

# COMPARISON OF AFRICAN CONCEPT OF PERSON, MAN AND DESTINY: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF GHANA, NIGERIA AND TOGO.

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## Abstract

**T**his study examines African concept of person, man and destiny among the West African people of Nigèria, Ghana and Togo. The study explores the psycho-linguistic concept of person, man and destiny among the Igbo and Yoruba of Nigeria, the Akan, Ga and Ewe of Ghana and the Kotakali of Togo. The findings of the study indicates a generability of the existence of various entities in man among the black people of West Africa. In addition, whereas there is overwhelming empirical evidence of universalism in the meaning of the concept of person among the people of West Africa, yet the concept of destiny remains a critical issue in the emerging field of African philosophy. Overall, the study highlights the empirical contributions of the cross-cultural universalism in the generative meaning of the African concept of person, man and destiny with regards to the African people's world view.

**Keyword:** Psycho-linguistics, Cross-cultural, Person, Man, Destiny, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, West Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

**M**an and society are mutually inclusive concepts in virtually all cultures. None existing independently of the other. I shall examine the conception of man from the vantage

point of its relationship to society. The concept of man here is used as a generic term for human beings, including man and woman, and legitimized by the fact that the concepts of person and destiny are all ontological question about man as a human person. It is interesting to note that almost every concept in African thoughts is theocratic, that is, dense with religiosity. Therefore, no adequate understanding of African concept of man and society will suffice without adequate recognition of its theistic and humanistic undertones. In African traditional thought, the metaphysical nature of man requires of him some social and natural obligations which are accomplished with rituals. It is called 'Rites of Passage' or 'Rhythms of life'; the belief which leads to eschatological beliefs in life after death. On the mundane plane, man does not exist alone in the universe - he is always interacting with, and under the influence of, other forces. So man has relations with other beings. But the belief in 'Destiny' and 'Predestination' in African Traditional thought presents metaphysical problems. If the concept of 'destiny' must be retained in the lexicon of African thought, then a distinction must be made between it and Predestination. Predestination so clashes with some fundamental African beliefs that its existence as a concept in African thought is problematic. Issues raised here are generalizable on the ground that

whatever obtains in two or more ethnic groups in black Africa, roughly obtains in the whole of black Africa.

### The Metaphysical Nature of Man

African universe has been shown to be religious and onto-theological, one with the belief that gods and spirits constantly interfere in human affairs. According to Mbiti (1969) "The individual is immersed in religious participation which starts before birth and continues after his death. For him, therefore and for the larger community of which he is part, to live is to be caught up in a religious drama". Practically everything is explained and understood in terms of religion. In a panpsychic sense, every object: rocks and so on are not empty objects, but religious objects, i.e. natural phenomena are active and spiritual forces of nature. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Olorun, Owner of sky lived in heaven with other divinities and the sky was a waste march without solid ground where divinities sometimes came down to play and hunt. God called a divine agent, Orishanla and gave him a small shell filled with soil, a pigeon and a hen, and sent them down below. When the soil was poured out on the march the birds scattered it about till earth was formed. The first place of the appearance of solid ground was called Ife or Ile - Ife the most sacred town of the Yoruba land. After creation the Earth-god shared the work of making man with Orishanla, leaving him to the Yoruba, God created man. This God gave the emi to man. He may be called 'Olorun' or 'Olodumare'. Similarly, other Africans believe that God created man and his name vary from one ethnic group to another. Among the people of West Africa as a whole, there are definite terms for the human essence, although details about it vary considerably. The oral tradition says the personality-soul derives directly from the supreme. It is this personality-soul that really makes a person

whatever he is. This serves as a man's double or guardian angel who is associated with him from birth, to warn and help him through his life and guide his fortunes. As a superior entity to the whole man, it is appealed to for protection, so that evil before man can be expelled and the evil behind him can be removed. Generally the conception of man is such that he is made of certain constituent parts. If there were any variations from one ethnic group to another, it would be only in nomenclature and not in substance. The Igbo and the Yoruba of Nigeria and the Akan, Ga, and Ewe of Ghana and Kotokali of Togo have certain conceptions of a person which roughly corresponds and which could be tabulated as follows:

ENGLISH	IGBO	YURUBA	AKAN	GA	KOTOKALI	EWA
Body	Ahu	Ara	Honon	Ghomotso	Tan	Nutla
Shadow	Ojijiyo	Oji	Sunsum	Okra	Aksen	Vovofin
Heart	Oki	Okun	Akma	Juyano	Baba	Kaka
Soul	Nigmbabi	Emi	Okra	Kla	Wana	Lawa
Brain	Uhuu	Oyolo	Adveni	Asoo	Samyi	Horio
Spirit	Mhu	Emi	Sunsum	Sunsum	Ophosphane	Nofi
Breath	Uue	Imi	Harkom	Mamo	Wazir	Chagor
God	Chakwa	Okodumare	Nyame	prambi	Iso	Muru
Blind	Okala	Ej	Moya	La	Mofup	Eru

The 'Ara/Ahu' Honon /Ghomotso /Tonu/Nutla is the physical body which men share with the lower creatures. It is with this that man acts and reacts in his physical environment. It serves as a temple or house for other constituents parts. The condition of the "Ara/Ahu" can be improved through proper care, and after the death of man it is the body that is buried. Another part of man is the 'Ojiji/Onyinyo' Sunsum/Okra which is the human shadow. The shadow itself is like a physical body which is visible. During life time of man the shadow accompanies it everywhere. This 'shadow' is taken to represent a higher phenomenon that is unseen. Thus when the personality-soul disappears at death, the shadow will cease to exist. For example it is believed that corpses cast no shadow, but during the life of man it constantly accompanies the body everywhere. It can be used, through sorcery, to injure the physical body. The other parts that constitute a man is the Okan/Obi (heart). Literally, it can be translated as the heart that can be seen and operated upon. But then, the heart is seat of thought and action. It can also be

used to denote (mind), that is, the mentality or rationality. The Yoruba call it *lye* where Igbo call it *Mkpuluobi* (synonymous with soul). In Yoruba language, this could be referred thus: "Okan re ti lo" (He is buried in thought), "O lokan" (He is brave or he has courage). Another part that constitutes man or that makes up man is the *Emi/Muo* (spirit or soul). It is the soul which breathes. It is associated with being but not identical with it. And so, when a man dies it leaves the body and return to God. Thus the Yoruba say of a dead: "Emi re ti lo" (His soul has gone). "Emi" can be used to denote spirit. Thus in this wise God is called "Elemi", that is, 'the owner of spirit'. However, according to the Yoruba the concept "Emi" is not real essence of being; the real word for the essence of being is "Ori". This is the 'personal god' of individuals. In Igbo philosophy it is called *Chi* and the Yoruba call it *Ori Inu* 'the inner head'. This type of *Ori/Chi* is not visible and it constitutes the essential man or person, that is: the whole being of man. In essence, since the Supreme being is the only one who can put the *Ori* for instance, his character, society, witches and wicked people. Invariably the bad *Ori* can change the whole course of man's life so much that people might say of that person's *Ori*: "inu re ti ba ti odeje", that is, "his inner head has spoiled the outer one". Furthermore, the Yoruba/Igbo believe that personal god is considered to be a person's guardian angel. When man is misbehaving, they say to that person: "Ori re nse", that is, "your *Ori* is giving you trouble". The Igbo would say: "Nwua je jugharia", meaning "Die and go back for a better destiny". Personal god, at times, is elevated to the level of a divinity and worshiped by man. This is used for ritual purpose. If a person's inner head is made to be bad by unforeseen powers, when the oracle is consulted, he or she is advised to wash his or her head so that such a person can be successful in life. But a man with good personal gods need not consult the oracle but

can even dispense with the divinities since everything will work well with him. In consequence of the importance of *Ori Inu*, we have its cult throughout Yoruba land. Among the Igbo, the concept of personal god plays similar roles as the concept of personal gods in Yoruba and other African cultures. It is believed that each individual has his *Chi* which controls his destiny. In black cultures one's personal god determines one's destiny. However, we shall see that there are compelling reasons to believe that the concept of personal god controls one's life but does not predestine it. By and large, all ethnic groups in Black Africa seem to agree on the existence of various entities in man and, roughly speaking, the soul and the guardian self severally and collectively constitute the mind in African traditional thought. In Western philosophy, there are two major components of man, and that is, mind and body, so that the problem has always been how they interact. But African conception of man, understood in terms of the body, the soul and the guardian self, presents a peculiar and difficult metaphysical and epistemological problem. The problem specifically borders on their interactions.

The Akan have dualistic conception of a person. On this, they believe that man has a soul and it is the principle of life. They affirm the pre-mundane existence of the soul and this, one could say, is in line with Plato's conception of the soul in one of his dialogues called *Phaedo*. Plato said that the soul existed somewhere before it was incarnated in the Body. Consequent upon this belief, the Akans refer to the *Okra* as living soul, "Okra tia sifo". Wiredu thinks that people with extra-sensory ability "jujumen" can communicate with the soul. If that is the case, he argues that the *Okra* is material, because communication takes place in space. He reinforced his position by saying that the fact that we give food to our ancestors presupposes that the *Okra* is quasi-physical. He wrote: "the soul is supposed in the

western philosophy to be purely immaterial entity that somehow inhabits the body. The Okra, by contrast, is quasi-physical". Gyekye, for his part, finds this interpretation strange and bizarre. He says that what is true is that the soul, by virtue of its spiritual powers, can take material form but essentially it is non-spatial, immaterial. He adds that the giving of the food to the ancestors is only symbolic. Confirming Gyekye's position, a traditionalist, Opanyin Kofi Mensch, a regent of fama nyame village near Obuasi, a mining town in the Ashanti region, told me in an interview that because of the nature of the soul being immaterial and the fact that Akan believe in the interpretation of what constitute the Akan soul. Another seemingly confusion that also surrounds the Akan conception of person is the further division of person into three constituents, namely the okra, (Soul) the sunsum both considered immaterial and the honam (body). Danquah tries to give tripartite interpretation to it. He says Sunsum is another constituent element of person. He further states that "the Akan believe that in dreams it is the sunsum that is in action. When you sleep the okra does not leave you as the sunsum may". The Akan believe that the sunsum and the okra, which are both immaterial, constitute a spiritual unity. It is interesting that I have only been using soul instead of mind in this discussion. The reason is that in Akan, "adweni" is considered physical, that is, the brain. Hence, we have expression like "ne adweni asa ye", loosely translated as "he has a brain damage". But the okra, being immaterial, is equivalent to the soul in western philosophy. According to Danquah not only does the body have influence on the soul but also the souls have effects or reflect on the condition of the body. On account of this he wrote: "when the soul is enfeebled or injured by evil spirit, ill-health results, the poor condition of the body affects the condition of the soul. The conditions of the soul depend upon the

condition of the Body". Thus, in Akan traditional areas, it is not uncommon to see that when the medicine man is curing somebody afflicted by some strange disease, he uses both the spiritual and the physical approach. In some instances, pure water is used to bath the victim or the normal broom is used to cleanse the victim. All these take place after the spiritual rituals have been performed. On "where the okra is situated", the Akan believe it is situated in the head around the region of the brain; hence the expression in their language like: "ne ti ye", literally meaning that "his head is good" in order words, he is fortunate. Another is expression which means that same is "ne kra ye". This claim by the Akan, I think, is not odd simply because the 17th century French philosopher René Descartes who, I believe, never had any contact with Africa also asserted that the mind is located in the pineal gland around the nervous system.

The Ga have a tripartite theory of man. Within or otherwise associated with the body are two unseen entities, the sunsum and the kla. There is no consensus on the proper translation of these terms. "Spirit" is a reasonable and apt translation of "sunsum", and "soul" may correspond to kla. Further, spirit is required also for the translation of murno. In order, therefore, to avoid erroneous associations and to presume necessary distinction, it seems best to transliterate both terms. Among the questions to be discussed will be the nature of the kla and the susuma, the grounds for postulating their existence, and their relation to the body and to each other. The Ga conceive personal immortality to take main forms: survival of death in a disembodied state, and renewed life in a different natural body. The Ga calls the body of a man "gbomotso", the same word being used for the body of animals. This is a compound word consisting of two elements "gbomo" and "tso". Gbomo (plural Gbmei) is the word for man or woman person. Mo( plural Mei) also has this sense. "Human being" is

"adesa" (plural Adesai) or "gbomo adesa". Tso (plural Tsei) is used for plants with an upright and particularly a woody stem, as distinct from creepers and soft-stemmed plants, which are bar. Tso also means the material "Wood" semantically equivalent to the Akan word "onipadua Twi" or "nyina Fante", where "onipa/nyimpa" means "man" and dua means "tree". Perhaps tso is being used in an extended sense to mean material and not just wood, so that gbomotso means "stuff of man". Anyone acquainted with the ancient philosophy of the west is irresistibly reminded of Aristotle's choice of the Greek word "hyle", meaning timber, as the technical term for his own concept of matter. But the fact that "tso" seems not to be used in other contexts to mean "stuff" makes this impossible. An African philosopher like Gyekye has maintained that the tripartite species conceive a dualistic Kernel. The "susuma" is a part of the "okra". The Ga say the breath of God which gives life to the clay is man's susuma. The word for breath is "mumo". The susuma therefore is mumo. The "kla" is also regarded as mumo. The interrelations between these concepts are, at first, puzzling. But I believe they are explicable; first, "mumo" is a generic term applicable to anything that is conceived as immaterial which is not composed of gross matter like the body; and second, "susuma" and "kla" are thus both species of mumo. "Mumos" normally used in the Ga Bible, for example, to translate "preamble" (spirit) which is seen as being higher than psyche (soul) on the grounds that God is preamble. Again, there is a traditional doctrine to the effect that when a man dies, his susuma goes to the world of the dead, but his kla goes to God; and the alternative way to expressing this is to say that while his "susuma" goes to world of the dead, his "mumo" goes to God.

Other species of mumo are Wong and Gbeshi. Both of these are entities which do not form part of the normal constitution of a human being but

(because they are not material as body is material) can superimpose themselves upon a human being and occupy the same space as his body or part of his body, and (because they are personal) can utilize that body to produce expressions. In the case of Wong, such expressions often involve displays of supernatural strengths of stamina, such as frenzied dancing or running. Possession of a "gbeshe" on the other hand does not give rise to such conspicuous manifestations and because its manifestation does not have supernatural capacities, they may be of much longer duration than those characteristics of possession by a Wong. Both Wong, and Gbeshi, then, are thought capable of possessing a human being; and both are species of "muwo" alongside susuma; and that it is when "mumo" is being used in its narrower sense, that it is contradistinguished from susuma (Nii Adote from Bukom a suburb of Accra). Within the class of immaterial personal entities, what distinguishes susuma from others? Like kla, but unlike Gbeshi and Wong, it is an integral and not adventitious part of human being. However does it differ from kla? One difference is that it can leave the body without causing death; whereas the kla is associated with the body right up to death. The detachability for the susuma from the body will be very prominent as though about the susuma in relation to consciousness. If one asks an exponent of Ga traditional thought about the nature of man, one will invariably be taught about the body, the susuma and kla, but the mind will not be mentioned. Yet, the word for mind, "jwegmo" exists; it is used for example in the phrase "ebe jwegmo", literally "he hasn't got a mind" that is, "he has no brain". This situation prompts two questions: Why is mind scarcely mentioned in the account of human nature? And what is the relation between this and the more important and interesting components? It would be wrong to say that the mind, for the Ga, is part of the body. For a distinction is certainly drawn

between the mind and the brain also. Nevertheless, it would seem that the mind is regarded as a function of the brain. It is difficult to get definite statements on this issue, and the reason for this seems to be that thought was not traditionally regarded as posing philosophical problems or standing in need of explanation in terms of occult entities, as are some other phenomena associated with man. Wiredu has made a comparable comment in connection with okra: "The okra is postulated in Akan thought to account for the fact of life and destiny but not of thought. The soul, on the other hand, seems in much Western philosophy to be intended to account, not just for life but also for thought".

But in some thoughts, the mind is regarded as a faculty of the brain, just as hearing a faculty of the ears, seeing of the eyes, etc. If this is correct and the mind is a function of part of the body, then it is not surprising if the mind is not mentioned along with the body, *susuma* and the *kla* in the theory of human nature. It is considered to be a problem subsumed under the finishing of the components. We have now to consider the relation between mind, the *kla* and *susuma* respectively. The relation between mind and the *susuma* is a complex and interesting problem. Here, we encounter a further sharp difference between this and Western theories of mind. The Ga view conscious thoughts alone and attributed them to the mind; unconscious thoughts are experience of the *susuma*. This is not said in so many words; but I believe it is generalization which is attributed to *susuma*. These include the following activities, with reference to all of which the chief point stressed is that the *susuma* is separated from the body; witchcraft activities; of the body experience in terminal illness and dreaming/sleeping. Empirical evidence is brought to bear on establishing the existence and functions of the *susuma*; the alleged "travelling" of the *susuma* of a sick person as death

approaches, and the alleged "travelling" of the witch in pursuance of witchy purposes. Both of these rest on testimonial evidence: the patient's report and the witch's confession respectively. One may feel that an adequate stringent criterion for assessing such testimonies is always applied, but to stigmatize the "spiritualistic" issue based on them is "superstition".

The *susuma* leaves the body at death. "Esusuma eshi le" (his *susuma* has left him) – means: "He is dead". The departure of the *susuma* alone, however, is not sufficient to cause death. It is when *susuma* and the *kla* both leave the body that death occurs. The question: whether animals are accompanied by the departure of the *susuma*, typically, does not meet with a very ready or assumed answer. But some Ga, at least, hold that animals do not have the *susuma*, and that is why (except those traditionally regarded as gods, such as the hyena, the python, etc) they are permitted to be killed. This position, however, would seem inconsistent with the role ascribed to *susuma* in human. Furthermore, how is the death of animals to be explained if they do not have a *susuma*?; for animals apparently do not have a *kla* (at least in one sense of *kla*), and one presumably wants to explain their death in a manner parallel to that of human beings. Perhaps, to argue that animals have *susuma*, would be more consistent with beliefs about the *susuma* of humans in relation to both dreams and death, and that the philosophical support for this is critical and difficult. When the *susuma* leaves the body at death it travels very quickly and reaches a river which it must cross. Alternatively, the body may be smeared with pepper or pepper may be burnt in the room. The *susuma* which is believed not to like the smell of pepper may sneeze, meaning that all is well. According to Nii Teiil Adummuah, a Ga Sagacist, in Ga one cannot talk of mind and body without a reference to a person, as mind and body are just two of the four constituent elements of the

person, namely: Kla (soul) Susuma (spirit) Asoo/Jwegmo (mind) material, and Gbomotso (body) a material element without which the body is dead. The above mentioned elements are grouped into three main dimensions: Mumo (spirit) and Kla (soul) in the first dimension - as the abstract which acts on both the mind and body; Jwegmo (mind) in the second dimension due to its housing in the body; and gbomotso (body) in the third dimension, because it is the over-all keeper of all the elements. The mind as constituent element of person, as conceived in Ga, is that which gives knowledge (Nilee) and thought (Susuma). It is the linkage between the spirit, soul and body. For example, in Ga, it is asserted that: "if you want to go to God, just get the knowledge of your intention (thought) of going to God, through the mind to the spirit". (Keji ootao oya nyogmo goo le, feemo susuma le ke iso o jwegmo no ke ha susurna le). Some Ga sagacists view the mind as a white paper without any character or ideas (tabular Rasa) but with experience. Reason and knowledge are founded on it; busy and boundless fancy of man is also pasted on it with almost endless variety and furnished with ideas. It is the mental agent.

The group of sagacists led by "Ataa Botchway", a kingmaker of kpone traditional area, asserted that the body (gbomotso) is the sole house for accommodating the soul, kla and spirit (susuma). Some discussants hold the view that the body is a material (physical) substance, which has a causal influence on the other elements as they also have on it. The first and foremost conception of the relation of mind - body by the Gas is that both are just put together by God, to work together - thus, they use the analogy of a car and its parts to illustrate; that is, the tyres for example, are the necessary part of a car. Hence, its attachment to the car; and if it is not needed, there is no need of putting it there. They also hold that, as all movements of the car is carried along

by its tyre, engine, etc and the drivers by the use of the pedals, so is the human body whose movements are controlled by the Brain/Mind. Their place of God in nature, perhaps, reduces the relation to occasionalism. They also hold the view that the body cannot work without the mind, but the mind can perform without the body. One's mind can be thinking but the body may be doing nothing. Hence, it is asserted that the mind, although it relates to the body, does more than the body. This is what they call interactionism.

Besides, the Gas in mind-body relation has this to say: that the mind is a by-product of the brain Asoo, which is the whitish matter housing human's thought, which formulates and houses ideas, thoughts and knowledge. The mind, therefore, being abstract (and the brain being physical), does not formulate actions of the brain. This they exemplified with the action of talking: when one talks, you hear but cannot touch the words. Hence, the mind can think but until you say your mind (what you think), no one can know your thought; because Gas take words to be spirit, Mumo. This brings to Gas the taboo: Naabu ni ake yeo goo ke shito le, ake lomoo mo (that, words are spirit, and a mouth used for taking salt and pepper is not used to curse). Also sagacists argued that the first dimensional elements - mumo (spirit) and kla (soul) are not seen at all but are two forces which control the body (gbomotso), and without them the body would be dead. As such, the Gas hold the view that the soul and spirit are life which gives animation and enhancement to the body. The spirit and soul can therefore live alone but body cannot; that is why for the Gas, in dreaming, the soul is said to go.

Ewes believe that the person is made up of body "nutila" soul - "luwor" and mind "susu". The luwor - soul, is the source of life and keeps the body moving. The presence of the soul in the body is indicated by the continuous breathing of the person.

Thus, to Ewes, the "gborgbor" breath, is a manifestation of the soul. The absence of gborgbor (breath) means the absence of the luwor (soul). On the other hand, when the luwor (soul) leaves the body, it is believed that it turns into another form almost the same as the body it has left, but appears either permanently at a very distant place where he was not previously known or temporarily to people who know him but are unaware of his death. This reappearance of the soul (luwor) is called "Norli" (ghost). They believe that the Norli (ghost) disappears when it realizes any sign of his being known as a dead person. The susu (mind), on the other hand, is known as the substance responsible for thinking, knowing, feeling, consciousness, decision and other subjective unobservable experiences like pain. The Susu is therefore known as immaterial. They believe that the mind (Susu), is in the brain - horhor, which is also located at the back of the person's head. There is, however, a problem as to where exactly the brain is in the head because statement shows that the mind-susu, is located at the forehead, because thinking or reasoning takes place at the forehead. For instance, "Ewor Ngo nu" (he made forehead); the meaning is: "He reasoned". Another one is; "Adanu le Ngonu nawo", (idea exists on your forehead). The meaning is: "you have an idea on your forehead". These statements conflict with the idea among the Ewes that the brain is a kind of white and strictly material substance contained in a box called horhorgui (brain box), located at the back of a person's head; and that this is a very fragile box and whoever hits this part of the head against anything would have either the brain box broken leading to death or have his mind dislocated. The question is: Can an immaterial substance, mind, as they think, be dislocated? But the only thing undeniable is the belief that processes or activities of the susu (mind) take place in the head of the person: "Me bun a ta mea"? (Don't you calculate

your head inside)? This means: Don't you think? "Yi tame wii" (go deep your head), meaning: to meditate or to ponder. The Nutila (body) is the physical entity that moves and occupies space. The nutila is clay kept alive by the presence of the soul evidenced by the breath; and the absence of the breath means the departure of the soul, and therefore, the body would have to go back to the earth, its natural place as clay.

Thus basically, the Ewes believe that a person has body (nutila), mind (susu) and soul (luwor). The soul keeps body and mind alive. The mind also controls the living body and the body does control the mind; a kind of dualism. Ewes believe that the mind is responsible for meaningful bodily movement. A person who has a dislocated mind "usutortortor" is a person whose life has come to a meaningful end and the rest of his days are meaningless. He is referred to as an "Ameworvor", a finished person. They also say "mere ame me o", he is not a person, or "Efe susu medorwom o", his mind is not working. People referred to in this way are not held responsible for their deeds since they lack the responsible component of their personality. He receives punishment for his acts if there is evidence that he did the acts in his right senses. Also, the body when affected/results into mental consequences. For instance, the head when hit against something, leads to mental problem or malfunctioning of the mind. They say: "Nusi kpor la yea dome" meaning: "Annoyance come by what the eye sees". Again, "Nusi to se Ia, yae vea dzi" meaning: "it is what the ear hears that pains the heart". Meanwhile, seeing and hearing are physical while annoyance and pain are none physical. This shows that there is dualism, among the Ewes just like among the Igbo. Yoruba, Akan, Ga, believes that the mind has casual effects on the body, and the body also has casual effects on the mind. Ewes believe that sleep and dream are mental activities but when a person is far on dream land, a



touch of his body brings him back to wake. They also believe that when children are prevented from going out they are better confined when hunger is not a problem to them. But so long as they are kept under hunger for some time, there is the tendency that they will move out. Hunger is mental but causes bodily movement.

The kotokoli people of Togo consider a human being to be constituted of three elements: wazu "soul", phanphante, "spirit" and tanu "body". The wazu is said to be that which constitutes the inner-most self, the essence of individual person. It is the individual life normally referred to as "living soul". The concept wazu is a spark of the Supreme Being Isso in man described as divine and as having an antemundane existence with the Supreme Being Isso. In metaphysical systems, the concept of soul is equivalent to wazu. The conception of the "wazu" as constituting the person's life, the life force, is linked very closely with another concept, "wazire" (breath). When a person is dead, it is said that "ide wezire wade" meaning: "His breath is finished". The departure of the soul "wazu" from the body "tanu" means the death of the person, and so does the cessation of breath. Yet, this does not mean that the "wazire" (breath) is identical with "wazu" (soul). It is the wazu that causes the breathing. So the "wazire" is the tangible manifestation or evidence of the presence of the wazu.

Ophanphante is another of the constituent elements of the person, which is rendered in English as "spirit". It is observed in Kotokoli that "ophanphante" is used both generically to refer to all unperceivable, mystical beings and forces, and specifically to refer to the activating principle in the person. The "ophanphante" (spirit) is not identical with the "wazu" (soul) as they do not refer to the same thing. The phenomenon of dream explanation given by most Kotokolis is that in a dream it is the

person's "ophanphante" that is said to be released from the fetters of the body when asleep. Thus, one is deeply asleep, yet may see oneself standing on top of a mountain or eating, and other physical things. It is also a belief that during sleep a person's ophanphante may talk with other ophanphantes. The fact that dreaming occurs only when asleep makes it a unique sort of mental activity. A purely physical object cannot be at two places at the same time; a body lying in bed cannot at the same time be on top of a mountain. Because whatever is on the mountain, then, must be something non-physical. With regard to ophanphante and wazu relationship, they are seen as identical to some extent in that both are immaterial, non-physical; but apart from that, both are different in terms of the activities they perform. Most Kotokoli agree that in dreaming it is the ophanphante (spirit), not the wazu (soul) that leaves the body. The departure of the wazu "soul" from the body means the death of the person, whereas the ophanphante can leave the body as in dreaming without causing the death of the person. The wazu (soul), as mentioned before is the principle of life in a person and the embodiment and transmitter of his or her destiny (Irudekaguria). Personality and character dispositions of a person are the function of ophanphante. The ophanphante appears to be the source of dynamism of a person, the active part or force of the human psychological system, its energies, the ground for its interaction with the external world. It is said to have extrasensory power; it is that which thinks, desires, feels etc, in short, people believe that it is upon the ophanphante that one's health, worldly power, positions, influences, success depend. The attributes and activities of the ophanphante are not ascribable to the wazu.

Understanding the ophanphante and wazu to constitute a spiritual unity, a person is made up of principle entities or substances, one spiritual and the other material. Kotokoli also focus philosophical

attention on the intractable question regarding the beginning of the connection of the soul to the body, of the body, of the immaterial. After god Isso had created the body, He then blew the wazu into it through the head, and from there, the wazu occupied the whole body. It is maintained that when a person dies he is not really dead implying that there is something in a human being that is eternal, indestructible, and that continues to exist in the world of spirit barsaou. god Isso is held to be eternally immortal. Therefore, it means that since God will not die, a person, that is, his or her "wazu" (soul), conceived as an indwelling spark of god, will not die either. That is, the soul of man is immortal.

### MIND AND BODY

The spiritual component of a person is all-pervading, encompassing and transcending. It must also be pointed out here that the traditional problem of mind (as a mental entity) and the body (as a physical entity) in western philosophy does not exist in African philosophy. This is more than a mental process which is something spiritual; the mind as a spiritual phenomenon is not located in any part of the body but inferable from the brain. The body is the only physically perceivable entity; yet with ontic spiritual reality. Hence, it is more appropriate to talk of soul/spirit and body interaction because no problem as such exists but a complex of spiritual relations which is still reducible to a dualistic conception of person, that is, semblances of miniature variations of more than two conceptions of person are reducible to a dual conception. Therefore, our discussion about mind and body here are actually about cognitive equivalent. Some dualists advance a doctrine of epiphenomenalism, which, while not completely rejecting causal interaction, hold that the causality goes in one direction only, namely, from the body to the soul; such a doctrine, too, is thus not

interactionist. Kotokoli, however, are thoroughly interactionist on the relation between soul and body, holding that not only does the body have causal influence on the soul but also that the soul has causal influence on the "tanu" (body). What happens to the "wazu" takes effect or reflects on the condition of the body. Similarly, what happens to the tanu reflects on the condition of the soul. When the wazu is enfeebled or injured by evil spirits, ill health results, the poor condition of the body affect the condition of the soul. The belief in psychophysical causal interaction is the whole basis for spiritual and physical healing among the Kotokoli. Certain diseases are believed to be "ophnaphnate ngyandi" (spiritual diseases) and cannot be healed by the application of physical therapy. In such disease, attention must be paid to both physiological and spiritual aspects of the person. So, unless the soul is healed, the body will not respond to physical and spiritual treatment. Hence, the point of view of the Kotokoli metaphysics of the person and of the world in general seems to imply that a human being is not just an assemblage of flesh and bone.

Africans have a dualistic conception rather than a tripartite conception of persons. These are (i) statements describing a person's body, bodily state and dispositions of event that occur in and to his body and (ii) statements which describe feeling and thought, hopes and fears, memories and expectations, mood and humour, etc. Statements describing bodily dispositions are those substances, the African calls mind and body (which they also call the materialistic and physicalistic phenomenon) and neither can be translated into the other. However, like Berkeley, some denied the above and agreed that physical statements must be construed as mentalistic statements. Apart from the above, the Ga, Yoruba or Igbo sagacists also assert that for the mentalistic events, there are two fountains of thought and knowledge from where all ideas and events of the

mind have, thus, sensation (senses that send particular sensible objects to the mind) and reflection (mind furnishing the understanding with ideas of its own operation). To add more in the distinction of mind-body, in Ga tradition, most discussants agree with David Hume, that the mind is a bundle of substantial qualities or perceptions described as mental substance or a pure ego, an enduring, immaterial, non-extended stuff, and undergoes constant changes, and performing various and different activities which are activities of thinking. But the body is a bundle of substances and it is extended, unthinking, and it is more original and enduring.

The first and foremost conception of the relation of mind-body by the Gas is that both are justly put together by God. The mind goes away from the body to find a good desire; and recreates itself at where the soul send some of the impression it got from other souls to the body as a dream. They stated: "Treat the body as a car" (Hieemo gbotomso le tamo tsone), they say, because a car needs a driver to move it and so does the body need the soul/spirit to move it. The body is therefore said to be restricting the soul but not the soul restricting the body. This account for the reason why when one sleeps, as soon as the spirit comes back to it from wherever it might have gone to, one wakes up. They also claim that constantly mind-body and soul are unique and work together to make the totality of the person. Hence, "intuition" manifest when the spirit needs something, it impresses upon the mind to do this or that, but normally good things. In summation of their relation (Mind-Body) a sagacist, Nii Noye Nortey of Osu, re-echoed Aristotle, when he says that our intellect is related to the prime beings which are most evident in their nature as the eyes of an owl is related to the sun. With reference to the above views on the mind-body relation, however, the Gas, from any discussants, made the two distinct general theories as in western philosophy-the Monistic

and dualistic theories. Theorists who denied that the mind-body are related and those who admitted that the mind-body are related offer various accounts of these relations respectively. There were the extreme materialists with the view that matter is the fundamental on which every existence depends. The Ga, claim that every existence is physical and not mental. The idealists, championed by Nuumo Ataa Botchway a king maker of Kpone among my discussants, claim that the only things, which exist are the minds and their perception. Referring to David Hume, some monists asserted that minds and bodies are different sorts of bundles of the same sort of things but not in the nature of the atomic constituents. There was also the view from Double-aspect theorist, with the claim that mind and body are different aspects of something that is itself neither mental nor physical.

There were the interactionists and the occasionalists, but surprisingly no discussant on parallelism and epiphenomenalism. Understanding the mind and body to constitute a mental and physical unity, one discussant says, the Ga philosophy maintains a dualistic conception of man, which is either interactionism or occasionalism. Interactionally, they hold the view that if the mind is not a necessary element of the body, God would not have housed it or attached it to the body and vice versa. They summed it with the thesis that events can sometimes cause heart pounds, etc. There were, however, an objection to the interactionist view did by drawing a distinction between the mental and physical but, also accepting the concept of cause and effect as having a necessary connection determined by God, and rejecting the possibility that there could be causal interaction between the mental and the physical. Scientifically, it will be appropriate to recall some of the theories which have been adduced to explain the mind/body problem. Interactionism is one

of them. It says that the mind acts upon the body and vice-versa. Epiphenomenalism is the theory that the body acts upon the mind to produce conscious thoughts and feelings but the mind itself has no physical effects. The 'double-aspect theory' says that the mind-body are aspects of one kind of substance. Parallelism is the theory that mind and body, being different substances never act upon each other, while 'Pre-established harmony' is the theory that God created a person in such a way that his mental and physical natures should always be in close correspondence without interacting; and 'Occasionalism' is the theory that God sees to it that this mental life is in close correspondence with what is going on in the body from time to time. If the God-intoxicated nature of African spiritualism and religiosity were anything to go by, some of these theories would easily be eliminable. For instance, 'Epiphenomenalism' is a complete materialist theory which cannot have a place in African culture. Similarly, African traditional thought cannot agree with the 'Double aspect' theory that the body and the mind (soul) are aspects of one kind of substance since it is believed that the soul or the spirit or the mind discards the body at death. Again, from Africa point of view, it would be highly problematic as to whether God created a pre-established harmony between the mind and the body. This is because in African traditional thought God is the greatest of the hierarchy of forces which controls man. These forces include the gods, the guardian self, the soul/spirit and the body. God controls the gods which in turn influence the guardian self and the soul. The relationship is something like A causes B, B causes C and causes D or A-B-C. So in African traditional thought, the interaction between God, gods guardian self, soul and body is asymmetrical, that is, it goes from God to man. At this point, occasionalism comes closer to answering the question as to the close

relation between these forces, for it says that, God sees to it that the mental life is in close correspondence with what is going on in the body. It can be generally surmised that in African theistic panpsychist consciousness the brain helps to instill faith and without brain there will be no faith. The brain and the mind are aspects of the body but the mind is not visible physically. Hence, both the mind and the body can be categorized as body as against the spirit and the soul which constitute the psychic spark or dimension of God. It is fairly reasonable to argue that in African thought, the guardian self, the soul (spirit) and the body interact. The guardian self could be likened to Emerson's and Robson Rampa's sub-consciousness. According to Rampa, the conscious is brilliant; it knows everything that you have ever known, can do everything that you could ever do, and can remember every single incident since long before you were born. Africans believe that the guardian or personal god (or sub-consciousness) influences the soul or the mind who in turn influences the body. Ultimately, God is the ultimate controller of other forces. It is most likely that what goes on among the body, the soul and the guardian spirit could be disturbed by elemental or witchcraft, and consequently, the life chart determined by On or Chi (guardian self or spirit) would be disturbed equally. Under this condition, the personality of the person would be distorted. It is, perhaps, when some elemental generated by magic and sorcery take over control of the body and the soul from the guardian spirit that the personality suffers misfortunes, and some would interpret that as one's destiny. However, destiny as is literally constructed here becomes problematic.

#### Rite of Passages or Rhythms of Life

Passages of life mean transformation in the life cycle. The cycle of life, commences from the

conception of a child and ends in death. Thus, in African ontology, birth, puberty, marriage and death are important turning points. Here existence precedes essence whereby persons are metaphysically and sociologically remade into new being with new social roles. Unfruitful marriage is a misfortune and a curse; this is because the couple does not contribute to the continuity of the family and human race. Hence, in barrenness, oracles are consulted to know why the barrenness. Thus, when menstruation ceases in a normal woman, the people know that a child is on the way; oracles are consulted to know taboos for the pregnant woman. In some families the husband may not have sex with the wife after pregnancy has been noticed. She may not have extramarital sex, and she may not eat some kinds of food. The woman must not walk in the night to avoid coming across the spirit of "abiku"-born to die. On the day of delivery a mid-wife is always around. If difficult labour is experienced, oracles are consulted to know the cause of the difficult labour for necessary propitiation to be done. When the child is finally born, there is joy and the oracle is again consulted to know some taboos to be observed and to know which divinity will be protecting the child. The child remains indoors for some days until the naming ceremony. The name given to the child depicts the situation under which the child was born. There is no elaborate puberty rite among the Yoruba except circumcision for the boys and in some families clitoridectomy takes place among the girls. And as a sign of general maturity, some girls tattoo their bodies which is a sign of beauty and preparation to marry. Every African society recognizes this stage in a man's life and performs rituals accordingly. Among the Africans, marriage is the affair of a family; hence, investigations are done on family basis to avoid any serious disease or scandal. The families must not be related. Oracles are consulted to know if the partners are alright for each other. But now the

role of the parents is lessened because their children may talk of marriage even before the knowledge of the parents. However, the role of intermediary is still persistent. He tries to bring the parties together and after they have known themselves, he backs out. Later, some money, gin and other things are sent to the parents of the girl for blessing. After the girl's parents have assented to the marriage, the bride-price follows. Then comes the marriage, which the Yoruba's call Igeiyawo- "carrying of the wife" which usually takes place at night. At the entrance of the bridegroom home the bride's feet are washed by the women of the house-this is to clean her of all defilements. As soon as the feet are washed, one elderly man carries her into the house without allowing her feet to touch the ground-hence the idea of Igeiyawo- "carrying the wife". One may stay in confinement for 5 days depending on the family, during which time she is given best food and tender care. On the fifth day, there is ceremony called "Igbale Iyawo" - the sweeping of the ground by the bride which introduces her into domestic responsibility. In some areas, the bride goes to her family on the 15th day accompanied by some girls or women from her husband's family. She takes with her prepared food to show how rich her husband's family is. After 5 days, she goes back to her husband with all her belongings.

Eschatologically, the Africans believe in life after death. Death is called "iku" in Yoruba land and is called "onwu" in Igbo land. There is one myth about death. One of them being that death began to kill because death's mother was killed. One may ask: Who was the mother of death? However, the most orthodox belief among the Yorubas is that iku is a creation of Olodumare- made for the specific purpose of recalling any person whose time on earth is fulfilled. It is a debt all must pay. Death to the Igbos and Yorubas is for the aged; hence youthful death is

frowned at. Death can be deferred by the intervention of God or any other divinity. The myth of deferring death concludes by saying that henceforth- *iku* (death) takes away only those who do not put themselves under the protection of Orunmila, unless those who are absolutely ready to go home. However, the Yorubas know that little can be done even to defer death when "*iku*-death is ready. Hence, the saying: It is sickness that can be healed; death cannot be healed. At death the soul leaves the body. But where it goes is an epistemological problem. Some believe that it goes underground, beneath the soil where it is buried, but the most plausible explanation is that, since it is a spirit, it exists in the spirit world, the world of unidentified flying objects in heaven, earth or underground. For clarity sake, the soul is distinct from the ghost. The ghost is the apparition or spectre of a dead person. The phantasmic appearances of a dying or recently dead person is different, but very common among Africans, occultists or black magicians who were buried with magical elements in their bodies that phantasmically appear, hunt and trouble those alive. In this case, it is not really within the powers of the deceased to appear as ghost, but the powers of the magic and occultic powers buried with him.

Ordinarily the soul of a human being joins the community of the spirits of the departed or the ancestors. To the Africans, death is not the end of life. It is a transition to after life. They believe that the 'after life' is superior to today's life. Hence, what is done today must be done with due regard to this great future. This belief is attested to in several ways- old people are heard saying: I am going home. The old ones are also heard talking to relatives who have gone before; sometimes, when the dead is to be buried, Africans sacrifice fowl to make the road easy for him. Some articles are enclosed in the coffin when the dead is to be buried so that the dead can make use of them

in the after-life. Messages are sent to dead folks and relatives. People do dream of their dead relatives. Even some stories are said of seeing a departed relative in the market; ancestors who act as a communion with ancestors. Libation is always poured by Africans to the ancestors who act as a check on the family; and finally, some ancestral cults like *Egungu* and *Oro* in Yoruba land and *Mmonwu* in Igbo land are usually celebrated. Such is the practice in most black African societies.

### Man and Other Beings

Ontologically speaking, the idea of man is viewed from the understanding of his relations with other beings. The ontological beings or categories in African thought are God, Spirits (gods); man, animals and plant, phenomena and objects. Alexis Kagaome, writing on Bantu culture, recognized the categories of localization being (time and space) and modal being (accidental or modification being) in Africa ontology. In this ontological order, God, spirits (gods) and man are beings with intelligence. While things like plants, objects and phenomena are bereft of intelligence; God is the supreme being that informs and controls others. The spirits and gods are being made up of superhuman beings and spirit of men who died. Man includes human beings and those yet to be born. Man has lesser intelligence in relation to God and spirits. But he is of greater intelligence in relation to animals and earth creatures, and that is why he is a *homo sapiens*. Inanimate objects like stones have intelligence. According to Mbiti, man is the centre of this ontology. Animals, plants and natural phenomena and objects constitute the environment in which man lives, is provided a means of existence and, if necessary, man establishes a mystical relationship with them. In African thought, man has power greater than that of all created beings. Though he is not the strongest of all created beings, he can use his

intelligence to outwit those who are physically more powerful. But man is dependent on God. God and powers (spirits) surrounding him and so, religion is very essential to his well-being, because it shows him how to remain in harmony with the God and spirits, for the realization of his goals and aspiration.

The power of man grow or diminish and all kinds of magical and other powers of man justified by their usefulness to it. Man belong to a community and they are related to other beings both living and dead. The power of a dead man, if not his whole personality, may return in a kind of re- incarnation to strengthen his name, his property and his clan.

The ontological order is, according to Mbiti, (1969) an anthropocentric one. It is a complete unity. It is an ontological wholism. Any attempt to remove one of the categories will result to a disharmony which is very harmful to man and society. In the ontological categories are the spiritual powers which the African believes can be tapped and manipulated by medicine men, witches, priests and rainmakers for the success of their vacations. Ontological wholism is precisely the root of African philosophy of society, which is communalism or kingship system. Africans conceive man as being with a distinct nature and intelligence. This determines the kind of being he is and defines the end he must realize to become a full being.

### Man and Society

African conception of man is that of a living animal being but also a rational being. Men are always in need of society in order to realize their capacities. Therefore, the society in an African traditional setting is natural. No man lives in isolation of others, he is like a part in relation to the whole.

Africans would agree with Aristotle that a social instinct is implanted in man by nature and that anyone unable to live in society or who has no need of it is either a beast or a god, but not a human being. Man cannot be separated from the society and the principle of justice, communalism and kingship system upon which it depends. The society is therefore organic in nature.

One of the western theories that may not historically be identified with African culture is the Hobbesian state of nature. According to Hobbes, man lived in a state of misery until the emergency of society or the state. According to him, "the state of nature is brutish, nasty, poor, short and solitary". He says that man is inherently wicked and to ensure the happiness of all, individuals had to consent to give up their natural rights, right to do whatever they want. Natural right means different things from natural law, for Hobbes. According to him, natural law is the state of nature, which is the state of war of each against all. For the Africans and some western liberals like John Locke and Rousseau, men are reasonable and moral, and are guided by moral values. But in Africa, since man has that irrationality in him which can sublimate at any time and place and, since some men are defenseless and weak, the society has a way of maintaining peace and order by checking lawlessness, capriciousness and other anti-society behaviours. African communalism and kinship presuppose rationality. I do not believe that Hobbesian state of nature was a historical period. If it was, historians have it as a duty to tell us when it was in European period not in African history.

I have the conviction that the Hobbesian state of nature can reasonably be a condition which humanity or any race can enter or come out of. A state of political or economic anarchy is a state of nature. Many nations and societies have at one time been in this condition and they could be described as

having been in the state of nature. From social and observable facts, modern world is degenerating into the Hobbesian state of nature and anarchy. The life of the masses is characterized by poverty, misery and indigence; the rich is getting richer while the poor is getting poorer. The phenomenon, in recent time, gripped African societies because of contact with the irrationalities of western civilization; one may say that the historical memories of cases of intertribal wars in ancient Africa is a state of anarchy which was a state of nature in Hobbesian sense. What is the case is that ancient African intertribal wars existed among ethnic groups. These ethnic groups were nationalists who had a duty to protect the safety and interest of their citizens. The wars were fought to restore balance and rationality in the ontological order in the entire African society but within ethnic rationalities; a state of anarchy or what Thomas Hobbes calls "state of nature" could not, therefore, be said to be present. Hobbesian state of nature is applied to individual relations as well as to ethnic relations. If intertribal wars could be construed as irrational and therefore a sign of Hobbesian state of nature, such irrationality cannot be said to exist among individuals within ethnic society. A state of anarchy or what Hobbes calls "state of nature" could be said to be present and the war fought between x and y and z could hardly stand for Hobbesian state of nature. It might not be as well irrational, for it could be a rational course to restore order in the society.

African conception of man is existential but not necessarily the existentialism of Satre, Simone de Beauvoir, Heidegger and Kierkegaard of Western philosophy. African world is considered to be a dynamic one with man surrounded by forces, which can influence him. Ethically speaking, Africans might believe that existence precedes essence; but when it comes to power, wealth and prestige, African cosmology stands out significantly as one of those

thoughts that believe that essence precedes existence. Africans believe in the dynamic of natures of the universe and human life.

"Beings are not fixed in an unchanging nature, or condemned in fatalist manner to stay always in a predestined lot. The great efforts that are made to 'Get up' to increase power and prestige, in wealth and learning, observation of the world, its powers, possibilities and effects upon human life"

African culture is strongly theistic inspite of this seeming position. In ethical consideration, the African believes that existence precedes essence. This is because there are already mapped out or pre-determined rules or moral codes for man to observe. These rules and morals are for the peaceful coexistence of the society. African communalism is the philosophy behind this attitude. It also underscores African theistic humanism.

For the existentialist, "men are active and creative while things are not. Things are simply what they are." But men might be other than what they are. "Man, according to the existentialist, must not subject themselves to pre-determined rules and principles. It is only things that are determined. For them, in terms of ethics, learning, power and wealth, existence precedes essence. "Men make their essences as they go along and do not live out a pre-determined essence of blue-print. According to Satre man makes himself a lack of being stand before him for judgement" This kind of existentialist view of life is strongly atheistic, and it is capable of setting in disorder in the society which is reminiscent of Thomas Hobbes' state of nature. However, another Western existentialist, Martin Heidegger emphasized on being. For him, "man lets being be, thereby meaning that man must somehow let nature or objects reveal themselves as they really and essentially are".



This is implying that essence precedes existence, that is to say, that nature has explanation for everything.

### Destiny and Predestination

Destiny and predestination are philosophical concept which can be found in many cultures. In African cultures, they present philosophical problems and puzzles. Causality is implied in destiny and predestination. Causation is the relation between cause and effect. It takes place by process of causation that is, bringing about effect by cause. When applied to human life, it becomes predestination. Causation is the relation between two things when the first is necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence of the second. For example if A cause B (A-B), then A is a sufficient and necessary condition for the occurrence of B. But the idea is problematic. According to David Hume, causation cannot be based on reason or observation because reason can only tell us of logical relations, and if the cause and effect were logically related, that is, if the occurrence of the cause entailed that of the effect, they would be one thing and not two. That means that if the cause 'A' and effect 'B' are related, they would be one and the same thing. Any distinction between them is illusion. Another problem is whether causality is regularity. It has been pointed out that regularity may be causal and in some cases accidental. Can we, then, say that the destiny of a man is but of clarity sake? I wish to distinguish between two notions of destiny as it pertains to man: first, destiny as casually determined patterns of a person's existence and second, destiny as causally determined pattern of human or a man's life which is what is ordinarily called predestination.

In African thoughts, the first refers to significant periods in man's life like birth, initiation, marriage, death etc. While the second refers to the position, status, movement, and so on, of individuals on earth. The former is the destiny of a persons

existence while the later is the destiny of human or man's life, which is predestination. The destiny of human existence is the rhythms of nature which is necessarily unavoidable in African thought. It can be described as causal regularity. This rhythm of nature, is expressed vividly by Mbiti (1969) as follows,

On the level of individual include birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, procreation. old age, death, entry into the community of the departed and finally entry in the company of spirit...On the community or national level, there is the cycle of seasons with different activities like sowing, cultivating, harvesting and hunting. . . .

These are religious rhythm. Religious ceremonies and rites mark them. In the rhythm of nature, death does not put an end to existence; it continues after physical death. The man enters into the world of his ancestors. Relatives and friends who knew him in this life and who have survived him remember him. They remember him by name. This remembrance by name may continue for up to five generations. The person will only be regarded as completely dead when all those who knew him have died. The departed person who is remembered by name is "the living dead". The living dead is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of spirits. The living dead is believed to be in a state of personal immortality. This is the metaphysical thought process underlying the institution of marriage in Africa. It is an ontological justification for "polygamy". This is because the more children one has, the more 'he will be remembered when he dies. Physical procreation is therefore an absolute way of ensuring that one is not cut off from personal immortality" According to Mbiti's study of Bantu people, at a point when the

living dead is no longer remembered by name, the process of dying is completed and he enters into the state of collective immortality with others. In this state, the living dead are incorporated into a body of intermediaries between God and man. The living dead, at this stage are on the same pedestal with divinities and gods of the communities, which may not have been human beings. At this point, they lost their personalities and if they are remembered at all, it is in genealogies. This could mean the end of the destiny existence. The kind of causality involved can be the regularity of the rhythms of nature. For the metaphysical justification of this destiny of man's existence, I shall employ Kagame's theory of pre-existence and existential movement. In Bantu thought, Kagame in accordance with the principle of causality, postulated a pre-existence by virtue of which the essence pass to be higher stage of existence. This pre-existence cannot be identified with the categories of being, that is, men and things. It is a necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of existence. Man and thing, Kagame says, Bantu culture does not identify it with God. This is however problematic because he could misinterpret Bantu culture at this point or he could be taking what is apparent for what is real. If Bantu culture believes in Supreme Being and it could not identify the pre-existent with God, what else could it identify God with? On the other hand, Bantu culture could not be said to be atheistic. Africans generally are theistic. According to Kagame, the existents after being causally informed by the pre-existent, continue in their movement towards their pre-destined journey. Existential movement is an attribute of existents and not pre-existent because the later can have no 'before' or 'after'. Existential movement is the transition from non-being to beings. It may be imminent or visible. Each existent "act or is acted upon in accordance with the dynamic disposition of its nature". Human beings and animals form a

special category among existents because they have the attributes of life. For clarity sake existence and life are separate concepts here. Both are attributes of man and animal. Existence continues after life in the case of man.

This is because man's vital principle of intelligence continues to exist where as the vital principle of animals vanishes at the moment of death. After life or physical death man continues in his destiny towards the state of personal immortality and collective immortality. Therefore, the destiny of person's existence in African thought, therefore, is his being acted upon in accordance with the disposition of his nature; that is, existential movement which is the passage through birth, initiation, puberty, marriage, death, personal immortality and collective immortality.

The popular conceived notion in Africa is that one's life pattern is causally determined. This is popularly known as predestination in almost all the societies and communities in Africa. Africans believe that one's life is already charted out by his personal god. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, the personal god is called Ori. The Igbo of Nigeria call it Chi. The Akan of Ghana call it Sunsum. The personal god of every man is interested in his affair. What one is on earth depends on his personal god. It is said that no one knows when the good or bad one is chosen until one gets to the world. One is successful because that is his choice and one is poor or unlucky because he made that choice through his personal god. The concept of predestination is so common in Africa that any critical comment on that seems paradoxical. It is our duty as philosophers to question the epistemological foundations of our thoughts and if necessary, metaphysically discover the coherence of what is apparently incoherent. The apparent contradictions is obvious to a rational inquirer. However, the dissolution or resolution of these contradictions tend

to show the humanistic trajectory of African culture. In Africa, the notion that whatever 'will be will' is very rampant. Some lazy men or never-do-wells take consolation in the belief that their laziness is predetermined. A man who could not prosper in trading might be justified on the ground that he is not destined to be a trader; and that perhaps his destiny might be in wine tapping or farming. A school dropout in school might say that education is not his destiny that he might do better in some other thing. People, while talking about a man who steals, might say that it is in his blood, that is, it is his destiny. Some would blame their adversities or reverses in life on witchcraft or sorcery: If these ideas of destiny were to be, then existential movement made by individual existents (human being) would be causally determined either for failure or success in one aspect of life or the other. This sounds unreasonable. Hence, the idea of existential movement should be movement, in terms of birth, imitation, puberty and so on. A critical note on the idea of personal god in African thought could be a hypothesis or myth, which is open to many interpretations. The interpretation given to it by people not only begs the question but also results to a lot of contradictions. It is said that a person through his personal god decides what would be his life chart before he is born. That doctrine of pre-destination tends to show that free willism is no longer there at birth into the world. I would rather believe that personal god, which is predicted on freedom of the will in heaven is still there in the world. There are some propositions in African thought that contradicts this idea of destiny. Among the Ibos, for instance, it is believed that if a man believes firmly that he can achieve something, his personal god would equally share with him the believe firmly. An Igbo adage says "Onye kwe Chi ya ekwe," literally translated: if one say 'yes', his personal god will say 'yes'. Among the Yorubas, it is similarly said: "Ki Ori Inu wa ka ma ba

ti ode je" It is always said in form of prayer. It means the inner head (one's God or Chi) should always be appealed to, to guide what we intend to do on earth. It is believed that if your inner head or being is not okay, it could affect one's progress in life. In some areas a man who encounter difficulty in his undertaking is made to believe that with much effort he can succeed. For example, in Ghana it is supported by the adage, which says "if poverty overtakes you, do not give up till better days come" These saying and adages of African people contradict the apparent meaning of predestination. They show that man still has the free will to alter whatever may have been purportedly decided for him by his personal god. Also the institutions of praise, blame, reward and punishment show that there is nothing immutable about predestination. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, "the father of the hero, Okonkwo, Unoka was rejected by the society for his failure and indulgence in lazy man's art of flute playing. His son, Okonkwo, was exalted for his military powers and success in life". The fact that the society rejected Unoka shows that there was nothing immutable and necessary about predestination. Free-willism is an element of African culture, which shows that predestination does not determine every minute detail of one's life. It presupposes intelligence and rationality. And African culture recognize man as having the greatest intelligence quotient of all created beings. Man with his free-will can influence his life. Kwasi Wiredu in his book, *Philosophy and African Culture*, says,

If you take a case such as one in which a man is supposed to be broadly destined to be, say a philosopher, it means quite plausible to suggest that he still retains free will and accountability in that it is still open to him whether he shall be, say an idealist or a materialist or something else altogether.

According to Wiredu, the idea of destiny, that is, the idea that whatever happens, happens of necessity can be shown to be fallacious by the method of logic. One thing certain about a man's life is that it will consist of a series of events. Hence, to say events will necessarily be what they will be is to utter a tautology.

But to say of one event that is unavoidable is to make empirical claim about the particular event which can be justified, justifiable, only by reference to the character of its antecedents together with any relevant empirical laws. Such a claim could never be a logical consequence of tautology since tautology cannot say anything in particular about any particular thing

Therefore, the idea that whatever will happen will happen is fallacious because as a tautology it contradicts the empirical claim people make about the thing in question. The thrust of his argument is to show that the conception of destiny as literally understood by some Africans philosophically is fraught with difficulties. It can be safe to argue that the conception of 'destiny' in the sense that 'whatever will happen will happen' is either a tautology which does not have any empirical significance to African people's world view, or an empirical claim backed up by a series of empirical antecedents, which is contingent, unnecessary and falsifiable by any counterfactual condition. Again in the face of whatever role free-will has to play roles in the life of the individuals. God is not blamed for whatever misfortune that befalls man.

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