

A Naturalistic Interpretation of the Yoruba Concepts of *Ori*

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Introduction

Ori is a central concept in Yoruba-language conception of human personality.¹ The Yoruba are said to believe that the personality of each individual is predetermined *Ori*. In this paper, I aim to show that the available accounts of *Ori* constitute an inadequate explanation of this determinism—what is popularly translated as *destiny*—in Yoruba thought. In place of the spiritualistic predetermination of personality implied in the idea of destiny, I wish to offer a naturalistic, humanistic account of *Ori*.

The Myth of Creation

One of the available versions of the Yoruba account of the creation of the human person holds that the human body (*ara*) was moulded by *Orisanla* (one of the deities in Yoruba traditional religious system) out of sand. It is thereafter that the lifeless body is infused with *emi* (life or breath of life) by *Olodumare* (supreme deity). The body at this stage becomes activated with life and then goes to *Ajala* (deity responsible for making *Ori*) to select an *Ori*.²

The act of selecting *Ori* in *Ajala*'s house has three important aspects:³ First, it is supposed to be one of free choice. You are said to be free to choose any of the *Ori* available in *Ajala*'s storehouse. Second, the *Ori* selected determines, finally and irreversibly, the life course and personality of its possessor on earth. Third, each individual is unaware of the content or quality of the chosen *Ori*, that is, the person making the choice does not know if the destiny embedded in an *Ori* is good or bad. Other terms used to symbolize *Ori* include *Akunleyan* (that which is chosen kneeling), *Ipin-Ori* (allotment), *Ayanmo* (that which is chosen or affixed to oneself), and *Akunlegba* (what is received kneeling).

Apart from the above account of the determination of destiny through a choice of *Ori* in *Ajala*'s house, there are other versions of the Yoruba belief on the deter-

mination of destiny. One such version has it that it is Olodumare who confers destiny on each human person, which is later doubly sealed by *Onibode* (the keeper of the gate between heaven and earth.)⁴ However all the available versions agree that destiny is determined by the *Ori*, either chosen or conferred upon a person. They also agree that by the time people arrive in the world, through birth, they are totally ignorant of the type of destiny awaiting them.

A Critical Analysis of the Myth

For present purposes, we shall concentrate on the version of the creation myth that maintains that *Ori* is selected in Ajala's house. Our aim is to see what philosophical implications may be derived from it, since other versions of the myth may have different philosophical implications. Many of the scholars who have written on the Yoruba concept of human personality seem to accept one version or the other of the mythical account of the creation of human beings as descriptive of what actually happens before each person is birthed. Some African philosophers have even used the creation myth as a primary premise from which many conclusions on the nature and meaning of human life are derived.

These mythical accounts are subject to two general criticisms. The first is that they lead to incompatible consequences, while the second is that they are not supposed to be taken literally but should be understood as allegory. The following are some of the problems arising from the literal interpretation of the Ajala version of the creation myth. First, the way the Yoruba are said to perceive the relationship between *Ori* on one hand, and the destiny and personality of individuals on the other, cannot be consistently held for some people. For instance, it appears that physically deformed people have their destinies and personalities determined by their deformed *ara* (body) and not by any prenatal choice of *Ori*. In the Yoruba culture, people like the *abuke* (hunchback), *aro* (cripple), *afin* (albino), and *arara* (dwarf) are all called *eni-orisa* (special people of the gods). They are denied, by virtue of their physical deformities, the full opportunities open to normal people. They are not allowed, for example, to function as heads of household, village heads, or kings. After death, they cannot become ancestors because they are not buried in the lineage grave site but in the evil forest.⁵

Also, in societies where there are no established manners in which people with physical deformities are treated, they remain limited in very important respects by their deformities. A cripple, for instance, can never aspire to be the world's fastest sprinter, the world's best swimmer, or the world's number one footballer. In this regard, we can meaningfully say that a cripple has been destined by his deformed *ara* (body) not to be an outstanding sprinter, swimmer, or footballer. Hence, it seems unacceptable to attribute at least some of the aspects of the destiny of a cripple to a prenatal choice of *Ori*, because the deformity which limits him and shapes his destiny is an aspect of his body which, going by the Yoruba creation myth, was fashioned prior to the selection of *Ori*.

In spite of the claims that the Yoruba believe that the prenatal choice of *Ori* determines, finally, the destiny and personality of man (used generically) on earth,

Idowu, Makinde, and Gbadegesin argue that the Yoruba believe that there are still some ways by which a bad *Ori* can be changed for the better and a good *Ori* altered for the worse. They maintain that the Yoruba are of the view that a bad *Ori* can be improved through consultations with *Orunmila* (a deity in Yoruba traditional thought), *etutu* (sacrifice), and hard work. Conversely, an originally good *Ori* may also be altered for the worse through the activities of malicious agents like the *aje* (witches), laziness, or bad character.⁶

The claim that destiny can be altered seems inconsistent with the Yoruba idea of predestination, as consisting of the belief that a prenatal choice of *Ori* determines, finally and irreversibly, the destiny and personality of each human person. The opinion that destiny is irreversible is reflected in many Yoruba proverbs and wise sayings. For instance, the Yoruba often say that *Ohun Ori wa se ko ma ni salai se eo* (what the *Ori* has come to achieve must definitely be fulfilled).⁷ Other Yoruba proverbs depicting the inalterable nature of destiny include

Akunleyan ni ad'aye ba
Akunleyan pin
Adaiye tan oju nro ni
 (We knelt down and chose a portion
 We get into the world and are not pleased)

A-yan-mo o gbogun
 (That which is affixed to one cannot be
 With soap)⁸

In addition, going by the definition of destiny as connoting "what must happen and cannot be changed or controlled,"⁹ it seems unlikely that what has been predestined can be altered. Hence, it is contestable that a consistent belief in predestination is synonymous with fatalism, which is the viewpoint that whatever happens is unavoidable and could not have been otherwise.

Ironically, however, many of the available accounts of the Yoruba belief system suggest that the Yoruba hold on to these incompatible beliefs. They are said to believe that a prenatal selection of *Ori* determines each person's personality and life course and also that a man's destiny can be affected negatively or positively.¹⁰ While some scholars have tried to explain how the Yoruba can consistently hold on to these seemingly contradictory beliefs, others have resorted to a fatalistic interpretation of the Yoruba idea of destiny. While putting forth a fatalistic interpretation, Abimbola, for example, stated categorically that even the gods cannot change human destinies. Supporting Abimbola's interpretation, Makinde argues that the best the gods could do in regard to a human's destiny is merely to guide the fulfillment.¹¹ The implication of this is that humans are not free agents but are merely acting out a previously written script. Hence, they should not be held morally responsible for their actions.

To avoid the above implication, Makinde rejected the fatalistic interpretation and introduced his weak conception of *Ori*, which sees *Ori* as a mere potentiality.¹²

He argues that the *Ori* chosen in heaven is just a potentiality which needs certain things to be done before it is actualized. Therefore, one needs to work hard, consult with *Orunmila*, and make necessary sacrifices before a potentially good *Ori* is brought to fruition or a potentially bad *Ori* is improved.

A problem with Makinde's conception of *Ori* as a mere potentiality is that it seems to be inconsistent with the idea of predestination, which he also wants to defend. Predestination, as rightly observed by Makinde himself, "presupposes that one's position on earth as well as the activities that led or would lead him to such a position were already pre-ordained from heaven and the situation could not be or have been otherwise."¹³ This suggests that all the things identified as required to actualize a potentially good *Ori* or improve a bad one are really either activities in futility or those that have been pre-ordained for specific individuals as part of the fulfillment of their destinies; when an individual works hard or consults with *Orunmila* before he is successful in life, he is merely following the path of destiny. He would not have worked hard or consulted with *Orunmila* if it was not so pre-ordained. Hence, the actions and inactions, which Makinde classifies as acts of free will in his effort to make the Yoruba belief in predestination coherent,¹⁴ should really be classified as part of what has been pre-determined. These actions can be described as free actions only if we completely give up the notion of prenatal determinism. Hence, it appears that the notions of free will and predestination cannot be consistently held together in any discourse on the Yoruba concept of *Ori*.

In essence, consistent predestination is equivalent to fatalism, while inconsistent predestination amounts to a negation of predestination. Either we maintain that there is predestination, in the sense that whatever happens to an individual and whatever steps he takes in life are mere manifestations of his destiny, or we assert that there is no predestination at all. Consequently, as Makinde's weak conception of *Ori* portrays the Yoruba as inconsistent with their belief in predestination, it follows that they do not really believe in predestination but pay mere lip service to it.

In addition, Makinde fails to realize that saying that something is predestined is completely different from saying that there is a potential for one thing or the other. For instance, a person may have the potential to be a good lawyer, a prominent politician, or a distinguished academic without actually becoming any of these things. But when we say that a person is predestined to become something, we are not merely saying that he has a potential. Rather, we are saying that becoming that thing is unavoidable and could not have been otherwise. Hence, it is a mistake to define predestination in terms of the mere possession of potentials.

Another difficulty arising from the mythical explanation of the nature and origin of man is seen in the area of free will and moral responsibility. The myth holds that the prenatal selection of *Ori* is one of free choice, by virtue of which a person can be held to be morally responsible for his or her personality and life course. Makinde, however, convincingly argues that there is no free will involved in the selection of *Ori* from Ajala's house.¹⁵ His argument is outlined thusly: One, all choices are preferential choices. Two, the types of *Ori*, good or bad, are unknown to the persons making the selections. Three, if an individual knows the types of *Ori*

available, he or she is likely to prefer a good one to a bad one. Therefore, the alleged prenatal selection of *Ori* is not of a free choice at all, and it follows that we cannot rightly hold anyone morally responsible for the quality of *Ori* selected, or for the consequences arising from it.

The above argument by Makinde seems to have established that the notions of free will and moral responsibility cannot be consistently held together in any discourse on the Yoruba concept of *Ori*. But, since the Yoruba in their everyday affairs operate the notions of moral responsibility and free will in conjunction with the belief in a prenatal selected *Ori*, we need to make further attempts to identify a sense in which these notions and beliefs can be consistently held together.

This brings us to a different attempt to reconcile the notions of free will, moral responsibility, and prenatal determination of destiny by Olusegun Oladipo.¹⁶ He subscribes to the view that human destiny is determined by a prenatal selection of *Ipin-Ori* after it is "doubly sealed" by both *Olodumare* and *Onibode*.¹⁷ He, however, describes *Ori*, symbolizing destiny, as a "covenant or agreement with *Olodumare* as to what a person intends to become in the world."¹⁸ *Ori* is seen as "a series of events agreed to in a covenant with *Olodumare*."¹⁹ Conceived in this manner, Oladipo argues that it is meaningful and consistent for the Yoruba to say that a person's destiny can be changed through any of the various ways we have identified earlier.²⁰ What he is saying, in essence, is that an earlier agreement between a person and *Olodumare*, which was doubly sealed by *Olodumare* and *Onibode*, can yet be changed under certain conditions.

I must say that Oladipo's effort to reconcile the belief in predestination is quite attractive. It appears to be very compatible with the Yoruba beliefs in the freedom of humans and their being morally responsible. However, he needs to clarify what is meant by "destiny being doubly sealed." If it means some kind of approval or ratification, then I would agree that destiny may be altered just like any party to an agreement may later alter some aspects of the agreement or even nullify the agreement completely. But it appears that the actual meaning of destiny goes beyond an agreement or covenant. When we say that something is predestined, we are not merely saying that it has been agreed upon or that it is included in a prenatal covenant. Rather, the main claim is that something cannot be prevented no matter what anyone tries to do.

I believe that it is in an attempt to buttress the inevitability of whatever has been predestined that the idea of destiny being "doubly sealed" by *Olodumare* and *Onibode* is introduced. This seal, in my opinion, is not just a kind of approval or ratification, but a means of ensuring that destiny is irrevocable, certain, and without any possibility of change.

As rightly pointed out by E. O. Oduwole,²¹ the fact that destiny is inalterable is illustrated in Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*.²² Here, we see Odewale eventually killing his father and marrying his mother, as was predestined in spite of all efforts made to forestall the fulfillment of these events. Indeed, Abimbola seems to be quite right to have stated that it is simply because people find it to be quite difficult to accept a bad destiny that they make serious, but fruitless, attempts to rectify or alter it.²³ Even consultations with oracles and the offering of relevant sac-

rifices cannot bring any change in human destiny. The best that these can achieve, according to Abimbola, is that "every man would be able to thread the path already laid out for him without beating about the bush."²⁴ Similarly, such virtues as hard work and good character are as incapable of changing a hitherto bad destiny. At best, they seem to be mere means by which destinies are fulfilled. The Yoruba have many proverbs depicting the inalterable nature of destiny. Some of these have been mentioned earlier. A Yoruba adage asserting that a good destiny can never be changed or perverted by evil agents is *omo ar'aiye ko le pa kadara da won kon le fa owo ago s,eyin ni* (malevolent agents can never alter or pervert a good destiny, the worst they can do is to delay its fulfillment).

The above analysis of Oladipo's account suggests, contrary to his own conclusion, that destiny is alterable. One implication of this is that the Yoruba seem to be irrational, because while they recognize that destiny is inalterable, they still go ahead to make efforts to change it. Another implication is that the notion of free will and belief in the moral responsibility of humans is unjustifiable and baseless within the context of the Yoruba culture.

However, before we accept this conclusion, let us attempt to transcend the myth in order to see if we can arrive at a more plausible naturalistic explanation of the Yoruba idea of *Ori* and predestination. Our presupposition in this effort is that the Yoruba mythical account of human creation is not meant to be taken literally but understood metaphorically.

A Naturalistic Interpretation of the Yoruba Concepts of *Ori*

It is granted that the Yoruba believe that each individual person is composed of *ara*, *emi*, and *Ori* (body, spirit and spiritual inner head). Other spiritual elements identified in some accounts of the Yoruba traditional thought system are *owo* and *ese* (spiritual hand and leg). It is also accepted that the Yoruba believe that individuals exercise free will and are morally responsible for many of their actions.

Ordinarily, the Yoruba recognize that an individual is free to do or not to do certain things. For example, the Yoruba will agree that each individual is free to decide whether or not to steal, tell the truth, or be kind to people. But they also recognize that in some cases, individuals may not be free to do or not do some things. For instance, the Yoruba would agree that a blind man is not free to help somebody read a letter, just as a cripple is not free to save a drowning child. It is because they are able to distinguish between areas in which people are free and areas in which they are not free that people are held to be morally responsible for only those actions they are free to carry or not carry out.

However, it seems that no one is free in an absolute sense, even in those areas where freedom may be exercised. This is because a number of external factors which people do not have much control over, and of which they are frequently not conscious, often affect or influence the way of their actions and characters. These may be classified into two sorts: Factors of heredity and factors of environment. Factors of heredity include all those inborn propensities common to a race or family, like certain physical characteristics, diseases, habits, and so on. Environmental

factors include earthquakes floods, droughts, and various climatic changes. So-called social environmental factors are those happenings in society that may influence individuals either at the level of specific actions or at the level of dispositions and characters. War, for instance, usually predisposes people to violence in a way they may not be predisposed to when society is at peace. Similarly, harsh economic conditions may propel some people toward such vices as prostitution, stealing, and armed robbery.

The fact that human acts, characteristics, and dispositions are not products of absolutely free choices suggests that the practice of praising and blaming people is really meaningless and unjustifiable. This is because the system of morality presupposes that people make free choices. To save morality, within the Yoruba context, from the charge of meaninglessness, we need to identify precisely how people can plausibly be said to be genuinely free in such a way that will be consistent with the Yoruba concept of *Ori*. An option is to say that an individual is free only when he is not compelled to do or is restrained from doing certain things. That is, when he is free from external constraints. Moritz Schlick is an advocate of this view, and he affirms that "free acts are uncompelled acts."²⁵ Hence, he sees all problems of free will and moral responsibility as pseudo problems.

However, a more plausible sense in which individuals may be said to be free, consistent with the Yoruba concept of *Ori*, is that each person has the power to introduce a new energy or to make an effort of the will to transcend environmental or hereditary factors that may want to constrain, compel, or predispose him or her to do or not do certain things. For instance, we still find some people embracing and practicing the ideals of Pacifism in war situations, in spite of the general tendency toward violence. Similarly, in spite of the fact that poverty predisposes people toward such vices as stealing and prostitution, it is still open to poor people to choose whether or not to steal or become a prostitute.

Although the term *will* is ambiguous and quite problematic, for our present purpose it means the mental powers manifested in making a choice between two or more alternatives. An example may be helpful in clarifying this: Let us suppose that an individual, Joseph, is aware of two things. First is the strong conviction that it is always morally right to tell the truth. Second is the equally strong desire to continue to live in the house he has lived in all his life. Let us suppose further that this second desire is incompatible with his deep conviction that he ought to always tell the truth, because the only way he can continue to live in this house is to lie under oath. C. A. Campbell describes such a situation as the "situation of moral temptation."²⁶ In the example above, even if Joseph's desire to live in the house in question is stronger than the desire to tell the truth, the choice remains with him to exert or not exert some effort of the will which will enable him to tell the truth. If he decides to tell the truth, his action can rightly be described as a free one because he could have lied. Similarly, his decision to lie would be a free one because he could have told the truth.

In essence, factors of environment and heredity may determine the nature of the situation within which decisions are taken,²⁷ but individuals can still exercise their free will in allowing or disallowing factors of heredity or environment to

dictate their decisions and actions. In Joseph's case, above, the desire to continue living in the house and the desire to tell the truth constitute at least some aspects of the moral situation in which Joseph finds himself. But the actual decision taken to either lie or tell the truth in pursuit of either of the two incompatible desires is a function of his free will.

In my opinion, it is how an individual exercises his free will, which is made manifest in his various free choices and free actions, which determines his character, that is, each person's character (*iwa*) is formed by virtue of his past acts of free choice, and it is in recognition of this that the Yoruba praise and blame people for their good and bad characters. For instance, a habitual thief may be blamed for his stealing habits because it has formed part of his character through his past acts of theft. Hence, the Yoruba are of the strong conviction that *Owo eni ni aafi'ntun iwa ara eni se* (we use our hands or make individual efforts to improve our individual characters).

Given the above understanding of how individuals could plausibly be said to be free, I will now present an alternative naturalistic understanding of the Yoruba concepts of *Ori* and destiny. To begin with, let me quickly address the Yoruba belief in the prenatal determination of *Ori* and destiny. I am of the opinion that the fact that hereditary and environmental factors, which influence the situations in which people find themselves, exist prior to and independent of the birth of the individuals they affect contributes to the Yoruba view that certain aspects of human lives are determined prior to birth in heaven. But there seems to be no good reason supporting the Yoruba prenatal thesis. Rather than maintain that there is a prenatal choice of *Ori* which determines one's destiny, personality, and entire life course, I argue that the idea of a chosen *Ori* is no more than a combination of all the various acts of free choice made by an individual up until any specified time in his life.

Three key factors seem to be vital in the determination of a person's life course: hereditary factors, environmental factors, and character. The relation between the first two factors and the third one is such that in the formation of character, each person has a choice to either allow or disallow facts of heredity and environment to dictate the particular decision and actions which will ultimately form the character.

By character we mean the distinctive quality of a person or the peculiar ways in which each person manifests his or her existence.²⁸ It is formed by virtue of the various previous acts of choice made by the individual and it is what, to a very great extent, determines the destiny of persons. Take as an example a habitual smoker who develops lung cancer as a result of the smoking habit. This habit constitutes part of the character of the smoker, by virtue of which it makes sense to argue that he or she is predestined to develop lung cancer. Therefore, it might be said of the habitual smoker in question that it is his or her *Ori* to develop lung cancer. Going by this, the claim by Moses Oke that "a man's character is his destiny" is quite plausible.²⁹

From the above considerations, what the Yoruba describe as a choice of *Ori* is actually made by individuals during the course of human existence, through the diverse acts of choices made, not by any prenatal choice in heaven. This implies that

the concept of *Ori* is meaningful only in a retrospective sense. It is only with the benefit of hindsight that we can plausibly say that an individual is predestined to be one thing or the other, or that an event is predestined to occur. Before an event occurs, I do not think that the Yoruba would say that it is predestined to occur, except if by some special powers they have some insights into the future. Prior to the occurrence of events, the best that can be said is that given the way a person is living, behaving, or manifesting his character, he is likely to end up this way or that way. It is only when such predictions come to pass that the Yoruba would say with some measure of authority that the events have been predestined.

It is of interest to note that various world religions and cultures subscribe to the view that some individuals are able to accurately predict future events. The Yoruba traditional religion is no different, as its practitioners often consult with the *Ifa* oracle to know the future of their children. This, in Yoruba language, is described as knowing the *Iko-se waiye* or the *es-n-taiye* of a child.³⁰ All that the oracle does is to foretell the kind of life the child will have, as well as the major events that will occur in his or her life. Subsequent efforts to avoid the occurrence of some revealed unsavory events, for all we know, would end up as fruitless efforts. Such efforts may be likened to the efforts to care for an individual who is sick with an incurable ailment. Just as relatives would not want to leave an incurably sick patient without doing anything to alleviate his or her pain, and perhaps hope against all hope that the ailment will miraculously disappear, the Yoruba also make fruitless efforts to alter a destiny that is foretold.³¹

Going back to our discourse on the relationship between destiny and character, my position is that it is a person's character, which is a product of past acts of free choice, that determines destiny on earth. There are several suggestions of this view in Idowu's writings.³² According to him, *Orunmila* recited thusly:

Iwa nikan l'osoro o
Iwa nikan l'osoro,
Ori kan ki buru l'out ife
Iwa nikan l'osoro o
 (Character is all that is requisite
 Character is all that is requisite
 There is no destiny to be called unhappy in Ife city
 Character is all that is requisite)

In essence, the idea that is being conveyed here is that human well-being and success on earth depend upon character. Similarly, Idowu stated that "a good character is a sufficient armor against any untoward happening in life."³³ As such, the recognition of the fact that each person is free to develop either a good or bad character underlies the Yoruba's practice of blaming or praising individuals for the quality or type of character they have and also for the ways their lives eventually turn out. They say to the woman having marital problems, *Obinrin so wan u o'loun o mori oko wa'aiye* (a woman is devoid of a good character but she complains of not being predestined to have a husband).

However, the view that destiny is determined by character seems to be undermined by the fact that there are occasions in which some significant occurrences take place in the lives of people which cannot be accounted for in terms of the characters of the individuals concerned or their past free choices. For instance, when a person who has never smoked before or engaged in anything that we know can cause lung cancer suddenly develops the ailment, the Yoruba may want to say that it is such a person's destiny to have cancer without us being able to say that the cancer is a product of past choices, habits, or character. In such situations, we are unable to offer any plausible explanation for the occurrence, except to say that it is the destiny of the person concerned to have that experience at that time. This is the kind of explanation offered when strange and perhaps tragic events defying rational explanations occur.

In such circumstances, the Yoruba make use of explanations in terms of destiny only because they lack any other rational explanations for the event. This is similar to the way other people may explain away events in terms of such notions as the "will of God," "chance occurrence," or "luck." However, we need to note that it is not in all cases in which the Yoruba need to explain events affecting people that they offer explanations in terms of predestination. In many cases, they are able to give plausible natural explanations as to why certain events take place or why a person has become a success or failure in life. For instance, the Yoruba often encourage young men to be hardworking and honest so as to make a success out of their lives. Thus, it is not uncommon for the Yoruba to attribute a person's success to such factors as hard work, consistency, and patience, without any reference to destiny. Likewise, failure is often explained in terms of such factors as laziness, rashness, foolishness, and impatience. It is usually when the Yoruba are unable to identify empirical reasons behind the success or failure of an individual that they resort to explanations in terms of destiny.

For instance, it is only when an individual, after doing all that is required to prosper in a venture, ends up in failure that the Yoruba may say that he is predestined to fail in the venture. But, in this context, the way the notion of destiny is employed is quite similar to how some other people might simply say that the person is just unlucky, because they cannot offer any plausible explanation for the ill fortune.

Indeed, the Yoruba term for luck is the same as the term used to denote destiny. When the Yoruba want to say that a person is lucky or unlucky, they say that *ose orire* or *ose ori buruku* (he has a good head or a bad head). Perhaps it is because reference is made to the head when the Yoruba are talking about both destiny and luck that some of the difficulties surrounding the Yoruba notion of *Ori* and destiny are accentuated.

What is being suggested, in essence, is that there are at least two senses in which the Yoruba employ the notion of *Ori*: First, to signify the choice of character made by each individual through the particular choices of actions made. Second, to denote the lack of plausible explanations in a perplexing situation that defies any reasonable naturalistic or empirical explanations. In such situations, there is the tendency to say that what has happened cannot but occur because it has been so predetermined in heaven. But as we have tried to show, such explanations can-

not be rationally defended and they are the products of a number of incompatible consequences.

Notes

1. See Wande Abimbola, *Ifa: An Exposition of Ifa Literary Corpus* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oxford University Press, 1976), 96–115
2. Olusegun Gbadegesin, "Destiny, Personality and Ultimate Reality of Human Existence: A Yoruba Perspective," in *Ultimate Reality and Meaning*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1984): 173–188; E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longman Ltd., 1962), 169–186.
3. Wande Abimbola, *Ifa*, cited above at note 1; Olufemi Morakinyo, "The Yoruba Ayanmo Myth and Mental Health Care in West Africa," in *Journal of Culture and Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1983): 87.
4. E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare*, cited above at note 2, 174.
5. E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare*, cited above at note 2, 174–175.
6. Wande Abimbola, *Ifa*, cited above at note 1.
7. M. Akin Makinde, "An African Concept of Human Personality: The Yoruba Example," in *Ultimate Reality and Meaning*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1984): 197–198; Olusegun Gbadegesin, *Destiny, Personality and Ultimate Reality*, cited above at note 2; E. B. Idowu, *Olodumare*, cited above at note 2.
8. E. B. Idowu, cited above at note 2, 171
9. E. O. Oduwole, "The Concepts of Ori and Human Destiny," in *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, vol. 1, nos. 1 and 2 (1996): 48.
10. A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (Oxford: University Press, 1974).
11. See M. Akin Makinde, "A Philosophical Analysis of the Yoruba Concept of Ori and Human Personality," in *International Studies of Philosophy*, vol. XVII, no. 1 (1985): 57.
12. M. Akin Makinde, *An African Concept*, cited above at note 7, 198.
13. M. Akin Makinde, *An African Concept*, cited above at note 7, 198.
14. M. Akin Makinde, *A Philosophical Analysis*, cited above at note 11, 58.
15. M. Akin Makinde, *A Philosophical Analysis*, cited above at note 11, 63–66.
16. Olusegun Oladipo, "Predestination in Yoruba Thought: A Philosopher's Interpretation," *Orita*, vol. XXIV, no. 1–2 (June and Dec. 1992): 36–50
17. Olusegun Oladipo, *Predestination*, cited above at note 16, 37.
18. Olusegun Oladipo, *Predestination*, cited above at note 16, 41.
19. Olusegun Oladipo, *Predestination*, cited above at note 16, 41.
20. Olusegun Oladipo, *Predestination*, cited above at note 16, 2–43.
21. E. O. Oduwole, *The Concepts of Ori*, cited above at note 9, 48
22. Ola Rotimi, *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
23. Wande Abimbola, *Ifa*, cited above at note 1, 63.
24. Wande Abimbola, *Ifa*, cited above at note 1, 63.
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