of “ori” (inner head), “ese” (spiritual leg) and “iwa” (character) “ara” (body) and “emi” (life giving entity) that jointly determine human personality in Yoruba thought²⁵.

At this juncture, it might be necessary to address some salient points about “ori”. Even though, I had discussed the concepts of “Ori” and human destiny fully in my earlier paper²⁶, and other components of human personality like “ara” (body) “okan” (physical heart) “opolo” (brain) “ifun” (intestine) and emi (life giving entity) in another paper²⁷ but for the sake of recapitulation, I would like to mention some salient points about “ori” in this paper.

“Ori” (inner head) is one of the elements responsible for a person’s personality and represents human destiny. While “ori” (inner head) is symbolized by the physical head, it is nonetheless an immaterial entity, otherwise called inner head. The Yoruba understanding of “ori” can be conceived in two related senses. It refers to the unconscious in two related senses. It refers to the unconscious self, who makes a free choice of one’s life course before Ajala²⁸ or Olodumare (as the case may be); it also refers to that which is chosen, that is, the individual destiny or portion. As the former, “ori” (inner head) is the personality spirit or guardian ancestor of an individual. As in the latter, the choice so made by “ori” (the personality spirit) is however unknown to the person (now conscious) after he has come into the world. There is a problem in Yoruba conceptual scheme about the choice and actualization of “ori” (inner head) and it has to do with whether it is possible for a person to consult “orunmila” the god of divination in order to determine the nature of one’s “ori” (inner head) or to actualize the kind of “ori” (inner head) one has chosen or change it for better. This became necessary, realizing the fact that “ori” (inner head) is the indicator of one purpose in life, it has the secret of the deity’s plan for one²⁹ it is like a forerunner, the pathfinder in the earthly bush.³⁰

Scholars like Bolaji Idowu had incorrectly argued that “ori” (inner head) is the sole determinant of human personality in the Yoruba thought. This is because the choice of a good “ori” (inner head), or a bad “ori” (inner head) actually determines the personality of the person that made a choice, coupled with the notion that the choice of “ori” (inner head) is irrevocable and that gods are not even in a position to alter a person’s destiny. From the above analysis it is deduced by Idowu that the choice of “ori” actually determines a person’s destiny and then dictates the path which a person must follow in life.

Our argument in the paper is that the above assertion by scholars like Idowu is baseless and cannot be supported by evidences in any of the ancient Yoruba scriptures like “Ifa Literacy Corpus”, “Ijala”, “Iwi and Esa Egungun.” On the one hand, it is our argument that “ori” (inner head) as it were is only limited to issues of material success, that is, things like wealth, riches and success in one’s profession. The point becomes clearer when one realizes that in Yoruba thought, there are various kinds of ire (blessings). As Kola Abimbola rightly points out, there are three basic varieties of ire, ire owo (blessings of riches), ire omo (blessings of children) and ire aiku to pari iwa (blessings of a long life and character).³¹ Yet, having a good ori will not necessarily yield all these “ires”, since a good or bad “ori is only related to the first kind of “ire” ire owo: (material blessing). “Ori” (inner head) has nothing to do with the blessings of character and as such it does not affect all human actions and or inactions.

On the other hand, arguably, nowhere in any of the ancient, Yoruba scriptures (i.e. “ifa” literary corpus, “Ijala”, “Iwi” and “Esa Egungun”) is there the claim that moral character can be predetermined by one’s earlier choice of “ori” (inner head), thus negating the assertion that “ori” can be regarded as the sole determinant of human personality. The role of “ori” (inner head), in the Yoruba conception of personhood is often misunderstood and exaggerated. However, “ifa” poems make a very clear cut distinction among “ori” (the principle of actualization and earthly success or failure), “Ese” (the principle of individual strife and struggle) and “iwa” (the principle of good character) and all these put together, according “Ifa” Literary Corpus jointly constitute human personality.³²

To further justify the above position that “ori” (inner head) cannot be regarded as the sole determinant of human personality in Yoruba thought, an exploration will be made into the ancient Yoruba scripture, “Ifa” Literary Corpus. The word “ifa” has six layers of meanings; but in this context, “ifa” literary corpus refers to a body of knowledge associated with “ifa” (the divination process). The body of knowledge is the sacred text of Yoruba religion and all its denominations in Africa and the African Diaspora. The corpus is made up of 260 “odus” (that is books or chapters), each “odu” contains between 600 and 800 poems.³³

In the very first book of the “ifa” literary corpus, “Eji-ogbe”, a major distinction is made between “ori” and “ese” as different components of human personality.

To ba se pe ori gbogbo nii sun posi
Iroko gbogbo I ba ti tan nigbo
A difa fun igba eni
Ti n’torun bo waye
To ba se ori gbogbo nii sun posi
Iroko gbogbo iba ti tan in gbo
A difa fun igba ese ti n torun bow aye
Owere la n ja gbogbo wa
Owere la n ja
Eni ya ori re o to nkann,
Owere la n ja gbogbo wa Owere la n ja.³⁴

Had it been that all “oris” were meant to sleep in coffins
The “iroko” tree would have become extinct. These were
the “ifa” priests/esses who performed. Divination, for two
hundred “ese” (leg).When they were coming to “aye”
(world) from orun (spirit world above). We are all exerting
great effort to succeed, all of us. We are all exerting great
effort to succeed. Those who selected “ori” for material
successes are few. We are all putting in great effort to
succeed. All of us.

From the above “ifa” poems, some points are glaring. It emphasizes that both “ori” (inner head), and “ese” (leg) have spiritual counterparts which play major roles in

determining human personality. Further, the poems reveal to us that those that were fortunate to have chosen good “ori” (inner head), that are blessed with material success have to struggle and strive to succeed, thus showing the importance of “ese” (leg). In other words, both spiritual “ori” (inner head), and spiritual “ese” (leg) are vital components of personhood in Yoruba thought. Another excerpt from “ifa” literary corpus says:

“ai burewa ni to risa, o daye , o ri aso lo, ni tara eni”³⁵.
 “where the absence of physical beauty is to the gods, lack of basic amenity of social living like clothes is personal responsibility.”

The above excerpt from “ifa” underscores the relevance of “ese” (leg) as a component of human personality in Yoruba thought. “Ese” (leg) which is the principle of individual strife and struggles signifies that each person has a responsibility to play even in actualizing his or her good “ori” (inner head), thus individual efforts and struggles like making sacrifices (“riru ebo”) which attract favour are all vital to the existence of a person in Yoruba society.

A deeper look at another excerpt from “ifa” which says “ori kan to buru lodu ife, ti iwa ni kan lo soro”. (No destiny or head in inherently bad in life, only right character is difficult), reveals to us that moral character is not predetermined by the earlier choice of “ori” (inner head). “Ori” (inner head) as it is indicated here is not the sole determinant of human personality, character (“iwa”) equally has a crucial role. Hence, when a person is devoid of good character (“iwa”), the Yoruba will say “kii se eniyan” (He or she is not a person), such a comment is a judgment of the moral standing of the human being in question. To achieve a desirable personality in Yoruba society, a person must exhibit good character. Wande Abimbola supports the above when he argues that “ebo” (sacrifice), “ese” (strife) and “iwa” (character) are all essential elements of human personality in Yoruba thought.³⁶

It must be emphasized, that moral character is also a major determinant of human personality in Yoruba thought, though not predetermined by “ori”. The implication of this is that predeterminism does not remove freewill because the notions of “ebo” (sacrifice) “ese” (strife) and “iwa” (character) are unconstrained exercise of freewill. This explains why in Yoruba thought, no person is considered as “eniyan buruku” (evil person) or “eniyan kenian” (wicked person) only on the basis of lack of earthly material success and achievement because of the choice of his or her “ori” (inner head). Perhaps that is why Kola Abimbola asserts that discussing “ori” (inner head) in relation to moral responsibility and autonomy as some scholars have done is misplaced.³⁷ However, a person can be punished or looked down upon if he or she fails to make use of the opportunities that are available to him through the notions of “ebo” (sacrifice), “ese” (strife) and “iwa” (character). In other words, if a person is to achieve a desirable personality in Yoruba culture, he/she must be ready to give credence to the functions activities of “ese” (leg) and “iwa”, (character) as it is the case with “ori” (inner head).

The above point is further corroborated by “Otuurupon meji” verse five in “Ifa” literary corpus. It goes, thus:

Obepe awo ese
 Lo difa f’ese
 Nijo ti ntikole orun bowaye
 Gbogbo awon ori sarajo
 Nwon o pee se sii
 Esu in e o pee se sii
 Bi o ti se gun naa nu un
 Ija in won fi tuka nibe
 Ni won too waa ranse si ese
 Nigba naa ni imoran ti won ngbaa too wa gun
 Nwon no be gege
 Ni awon awo awon wi
 Opebe awo ese
 Lo difa f’ese
 Nijo ti nti kole orun bo waye
 O pe be mo mo de o
 Awo ese
 Enikan kii gbimoran
 Ko yo to see le
 Opebe mo de o
 Awo ese³⁸

The above “ifa” verses clearly show that apart from “ori” (inner head), “ese” (leg) is another salient metaphysical force that determines human personality in Yoruba thought. It is clearly demonstrated that the gathering of the “oris” (inner heads) without the involvement of “ese” (leg) would yield a fruitless effort. According to these verses, the “oris” (inner head) thought that they could determine or shape human personality without the contribution of “ese”, hence they refused to invite “ese” (leg) to their meeting. As the verses reveal, they were cautioned by “Esu” the universal police, but turned deaf ear to the advice of “Esu” (Universal Police) and the consequence is that the meeting ended with conflicts and confusion. The “oris” (inner heads), were not able to make a meaningful progress until the “ese” (leg) is invited to their meeting. The verses ended with an injunction that no vital decision can be taken on human personhood without the contribution of “ese” (leg).³⁹

Also in “Oyeku meji”, the story of an “Ifa” priest, Akapo is narrated⁴⁰. The argument established in this “ifa” text is that majority of people neglect and violate moral principles while very few live by them. However, the few who hold tenaciously to moral principles need not despair because every moral act has its natural repercussions. In the case of Akapo, he lacked all the good things of life such as money, children etc. and ideally for the Yoruba, a priest by profession is expected to be upright, just and reasonably blessed with the goodness of life. But the contrary is the case with Akapo. In the false belief that it was his destiny that fated him to lack all the essentials of human

existence, Akapo decided to consult “Orunmila”⁴¹, the divinity of wisdom to know what exactly was the cause of his woes. “Orunmila” directed him to “Esu”, the minister of justice in Yoruba cosmology. “Esu” therefore advised Akapo to reconsider his sayings and amend his ways accordingly, if he wanted to succeed. Akapo conceded and consequently things started changing for the better for him. Then he knows that it was not his destiny that was bad, but his character.

The story narrated in Oyeku meji further shows that the neglect of the role of “ese” (leg) may spell a doom to any person in fulfilling his destiny, even if it can be said or claimed that the person had chosen good “ori” (inner head), thus character as exemplified by the spiritual “ese” (leg) which is an essential component of human personality cannot be predetermined by one’s earlier choice of “ori.”

To a large extent, it has been shown from some excerpts in “ifa” literary corpus that “ori” (inner head), “ese” (leg) and character “iwa” have major roles to play in determining human personhood in the Yoruba thought system. It should be added that the role of “okan” (both physical and spiritual heart) in determining human personality in Yoruba though cannot be ignored. “Okan” (heart) which usually determines one’s act of rashness or impulse behaviour can affect one’s personality for better or for worse. Gbadegesin recognizes this when he asserts “okan” (heart) is the source of emotional and psychic reactions.⁴² A person who is easily upset is described as having no “okan” (heart) and when a person is sad, it is said that her “okan” (heart) is disrupted because the emotional states of persons are taken as functions of the states of their “okan” (heart). In other words, the functions of “okan” (heart) according to Gbadegesin which is the seat of thought and the locus of conscious identity usually determines the emotionally states of a person and in turns affect his personality. This explains why some persons are naturally impatient and some are naturally slow. While an impatient person (dues to the state of his/her “okan” heart) will run at a faster pace than his “ori” (inner head), thereby losing its support, an idle mind will also spoil an otherwise prosperous destiny.

From the above analysis, it can be shown that it is the combinations of the functions of “ori”, (inner head), “okan” (heart), “ese” (leg) that jointly determine and constitute human personality in Yoruba thought. In other words, the role of “Ese” (leg)⁴³ in Yoruba thought cannot be underestimated. Perhaps, this explains the popular proverbial saying among the Yoruba that wherever your “ori” (inner head) has destined you to be, it is your “ese” (leg) that will surely convey you to the destination.

Endnotes

- ¹ A detailed analysis of the Yoruba concept of “ori” and human destiny has been discussed in a separate paper. For further details see my paper. Oladele A. Balogun, “The Concept of “Ori” and Human Destiny in Traditional Yoruba Thought: A Soft

Deterministic Interpretations”, *Nordic Journal of Africa Studies*, University of Joensuu, Finland, Vol. 16 (1), 20007, 116-130.

²The word “ori” in Yoruba language is translated in English as “physical head”, but in this paper “ori” is used as a component of human personality, that is the bearer of human destiny. In this case “ori” means “inner head”, a spiritual head, and not just the physical head.

³Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, London: Macmillan, 1963, 70.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., 71.

⁶Barry Hallen and Olubi Sodipo, *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft: Analytical Experiments in African Philosophy*, London: Ethnographical 1986, 105.

⁷Ibid.,

⁸Olusegun Oladipo, “Predestination in Yoruba Thought: Philosopher’s Interpretation, *Orita: Journal of Religion*, Vol. XXIV, 1992, 14-22.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Segun Gbadegesin, *African Philosophy, Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary African Realities*, Chicago: Gateway, 1991, 25-59.

¹¹Ibid., 26.

¹²Ibid., 28.

¹³Ibid., 31.

¹⁴Ibid., 42.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 43.

¹⁷Kola Abimbola, *Yoruba Culture: A Philosophical Account*, Birmingham: Iroko, 2006, 3.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 80.

²¹Ibid.

²²Wande Abimbola, “The Yoruba Concept of Human Personality”, *La notion de Personnes Afrique Nove Collogues Internationale de Centre Nationa de la Recheche Scientifique*.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Wande Abimbola, ““Iwapele”: The Concept of Good Character in “Ifa” Literary Corpus”, Wande Abimbola (Ed.), *Yoruba Oral Tradition*, Ibadan, University of Ibadan Press, 1975, 400-415.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷.A detailed Analysis of the Yoruba concept of person has been discussed in a separate paper. For further details see my paper: Oladele A. Balogun, “The Nature of Human Person in Traditional African Thought: Further Reflections on Traditional Philosophies of Mind”, *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, University of Braga, Portugal, 2007, forthcoming.

²⁸.It is important to note that Ajala, the entity that moulds “ori” has an important status in Yoruba cosmology. However, as explicit in “ifa” poems and many other ancient Yoruba scriptures, Ajala is not a divinity (i.e., an *orisa*). This is understandable when one realizes that not all supernatural entities in Yoruba Religion are gods, goddesses, or divinities.

²⁹.Oladele Balogun, 2007, op.cit., 122.

³⁰.Segun Gbadegesin, op.cit, 183.

³¹.Kola Abimbola, op.cit, 80.

³²Ibid., 73.

³³Ibid., 47

³⁴Ifayemi Elebuibon, *Ifa: The Custodian of Destiny*, Ibadan: Penthouse Publications, 2004, 11.

³⁵Ibid., 70.

³⁶Wande Abimbola. op.cit., 410.

³⁷Kola Abimbola. *op.cit.*, 74.

³⁸Wande Abimbola, *Ifa: An Exposition of Ifa Literary Corpus*, Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1976, 124.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁴⁰Ifayemi Elebuibon, *op.cit.*, 72.

⁴¹“Orunmila” otherwise known as the god of divination, is the divinity that asserts “Olodumare” (The Yoruba high God) in matters pertaining to omniscience and wisdom. It is believed by the Yoruba that “Orunmila” possesses intimate knowledge of matters affecting human destiny, therefore “Orunmila” is being consulted for necessary guidance during times of important decisions.

⁴²Segun Gbadegesin, *op.cit.*, 23.

⁴³“Ese” which can be translated as physical legs has a spiritual connotation in Yoruba thought. “Ese” is regarded as the principle of individual strife and struggles. “Ese” also acts as a catalyst to the realization or otherwise of one’s destiny.

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