

**ÌFÉ-INÚ AND SOCIAL ORDER IN YORÙBÁ
THOUGHT SYSTEM**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

To the most Supreme Being, *Olódùmarè: A tẹ̀ rẹ̀rẹ̀ kárí ayé* (the Almighty that manifests Himself across the universe) and my ever supportive and adorable mother, Madam Shakirat A. Ẹnífẹni.

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ABSTRACT

Ìfẹ́-Inú, the *human will* in Yorùbá ontology, exercises considerable influence on social order, which is the harmonious functioning of different facets of society to enhance human flourishing and development. However, the persistence of social disorder has made sustenance of peace and development difficult in contemporary society due to lack of consideration for *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. Earlier studies on social order have emphasised the physical actions of the human person, either as individuals or collectives, as determinants of social order while under-exploring the state of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, which produces, as well as drives decisions and actions in human persons. This study, therefore, philosophically examined *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and how it is mediated in Yorùbá thought to initiate decisions and actions, with a view to promoting a morally desirable social order that will guarantee peace and sustainable development.

The study adopted Emile Durkheim's methodological holism and Herbert Spencer's methodological individualism as framework. Holism explains social order on the basis of an understanding of social institutions while individualism bases social order on individuals' behaviours and conducts. Six relevant texts in the philosophy of the social sciences, five on ontology and six on Yoruba culture which deal extensively with the concept of the human person in relation to social order were purposively selected. The analytic, critical and reconstructive methods were employed in this study. The analytic method was used to elucidate the importance of the human will and social order. The critical method was employed to interrogate how social order is guaranteed through the mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá culture, while the reconstructive method was used to determine the constitution of *omolúwàbí* (a virtuous person) through the mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

Texts in the philosophy of the social sciences established that human persons are determinants of social order, but did not consider *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in its ontological and moral dimensions as very significant in their explanations, and therefore, under-explored the connection between social order and the state of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. Texts on ontology revealed the importance of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as the initiator and driver of decisions and actions in human persons. Texts on Yorùbá culture revealed that *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is mediated by culture to ensure the formation of *omolúwàbí*. *Omolúwàbí* exhibits such virtues as trust, honesty, inter-dependence, integrity, cooperation and perseverance necessary for harmonious living. Critical reflections revealed that the mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* ensures that citizens are socialised to become *omolúwàbí*. At the normative level, *ìwà* (character) is central to the formation of *omolúwàbí* and character development serves as the basis for taming the negative traits of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. The mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* by culture, to produce *omolúwàbí* who will promote social order, addresses the role of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in the areas of desires, actions and decisions which form the basis for the promotion of a morally desirable social order pursuant to the quest for peace and sustainable development in society.

The mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yoruba culture which produces *omolúwàbí* is capable of enhancing the promotion of a morally desirable social order. Therefore, *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is fundamental to peace and sustainable development in society.

Key words: *Ìfẹ́-Inú, Omolúwàbí, Human will, Yorùbá thought system, Social order.*

Word count: 498

INTRODUCTION

This study presents the Yorùbá conception and mediation of the human *will* through the lens of culture and its role in engendering social order. As a result of this focus, the study addresses three commitments: The investigation and exploration of the conceptions of a person in Western and Yorùbá cultures with particular interest in their distinct ideas of the human will. Second is the re-invigoration of the discourse on the subject-matter of social order while the demonstration of the link as well as causal relation between the idea of the human will as mediated within Yorùbá culture and the existence of social order.

With our choice of the Yorùbá belief system on the conception and mediation of the human will, the study demonstrates the clear understanding that discourses on social order have been predominantly anchored on the Western ontological orientation of individual human will; that is, contributions to social order discourse are mostly dominated by the individualistic character of the human will in Western tradition, for example, the liberal democracy and its presuppositions.

Although, the fundamental problem of identifying the Yorùbá equivalent of the human *will* in written literature arises, however, research revealed that there are oral indications that show the rich knowledge and conception of the human *will* in Yorùbá thought. Therefore, this study interrogates both the written literatures on Yorùbá conception of a person and the Yorùbá oral literatures like *Òwe* (proverbs), *Odù Ifá* (*Ifá* literary corpus), and *Òrọ̀ Àgbà* (wise-sayings) to arrive at the Yorùbá equivalent and conception of the *human will* as *Ìfẹ̀-inú*. On arrival at this notion, we proceed to demonstrate the significance of culture in mediating the *Ìfẹ̀-inú* of an individual for the purpose of engendering social order. And finally, we demonstrate how this can be employed to solve the problem of disorders in our contemporary societies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The under-explored connection between explanations (of the existence and persistence) of social order and the ontological conception of the human *will* is the defining problematic of this study. In a broader sense, the significant role that the ontological

conception of the human *will* plays in the theoretical considerations of the question of social order is what this study addresses.

This problematic has two dimensions: The first is the under-exploration of the significance of ontological conception of the human *will* in the methodological holists and individualists explanations/analyses of social order. In other words, *human will* as the element that initiates decisions and actions in a person has received inadequate attention in the analyses/explanations of methodological holism and individualism on the subject-matter of social order, yet scholars of these theories hardly speculate about social order without recourse to the individuals, especially the conducts, decisions, and actions of individuals.

The second dimension of the problem of this study derives implicitly from the first one above. And this has to do with the consensus between methodological holists and individualists on social order that the individual is autonomous in taking decisions and actions that have consequences (positive or negative) for the existence and persistence of social order. The issue here is the overt emphasis placed on the autonomy of the individual. This emphasis, as it is very obvious, is rooted in Western ontological conception of human nature which glorifies the individual for possessing a *will*. This conception establishes the conviction that the individual is autonomous, and therefore, supreme over the collectivity.

This problem of Western glorification of individual constitutes a major factor in the discourse on social order, particularly in the area of the conception of the human *will*. In order to show this, we turn to the Yorùbá belief system and show how the individualistic conception of the human *will* is mediated to enhance social order. This mediated human *will*, though autonomous, is made to decide and act in the interest of the society.

A concise discourse on social order, the conception of the human *will* in Western intellectual tradition, and the Yoruba idea of the human *will* is desirable. The issue of social order is central to any explanation or analysis of social reality. And it remains one fundamental problem that has continued to occupy the attention of social philosophers and theorists since antiquity. Conceptually, social order is about how people behave in society, which is basically needed for society to function properly¹; that is, the notion of social order

¹Bessant, J.& Watts, R.*Sociology*, 2002, P 128

refers to the stable patterns of social expectations and the problems of what make societies cohere, and how this cohesion is sustained.

Theoretical consideration of the existence and persistence of social order in society dates back to the Sophists (particularly Protagoras) when they insisted that ‘Man is the measure of all things’², meaning that any explanation of how social order exists and persists can only be understood through the activities, actions, inactions, and decisions of individuals.

However, systematic explanations of the existence and persistence of social order in society first appeared in the work of Auguste Comte who employed scientific methods to explain societal origins and developments. This great theoretical achievement derived from Comte’s belief that:

...the methods established in the natural sciences could be applied to the study of society’s origins and developments. Although Comte did not develop a theoretical perspective... *however* he made an important contribution to the theories of social development. Comte provided an evolutionary account of how society developed and changed: he believed that the development of the human mind, and thereby of knowledge and belief, was closely related to the way in which society was organised³

There is no doubt from the submission above that Comte was the first to engage in a systematic explanation of society. Beyond this, implicit in the submission is the commitment to the view that the existence and persistence of social order can only be explained through an understanding of the social system rather than through the activities of the constituting individuals..

This classical position of explaining social order (and other social phenomena) through the social whole, rather than through the constituting parts, is popularly known as methodological holism. In a more technical sense, methodological holism – sometime called positivism in recognition of Comte’s contribution – is

a philosophical concept *which* refers to a particular set of assumptions about the world and about appropriate ways of studying it. In general, positivists see ‘society’ as more important than the ‘individual’. For example, they point out that individuals are born, take their place in society and then die, but society continues largely undisturbed. Moreover, positivists suggest that

²Pojman, L. P. *Who are we? Theories of Human Nature*, 2006, P 30-31

³Marsh, I.et. al., *Classic and Contemporary Readings in Sociology*, 1998, P54

people are the puppets of society, i.e. they are controlled by social forces emanating from the organisation of society. This is because they believe that just as there are natural laws governing the behaviour of chemicals, elements, plants, animals, e.t.c., so there are social forces or laws governing and determining the operations of the social world, particularly our everyday experiences and life chances. Such laws are the product of the way society or social group is socially organised, i.e. its social structure, and are beyond human influence⁴.

In view of the above, Comte bequeathed to his successors this classical doctrine of explanation of social phenomena through the whole rather than the parts. With little but significant modification, later social theorists and philosophers – Marx and Durkheim – followed this line of thought of Comte.

For instance, in Marx's philosophy, there is the insistence that a thorough explanation of any social phenomenon can only be achieved through the understanding or analysis of the society's economic whole. This is because Marx strongly "believed that the overall structure of society is heavily influenced by how the economy is organised"⁵. Furthermore, Marx insists that "society is a set of interdependent parts that work together to maintain the system over time"; in fact, "he considered social change and unrest to be natural occurrences in a society's evolution towards stability and perfection", and hence "thought that no steps should be taken to correct social ills"⁶. Furthermore, Durkheim equally embraced this doctrine when he admits "beliefs and values of the society (particularly religion) as the glue that hold society together"⁷.

A mechanistic conception of individual dominates the analysis of social order (and other social phenomena) as appeared in the explanations of these methodological holists. And it is this mechanistic conception of individual that later became the very undoing of methodological holism as an inadequate and unreliable doctrine to explain social phenomena. This is because it did not take into account the reality of human conducts and behaviours, and the fundamental roles they play in shaping and reshaping social affairs. In fact, Durkheim's classical position – being a foremost representative of this doctrine – could not stand the test of time because "Durkheim did not consider the thoughts and feelings of individuals within

⁴Mcneil, P.& Chapman, S.*Research Methods*, 2005, P15

⁵ Thomas, L. *Sociology: The Study of Human Relationships*, 1995, P10

⁶*ibid*, P 11

⁷*ibid*,P 12

society”⁸, and therefore completely falls out of favour as an adequate explanation of social order.

With a very significant modification, Max Weber offers explanation of social phenomena with considerable incorporation of human factors, although he “was interested more in groups within society than in social whole and this emphasis on group led him to analyse the effects of society on the individual. However, he believes that social theories must try to uncover the feelings and thoughts of individuals”⁹. The mere appearance of the individual as well as individual’s feelings and thoughts in the explanation of social phenomena by Weber (and others like Popper and Mill) qualifies him as an advocate of methodological individualism. This theory depicts the importance of the individual in the explanation of social phenomena like the social order.

Thus, in contrast to methodological holism, methodological individualism is the doctrine that aimed at explaining and understanding broad society-wide developments as the aggregate of decisions by individuals. It is the philosophical view that social phenomena are, in principle, only explicable in terms of individuals’ actions¹⁰. As an alternative doctrine to methodological holism in the explanation of social phenomena, methodological individualism enjoys wide acceptability among modern and contemporary social theorists for two technical reasons: that it is the individual rather than the society that has ontological existence and that the whole is in the final analysis reducible to the individual. In other words, “social phenomena are a result of individual behaviour and action and therefore any attempt of analysis above the individual is not possible...thus the focus on individualism is on explaining human behaviour because it is only the individual that exists”¹¹.

Thus, inherent in methodological individualism is the salient and fundamental issue of ontological orientation about the human *will*, particularly as it regards the question of the existence and persistence of social order. For instance, *why* does individual take decision and action that sometimes (or often times) threatens or enhances social order? This fundamental problem has more to do with the underlying ontological conception of human nature especially the human *will*, this view receives clarity in the assertion that:

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Schumpeter, J.A. “Methodological Individualism” in *Institutum Europaeum*, 1908, P 1-8

¹¹ Bone, J.D. “The Social Map and The Problem of Order: A Re-evaluation of *Homo Sociologicus*” in *Theory and Science*, 2005, P 7

implicit within this perspective (that is methodological individualism) is that humans have total free *will* and are thus given complete agency in regard to their behaviours and attitudes¹².

In this regard, it is clearly revealed that methodological individualism identifies with a fundamental element in human nature that allows the theory to remain faithful to the analytical core of individualism. In other words, methodological individualists stress the emergence and sustenance of social institutions and phenomena as the consequences of human actions (intended and unintended); therefore, point to the view that knowledge of human *will* is significant and worthy of theoretical exploration.

In fact, some important arguments against methodological individualism are directly connected to the ontological conception of the human *will*. That is, the criticisms against methodological individualism, that it provides too much autonomy to the individual and that it has low predictive power, arising out of the ontological conviction that individual's *will* is free and remains absolutely free in performing its function of initiating decision and action in individual.

Hence, the shortcomings of methodological individualism fundamentally reside in its basic assumption about the nature of the individual which derives from the ontological conception and conviction that the human *will* is a possession of the individual, therefore it is free. This conception of the *will* defines the free acting and deciding individual that forms the basis of explanation for methodological individualism. Thus, individual decides and acts 'freely' (by aid of the *will*) to either threaten or sustain social order.

On this basis, it is utterly important to unveil the metaphysical foundation of this *will* possessed and freely exercised by the individual in Western thought. In the history of Western philosophy, Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche are overtly categorised as philosophers of the *will*; and this is not because the duo are the only ones that engage in the discourse on the *will* in Western philosophy. Rather, it is because both thinkers took the intellectual orientation of the West about the *will* to its apogee. Therefore, Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's expositions of the *will* constitute important Western ontological conception of the human *will*.

¹²*ibid*

In historical sequence, Schopenhauer was the first to take the exposition of the *will* to its intellectual apogee. However, he inherited from his predecessors the conception that the *will* is a non-physical element that is specifically an aspect of the human mind/soul. That is, philosophers before Schopenhauer have established that the *will* is an aspect of the human mind/soul and that it is responsible for initiating deliberate decisions and actions that are exhibited by human being. By this, it means that human characters, decisions, actions, and inactions are driven by the immaterial element called the *will* in human nature.

For Schopenhauer, the *will* is the principle of life in man; in his words, “the element and indestructible element in man – that which constitutes the principle of life in man – is not the soul, but....the radical part of the soul; this is the *will*”¹³. The submission above clearly indicates Schopenhauer’s commitment to the conviction that the *will* is immaterial by nature as traditionally held by his intellectual forerunners since antiquity. In addition, the submission indicates that the *will* is not just an element in man, but an essential one without which human nature will remain indefinable.

In fact, to clearly demonstrate the distinctiveness of the *will* in human ontology, Schopenhauer claims that:

The world as idea is a mirror which reflects the *will*. In this mirror the *will* recognizes itself in ascending grades of distinctness and completeness, the highest of which is man, whose nature, however, receives its complete expression only through the integrated series of his actions¹⁴.

With fundamental clarity, Schopenhauer advanced the glorification of the individual as a result of the *will* in the nature of man, which he claims is unfettered. In other words, Schopenhauer proclaims that individuals – as conscious and reflective beings – interpret the world. To establish this conviction, Schopenhauer writes that:

To the subject of knowing, who appears as an individual only through his identity with the body, this body is given in two entirely different ways. It is given in intelligent perception as representation, as an object among objects, liable to the laws of these objects. But it is also given in quite a different way, namely as what is known immediately to everyone, and is denoted by the word *will*. Every true act of his *will* is also at once and inevitably a movement of his body; he cannot actually *will* the act without at

¹³Schopenhauer, A. *The Wisdom of Schopenhauer*, 1911, P 19

¹⁴*ibid*, *The World as Will and Idea*, 1995, P 54

the same time being aware that it appears as a movement of the body. The act of *will* and the action of the body are not two different states objectively known connected by the bond of causality; they do not stand in the relation of cause and effect, but are one and the same thing, though given in two entirely different ways, first quite directly, and then in perception for the understanding. The action of the body is nothing but the act of *will* objectified¹⁵.

Accordingly, Schopenhauer's conception "is not the principle of self-consciousness and rationally-infused *will*, but is rather...a mindless, aimless, non-rational urge at the foundation of *individual's* instinctual drives and at the foundational being of everything"¹⁶. In this respect, the *will* puts desires first and it is expected that the world conforms to the *will* in order to suits these desires.

Thus, Schopenhauer's insistence on the significance of the functions of the *will* in human ontology as regard human conducts has direct influence on his successors in Western philosophy. The greatest influence this conception had was on Nietzsche; hence, the concept of the *will* came to Nietzsche through the teachings and writings of Schopenhauer. Thus, no doubt, Nietzsche agrees with Schopenhauer in using the *will* as the foundation of his own philosophy.

Without contention, Nietzsche's clearest statement about the *will* is whether it is strong or weak; according to him, "in real life it is only a question of strong and weak *will*"¹⁷. It is on this note that he takes the Western ontological glorification of the individual to a higher level, he posits that:

Today the taste and virtue of the time weaken and thin out the *will*. Therefore ...it is precisely strength of *will*, hardness, and capacity for long-range decisions which must form part of the concept of "greatness"¹⁸.

Without much ado, any careful observer will notice that the human *will* in Western ontology of a person is individualistic and clearly unfettered with the views and thoughts of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. And this conception of an unfettered individual's *will*, as we

¹⁵*ibid*, P 1

¹⁶Wicks, R. "Arthur Schopenhauer" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition)

¹⁷ Nietzsche, F. *The Portable Nietzsche*, 1976, P 529

¹⁸*ibid*, P 445

have earlier demonstrated, underlies the Western conviction that the individual is an absolute autonomous being that shapes social realities as s/he so decides and acts.

The Yorùbá conception of the human *will*, on the other hand, have been given ambiguous interpretations in written literatures on Yorùbá conception of a person. In written literatures on Yoruba ontological conception of human personality, it is the case that there is an unclear conception of the *will*. This is so because we find the treatment of the *will* to be obscure and incoherent in the few available literatures on Yorùbá ontology.

In spite of the difficulty in locating the Yorùbá equivalent of the *will* in written literature, evidences abound that indicate that the Yorùbá people share in the experience of the idea of a *will*. For example, the Yorùbá describe someone whose conduct derives from a *will* as *Ó nímò ara è nìkan*, meaning a self-centred person (and a self-centred person is someone interested only in oneself).

There is also a lot that point to the conception of the idea of a *will* in Yoruba wise sayings, for instance:

*Ajeje owó kan kò gbé ẹrù d'órí*¹⁹ – meaning A single hand cannot lift a calabash of luggage on the head. This simply suggests that individual's conducts derive from unmediated *will* can never lead to success, and implicitly suggests that individual success is always a product of individual's conducts driven by mediated *will*; simply rendered, each person, though autonomous, is discouraged to always decide and act without the interest of the others in mind.

*Bí a ba sòkò s'òjà, ará ilé ẹni n í bà*²⁰ – meaning If we throw stones into the market, our household members will get injured. That is, acting out of one's unmediated *will* is always detrimental to one's well-being, but acting out of a mediated *will* is to better one's situation.

*Àjoje kò dùn b'ẹnikan kòní*²¹ – meaning communal feasting is not desirable when one member does not have. This suggests that it is only when each of us acted individually out of mediated *will* that everyone is happy.

¹⁹ Akinlade, K.Owe *Pelutumo (A – GB)*, 1987, P 52

²⁰ *ibid*, P 102

²¹ *ibid*, P 54

*Àdàṣe ní í hun ni, àjọṣe kì í hùn èniyàn*²² – meaning What affects one's success is working alone, working with others does not have negative effects. Again, this explains the emphasis of the importance attached to individual's conducts based on mediated will by the Yorùbá.

The Yoruba conception of the human *will* is reveal further in *Odù Ifá* (being the Yorùbá repository of knowledge and wisdom, hence it pervades the whole range of Yorùbá thought²³). For instance, in *Ògúnda Ìrètè*, anyone with power is reminded of the real potent power in the possession of a *will* that guarantees good conducts. The *Odù* states thus:

Kúkùndùnkú a b'ewégèrugèru
Òpò oògùn a gun'mọ gálègàlè
Bí o bá l'ópò oògùn, bí o bá lé'kèè
Èké ò ní jé ó jé
Inú ire jéju ewé lọ
D'ifá fún Oòni Alánàk'èṢùú
Èyí kò gbọdò kọ ohùn Ifá silè

In English language, it means

Sweet potato with fresh leaves
Possession and knowledge of too many charms intoxicate
If you have potent charms and you are dishonest
Your dishonesty will render the charms impotent
A will that is good is better than charms
Divined for the king Alanak'esuu
Who must follow Ifa's advice and injunctions

This *Odù Ifá* as stated above clearly shows that there is a clear conception of the human *will* in Yoruba ontology. In line five, one can discern that the *odù* speaks of goodwill, which is an indication that there is a clear recognition of the *human will* in Yorùbá thoughts.

²²*ibid*, P 27

²³Abimbólá, W. *Ifá: An Exposition of Ifá Literary Corpus*, 1976, P 32

Furthermore, some words in Yorùbá language are indicative that the concept of the human *will* is embedded in the vocabulary of the people. In *A Dictionary of the Yorùbá Language* published by the CMS (Church Missionary Society), the words *Ìfẹ̀-àtinúwá* and *Ìfẹ̀-inú* are translated into English as *freewill* and *goodwill* respectively. This supports the supposition that the word *Inú* (which literally means inside or inner) must be very important in our search for the Yorùbá equivalent of the human *will*.

Another important point of observation from the dictionary translations above is the pointer to the Yorùbá word ‘*Ìfẹ̀*’ which literarily means ‘love’, but the manner in which it is put into use in combination with ‘*Inú*’ to give *Ìfẹ̀ inú* which literally means the love of inside (inner love). However, expressions such as *ṣẹ̀ ifẹ̀ inú ẹ*, which means to exercise one’s freewill, suggests that *Ìfẹ̀-inú* possesses technical meaning much more than its literal meaning. In fact, from a breakdown analysis of *Ìfẹ̀-inú rere* (goodwill according to the dictionary cited above), if we remove *rere* (which means good) from *Ìfẹ̀-inú rere*, we shall be left with *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* (which can only mean human *will*).

On this note, our search for the Yorùbá idea of the human *will* points to one possibility that can serve as operational definition and equivalent of the human *will* in Yorùbá thought and this possibility is the notion of *Ìfẹ̀-inú*. That is, the term ‘*Ìfẹ̀ inú*’ within Yoruba traditional culture and language is the operational definition – in this study – of the human *will* as known in Western tradition.

STATEMENT OF THESIS

The thesis of this study is that social order can be engendered through the *Ìfẹ̀-inú* (human *will*) if adequately mediated by cultural categories and imperatives that are geared toward the survival of individuals in society. In establishing this claim, we relied on Yoruba belief system concerning the mediation of the human *will*.

The stated conviction above warranted our interrogation of the Yorùbá cultural and intellectual orientations concerning the *Ìfẹ̀-inú* and with thoroughness, we argued that the Yoruba equivalent of the human *will* is called *Ìfẹ̀-inú*. By the same token, we also argued that an individual’s *Ìfẹ̀-inú* is mediated by culture in Yoruba thought in order to produce *Omọ̀lúàbí* (a virtuous person) with characters and conducts that will guarantee peaceful cohabitation and corporate existence.

We noted that this inherent property of the individual is a possession of all human persons regardless of age, religious affiliation, gender, social and economic status, or ethnicity and so on. It is on this note that we contended that when mediated (i.e. the *Ìfẹ́-iní*), we can achieve more deeper understanding of social processes and key social phenomena like order.

As examples of cultural categories and imperatives that mediate the *Ìfẹ́-iní* of individual, the Yorùbá proverbs: *Àgbájọ ọwọ ni a fí n sọ 'yà* meaning *We used closed fist for tapping our chest* teaches that the strength in collective *will* is important to achieve societal unity and peace; *Bí èniyàn bá sọ wípé òun ò fẹ́ irànlówó ẹnikẹni láti sin ara rẹ sínú sààrè, ò dájú wí pé ọwọ rẹ láti wà láyé lókè èèpè* meaning *He who says he need no assistance to be buried when deceased will definitely have his hands alive on earth* clearly teaches that no individual can be an island in the quest for social harmony.

In Yorùbá thought, thus, social order is the compliance of each autonomous individual (without being forced) to rules and principles that promote social cohesion. Therefore, we argued that as a way of life, the Yorùbá culture achieves mediation of each individual's autonomous *will* through the processes of internalising cultural categories and cultural indoctrination by formal, informal, and non-formal means.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) To disclose the inadequate attention received by the human *will* in the explanations, analyses, and theories of social order in Western intellectual tradition.
- 2) To demonstrate the fundamental problem associated with Western conception of the human *will* in the analyses and understanding of social order.
- 3) To demonstrate the equivalent, conception, and mediation of the human *will* in Yorùbá system of thought.
- 4) To expose the Yorùbá conception and mediation of the human *will* and its relation to the existence and persistence of social order.
- 5) To unveil and articulate the advantages of the Yorùbá conception and mediation of the human *will* as a complementary ontological orientation in analysing and understanding of social order.

METHODOLOGY

In the interest of desirable result and taking into cognizance the nature of our tasks, we employ the analytic, critical, and reconstructive methods in this study. The analytic method was used to elucidate the importance of the human will and social order. The critical method was employed to interrogate how social order is guaranteed through the mediation of *Ìfẹ́-inú* in Yorùbá culture, while the reconstructive method was used to determine the constitution of *Ọmọ́lúàbí* (a virtuous person) through the mediation of *Ìfẹ́-inú*.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted Emile Durkheim's methodological holism and Herbert Spencer's methodological individualism as framework. Holism explains social order on the basis of an understanding of social institutions while individualism bases social order on individuals' behaviours and conducts.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The first of the fundamental contributions of our study to scholarship is the deepening of our understanding of a person, particularly about the ontological element that initiates decision and action in a person. This deepened understanding of a person viz-a-viz his decision and action revealed part of the inadequacy inherent in the discourses on social order.

A second contribution is the filling of the vacuum that has been created in scholarship by thinkers on Yoruba ontology concerning the conception and mediation of *Ìfẹ́-inú* in traditional Yoruba thought. Thus, we contributed to knowledge by putting into coherent perspective the proper conception of the human will as *Ìfẹ́-inú* among the Yoruba and how this *Ìfẹ́-inú* is mediated to function in a person in order to produce *Ọmọ́lúàbí* (a virtuous person) that promotes values and practices that engender the existence of social order.

Thirdly, these contributions are our discovery and identification of an intricately connected web between our ontological conception of the *Ìfẹ́-inú* (human will) and our portrayal of the action and decision of the human person. By this token, we strengthened

arguments, views, understandings, and explanations of the existence and persistence of social order.

The fourth contribution to knowledge by this study is the established understanding that *Ìfẹ́-inú* especially in its culturally mediated state is fundamental to the process of achieving peace and sustainable development in our contemporary society.

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

The extent to which the ontological conception of the human *will* is fundamental to the explanations and understanding of social order remains a validated justification to undertake this study. The emphasis given to explain the various theories of social order as undermined by Western cultural ontological orientation about the human *will* also justified the interest of this study. The interest of this study is further justified with the task to unveil the Yorùbá conception, and equivalent of the human *will* as *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, its mediation, and how it engenders the existence, persistence, and understandings of social order.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE: CONCEPTIONS OF A PERSON

In chapter one of this study, we dealt with the conceptions of a person from the perspectives of both the Western and the Yorùbá intellectual traditions. This chapter uncovered that the Western intellectual tradition identifies the *will* as a fundamental ontological entity that propels decision and action in a person. Using this as a template, the chapter unveiled that the idea of the human *will* is muddled up in written literatures on Yorùbá conception of a person.

CHAPTER TWO: THE IDEA OF *ÌFÈ-INÚ*

In this chapter, we looked at various knowledge systems that are indigenous to the Yorùbá culture – which are mostly oral traditions. Upon critical investigation and interrogation of these knowledge systems, we showed in this chapter that the appropriate Yorùbá equivalent of the human *will* is *Ìfẹ́-inú* given its technical meaning. We also explored

the groundwork of the metaphysics, nature, and function of *Ìfẹ̀-inú* as embedded in Yoruba knowledge systems. In sum, this chapter examined the idea and metaphysics of *Ìfẹ̀-inú* (relying on both written and oral literatures) as the most suitable equivalent of the human *will* in Yorùbá belief.

CHAPTER THREE: THE QUESTION OF SOCIAL ORDER

In this chapter, we take a look at the historical development of the discourse on social order, that is, we examined the discourse on the existence and persistence of order in human society from a historical perspective. We also discussed the two major and distinct theories of social order as recognised in the field of social philosophy, which are methodological holism and methodological individualism.

The significance of this chapter to our study cannot be over-emphasized because we demonstrated the fundamental difficulties that often arise from, or associated with, any discourse on social order. We specifically revealed the inadequate attention received by the important notion of the human *will* in the discourses on social order.

CHAPTER FOUR: *ÌFÈ-INÚ* AND CULTURE

In this chapter, we considered the role of culture (specifically that of the Yorùbá) in mediating the *Ìfẹ̀-inú* of an individual, that is, we were concerned with how the Yorùbá culture mediates the *Ife-inu* of an individual. We examined various categories of culture (like language and values) and how these categories of culture are employed to tame an individual's *Ìfẹ̀-inú*. Importantly, we showed that an individual whose *Ìfẹ̀-inú* is adequately mediated by culture can only take decisions and actions that will be in conformity with the social expectations of peaceful co-habitation, avoidance of action or inaction that leads to social conflicts, and other expectations that engender social order.

The claim that *Ìfẹ̀-inú* in Yoruba belief is mediated by culture is specifically the focus of our study in this chapter; and hence, we looked at the concept of culture in terms of meaning, variants, categories, and its role in the lives of both the individual and the society; we also elucidated the reciprocating influence of the society and the individual on culture. Importantly, we examined the *Ìfẹ̀-inú* of an individual and how culture mediates it in order to produce *omólúàbí* (a virtuous person) that guarantees the existence and persistence of social order.

CHAPTER FIVE: *ÌFÈ-INÚ* AS A BASIS FOR SOCIAL ORDER

We looked at contemporary realities in Africa and showed the relevance of our discovery in understanding both the problems and the solutions to them in this chapter; that is, we discussed some of the problems facing the continent of Africa, particularly leading to the dearth of social order in the continent. Specifically, we examined the problem of governance that accounts for socio-political conflicts, the problem of religious practices that accounts for various religious violence and the problem of cultural denigration that accounts for the many crises of indigenous values and norms. Upon critical analysis, we showed that these problems have direct link with cultural intellectual orientation of the *Ìfè-inú* of individual actors in these areas of life; and that the mediation of individuals' *Ìfè-inú* by culture is desirable to solve or resolve many of these problems.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTIONS OF A PERSON

The task of this chapter is to conceptually clarify the notion of a person as it appeared in the title as well as the way we have employed it in the course of our discussion. This task is important as it guides us from derailing in our quest to explore the conceptions of a person.

In a *Webster's dictionary*, a person is simply defined as “a human being or an individual”²⁴. This definition lacks depth to warrant any intellectual consideration or exploration. However, we are adequately informed in a text that,

One way philosophers have approached the matter of individuality has been to develop the notion of person; *and thus*, what a person is cannot be adequately determined simply by observation or experiment. It is, rather, a metaphysical question ... As such, the notion of person might vary greatly from culture to culture, and indeed it does²⁵.

In the quote above, it is important to take note of the following points: (1) that the notion of a person evolved as an approach to the matter of individuality, and (2) that personhood itself is defined differently by different scholars as well as different cultural traditions.

Our reason for noting these two points from the definition is to delineate and make clear the focus of our aim in this chapter. The first point noted above indicates that in talking about a person, we should concern ourselves with the matter of individuality from the perspectives of cultures; and that the notion of a person can be used interchangeably with the notion of an individual as well as human being. This is noted with the view that the idea of person is more an invention of human beings than an inherent fact of nature since it varies from culture to culture²⁶. Thus, since we are interested in the conceptions of a person, the important task of this chapter is to unveil the capacities and attributes that constitute personhood or a person of the human being.

The second point is an indication that our exploration of the conceptions of a person must take diverse dimensions since personhood is construed differently by different authors and cultures; however, this is not the case for us in this chapter for it will turn out to be an

²⁴ *Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus*, P 357

²⁵ Moore, B.N. & Bruder, K. *Philosophy: The Power of Ideas*, 2011, P 542-543

²⁶ *ibid*, P 543

endless and difficult adventure. But it is important to state that this point is indicative that we can explore the conceptions of a person either from a known author's perspective or from the perspective of an identified cultural tradition as long as the exploration is to unveil the capacities and attributes that constitute a person or personhood. On our part, therefore, the conceptions of a person generated from the cultural cum scholars perspectives are adopted, that is, we combine the cultural and authors perspectives in discussing the conceptions of a person in this chapter.

This chapter also focus on the discourse on the conceptions of a person from both the Western and the Yorùbá cultural perspectives. Hence, this chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, we deal with the Western conception of personhood with special interest in classical conception while the second is focused on the Yorùbá conception of a person.

1.1 A Person in Western Intellectual Tradition

There is one dominant view about the nature of a person in Western intellectual tradition, which is that there are two elements that constitute a person: the first, which is tangible, is specifically and famously named the body; the second, which is intangible, is variously identified as the soul, the spirit, or the mind. However, there exist diverse speculations about this dominant view. For the purpose of appropriation, we deal with five main speculations about this dominant view; and we have identified these five main speculations as (1) The notion of a person in Plato's philosophy, (2) Aristotelian conception of a person, (3) The Augustinian theory of a person, (4) The concept of a person in Aquinas's thought, and (5) Hume's ontology of a person. However, it is important to note that beyond these five speculations, there are many other intellectual engagements on a person in Western philosophy like Hobbes', Marx's and so on²⁷.

In Western philosophy, this dominant view has its classical foundation in both the Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian thought represented by the works of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine and other notable ancient Western thinkers. This dominant view, however, has been subjected to diverse speculations in Western philosophy and, we explore

²⁷ Pojman, L. S *Who Are We? Theories of Human Nature*. 2006

these speculations in this chapter in order to demonstrate their similarities and differences about the dominant view.

Specifically, our interest in exploring the Western conception of a person is to investigate and establish the nature, the seat, and the function of the *will* in human personality as generally conceived and this exploration will be the major theoretical framework since the human *will* is well developed theoretically compared to the framework in other cultures.

Books written by Plato are in *Dialogues*, that is, they are written in the form of recorded conversations where two or more characters are engaged in discussions. Also, many of Plato's basic ideas occur repeatedly in more than one of these *Dialogues*. Thus, it is more convenient and profitable for the purpose of simplicity of comprehension to explore Plato's theory of human nature from the perspective of one of the notable commentaries on his works or ideas. However, we shall turn to any of his *Dialogues* when necessary.

For Plato, a person is basically a composite of a material and an immaterial element that is mortal and immortal respectively. These elements, respectively identified as the body and the soul, constitute the nature of a human person. According to Plato "...the bonds of life... unite the soul with the body..., and they are the root and foundation of the human race"²⁸. Furthermore, the body and the soul in platonic thought are distinct from each other in that the body is of this physical world hence it is unreal, while the soul is of the unchanging reality of the world of forms, therefore is the real element in a person.

Hence, according to Plato, exploring the knowledge of the body in order to establish the nature of a person will yield no authentic result since the body is unreal. It is on this note that Plato holds the soul of a person as the most important element in the constitution of a person, thus Plato conceives a person as principally a soul because "the soul, for Plato...is the intellectual and moral personality, the most important part of man; and...it is not only important, but is by far more real than the body"²⁹.

For Plato, souls originate and pre-exist in the World of Forms. Plato's imaginative observation that this physical world is mutable and imperfect, and therefore there exists a place where immutability and perfection is found. This imagined world of immutability and perfection, according to Plato, is where the eternal and the unchanging forms that are the

²⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, 1999, P 67

²⁹ Armstrong, A.H. *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, 1981, P 40

prototypes of every created entity in this physical world exist. Thus, the soul being an intangible aspect of human personality belongs to this world of reality, by virtue of that, it is more real than the body, and by implication, it is the most important element in a human person.

From this stand point, a critical consideration of Plato's conception of the soul will yield the desired Plato's treatment of the human *will*. In other words, since Plato considers the soul of a person as the most significant element in human personality such that it is also the moral personality of a person, by implication therefore, Plato's view of the human *will* can only be known by investigating Plato's conception of the soul.

The soul, according to Plato, has three parts³⁰. The first part of the Platonic soul performs the function of directing the activities of the being of the human person and as a result it is identified as reason or the rational part; the second part performs the function of supporting and collaborating with reason especially in the area of emotional states, thus, it is identified as the *will*; and the third part performs the function of craving for worldly lusts and desires, therefore it is identified as the appetite³¹.

Turning to the first part of the soul (that is the rational part), Plato holds that it is the part of the soul that discerns what is real and not merely apparent, and judges what is true and what is false, in fact, it is a thinking portion within an individual that makes rational decisions that are exhibited in actions. According to Armstrong, "first, there is the reason, the rightful ruler of the whole, which in a properly ordered soul sees the truth and directs the activities of the whole man according to what it sees"³².

The second part (the *will* part), according to Plato, is an active portion of the soul whose function is to carry out the dictates of reason, it is that part that prompts actions, particularly actions that the intellect has determined to be best. Again, Armstrong submits "then there comes that part in which the higher emotions have their seat, love or fear, for instance, or just anger"³³.

The third part (the appetitive part) is the portion of the soul in each individual that wants and feels many things, most of which must be deferred in the face of rational pursuits if

³⁰ See Plato's *The Republic*, P 434, 441

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

an individual is to achieve a salutary degree of self-control. It is in this respect that Armstrong writes that “there is that part which belong all the lower, carnal lusts and desires, the ‘savage, many-headed monster’ ”³⁴.

In summary, Plato’s conception of the *will* indicates that it is an intangible element in the ontological make-up of a person; in fact, it is one of the three candidates making up the human soul. Plato also argues that the *will*, jointly with the two other parts of the soul, defines the personality of the human person. We are also informed that it functionally collaborates with reason in the cases of emotional matters.

Without any iota of doubt, Plato laid the fundamental foundation for philosophy in general. For instance, the dualistic conception of human nature that cut across all manners of philosophical eras in Western thought is traceable to Plato, although Plato himself employs knowledge that belong to previous traditions to lay the solid foundation, yet his influence on subsequent thinkers till date cannot be overemphasized.

Like Plato, Aristotle also holds that a person is a composite of both the body and the soul, but disagrees with Plato that the body and the soul are distinct from each other, and that a person is essentially known through the soul. It is clearly noted in the introduction to his *On the Soul* (that is his *De Anima*) that, for Aristotle, the “soul and body...are distinct things, they are one thing presenting two distinct aspects”³⁵. Thus, for Aristotle, a person is made up of a body and a soul, that is, an exploration of the body and the soul that constitute a person is required to discover or establish the personhood of an individual, because for Aristotle “...every natural body possessed of life must be substance...of the composite order”³⁶.

Thus, Aristotle contends that the soul cannot exist independently of the body, in other words, he did not see it as independent from the body. He claims that the soul is not separate from the body, but that it is an interconnected part creating a unity between body and soul. Here is what Aristotle supposes regarding this point thus,

. . . The soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body. For it is not a body, but something

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ “Introduction” in Aristotle’s *De Anima*, 1907, P 44

³⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, 1907, P 4

which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body and in a body of such-and-such a kind³⁷.

On this note, Aristotle thinks that any discourse on the soul is ultimately a discourse on the composite nature of a person. In fact, Aristotle specifically argues that “both psychical activity and corporeal change belong as attributes to the composite substance”³⁸. Hence, Aristotle conception of the soul requires our attention in order to establish his idea of the human *will*, and this is with the understanding that we are actually referring to the composite conglomeration of personhood.

For Aristotle, there exist three levels of soul. The first he called “nutritive soul” and is mainly possessed by plants. It is the driving force for growth, namely, what leads a seed, a potential matter, to reach its actualized form as a full-grown tree. Without the dynamic, directing and guiding force of the “nutritive soul” it would not be possible, according to Aristotle, to grow³⁹.

The second level is the “sensitive soul.” This force is inherent in animals which are conscious of their surroundings, an ability that plants lack⁴⁰. Animals, Aristotle believes, have sensations and even feelings due to their more developed form of the soul.

The third and final level is the “rational soul.” This is unique to humans as they have the ability to think, reason and to gain abstract knowledge. All of this is denied to animals and plants and gives humans the power for logical reasoning, creative thinking, and imagination⁴¹.

In summary, there is a nested hierarchy of soul degrees in Aristotle’s doctrine that corresponds to three functions of the soul: Nutritive soul – Growth and nutrition for the purpose of reproduction; Sensitive soul – locomotion and perception and; Rational soul – intellect for the purpose of thought. These are nested in the sense that anything that has a higher degree of soul also has all of the lower degrees. All living things grow, nourish themselves, and reproduce. Animals not only do that, but move and perceive. Humans do all of the above and reason as well.

³⁷*ibid.*, Book IP 5-12

³⁸*ibid.*, P 274

³⁹*ibid.*, Book II, P 5-12

⁴⁰*ibid.*

⁴¹*ibid.*

It is on this note that much of Aristotle's discussion of the soul concerns the topic of sense-perception⁴². He discusses the physiology of each of our five senses in detail and defines perception in general as the reception in the soul of the perceptible form of an external object⁴³.

In view of the above, Aristotle's conception of the soul is very ambiguous as regards the seat of the *will* or the *will* in human nature, because we are provided with two aspects of human soul as faculties that initiates decisions and actions. Thus, his account of the *will* via his conception of the soul is neither material nor immaterial in nature, in other words, it is an attribute exhibited by the composite nature of a person.

This is articulately stated by Aristotle when he submits that "the soul is the whole body's actuality, its "parts" being the actualities of the body's parts, and granted that an actuality or form cannot be separated from that which is actual and has form, we can certainly conclude that no soul can be separated from its body"⁴⁴. Equipped with this understanding, Aristotle enters his doctrine of deliberate choice where his blurred conception of the *will* is to be found.

According to Aristotle, deliberate choice "is an act in which desire and reason are combined and it is an essential element in moral activity"⁴⁵. He also argues that since it is rationally and morally inclined, it is clearly distinct from mere appetite – which is neither rational nor moral, and rational wish – which is rational but not moral because it can be directed to impossibility⁴⁶. Functionally, Aristotle argues that deliberate choice as part of human ontology is only a means to an end but not an end in itself.

In summary, we observe from the above that Aristotle's treatment of the human *will* is not so clear as it appears that he is not conversant with the notion just like his predecessor, however, part of his discussion indicates an indirect concern with the notion and issues related to the concept. Thus, rather than employing the *will*, he employs 'deliberate choice' and sometimes 'choice'.

⁴²*ibid.*

⁴³*ibid*

⁴⁴Flew, A. *Body, Mind, and Death*, 1964, P 78-79

⁴⁵ Armstrong *op. cit.*, P 105

⁴⁶*ibid*

Concerning the nature of the *will* in Aristotle's thought, we can say that it is *hylomorphic* going by his composite description of the human personhood – that is the body is inseparable from the soul; hence the *will* is also inseparable from the composite nature of a person.

Like the Platonic philosophy of Plotinus that influenced him, Augustine maintains that a human person is made up of body and soul, but he agrees with Aristotle who disagrees with the Platonic influence that only the soul is perfect, and it is trapped in an imperfect body, therefore that the body is unimportant in defining the personhood of a human person as well as that the true personality of human involves only the soul and therefore the human body has nothing to do with human personality⁴⁷.

As a result of his disagreement with the Platonic conception of a human person, Augustine convincingly holds that a human person is composed of both a material and an immaterial elements, in other words, it is the view of Augustine that the body and the soul (or spirit, because St. Augustine holds “that the soul was spirit”⁴⁸) of a human person are perfect creations of the divine⁴⁹, and thus, all play significant roles in human nature – and by extension in defining personhood. In fact, according to him, “the entire nature of man is certainly spirit, soul, and body; therefore whoever would alienate the body from man's nature, is unwise”⁵⁰.

On the conviction about the significance of the body and the soul in the personality of a human person, Augustine affirms the absolute unity and spirituality of the human soul, claiming the union of the soul with the body to be somewhat extrinsic. On the soul specifically, Augustine affirms that the soul is a creation of the divine at the very moment it animates the body⁵¹.

According to Augustine, the nature of the soul is simple and immortal, but holds that there are two aspects of the soul: the sensitive and the intellective⁵², otherwise called the sensitive soul and the intellective soul respectively. The first aspect of the soul (that is sensitive), Augustine argues, connects with the five senses because it is endowed by the

⁴⁷ Augustine, St. *De anima et ejus origine* P 611

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, P 673

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ *ibid.* P 676

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² *ibid*, *De Trinitate* XV.5.7

divine with a sensitive cognition⁵³, hence, it is that aspect of the soul that is common to all animals including the human person because it is used in judging the proper object of each of the senses.

The second aspect of the soul (that is the intellective soul), on the other hand, incorporates three distinct functions. According to Augustine, these three functions incorporated in the intellective soul are being, understanding and loving. And for him, these three correspond to three faculties in the intellective aspect of the soul, and respectively they are intellective memory, intelligence, and *will*. Among these faculties, Augustine is of the view that the *will* in a person is primary above the intellective memory and intelligence⁵⁴.

Against the above background, Augustine's conception of the *will* suggests the following suppositions: that the *will* is a perfect creation of the divine, that the *will* is immaterial and immortal, and that the *will* has primacy over and above all other aspects or sub-aspects of the soul.

Furthermore, Augustine turns in a new problem about the *will* which has to do with whether the *will* is free or not. Focusing attention on this problem, and which by extension touches on the origin of evil in the world, Augustine categorically holds that the will of the human person is by nature free⁵⁵.

In retrospect, an important aspect of Augustine's conception of the *will* is the primacy of the *will* over all other faculties of the soul. Augustine holds this primacy of the *will* as an intrinsic law of the being that has its first activation in the divine. And because Augustine holds this divine to have created everything from nothing through his own *will*, and as already shown above, the *will* is love; thus, the first love is that of the divine which flows down to the created beings. Augustine further holds that love signifies order, and action is an activity according to love, therefore, action is an activity according to order, which has its centre in the divine *will*⁵⁶.

Augustine's account of the *will* postulates the *will* of man as a divine gift, and it is characterized by freedom, which allows individuals to take deliberate decisions and actions (that may or may not be contrary to the will of the divine). Augustine's account further

⁵³*ibid*, *De civitate Dei* XXI.7

⁵⁴*ibid*

⁵⁵Clark, M.T. *Augustine*. 1994, P 30-31

⁵⁶*ibid*, P 31

supports clearly, the understanding of the ancient position that the human *will* is immaterial by nature. In fact, the support found in Augustine's account is very fundamental for introducing a divine *will* and the problem of free or un-free *will*.

St. Thomas Aquinas' conception of a person is synonymous to the Aristotelian point of view, but acquires a specific character in combination with the Christian thought. On this note, he presented us with the hierarchical structure of beings thus: the world of created beings is ordered depending on their level of simplicity and proximity to the pure existence of God.

According to him, Angels (which are compounds of essence and existence) are on the peak of creation, and then come human beings (whose substantial form is the soul, which is united with material); these material world substances are compound of material and form, therefore, a person is an intersection point between the merely corporeal and spiritual being. Thus, the 'form' called soul can exist independently of the body. However, the sensitive beings and vegetative ones (the animals and plants respectively) have a corruptible form that cannot exist independently of the material⁵⁷.

Much more than the rest of the natural beings, but less than angels, a person reflects in his being certain proportion with the divine being, locating between two worlds: made up of material body and the spiritual soul. The first one ties a person to the sensible world and the second to the spiritual world. He is the most perfect being of the sensible world and the less perfect in the level of the intellectual substances⁵⁸.

According to Aquinas, living beings have a realm of characteristic functions different from the non-living beings, to be born, to nourish themselves, to grow, to reproduce, to move locally, to die, and in superior degrees to feel, to think and to want⁵⁹. In this respect, he acknowledges the ontological components of a person as purely that of body and soul. And in line with his Aristotelian inherited wisdom, Aquinas defines the soul as a principle of life and as the form of a physical body which potentially has life⁶⁰. The soul is what distinguishes the living beings from the non-living beings.

⁵⁷ Aquinas, T. (St.), *Summa Theologiae*. P 1,29, 3 c

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 1.29, ad 2

⁶⁰ Wilhelmensen, F.D. "The 'I' and Aquinas" in *Proceedings ACPA*, Vol.511977, P 55

According to him, there are faculties that serve as the active powers of the soul and the principles of vital functions. However, he distinguishes between corporeal and incorporeal powers or faculties. The first ones require a corporeal organ, whereas the second ones – such as understanding and *will* – do not; they operate from the essence of the soul where they belong. Apart from the intellect, divided into theoretical (whose function is the knowledge of truth) and practical (whose function is the action), human soul holds other three kinds of mental faculties: *will* or rational appetite, sensation faculties (vision, hearing, etc.) and sensuality or sensible appetite⁶¹.

Specifically on the *will*, Aquinas argues that the intellect and the *will* engage in a dynamic and very complex interaction, with multiple stages between an initial perception and cognition by the intellect to the final action of the *will*, with occasional interruptions or overrides by passions⁶². All these stages may happen in a "twinkle of an eye" or in a long drawn-out process. At any stage, the *will* can change the subject and ask the intellect to think about something else. The intellect may or may not do so, however⁶³.

Against this foreknowledge, we can say that the human soul is a creation of the divine, and as a result of its rational aspect (which is solely responsible for the distinction between human performance and other animals), this soul defines the distinctiveness of each individual. In addition, the activities of the rational soul (which are understanding and volition) do not depend upon the body. These activities of the rational soul, indicates the presence of two faculties in the rational soul which are respectively that of the intellect and the *will*. Thus, the faculty of the intellect has its object as the knowledge of the universal and performs the dual operations of judging and reasoning, the faculty of the *will* is only determined by itself because it is free⁶⁴.

Although, Aquinas argues that the soul which is the abode of the *will* is separated from the body, but he acknowledges that this separation of the soul and the body is not entirely whole but partial because the soul has an inclination to the body as the necessary instrument for its complete and full activity⁶⁵.

⁶¹ *ibid*, P 51

⁶² Aquinas, T. *Summa Theologiae* 1.87,3,c

⁶³ Wilhelmensen, *op.cit.* P 23

⁶⁴ Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.65

⁶⁵ *ibid*, *Summa Theologiae*

Hume was largely influenced by the advancement of science of his time, and this led him to attempt a rendition of a materialistic conception of a person vis-à-vis human *will* and action. However, he accommodates certain mental elements in the personality of the human person, but with insignificant roles as regard human nature and action. Therefore, Hume holds the sensible component (which is the body and all the internal and external organs of the body) in the make-up of a human person as most important in explaining human nature and action. In his wisdom, he posits that

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but perception...setting aside some metaphysicians....I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement⁶⁶.

The primacy accorded the body in Hume's conception leads him to base his theory of human nature and action on the belief that reason can never cause action, since virtue is always accompanied by a feeling of pleasure, and vice by a bad feeling or pain. For him, a person is compelled to commit a virtuous action because it creates pleasant feelings, and a person avoids doing a vicious act because it would cause pain or bad feelings.

Hume's account of the motive force of human 'conscience'⁶⁷, that is, of our tendency to act because we 'feel' that we ought to, is important for us here, this is in order to have an adequate grasp of Hume's concept of the human *will*. Hume's cognitive psychology prepares the ground for an examination of the virtue of benevolence; a virtue which best illustrates the nature of moral motivation.

For Hume, morality is not divinely revealed; neither is it determined by reason nor *will*. Reason is, as Hume infamously puts it, the 'slave of passion'⁶⁸. Our passions, in particular our desires, posit ends to which reason, and by extension the *will*, discovers only the means. Human reason cum *will* is thus purely instrumental. Desire neither responds to the

⁶⁶Hume, D.A *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1896, P 134

⁶⁷*ibid.*, P 233-242

⁶⁸*ibid.*

authoritative dictates of a distinctively rational part of the soul nor sublimates into an erotic longing of the human *will* of man.

So far as it accords with a specific moral purpose, desire takes its direction from certain sentiments, which by the arbitrary constitution of our nature arise in us when we observe human behaviour.

These sentiments are the offspring of a sympathy which we extend to those who act for the benefit of either themselves or others. For example: someone who displays a concern for the plight of his fellows is said to possess the virtue of humanity⁶⁹, just as someone who conducts his own affairs with attention and foresight is said to be prudent. What leads us to affix these excellences to certain people when neither reason nor *will* suffices? Hume believes that sympathy brings us to do this.

By a delicate sympathy with the gratitude of the beneficiary, we approve of the actions of the benefactor. Hume calls this feeling of approval a 'moral sentiment'; its projected 'worldly' correlate, he calls a 'virtue'. But not every instance of sympathy generates moral sentiments. Only the sympathy of one who occupies a 'general point of view' – or, at least, of one who makes an effort to occupy it – produces them. Hume devotes considerable space to discussing the 'general view' and the 'judicious spectator' who stands there⁷⁰.

In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume notes that actions which spring from benevolence are themselves often pleasurable and that, to a cynical mind, the experience of this pleasure might seem to be the basis of their performance. In the above-mentioned essay, Hume brushes aside any troubles which any observation might raise. The pleasure of benevolence is merely incidental to it; it is not the end which it seeks. On this note, Hume submits that,

Since, ...a parallel direction of the affections, proceeding from interests, can give rise to benevolence or anger, no wonder the same parallel direction, deriv'd from sympathy and from comparison, shou'd have the same effect⁷¹.

⁶⁹This is what Hume calls 'benevolence' in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, P 69-78

⁷⁰Hume, *op. cit.* P 270

⁷¹*ibid*, P 201

Finally, Hume believes that a parent is instinctively driven to care for his or her young ones. Hume does not elaborate on the nature of parental instinct; he draws attention to it for the sole purpose of refuting those who deny the existence of benevolence altogether. Nevertheless, Hume does not believe that there exists anyone who possesses an innate desire that emanates from a *will* to promote the well-being of his fellow humans, considered simply as such. Instinctual benevolence is very confined. The benevolence which originates in the pleasure which we take in others is also limited in scope, if for no other reason than that such persons tend to be few in number. We take a sincere interest in the welfare of people who are not well known to us only through sympathetic engagement. This alone enables us to concern ourselves directly with their fate.

Hume observes that a person who fails to perform actions – the neglect of which signifies vice – would bring an impartial spectator to ‘feel’ that these actions ought to be performed. To be more precise, however, it should be said that the spectator's feeling is not so much directed towards the virtuous or vicious actions as it towards their underlying motives: “This is evident, that when we praise any action, we regard only the underlying motives that produced it, and consider the action as signs or indications of certain principles in the mind and temper”⁷².

Against the above background, Hume’s argument is that every action is traceable to individual sentiment (passions: feelings and emotions), and as a result, we can categorise the derivation of human actions into four qualities: (1) qualities useful to others, which include benevolence, meekness, charity, justice, fidelity and veracity; (2) qualities useful to oneself, which include industry, perseverance, and patience; (3) qualities immediately agreeable to others, which include wit, eloquence, and cleanliness; and (4) qualities immediately agreeable to oneself, which include good humour, self-esteem, and pride⁷³. For Hume, since most significant actions seem to fall into one of these four categories, it is therefore a set of rules that govern human actions.

On this basis, Hume concludes that human emotion flows from within individual naturally without the interference of reason, thus, what motivates the *will* to action, Hume argues, is not reason; rather it is feelings and emotions, the passions for short. Therefore, to

⁷²*ibid*, P 248

⁷³*ibid*, P 301-322

pronounce an action good or bad is to experience a feeling of praise or blame from the contemplation of the action, and not because it was motivated by any *will*.

1.2 Important Observations in Western Accounts of the Concept of a Person

Generally, we observe from the above that the study of the human *will* began with the study of personhood. Philosophical treatment of the human *will* holds it to uniquely differentiate the human person from the rest of the animal kingdom. In the works of the classical thinkers, it is clearly shown that the difference between a person and an animal arises as a result of the nature of the human *will* as a distinctive aspect of the human soul/mind. In other words, only human persons are endowed with the *will*. In addition, we observe that the human *will* is the power of choice, that is, the ability to make choices is the proper function of the human *will*.

The classical conception of the human *will* is unique in its own right and also serves as a foundation to subsequent conceptions, although comprehensively, it is characterized by some form of ambiguity. However, in spite of this encountered problem of comprehension, we are able to show clearly that thinkers of the period conceived the soul as the seat of the *will*. Plato considers the nature of the *will* to be incorporeal, which is non-physical; Aristotle on his part argues that the nature of the will is neither material nor immaterial. In terms of function(s), Plato assigns a subservient role to the human *will*, the *will* functions as an agent of reason.

For Aristotle, the human *will* functions as a by-product of two aspects of the soul: the nutritive and rational souls. In the case of St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, Augustine follows the Platonic tradition and Aquinas follows Aristotle's doctrine. However, despite following different orientations, Augustine and Aquinas arrived at almost the same conception of the human *will*. Both of them agree that the soul is the seat of the *will*, and since the soul is incorporeal, therefore, the *will* is also immaterial.

Influenced by scientific development of his time, Hume relegates the importance of human soul viz-a-viz the human *will* to the background, while he outrightly posits that what we call *will* is a mechanical functional process that takes place within an individual. Hume specifically argues that whatever that is regarded as a thing of the *will* is nothing other than a

function of sentiment and custom. In the long run, however, Hume fails⁷⁴ in his attempt to ‘mechanize’ an important aspect of the human person, which is the human *will*.

Against the above background, we can observe that the human *will* remains very significant, especially in an attempt to understand human action and inaction. Above all, human *will* is immaterial by nature. However, whether the entire human body or the human soul/mind is the seat of the *will*, what is important is that its abode is ‘within’ rather than ‘outside’ the human person, and since it is immaterial by nature, it is difficult to investigate its abode outside the human person.

Without misconception, the *will* is generally conceived as the faculty in a person that indulges in the acts of choice-making and decision-taking; it is what distinctively defines the human person, because through it individual is capable of taking deliberate decision and action, thus, the logical consequences is a negative individualistic conception of the *will*. This conception, we hold, propagates individualistic extremism at the expense of collective well-being and values, therefore having serious unfavourable implications for the society at large, particularly in the area of values that promote collective cooperation.

1.3 The Concept of a Person in Yorùbá Culture

In this section, we explore the Yorùbá conception of a human person as presented in the works of some scholars on Yorùbá belief system. This exploration is undertaken solely for the purpose of identifying the continuity and discontinuity in the accounts of various scholars on the subject-matter of Yorùbá conception of a person.

This task to explore the Yorùbá conception of a person is germane to our study in the sense that without it we can hardly have headway to a direction or an insight into the idea and nature of *Ìfẹ́-inú* (human *will*) in Yorùbá thought system. Thus, principally, this task of exploration is embarked upon to lead us towards the direction of identifying the nature and function(s) of *Ìfẹ́-inú* (human *will*) in the Yorùbá conception of a person.

⁷⁴ This failure is well explored and articulated in *Immortality* (1992) by Paul Edwards. Edwards identifies and explains four criticisms against materialistic conception of a person: (1) Privacy-means the observation of one’s behaviour and the same time what’s on the brain; (2) Qualia-means that there are some features of our experience that are left out in any materialistic world; (3) Intentionality-which is proven to be incapable to be accommodated by materialism; and (4) Immateriality-means that it is absurd to regard mental states as having sizes and shapes

Ìdòwú's account of the Yorùbá conception of a person is found in chapter thirteen entitled "Olódùmarè and Man's Destiny" of his popular book *Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief*. In that chapter, the scholar identifies four components as major constituents of a person in Yorùbá thoughts, these four components are the body, the spirit, all the internal organs taken together, and finally the soul or personality-soul.

According to Ìdòwú, the Yorùbá word for the body is *Ara* and, for him, it can be described in physical terms because it is materialistic by nature, thus we have knowledge of it through our sense organs. In the words of the scholar, "the body is the concrete, tangible thing of flesh and bones which we know through the sense, which can be described in a general way, or analytically by anatomy"⁷⁵. Very obvious, this submission supposes that the *Ara* is both the *Awọ* (flesh or Skin) and the *Egúngún* (bones).

The second component which is the spirit, Ìdòwú argues, is the English word for the Yorùbá *Èmí*. The *Èmí* for Ìdòwú is immaterial, that is, it cannot be known through the senses like the *Ara*. It is on this note that he submits that "... *Èmí*, the English approximation to which is spirit... is invisible and intangible"⁷⁶. On a further reading of that chapter, Ìdòwú is of the view that *Èmí* has the sole function of lighting up a lifeless body in order that such body can participate in existence, in other words, *Èmí* is life itself because its presence (or absence) in a person makes that person a living (or non-living) entity.

According to Ìdòwú, *Èmí* "is that which gives life to the whole body, and thus can be described through its causal functions. Its presence in or absence from the body is known only by the fact that a person is alive or dead"⁷⁷. From Ìdòwú's point of view, the *Èmí* is very important in the Yorùbá conception of a person, because it is with its presence in a person that we can talk about that person engaging in any activities; and this is why Ìdòwú supposes that "to the question "what is man?" the Yoruba will answer off-handedly that man is body plus *Èmí*"⁷⁸.

Ìdòwú also makes additional and important remark about the *Èmí*, according to him, "*Èmí* is closely associated with the breath and the whole mechanism of breathing which is its most expressive manifestation". This assertion suggests that *Èmí* – being invisible and

⁷⁵Ìdòwú, E.B. *Olódùmarè: God in Yoruba Belief*, 1962, P 179

⁷⁶*ibid*

⁷⁷*ibid*

⁷⁸*ibid*

intangible – has a sensible manifestation in a person, and this manifestation is essentially known through breathing. Thus, the simple observation that a person is breathing or has breath is a sign that *Èmí* is present in that person, otherwise it is not and such is refer to as a an *Òkú* (corpse) rather than an *Ènìyàn* (a person). This associative connection between the invisible *Emi* (spirit) and the sensible *Èémí* (breath) is expressly shown in the given examples by Ìdòwú below⁷⁹:

- (1) *Èmí rẹ̀ ti bó* – His spirit has slipped off
- (2) *Èmí rẹ̀ ti lọ* – his spirit is gone
- (3) *Èémí ti tán nínú rẹ̀*- There is no more breath in him.

On this note, therefore, *Èmí* and *Èémí* solely indicate life in a person, because its presence or absence in a person principally determines the living or non-living of a person. In Ìdòwú's words, "*Emi* is....used for 'life' as the bare fact of animate existence"⁸⁰. Thus, *Èmí* is life to Ìdòwú.

The collection of all internal physical organs of a person constitutes the third component identifies by Ìdòwú as constituent part of Yoruba conception of a person. According to Ìdòwú, "practically all the internal organs of the body taken together or severally have emotional or psychical functions attributed to them"⁸¹. Put differently, "all the internal organs of man taken together or severally function only as the seats of man's psychical or physical actions or reactions"⁸².

Picking on *Òkàn* and *Ìfun* (physical heart and intestine respectively for Ìdòwú) to illustrate the point that internal organs taken together or severally function as the seats of a person's actions or inactions, Ìdòwú argues that "*Òkàn* accurately translated as the heart....is the seat of the emotion and psychic energy"⁸³; in furtherance of this view, Ìdòwú articulates the use of *Òkàn* in day to day Yorùbá language in the following given examples⁸⁴:

- (1) *Ó ní òkàn* – He has a heart (meaning he is brave)
- (2) *Kòní òkàn*– He has no heart (meaning he is a timid person)

⁷⁹*ibid*

⁸⁰*ibid*

⁸¹*ibid*, P 180

⁸²*ibid*

⁸³*ibid*

⁸⁴*ibid*

(3) *Kì í lókàn tàbí mú un lókanle* – strengthen his heart (meaning to encourage a person)

In the same vein, Ìdòwú argues that “a person’s intestines are regarded as the source of strength and resourcefulness”⁸⁵, and to support this claim, he gives the following examples⁸⁶:

(1) *Kò n’ifun nínú*– He has no intestine (meaning he is not strong or has no resilience)

(2) *Onífun kan*– a person with only one intestine (meaning a person that is not resourceful or has no initiative)

In addition to the examples given above about the *Okàn* and *Ifun*, in order to illustrate his claim that all the internal organs function collectively as the seats of emotional and psychical actions, Ìdòwú also gives an important example about the organs collectively. According to him: The Yorùbá assertion “*Inú rẹ̀ le* or *Inú rẹ̀ dí*, meaning his inside is hard or his inside is inscrutable respectively, simply means that a person is obdurate or a person is not open-hearted”⁸⁷.

Against this background, all the internal organs of a human person, for Ìdòwú, function collectively as the seat or faculty wherein deliberate decisions and actions are initiated. However, we must be weary of something very important in Ìdòwú’s claim concerning all the internal organs, recall that he specifically identifies the *Okàn* (as a physical element in man) as the abode of emotional and psychical energy, and this is a very important signification for our purpose in this study.

What readily comes to mind concerning the *Okàn* in Ìdòwú’s account is that it must in a way be specifically responsible for deliberate initiation of decision and action of a person or that it is actually the abode of the faculty that is responsible for such activity in a person.

Finally, Ìdòwú identifies the *Ori* as the fourth component in the Yorùbá conception of a person. *Ori*, according to Ìdòwú, is the inner person; the English equivalent of *Ori* is the soul or personality-soul. In his words, “The soul, to the Yoruba, is the inner person and their name for it is *Ori* and this is the personality-soul”⁸⁸. Although *Ori*, Ìdòwú submits, “is the

⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁸⁶ *ibid*

⁸⁷ *ibid*

⁸⁸ *ibid*

word for the physical 'head'... but it is a symbol of *Ori-Inú* - 'the internal head', or 'the inner person' ... which makes it the very essence of personality"⁸⁹.

Here we find Ìdòwú talking about *Ori* and *Ori inú*, and we can recall that he did note that the English equivalent of *Ori* is the physical head, however, he did not states whether *Ori-Inú* is physical, non-physical or quasi-physical by nature. However, going by his submission about the two and the literal meaning of the latter, we can deduce that *Ori Inú* is immaterial by nature and that its physical manifestation is the *Ori* itself which is open to empirical confirmation. Thus, *Ori* as appeared in Ìdòwú's account has a dual nature: physical and non-physical; while the former can be known through the senses, the latter cannot be known but can manifest through the known (i.e. through the former).

Concerning the function of *Ori* (specifically to *Ori Inú* i.e. the 'inner head' or 'personality-soul'), Ìdòwú argues that "it is this *Ori* that rules, controls and guides the 'life' and activities of the person"⁹⁰. In fact, in the pre-existent life of a person, "It is the *Ori* that kneels down and chooses a person's destiny, and by design it also come into the world to fulfil the destiny"⁹¹. Against this background, we can say that Ìdòwú is of the opinion that the Yoruba believe that *Ori* is very significant when considering and evaluating a person's actions and inactions; in other words, the deeds and misdeeds of a person for and against oneself and other selves should be understood in the light of that person's *Ori*. This is the only appropriate interpretation we can make of Ìdòwú's rendition of Yorùbá concept of *Ori*, since for him, the *Ori* rules, controls and guides a person in life.

In his account of Yorùbá conception of *Ènìyàn* (i.e. a person), Gbádégeşin argues that four terms are prominent among the many that features in the discussion of human personality in Yorùbá culture, and these terms are *Ara*, *Okan*, *Èmí*, and *Ori*. In his words, "Among the terms that feature in discussions of the Yorùbá concept of *Ènìyàn*, the following are prominent: *Ara*, *Okàn*, *Èmí*, *Ori*"⁹². The first among these four (that is *Ara*), according to him, is the tangible component of a person which include all the interior and exterior organs in human make-up, for him, "*Ara* is the physical-material part of the human being. It includes

⁸⁹*ibid*

⁹⁰*ibid*

⁹¹*ibid*, P 181

⁹²Gbádégeşin, S. "*Eniyan: The Yorùbá Concept of A Person*" in *The African Philosophy Reader*, (eds.) Coetzee and A.P.J Roux., 1998, P 149

the external and internal components: flesh, bone, heart, intestine e.t.c.”⁹³. The term *Ara* among the Yoruba, following Gbádéḡeṣin’s submission, denotes any empirically accessible and sensible part of a person and sometimes used to “refer to the whole of the person”⁹⁴. On this note, we can say that *Ara* describes all pure physical aspects of a person.

The second among the four mentioned terms (which is *Òkan*), Gbádéḡeṣin argues, is characteristically acknowledged among the Yorùbá as possessing both tangible and intangible nature. As a term with material nature, it is the Yorùbá equivalent of heart, thus, it is that organ in a person whose function is to pump and circulate blood; and as a term with immaterial nature, it is the intangible element in human person responsible for emotions and psychical actions. On this, Gbádéḡeṣin submits “*Òkàn*... in the Yorùbá language...has a dual character; first, it is ... the physical organ responsible for the circulation of blood... and second, it is... the source of emotional and psychic reactions”⁹⁵. As a result of this dual nature of *Òkàn*, particularly its immaterial conception, Gbádéḡeṣin considers it an important term in the Yorùbá conception of a person.

To buttress the claim that the Yoruba construed the *Okan* as an immaterial entity, Gbádéḡeṣin gives the following examples as employed in the Yoruba language⁹⁶:

- (1) *Kii l’okan* – strengthen his /her heart (which means to encourage a person)
- (2) *Kòní òkàn* – he /she has no heart (which means a person who is easily upset)
- (3) *Òkàn rè ti dàrú*– his /her heart is disrupted (which means a person who is sad).

These examples, Gbádéḡeṣin contends, are to indicate “that the emotional states of a person are taken as functions of the state of their *Òkàn*”⁹⁷. Against this background, Gbádéḡeṣin is led to raise a fundamental question regarding the immaterial *Òkàn*, “Is *Òkàn*, the seat or centre of conscious identity?” In his attempt to respond to this question, he appeals to the English word ‘mind’ via Webster’s New International Dictionary meaning, and claims that it is the equivalent of Yorùbá immaterial *Òkàn*. According to this scholar, *Òkàn* in this sense is “something invisible and perhaps non-physical which is responsible for all forms of

⁹³*ibid*

⁹⁴*ibid*

⁹⁵*ibid*, P 150

⁹⁶*ibid*

⁹⁷*ibid*

conscious identity...”⁹⁸. Thus, “in the Yorùbá language, *Ìgboiyà* (bravery), *Èrù* (fear), *Ìfẹ́* (love), *Ìkórira* (hate), *Ayo* (joy), *Ìbàníjé* (sadness), *Ojora* (cowardice) are different manifestations of the *conscious* state of the person and the *Ọkàn* is identified as the basis for such conditions”⁹⁹. Gbádéḡeṣin gives the following examples to attest to this¹⁰⁰:

- (1) *Alàilókàn*– a person without a heart (which means a coward or lacks the capacity for endurance)
- (2) *Ọlókàn lile* – a hard-hearted person (which means a stubborn person).

In the Yorùbá conception of a person, Gbádéḡeṣin categorically states that the term the *Ọkàn* has both physical and non-physical nature, its physical nature makes it an equivalent of the English word ‘heart’ and its non-physical nature with all its psychical functions (feels, perceives, wills, thinks¹⁰¹ makes it an equivalent of the English word ‘mind’. However, the non-physical nature of the *Ọkàn* “raises a further problem”, particularly with respect to its function as the seat of thought. This particular problem has to do with the function perform by *Ọpolo*. We hope to come back to this later although it is not one of the four prominent terms mentioned by Gbádéḡeṣin, but from his treatment of it, he shows its’ importance in Yoruba conception of a person.

The next among the four terms is *Èmí*. And for Gbádéḡeṣin, *Èmí* is purely immaterial, that is, it is neither physical like the *Ara* nor does it have a dual nature like the *Ọkàn*. The translation of *Emi* as soul or spirit, he contends, is not correct and thinks that the proper English equivalent of *Emi* can only be articulated by considering the Yoruba creation myth of a person. And after a careful presentation and examination of the Yoruba creation story, Gbádéḡeṣin notes that *Emi* is “the active principle of life, the life-giving element put in place by the deity (the Supreme Being)”. Also, *Emi* is different from *Èémí* but principally affiliated to it. According to him, “*Èémí* is construed as a manifestation of the continued presence of *Èmí*” in a person, thus, *Èémí* is breath which is non-immaterial¹⁰². Most notable about *Èmí* is that it is immaterial and the active principle of life, its presence in human body guarantees existence.

⁹⁸*ibid*, P 151

⁹⁹*ibid*

¹⁰⁰*ibid*

¹⁰¹*ibid*

¹⁰²*ibid*, P 153

The last among the mentioned four prominent terms identified by Gbádéḡeḡsin is *Orí*. *Orí*, according to him, has both a physical and non-physical nature like *Okàn*. In his words, “*Orí* has a dual character. On the one hand, it refers to the physical head and on the other hand, there is the conception of an *Orí* which is recognized as the bearer of the person’s destiny as well as the determinant of personality”¹⁰³. *Orí* as the physical head houses the human brain (*Opolo*) and almost the five sense organs eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and skin of a human person. As a result, Gbádéḡeḡsin notes that “given the acknowledge significance of the head over the rest of the body, *Orí* is considered vital... in its physical character. It is the seat of the brain (*Opolo*)”¹⁰⁴.

We now turn to the significance that Gbádéḡeḡsin ascribes to the *Opolo* (brain) in the Yoruba conception of a person, before we come back to consider his account of the non-physical aspect of *Orí*. According to Gbádéḡeḡsin, “there is a class of activities which *Opolo* is particularly responsible for and they are ratiocinative activities”¹⁰⁵. In summary, *Opolo* is “the source of logical reasoning”¹⁰⁶. In support of this supposition, he gives the example of ‘*Alàilópolo*’ which literally means ‘a person without a brain’, but in proper translation it means a person who is incapable of simple logical reasoning. Without any iota of misunderstanding or mis-interpretation, a proper reading of Gbádéḡeḡsin’s submission on *Opolo* points to one claim, and it is that the *Opolo* (brain) is the faculty of thinking, in other words, thinking takes place in the *Opolo*, for if a person can reason/think correctly rather than logically such is describe as *Olópolo pipé*. However, in its proper usage, each existing person is with a brain, and as such, each person is *Olópolo*. The point of emphasis here is to unambiguously establish the fact that thinking is a function of *Opolo*; on this note, we may recall that Gbádéḡeḡsin earlier ascribes the function of thinking among other functions to the *Okàn* (the non-physical *Okàn*).

Back to Gbádéḡeḡsin’s treatment of the Yorùbá concept of *Orí* as the determinant of personality and the bearer of human destiny; according to Gbádéḡeḡsin, recounting the Yorùbá creation myth of a person, “... after *Emi* has been put in place, the newly created human being proceeds to the next stage – the house of *Àjàlá* – for the “choice” of an *Orí*. The *Orí* is,

¹⁰³ *ibid*, P 154-155

¹⁰⁴ *ibid*, P 154

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, P 152

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*

as it were, the “case” in which individuals’ destinies is wound up”¹⁰⁷. What is most important to us here is neither the actual choice of *Orí* made nor the content; rather we are interested in the act of choice-making by the created human person. Recall that the faculty for making deliberate choice is called the human *will*, and to follow Gbadegesin rendition of Yoruba creation story of a person in summary: *Òrìṣà òlórà* mould the human body, *Olódùmarè* (the Supreme Being) supplies the *Èmí*, and the created person moves to the house of *Àjàlá* to make his/her “choice” of *Orí*, this rendition goes to suggest that either the moulder of the body incorporated the faculty of the human *will* in one or more physical parts of the human person (but remain dormant because there was no life yet in the body) or at the point of supplying the *Èmí* by *Olódùmarè*, the *Olódùmarè* supplied a mixture of *Èmí* and the *will* so that the human person can be capable of deliberate choice in the house of *Àjàlá* and beyond.

In order to make clear his supposition, Gbádéḡṣin provides something like a rebuttal to the claim. According to him,

...the time frame here is pre-natal. Activities like choosing an *Orí* go on in the spirit world where the divinities and prospective human beings are construed as engaging in all kinds of relationships and exchanges. In this world, anything is conceivable ... it seems clear... that it is a combination of conceptualization and imagination that is brought into play here *by the Yorùbá*¹⁰⁸.

This point excuses us to consider Gbádéḡṣin’s articulation “of the relationship among the identified components of the person namely *Ara*, *Òkàn*, *Èmí*, and *Orí*”¹⁰⁹ as a partaker in existence. Specifically, Gbádéḡṣin ascribes to each of the identified components the following nature and functions¹¹⁰:

1. The nature of *Ara* is physico-material and no specific function ascribe to it.
2. The nature of *Èmí* is mental-spiritual, and its’ specific function is to activate the body with life, thus, guaranteeing existence and activates the lifeless body into consciousness, but it is not the locus of conscious identity because a person may have it (as an activating life principle), yet not be conscious of his/her existence as a self.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*, P 155

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*, P 156

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, P 157

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

3. The nature of the *Ọkàn* is both physico-material and mental-spiritual, and it specifically function (in its mental-spiritual nature) as the phenomenon of thought and the source of post-natal consciousness and emotions as well as the subject of conscious identity responsible for the phenomenon of thinking, feeling, willing, and desiring.
4. Finally, the nature of the *Orí* is also both physico-material and mental-spiritual, and specifically functions in its physico-material form as the seat of *Ọpọlọ* – that which is the seat of intelligence, and in its mental spiritual form, it is the bearer of destiny as well as the determinant of the personality of the individual.

In rounding off, Gbádégeṣin made an important remark concerning the functional inter-dependence of the mental-spiritual *Ọkàn* and that of the *Orí*, according to him:

Even when *Ọkàn* is postulated to account for the phenomenon of thought, whatever it has to do with this and with the emotional state of a person cannot be separated from the *Orí* as the bearer of her destiny. Therefore, *Ọkàn*, as source of conscious thought and emotions, could be regarded as a subsequent (post-natal) expression of the destiny portion encased pre-natally in the *Orí*. This may be explained as follows: *Orí* determines the personality of the individual. The emotional states, on the other hand are reflections and good indicators of the personality. *Ọkàn*, as the source of post-natal consciousness and emotions, therefore only reflects that which had been encased in the *Orí* originally. In other words, *Ọkàn* may be regarded as one of the avenues through which destiny unfolds in the post-natal existence of the person¹¹¹.

This remark is important in one way to us in this study: It leaves us with an unsettled task of deciding the actual seat of the human *will* between the *Orí* and the *Ọkàn*.

These respected scholars, in their *West African Traditional Religion*, identified five components in their own account of Yorùbá conception of a person. According to them, “the Yorùbá have conception of certain constituent parts that they regard as making a whole man” and these are *Ara* (body), *Ọ̀jìjì* (shadow), *Ọkàn* (heart with an immaterial counterpart), *Èmí* (vital principle or the seat of life, also immaterial), and finally *Orí* (personality-soul, which is also immaterial)¹¹². These components, for these scholars, are all that make-up a person in

¹¹¹*ibid*

¹¹²Awólàlú, J.O. & Dọpamú, P.A. *West African Traditional Religion*, 1979, P 108-181

Yorùbá ontological conception of a human person; thus, outside these five, any other component is either insignificant or subservient in the make-up of a person.

Turning to the nature and functions of each of the five components, Awólàlú and Dọpamú follow the order of their listing. Therefore, the first which is *Ara* is a material component that is not only a possession of human persons, but equally a possession of other animals, in their words, “*Ara* is the physical body which man shares with lower creatures”¹¹³. The function of the *Ara*, according to Awólàlú and Dọpamú, is to act and react to the physical environment as well as to serve as “the house’ or ‘temple’ for other constituent parts”¹¹⁴. These dual functions (acting/reacting and sheltering other components) ascribed to *Ara* by these scholars is, without doubt, very outstanding among other accounts of Yorùbá concept of a person by notable scholars.

What makes it outstanding is the fact that *ara* is considered a component that acts or reacts to the environment independently of any other components. In other words, *Ara* requires no other components or the aids of other components within the ontological structure of a person to perform its functions, particularly that of acting and reacting to the environment. Thus, *Ara* in Awólàlú and Dọpamú’s account of Yorùbá conception of a person is important to us in this study, because that account provides us with the need to investigate the *Ara* thoroughly in Yorùbá thought so that we can determine whether or not the *Ara* possesses the capacity or attribute for it to act and react to the environment.

The second component is the *Òjìjì*, and for these scholars, the English equivalent of it is the human shadow. Thus, like the *Ara*, it can be known through the organ of sight. However, that it can be known by seeing, Awólàlú and Dọpamú argues that it is a manifestation of an unseen component which is higher than what is known. This unseen component that is represented by the visible shadow, according to these scholars, is “the invisible human essence or personality-soul”. In the words of these scholars, “the *Òjìjì* is the human shadow ...and like the physical body, it is visible ... despite it is visible, it is taken to represent a higher phenomenon which is unseen, that is, the shadow is the visible representation of the invisible human essence, or personality-soul”¹¹⁵.

¹¹³*ibid*, P 180

¹¹⁴*ibid*

¹¹⁵*ibid*

On the importance of this *Òjìjì* to the personality of human person in Yorùbá thought, the scholars note that “During man’s life time, the shadow (*Òjìjì*) accompanies him everywhere”¹¹⁶. Awólàlú and Dọpamú contend that regarding this important issue except the negative remark that “during man’s life time, the shadow, as a constant accompaniment of the body, can be used through sorcery to injure the physical body”¹¹⁷. Against this background, the shadow seems to be inconsequential in the scheme of human personality.

Specifically, it is insignificant because it does not in any way contribute to the action and inaction of a person either to the self or in relation to others in practical existence. However, action and inaction at the supra-sensible realm may be a subject of explanation that may derive from the *Òjìjì* (and which usually have implication in real existence), in other words, the *Òjìjì* would only be an important component for consideration in discourses that bother on actions and inactions in the supra-sensible realm, which is not within our scope in this study.

Okàn is the number three on the list of components that constitute a person as listed by Awólàlú and Dọpamú. *Okàn* for these scholars is translated as the “heart” or physical heart, that is, the English equivalent of *Okàn* is the heart. In the wisdom of these scholars, this *Okàn* has close affiliation with the *Èjẹ̀*. The kind of affiliation *Okàn* shares with the *Èjẹ̀* was not discussed by these scholars, but from their subsequent submission about *Okàn*, we can deduce that the affiliation is that of pumping and circulation of the former by the latter to the appropriate places within the human anatomy. In other words, *Okàn* (the heart) pumps and circulates *Èjẹ̀* (blood) within human biological system. A clarity of this is seen in the submission made by the scholars that *Okàn* is “literally....translated as the “heart”, or “physical heart” which is closely connected with the blood and in this sense, it is that kind of heart that can be seen if an operation is performed on man, and because this is material, man has it in common with other lower animals”¹¹⁸. On this note, we can see that *Okàn* is the heart that pumps blood, thus it is a possession of all sentient beings just like the *Ara*.

In a person, however, these scholars opine that the physical *Okàn* that pumps and circulates blood is a manifestation of another *Okàn* that is not physical. According to them, “this material *Okàn* is a real representation of another *Okàn* which is essentially immaterial

¹¹⁶*ibid*

¹¹⁷*ibid*

¹¹⁸*ibid*

and invisible”¹¹⁹. On the basis of this submission, these scholars posit that the physical *Ọkàn* has a non-physical counterpart, therefore, it follows that the non-physical *Ọkàn* also have its own function within the ontological structure and nature of a person.

Against this background, the authors argued that the *Ọkàn* as a non-physical and an invisible entity functions as “the seat of intelligence, thought, and action”¹²⁰, and as a result of this function, this immaterial *Ọkàn* indicates what is called *Iyè* in Yorùbá language. For these scholars, the English equivalent of *Iyè* is ‘mind’, ‘mentality’, or ‘rationality’. In their words, “ in this sense (i.e. *Ọkàn* in the sense of an immaterial counterparts of the physical *Ọkàn*), *Ọkàn* is “the seat of intelligence, thought, and action”, thus, it can also be used to denote that part of man called *Iyè*, “Mind”, “Mentality” or “rationality”¹²¹. An additional important observation to note here is that *Iyè*, is articulated as a component of a person, but it is considered to be incorporated into the nature of the non-physical *Ọkàn*.

In support of their claim that the non-physical *Ọkàn* or *Iyè* is the seat of intelligence, thought, and action, the duo appeals to the following examples in Yorùbá language¹²²:

1. *Ọkan rẹ ti lọ* – He is buried in thought (which means a person who is absent-minded, or who is thinking of another thing when the people around him are discussing with him, thus, such a person will not be able to say a word about the discussion).
2. *Ọkàn mi so pé yóò wá* – I think he will come
3. *Ó ẹ Ọkàn gírí* – He behaved bravely
4. *Ó lọkàn* - He is brave / He has courage
5. *Ó Gbàdúrà Àtokànwá* – He had heartfelt prayers

The above examples given by the scholars are plausible to some extent, because they only showed that the physical *Ọkan* truly has an immaterial counterpart, but there is nothing in any of the examples to tell us the sameness, similarity, or incorporation of the non-physical *Ọkàn* and *Iyè*. However, whether the non-physical *Ọkàn* or *Iyè*, it is very clear from the standpoint of these scholars that either one of the two or both are the components within a person responsible for psychical and emotional actions and inactions. In addition, it is the component in a person that carries out ratiocinative activities – since it is the seat of

¹¹⁹*ibid*, P 181

¹²⁰*ibid*

¹²¹*ibid*

¹²²*ibid*

intelligence; more so, it denotes a part in a person that is responsible for human rationality. Therefore, the immaterial *Okàn* and/or *Iyè*, for Awólàlú and Dọpamú, is an important element in a person that defines the self for in a person and in relation to other persons.

The *Èmí* is next in the list of five components as identified by Awólàlú and Dọpamú. The *Èmí*, according to these scholars, is the component that provides the *Ara* of a person that capacity to participate in existence, that is, without *Èmí* the *Ara* will be lifeless and therefore a person cannot be said to exist; in the words of these scholars, “*Èmí* is the vital principle, the seat of life”¹²³ in a person.

Thus, the scholars note that the *Èmí* has an association with (1) “the personality-soul of a person but it is not the personality-soul, rather the English equivalent of *Èmí* is “spirit” or “being”, to drive home this point, they submit that “*Èmí* is... associated with breathing, breath – *Èmí* – but not identical with it....and with the personality-soul, that is why it is when the personality-soul disappears from man that he ceases to breathe. Moreover, *Èmí* can be used to denote “spirit” or “being”¹²⁴. And (2) “the breathing or breath of a person, but it is not the breath or breathing itself, to illustrate the close association between *Èmí* and the breath /breathing of a person, Awólàlú and Dọpamú submit that “when man ceases to breath (which is death), it means that his *Èmí* has gone”¹²⁵. Note that the Yorùbá word for breath is *Èémí*.

As a way to buttress their suppositions concerning *Èmí* as the life in a person which makes it possible (or impossible) for a person to experience existence (or not to experience existence) either of oneself or the other selves, Awólàlú and Dọpamú articulate the usage of *Èmí* in expressions as they appear in Yorùbá language in the following examples¹²⁶:

- (1) *Mo fẹ gba èmí rẹ* – I want to take his life
- (2) *Ó pàdánù èmí rẹ* – He lost his life
- (3) *Kòní èmí nínú* – He is lifeless
- (4) *Èmí gùn ún-* He is possessed (by the spirit of the divinity)
- (5) *Èmí búburú bà le e* – evil spirit descends upon him.

From the above, the first three (that is 1 to 3) examples actually illustrate the point that *Èmí* is the life-giving component in a person, but the last two examples do not show any

¹²³*ibid*

¹²⁴*ibid*

¹²⁵*ibid*

¹²⁶*ibid*

thing of such, rather they seem to suggest that *Èmí* – as a component in a person – has some capability to serve as the seat of human actions and inactions; but we can be very rest assured that the authors do not intend anything of such. Thus, as given to us, that *Èmí* is the vital principle or seat of life in a person, and that it shares association with the breath and personality-soul of a person.

The last component listed by the authors is *Orí*. The *Orí*, according to these scholars, has its physical and non-physical manifestations in a person. Principally, however, the English equivalent of *Orí* is the head of a person that is material by nature, and this material head houses the human brain (*Ọpọlọ*) which is responsible for intellect in a person. In the words of the authors, “the literal meaning of the word *Orí* is the “Physical head”, and this physical head contains the brain, and it is the seat of intellect”¹²⁷. Against this background, we can see that the material *Orí* is very important as a component in a person, because it is the abode of an important organ in human anatomy.

The material *Orí*, the scholars argue, is only a physical indicator of an immaterial *Orí*; and the immaterial *Orí* (or simply *Orí Inú*), for these scholars, is actually the personality-soul or what they also called the real essence of a person and as a result of being the personality-soul, it is fully in-charge of a person from pre-conception stage through existence to post-existence stage. It is in this regard that the scholars submits that “we have the real essence of being, the personality-soul, which guides and helps a person before he is born, at birth, through the passages of life, at death, and finally goes back to supreme deity..., and this personality-soul is called *Orí* by the Yorùbá, ... thus it control the full personality of man”¹²⁸.

In the light of the above, the *Orí* like the *Ọkàn* seems to be responsible for human deeds (which include actions and inactions) while participating in existence, in fact, for these scholars, it is the *Orí* that decides the lots of a person in life, in their words: “it is...believed that good or ill-fortune attends one (i.e. a person) according to the *will* of *Orí*”¹²⁹. Thus, in clear terms, these authors are of the view that *Orí* is actually the abode of actions and inactions in a person.

A review of Awólàlú and Dopamú’s account of Yoruba conception of a person is unique in the sense that it introduces another significant notion, which is *Iyè* and this notion,

¹²⁷*ibid*

¹²⁸*ibid*

¹²⁹*ibid*, P 183

without gain saying is very critical in the ontological nature of a person in the Yorùbá traditional thought, at least this claim is supported by the usage of the notion, for instance, the Yorùbá will say (1) *Kí Iyè rẹ̀ là*, (2) *Iyè re ti lọ*, and (3) *Kòní làákàyè*. In these contexts, the English equivalent of *Iyè* is memory, thus these examples respectively translate to (1) let your memory be open (to recall or remember), (2) his/her memory has gone, and (3) he /she has no capacity for memorizing.

Against this foreknowledge, we can see that the *Iyè* is important in the Yorùbá ontology of a person, but the scholars erroneously considered it to be the English equivalent of mind, mentality or rationality. Aside this error, there is this ambiguity as to the proper delineation of the boundary between *Ọkàn* and *Orí* (both in their physical and non-physical functions). The scholars made sweeping functional generalization that swings between the *Ọkàn* and the *Orí*. For convenience, however, we can say that the authors mean to point to a direction that will indicate that the *Ọkàn* and the *Orí* can hardly be separated in terms of function.

The Yorùbá conception of a person in general, Ọládìpò posits, consists of three important elements of the *Ara* (body – the internal and external physical component of a person), the *Èmí* (the immaterial life-provider), and the *Orí* (the human personality which is also immaterial). However, Ọládìpò holds that these three elements can be group into two classes of the physical and non-physical components of a person for the purpose of simplicity and convenience, Ọládìpò writes that “the Yoruba believe that a person is made up of three important parts: *Ara* (the body, including the internal organs of a person), *Èmí* (the life-giving element which is invisible and intangible) and *Orí* (the individuality element which is claimed to be responsible for a person’s personality). But for the purpose of clarity, these parts can be divided into two broad categories: (i) the category of the visible and tangible entities that constitute the material aspects of a person and (ii) the category of immaterial, in a sense invisible, element(s) that is postulated as the categorical basis of life”¹³⁰.

The visible and tangible aspect of a person is known as *Ara* and the word ‘*Ara*’, Ọládìpò argues, “is a collective term for all the material components of a person”. Some of these material components of a person, he holds, are fundamentally important to the

¹³⁰Oladipo, O. “The Yoruba Conception of A Person: An Analytico-Philosophical Study” in *International Studies in Philosophy*, xxiv/3, P 15

existence of a person, to mention but few we have the *Opọlọ* (the brain), the *Okàn* (the heart) and the *Ìfun* (the intestine)¹³¹. Functionally, the *Opọlọ*, the *Okàn*, and the *Ìfun* in Yorùbá thought, are the seats of conscious activities of a person. Specifically, *Opọlọ* is conceived as the seat of sanity, intelligence, and thought; the *Okàn* is conceived as the seat of emotion and feeling; and the *Ìfun* is conceived as the seat of strength and other psychic actions.

On this note, Oládipò notes that all the physical internal organs of a person play significant roles in human conscious activities¹³². He states this clearly when he submits that “*Opọlọ* and some other internal organs of person like the intestine have one thing or the other to do with human conscious activities”¹³³. Therefore, the actions/inactions and decisions/indecision of a person is a function of all the internal organs (in their physical state). This understanding derives from Oládipò’s analysis of the Yorùbá conception of the physical components of a person. In fact, he clearly posits “that the Yorùbá do not attribute mental activities to a single physical organ”. Therefore, the material components of a person (in this case the internal organs), from Oládipò’s account, must be the seat of the human *will*.

Turning to the non-physical aspect in the Yorùbá conception of a person, Oládipò holds that the *Èmí* is regarded by the Yorùbá as the categorical basis of life¹³⁴. To further support this claim, he writes thus that “*Èmí*, the Yorùbá believe, is the element that provides the “animating force” or energy without which a person cannot be said to be living at all, talk less of being conscious”¹³⁵. Thus functionally, the *Èmí* ensures a person is alive, thereby, giving a person the opportunity to be identified as a living being; the emphasis here is the word ‘living’, that is, it is the *Èmí* that actually determines whether a person is living or not; therefore, the talk of *Èmí* is the talk of a living or non-living person.

From the above analysis, Oládipò’s position seems to suggest that the decisions and actions of a person cannot actually be exhibited without the presence of *Èmí*, that is, the absence of the *Èmí* in a person will amount to non-decisions and non-actions. Therefore, the *Èmí* is important in one sense: that of ‘activating’ the *Ara* with life, in order to prompt the internal organs to produce conscious activities, part of which decision and action is taking. It is on this note that he writes that “the Yorùbá do not regard the material aspects of a person

¹³¹ *ibid*, P 15-16

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ *ibid*, P 17

¹³⁴ *ibid*, P 19

¹³⁵ *ibid*

(the body frame and all other organs of a person) as “self-sufficient and self-enclosed”. They see their capacity to function at all as dependent on a higher principle which animate them...because there is more to life than the efficient functioning of all the internal and external organs of a person”¹³⁶.

The most remarkable suggestion that can be derived from Oládipò’s account of Yorùbá conception of a person is that the human *will* is interlocked in the ambiguous conception of the *Èmí* and the *Ara* in Yorùbá thought. This is what we can make of Oládipò’s account of Yoruba conception of a person, but we must note that he incorporated the conception of a third element “the *Orí*” by the Yorùbá. However, the only thing he notes concerning *Orí* is that “it is that part of a person that is the embodiment of a person’s destiny; it is also what is believed to be responsible for a person’s personality”¹³⁷.

His unpublished doctoral thesis is of critical significance to this study as we shall soon find out that he made very important clarifications of most of the components in the Yorùbá conception of personhood. In fact, his clarifications point to an unambiguous direction wherein we can locate with ease our principal concern for exploring Yorùbá traditional thought system concerning a person.

Like scholars before him, Oyèshílè holds that in Yoruba traditional thought the human person is composed of physical and non-physical components, and respectively they are specifically called *Ara* (body) and *Èmí* (vital principle that gives life to the human body)¹³⁸. The *Ara*, according to him, is visible and comprises of flesh (*Awọ*), bones (*Egungun*), brain (*Ọpọlọ*), head (*Orí*), heart (*Ọkàn*), intestine (*Ifun*), blood (*Èjẹ*), eyes (*Ojú*) Nose (*Imú*) and other physical components of a person.

In his words, “the material part is man’s body known as *Ara*...and it is concrete, tangible and made up of flesh and bones. We know or feel it through the senses and it constitutes the human anatomy. The body is best known through the study of the various components that make up the human anatomy such as the brain (*Ọpọlọ*), head (*Orí*), heart

¹³⁶*ibid*, P 21

¹³⁷*ibid*, P 19

¹³⁸Oyèshílè, O.A. *Conflict of Values Between The Community and The Individual in Traditional Yorùbá Belief System*, 2002, P 13-15

(*Okàn*), intestine (*Ifun*), and blood (*Èjè*)”¹³⁹. This submission acknowledges the presence of various physical parts within and outside the make-up of a person.

As regard *Èmí*, Oyèshílè posits that it is the vital principle of life in a person; that is, it is that which gives life to a person, in other words, it is the seat of life¹⁴⁰. In making a fundamental clarification concerning *Èmí*, Oyèshílè argues that *Èmí* is often times erroneously taken as the English equivalent of spirit, but that the word ‘spirit’ is a much broader concept than *Èmí* because it is used among other things to denote the vital principle, the principle of thought, the soul, a ghost, and an incorporeal being¹⁴¹. Thus, he maintains that *Èmí* – considering the myth of its source and that of a person in general in Yorùbá thought as well as its usage in language is better translates as “the vital principle that gives life to the human body”¹⁴². Thus, we observe in Oyèshílè’s rendition that the traditional Yorùbá thought has a clear understanding of a person as a combination of material and immaterial substances.

With regard to the functions of certain aspects of the two components (that is the material and immaterial) of a human person, Oyèshílè kick starts with the *Okàn*; and according to him, the *Okàn* though physical, has an immaterial counterpart, and it is this immaterial *Okàn* that is equivalent to the English word ‘soul’. *Okàn*, according to Oyèshílè, is the seat of emotion and psychic energy, this is clearly stated when he submits that “at the physical level, the heart (*Okàn*) is part of *Ara* (body) and it is responsible for the pumping of blood to other parts of the body. At another level, the *Okàn* (soul) is the seat of emotion and psychic energy...thus it is the material heart that constitutes a real representation of another *Okàn* which is essentially immaterial and invisible”¹⁴³. However, at some point on a further reading of Oyèshílè, he contends that the immaterial *Okàn* is not and cannot be the seat of emotions and psychic energy, in his words, “one may disagree with the view that the *Okàn* is the seat of intelligence because there is another physical organ in the head called *Opọlọ* (brain) which is responsible for this, and a similar argument can be adduced for the view that the *Okàn* is the seat for emotional and psychical actions”. At this point, it is clear that Oyèshílè rejects the immaterial *Okàn* as the seat of intelligence as well as emotional/psychical actions.

¹³⁹*ibid*, P 14

¹⁴⁰*ibid*, P 15

¹⁴¹*ibid*

¹⁴²*ibid*

¹⁴³*ibid*, P 15-16

Subsequently, what seems as a replacement (in terms of function) for the immaterial *Ọkàn* is what Oyèshílẹ̀ called *Ìfun* (intestine), according to him, because the *Ìfun* plays significant role in determining strength of a person, it is therefore attributed with certain psychical and emotional features¹⁴⁴. To substantiate this claim, he gives examples as follow¹⁴⁵:

- (1) *Kòní ifun nínú* – he has no intestines (which means a person is not strong or has no resilience).
- (2) *Onífun kan* – he has one intestine (which means a person that has little or no initiative, thus, unresourceful)

Like Awólàlú and Dọpamú, Oyèshílẹ̀ also identifies with *Èjẹ̀* and *Ọ̀jìjì* in the ontological make-up of a person in Yorùbá traditional thought, and concisely, he acknowledges the role of *Èjẹ̀* in the existence of a person. And following Awólàlú and Dọpamú, he identifies with the significant role of *Ọ̀jìjì* in the personality of a person¹⁴⁶. In addition, Oyèshílẹ̀ also follows Gbádégeṣin in acknowledging the significant role of *Ọpọ̀lọ*, which is located in the *Orí* (head), as the main source of logical reasoning and ratiocinative activities. Thus, with all sense of accuracy, Oyèshílẹ̀ did not quarrel with any of these positions by these scholars concerning the three identified elements as they identify and analyze their nature and functions.

For us in this study, however, there is the need to re-examine the nature and function of *Ọpọ̀lọ* (brain) as articulated by Oyèshílẹ̀, that is, there is the need for us to establish if Oyèshílẹ̀ inherited the whole of Gbádégeṣin's idea and analysis concerning *Ọpọ̀lọ* or he introduce some modification. Articulating the view of Gbádégeṣin, “*Ọpọ̀lọ* is a material component whose functions and activities are carried out and recognized on the physical plan. Thus, *Ọpọ̀lọ* (brain) and *Ọkàn* (heart) are regarded by the Yoruba to have some connections with human conscious activities such as thinking and feeling..., in addition, both are connected to *Èjẹ̀*¹⁴⁷.

Following from this, Oyèshílẹ̀ holds that the Yoruba considers the *Ọpọ̀lọ* as the seat of thought while they consider the *Ọkàn* as the abode of emotion and psychic actions; thus,

¹⁴⁴*ibid*, P 16 &Pp 31-32

¹⁴⁵*ibid*, P 16-17

¹⁴⁶*ibid*, P 17-18 &Pp 32-33

¹⁴⁷*ibid*, P 101-102

for him, they (i.e. *Ọpọlọ* and *Ọkàn*) both perform the same functions since *Ọpọlọ* is the instrument of thought and *Ọkàn*, he regards, as the basis of feelings and emotions. Very clearly, Oyèshílẹ̀ modifies the position of Gbádéḡeṣin on *Ọpọlọ* and *Ọkan* by first associating both with *Èjẹ̀*, and second by claiming that the function of both cannot be differentiated.

In fact, on a further reading, we find Oyèshílẹ̀ making a sweeping remark about all organs in human person and their relation to psychic function. Oyèshílẹ̀ argues that “we can say of the physical or biological components of a man that the attribution of psychic function to almost all the internal organs of a person by the Yorùbá is to see it as a demonstration by them of the realization that a person is an integrated physico-chemical system, thus, the conscious activities of a person are products of the harmonious interaction between his various elements or sub-systems”¹⁴⁸. Briefly, Oyèshílẹ̀ seems to have established that most physical organs (particularly internal) and their non-physical counterparts are involved in psychical, emotional, and ratiocinative actions, going by their uses in everyday language among the Yorùbá.

One important non-physical element in a person was placed on reserve for discussion by Oyèshílẹ̀ as a result of its uniqueness in Yorùbá traditional thought, and this is *Orí-Inú* (inner head) which has an unparalleled significance for us in this study. *Orí-Inú*, for Oyèshílẹ̀, determines the personality of a person and it has its physical manifestation in *Orí-Òde* (the outer head: *Orí* means head and *Òde* means outer). Furthermore, Oyèshílẹ̀ writes that “whether we refer to *Orí-Inú* (Inner head) as that which determines an individual’s personality or his essence, we are merely referring to a person’s destiny”¹⁴⁹.

Against this background, we can say that *Orí-Inú*, following Oyèshílẹ̀, is tied up with destiny. But the question is ‘what is the significance or function of *Orí-Inú* with regard to human psychical activities? To this end, Oyèshílẹ̀ posits that the Yorùbá “believe that it is *Orí* that rules, controls, and guides the life and activities of a person”¹⁵⁰. Without any iota of misinterpretation, we can observe from Oyèshílẹ̀’ s submission that the *Orí* is totally in-charge of a person. Note that the *Orí* is not the giver nor the sustenance of life in a person, this function belongs to the *Emi* (vital principle) and as long as the *Èmí* is present in a person, the *Orí* will continue to be in-charge of a person. In support of this supposition concerning the

¹⁴⁸*ibid*, P 20 & Pp 33-34

¹⁴⁹*ibid*, P 21

¹⁵⁰*ibid*

task of *Orí* in human personality, Oyèshílẹ̀ gives this example “*Ohun Orí wá á ẹ̀, kò mà ní s’aláìsẹ̀ e o* which translates as what the *Orí* comes to fulfil, it cannot but be fulfilled”¹⁵¹.

However, Oyèshílẹ̀ further notes that “the Yorùbá also believe that *Orí* cannot perform its function well without the aid of *Èsẹ̀* (legs) both in its physical and spiritual senses”¹⁵². A submission that also recognizes the significance of *Èsẹ̀* as a physical component and with a non-physical counterpart in the Yorùbá traditional conception of a person. And again in respect to the physical head, because the *Orí-Inú* is the ruler, controller and guardian of a person, and it has its physical manifestation in the physical head, this explains why one of the most significant physical organs in human person is located in the head and this is *Ọpọ̀lọ* (brain).

As a result of this unique character of *Orí-Inú*, Oyèshílẹ̀ did not hesitate to re-delineate – in line with Yorùbá traditional thought – the personality make-up of a person as a conglomeration of three components, according to him, “the three elements are *Ara* (body), *Èmí* (vital principle), and *Orí* (a person’s destiny or the spiritual component of human personality)”¹⁵³. However, considering the ontological nature of each of these three, he conveniently delimits them into two: the physical and the non-physical because “the Yorùbá do not regard the material aspect of a person (the body frame and all other organs of a person) as “self-sufficient and self-enclosed”, rather they see their capacity to function at all as dependent on a higher principle which animates them”¹⁵⁴, and this is so, he continues, “because of the belief that there is more to life than the efficient functioning of all the internal and external organs of a person, ...thus attributing that which is fundamental to human existence to a principle that is higher than any observable constituents of a person”¹⁵⁵.

Most derivative significant observation, from the above analysis of Oyèshílẹ̀’*s* account of the Yorùbá traditional thought on human personality, is that all components (either material or immaterial) of a person are involved in all kinds of action and inaction that a person engages in. In other words, Oyèshílẹ̀’*s* account of Yorùbá conception of a person is all embracing, because for him, the whole rather than a part or combination of parts of a

¹⁵¹ *ibid*, P 22

¹⁵² *ibid*, Pp 22-23

¹⁵³ *ibid*, P 21

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*, P 32

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, P 39

person performs whatever function (intrinsic or extrinsic) that defines a person as an individual both for himself/herself and others.

1.4 Pertinent Observations in Yorùbá Accounts

We have explored exactly five speculations by different scholars on the Yorùbá conception of a person. Painstakingly, we have taken time to thoroughly reveal each of these considered scholars understanding of the issue at stake. Each one of them has in one or more important ways points to a very useful direction in respect of our own primary goal in this study.

In summary, each one of them differs from the others in some important areas, but all of them agreed on certain critical points. In consonance, none of them jettisons the idea that the three fold components of *Ara*, *Èmí* and *Ori* are part of the Yorùbá conception of a person. However, in some degrees, they disagree on the functional ascriptions and the English equivalents of the components of *Èmí* and *Ori*.

In general, they all agree that the Yorùbá believed that a person is composed of a physical part called *Ara* whose English equivalent is the body. However, the Yorùbá term 'Ara' do not refers only to the body frame, it also includes all the internal and external physical organs; some of these internal organs are *Okàn*, *Ifun*, *Èdò*, *Ọpọlọ*, *Èjẹ*, and so on, and some of the external organs are *Ojú*, *Èsẹ*, *Ọwó*, *Àyà*, *Ori*, and so on.

Functionally, some of these scholars did inform us of the function(s) of the *Ara* while others do not. Specifically, Awólàlú and Dọpamú state that it is the *Ara* that acts and reacts to the environment; for Gbádégeşin, each unit of the *Ara* (internally and externally) has its own specific function. For others who did not attempt to inform us of the function of the *Ara*, we assume that this may have being due neither to negligence nor for lack of knowledge of its function, but to their conviction and predication on the assumption that their readers already know the functions of the *Ara*.

In respect to the *Èmí*, they all agreed that it is an immaterial element by nature and that it is responsible for the activation of life in a person, in other words, there is no disagreement as to the nature of the *Èmí* as a non-physical component in a person and as to the primary function of the *Èmí* as the activator of a lifeless body to have a life. However,

they differ concerning identifying the English equivalent of the notion of *Èmí*. Specifically, Ìdòwú holds the word ‘spirit’ as the English equivalent of the component. Other scholars identify the English equivalent of *Èmí* simply as the ‘vital principle of life’ or ‘that which gives life’.

On the third component they all agreed on as part of the Yorùbá conception of a person, which is *Orí*. There is no disagreement as to the accurate English equivalent of the component among Ìdòwú, Gbádéḡḡin, Awólàlú and Dọpamú, Oládìpò, and Oyèshílẹ̀. Also, they all agreed that the *Orí* is immaterial by nature, with its physical counterpart or manifestation as the physical head (*Orí-Òde*), and most importantly, that it is an embodiment of human destiny; therefore, it determines the course of life of a person.

Outside these three components, as we have noted earlier, none of them denies their presence in Yoruba traditional thought on human ontology, virtually every one of them adds some other components that differ in many respects. Quite clearly, in the work Oyèshílẹ̀, *Èsẹ̀* (legs) and *Ọwó* (hands) – both physical units of the *Ara* and having non-physical counterparts – feature uniquely in the Yorùbá conception of a person. In the works of Awólàlú and Dọpamú, Ìdòwú, Gbádéḡḡin, Oládìpò, and Oyèshílẹ̀, the component *Okàn* features prominently. In the works of Ìdòwú, Gbádéḡḡin, and Oyèshílẹ̀, we find *Ifun* featuring.

What is most important for us here is their views on all these extra components of a person identified in the Yorùbá conception of a person. According to Ìdòwú, Gbádéḡḡin, Oládìpò, and Oyèshílẹ̀, human actions/inactions and decisions/indecisions are part of the conscious activities of a person, and these conscious activities are functions of the physical internal organs put together or severally. Therefore, internal source and the external exhibition of human acts should be located in the total or some aspects of the internal organs. Although, Oyèshílẹ̀ argues specifically for the combined efforts of the physical organs, and their non-physical counterparts, as the seat of conscious activities.

Furthermore, Awólàlú and Dọpamú specifically hold *Okàn* in its physical and non-physical sense as the seat of conscious activities, this by extension, means that the action and decision of a person is inclusive. Again, we hope to explore the direction all these suppositions will take us with regard to our primary objective of identifying the nature and attribute of *Ìfẹ̀-inú* (human will) in Yorùbá traditional thought on a person.

In conclusion, it is important to restate that all the works considered in this section provide us with a direction towards our primary aim of finding the equivalent and the seat of *Ìfẹ́-inú* in the Yorùbá conception of a person.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE IDEA OF *IFÉ-INÚ*

In the second section of the last chapter, we analysed and explored the different accounts by different scholars on the Yorùbá conception of personhood. This is with a view to get a direction into the Yorùbá equivalence, nature, and function of the human *will* as conceived by the Yorùbá people. From that exploration, we were able to infer some useful information concerning the Yorùbá idea of the human *will*, these information point to the word '*Inú*' as an important notion in our search for the Yoruba equivalence, nature, and function of the human *will*; however, *Inu* as a prominent word within the confines of Yoruba metaphysics carries meaning that is deeper than denoting the human *will* alone in Yoruba ontological conception.

Thus, our view is that this deeper meaning of the word *Inú* needs to be narrowed down, so that an appropriate Yorùbá equivalence of the human *will* can be formulated. On our part, we propose the notion of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as the Yorùbá equivalence of the human *will*. The reason for proposing this term as the human *will* in Yorùbá language is what constitutes major part of the focus of this chapter. Precisely in the section that follows this introduction – which is titled “What is *Ìfẹ́-Inú*?”, we demonstrate how we come to arrive at *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as the operational definition and equivalence of the human *will* in Yorùbá thought. In the section that follows, titled “The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*”, we examine the ontological status as well as the facticity of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*; and in the last section of this chapter, titled “Nature and Function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*”, we explore the difficult and complex idea of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in terms of its nature and function.

2.1 What Is *Ìfẹ́-Inú*?

In Yorùbá written literatures in any field or on any subject, one cannot find the exact word for human *will*; at most, one can come across related or associated words that carries meanings derivable from the meaning of this important word that denote a significant mental element in human nature. Our position is that the word '*Ìfẹ́-Inú*' is the equivalence of the human *will*. In other words, what is called the human *will* in Western conception of a person as shown in the first chapter is identified as *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá worldview on human nature. This claim is what we hope to demonstrate in subsequent paragraphs of this section.

Among the Yorùbá, it is popular to hear them talk about *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, for instance, in the following manners: *Té Ìfẹ́-Inú ẹ* and *Se Ìfẹ́-Inú ẹ*, literally meaning “Satisfy yourself” and “Do as you wish” respectively. However, the exact meaning of the notion as it appears in these examples is difficult to establish. To make this issue more difficult, the word is conspicuously unavailable among entries in dictionaries on Yorùbá language that we come across; however, we find words that have association either in meaning, spelling, or both with the word *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in these dictionaries.

For instance, in a dictionary published and reprinted by the CMS¹⁵⁶ in 1913 and 2002 respectively, the notion of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is not included among the entries in the dictionary. However, we have words like (1) *Ìfẹ́-àtinúwá*¹⁵⁷, which according to the dictionary means free will in English language; (2) *Ìfẹ́-inúrere*¹⁵⁸, which means goodwill; and most importantly (3) *Ìfẹ́*¹⁵⁹, which variously means liking, willingness, love, will, desire, and cordiality. It is important that we note, before discussing further, that the word ‘*Inú*’ (like the notion with which we are concerned in the present exercise, which is *Ìfẹ́-Inú*) is also not among the entries in this dictionary.

Thus, our problem is half-solved by the dictionary cited above as it is clearly shown that the word *Ìfẹ́*, which is the prefix of the word, has various English equivalences. Among these various English equivalences noted by the dictionary as the meanings of *Ìfẹ́*, we consider ‘will’ as the most appropriate equivalence of the word for us in this study. The *will* as the appropriate English equivalence of *Ìfẹ́* is adequately shown in the illustrations of *Ìfẹ́-inúrere* as goodwill and *Ìfẹ́-àtinúwá* as freewill, upon breaking down these words into units of *Ìfẹ́* and *Inúrere* as well as *Ìfẹ́* and *Àtinúwá* respectively, commonsense is adequate to tell that *Ìfẹ́* as appeared in these words can only mean *will*.

Hence, we are left with the problem of identifying the English equivalence of the second part of our desired notion. In resolving this problem of identifying the English equivalence of *Inú* in order to prove the point that the Yorùbá equivalence of the human *will* is *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, we turn to another dictionary of the Yorùbá language. The word ‘*Inú*’ is spelt as ‘*Inun*’ in a Yoruba dictionary compiled by Abraham¹⁶⁰ and published in 1958; this is obvious

¹⁵⁶CMS, *A Dictionary of the Yorùbá Language*, 1913 (reprinted 2002)

¹⁵⁷*ibid*, P 108

¹⁵⁸*ibid*

¹⁵⁹*ibid*, P 107-108

¹⁶⁰ Abraham, R.C. *Dictionary of Modern Yoruba*, 1958 (reprinted 1976)

the moment the author attempts to clarify the meaning of the word by analysing it in its appearances in everyday usage. For instance, he mentioned goodwill and writes it in Yorùbá as *Ìfẹ́inúnrere*¹⁶¹ instead of *Ìfẹ́inúrere*.

Presently, however, spelling is important but it is not a problem for us in this exercise, rather our concern is the meaning that this word carries. On this note, the dictionary simply translates the word as stomach. In this sense, it means that the word *Inú* denotes the physical part of a person called stomach in English language; but following the dictionary's various examples in its attempts to demonstrate the meaning ascribed to the word by noting the many contexts within which the word appears in Yorùbá language, we observe that the word must have deeper meaning than just denoting a physical part of a person. In the dictionary, the following examples¹⁶² are given as some of the contexts within which the word appears:

- 1) *Onínún rere*, which means he is goodhearted
- 2) *Iṣ́enun rere* means kindness
- 3) *O nínún funfun*, which means he is a sincere person
- 4) *Inúnrẹ̀ẹ̀ tẹ̀* means he is a mild person
- 5) *Onínún re* means kind hearted
- 6) *Onínún búburú* or *onínún dúdú*, which means he is malevolent
- 7) *Onínún kan l'àwá*, which means our views coincide or we are trustworthy
- 8) *Inún fífù* means bad temperedness; and
- 9) *Onínún fífù* means sharp tempered person

With these examples, one will observe that the mere translation of *Inú* as stomach is a misrepresentation in the translation of the word. In subsequent treatment of the word as 'a noun' (although there is no indication in what figure of speech it is being translated as stomach, however mere denoting a physical part of a person indicates that it is also a noun but a concrete noun), the dictionary translates the word as 'the inside' and notes that it is 'often used as preposition'. To make clear this supposition, the dictionary cites "*Inún ẹ̀ni lorúkọ́ t́áá óó fí sọ́ ọ̀mọ̀n ẹ̀ni í gbé*, which means it is inside oneself that one hides the name to be given to a child"¹⁶³ as an example.

Without much ado, it is clear that the word *Inú* is much more than merely denoting the part of a person called stomach. It is important to make it clear here that we are not saying that *Inu* do not mean stomach; rather we are saying that within the contexts that it appears in

¹⁶¹*ibid*, P 309

¹⁶²*ibid*

¹⁶³*ibid*

the above examples and in the notion we are presently dealing with, the word has deeper and more important meaning than mere stomach.

Our effort to establish the English equivalence of *Inú* as a word on its own and as conjoin in the concept of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* or other related ideas like *Ìfẹ́-inúrerere* and *Ìfẹ́-àtinúwá* requires that we turn to a person. This supposition derives from our general observation from the above discussion, that is, the above discussion points to the direction that we should interrogate the ontological status of a person as construed by the Yorùbá.

On this note, an article by Hallen and Sodipo is significance on this issue. The paper specifically explores the concept of *Inú* as an important term within the Yorùbá speculation on the ontology of a person. According to these scholars, the English equivalence of the word is 'self', this is clearly stated when they submit that

We are suggesting that an appropriate translation of “*Inú*” or the “*Inú*” as used...(in Yorùbá language)...is the English-language “self”. The adoption of this translation...does not imply that we are adopting any specific English-language (or Western) psychological theory of the self...and attributing that to the Yorùbá as well...Nevertheless for us to choose “self” as the most representative translation of this term, there must be at least some meaning shared in common between the two, or there would be insufficient reason for us to suggest this as a translation¹⁶⁴.

This suggestion by Hallen and Sodipo that *Inú* is the self in English is adequately appropriate to capture the fundamental meaning of the term as it appears in the concept of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and other related notions. The reason for following the line of thinking of these scholars in this regard is obvious enough, for they observe unambiguously that

In English, “Self” is used to refer to the individual person, and may include both the body and the mind...and it is along the lines of this kind of conception of the self that...explanations of *Inú* follow¹⁶⁵.

Hence for the purpose of clarity, the word ‘*Inú*’ from our exploration of written literatures has two layers of meaning, each of which is very significant for our study. The first of these meanings is that *Inú* in Yorùbá thought indicates the notion ‘human’ since it refers to

¹⁶⁴ Hallen, B. & Sodipo, J. “The House of the “*Inu*”: Keys to the Structure of a Yorùbá Theory of the Self” in *Quest: An International African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. VIII, NO. 1, June 1994, P 4-5

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*, P 5

the individual person according to Hallen and Sodipo; the second meaning of the word *Inú* connotes the immaterial aspect of human personality since it may also include the mind; and derivable from the second meaning is that it is signification of whatever that comes from within the person. On this note, we want to argue that since the physical part (body) of a person in Yorùbá thought is called *Ara* therefore *Inú* should indispensably refer to the immaterial part of a person in Yorùbá thought.

In justifying this point, Hallen and Sodipo gathered from their extensive research that *Inú*, being the self in Yorùbá conception suggests that everything we do begins from the *Inú*, in fact, all the bodily parts and all mental dispositions of a person are functionally incapacitated, if there is no *Inu*¹⁶⁶. Therefore, the self being *Inú* in Yorùbá language can be replaced with words like ‘individual’ or ‘human’. The ‘self’ or any of the replacements for *Inú* is suitable for our use, that is, *Inú* as either the self, individual, or human suits the meaning of *Inú* that we seek in order to identify the English equivalence of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

In this regard, we have solved the other part of the problem to identify the English equivalence of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. Unambiguously from our discussion so far, ‘*Ìfẹ́*’ which means ‘will’ and ‘*Inú*’ which means ‘human’ (as an indication of an immaterial aspect of a person) when conjoined to have *Ìfẹ́-Inú* can only translate into human *will* (or self will/individual will) in English language. Thus, *Ìfẹ́-Inú* serves adequately as operational definition and equivalent of the human *will* in Yorùbá language.

Therefore, *Ìfẹ́-Inú* can be regarded as the exit and entrance for all the *Inu* (non-physical) parts of a person; thus, all these *Inú* parts have their place and functions in the one common sovereign *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, because they all unite in all their works and functions. For instance, the moment *Ìfẹ́-Inú* determines a thing earnestly, all the powers of the *Inú* parts marshal under its banner, and go out to do their appropriate works according to the bidding of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. This is exactly the point some of the scholars on Yorùbá ontology endeavour to demonstrate when they variously talk about the Yorùbá conception of the immaterial counterparts of the physical aspects of a person¹⁶⁷.

In this regard, *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is not the whole of a person, but a capacity or a power of the *Inú* that constitutes a person. It is a part of a system of powers, needful to give completeness and unity to the whole, and dependent upon them for its powers, dignity, and all its resources.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid*, P 4-15

¹⁶⁷ See Oyeshile, 2002, P 26-34

That is, the existence of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* necessitates the powers of the other parts of the *Inú*, and the determination of its action involves various other elements of the *Inú*. Thus, a person is inconceivable without *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

Hence, the total immaterial parts that constitute an individual co-operate with the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in all its true and earnest acts, because in its determination, all agree and lead out the energies of the other parts of the *Inú* to action, enterprise, and usefulness. In fact, it is through *Ìfẹ́-Inú* that a person develops his/her own resources, performs his/her own work, and realises his/her own wishes.

2.2 Groundwork of the Metaphysics of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*

Recalling from the first chapter above, precisely in the third section, where we dealt with the Yorùbá conception of a person, that among the numerous conscious activities of the immaterial *Ọkàn* is the act of willing, this is clearly a position held by Awólàlú and Dọpamú when they submit that “Immaterial *Ọkàn* is the abode of intelligence, thought and action”. The immaterial *Ọkàn*, therefore, appears as the entity in a person that represents the faculty of the human *will* in Yorùbá thought. However, it is problematic to hold this immaterial *Ọkàn* as the sole abode of the human *will* on two grounds:

1. The act of willing, that is of deliberate decision and action, is associated with other elements in a person as appeared in Yorùbá thought. That is, the *will's* act is not only associated with the immaterial *Ọkàn* because scholars like Wándé Abimbola¹⁶⁸, Adé Àlì¹⁶⁹ hold other aspect of a person like *Orí* as the abode of the *will* in Yorùbá thought.
2. The so-called immaterial *Ọkàn* is not given an appropriate language translation. Whenever the Yorùbá speaks of *Ọkàn* in the non-physical sense, the onus is on the translator to take it as the ‘*Inú*’ aspect of the *Ọkàn* just as it is a common-place to have *OjúInú* as the immaterial *Ojú* (ẹyẹ) whenever it is being spoken of among the Yorùbá people.

¹⁶⁸ Abimbola, W. “The Yorùbá Concept of Human Personality” in *La Notion de Personne en Afrique Noire*. Colloques International aux de centre National de recherche Scientifique. 1971

¹⁶⁹ Ali, S. A”The Yorùbá Concept of Destiny: A critical Analysis” in *Journal of Philosophy and Development* No 1 Vols. 1 & 2. 1994

Hence, this ‘*Iní*’ aspect of the *Okàn* cannot be the category in a person that engages in the act of willing as noted and supported by some scholars like Gbádégeşin, who also shares the view that the ‘*Iní*’ aspect of the *Okàn* is responsible for the act of willing when he posits that “*Okàn* is the source of all consciousness and emotional response”¹⁷⁰ and further that “the subject of conscious identity responsible for the phenomenon of thinking, feeling, willing, and desiring is, in Yorùbá language, *Okàn*”¹⁷¹.

Barry Hallen attempts to systematize Abímbólá’s various submissions in order to have a coherent system of thought of the Yorùbá ontology leading to his rejection of the idea of the *Esè* (leg) in his own claim concerning the likely seat of human *will* in Yorùbá thought; however, he claims that it is *Èmí* (life-giving force), among its various functions, that is responsible for the act of deliberate choice and action, but when encased in the human body, the functions of the *Èmí* – including the act of willing – become subservient to a higher element in a person. This is expressly shown in Hallen’s submission that,

Èniyàn is in fact composed of two personal elements: *Èmí* and *Orí*. *Èmí* represents the vital life force or spirit, but it is also the source and locus of the conscious person, the so-called “I” that wishes, describes, and acts. At the same time, every *Èmí* when in its *Ara* (body) is linked to another personal element that is external to the individual’s self-consciousness and that represents the *Èmí*’s destiny, is cognizant of the efforts any *Èmí* makes during its lifetime in the world to achieve success and which the *Èmí* may petition in certain circumstances where it feels this may have some demonstrative effect on its life¹⁷².

From the above submission by Hallen, we can observe that it is extremely difficult to point at any one between the *Èmí* and *Orí* as the category that incorporates the faculty of the human *will*. However, the little that can be said is that the *Èmí* originally indicates the faculty of the human *will* but leaves the position to *Orí* the moment it enters the *Ara*; the *Orí* now begins to ‘direct’, ‘control’, and ‘dictate’ to the *Èmí* the course of life of an individual. At some other points, while the *Èmí* is still encased in the body, “it may petition (we don’t know to whom or how) where it feels some demonstrative effect on its life”. This position suggests that the *Èmí*, despite being under the control and dictate of the *Orí*, is consciously active.

¹⁷⁰ Gbádégeşin, S. “*Eniyan: The Yorùbá Concept of A Person*” in *The African Philosophy Reader*, (eds.) P.H Coetzee and A.P.J Roux., 1998, P 153

¹⁷¹ *ibid*, P 157

¹⁷² Hallen, B. “*Èniyàn: A Critical Analysis of the Yorùbá Concepts of Persons*” in *The Substance of African Philosophy*, (ed.) C.S Momoh, P 304

Specifically, the point here is that it is difficult to know which one between the two identified elements is the faculty of the human *will*, and it is even more difficult to establish any connection or link that the two can be taken together to be responsible for the act of willing as a result of the way and manner their relationship is presented to us by Hallen. In addition, this view by Hallen has traces of the Cartesian flavour that makes it moribund rather than clarifies.

However, this submission is useful because Hallen also seems to be interested in speaking of the idea of the faculty, nature, and function of the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* (human *will*) in Yorùbá ontology. Hence, it means that the non-physical counterparts of the *Orí* and the *Èmí*, that is, the *Orí-Inú* (i.e inner head which is the immaterial counterpart of the physical *Orí*) and/or the *Èmí* (which is also the immaterial counterpart of the human heart according to Hallen) are significant to reinforce the nature and function of the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* (human *will*) as a result of their immaterial nature.

In the work of Mákindé, it is not surprising to find something similar to that of Hallen, and this is because the duo solely or partly relied on the work of Abímólá to articulate their views. Specifically, Mákindé holds that “...the Yorùbás take the heart (in its spiritual place) to be the seat of emotion, love, hatred, hope, and faith while the *Orí* is the seat of human wisdom and intelligence (*Ogbón* and *Opolo*) and all thought systems”¹⁷³.

We must quickly note here, that what Hallen endeavours to systematize is to make a coherent whole or system, Mákindé separated. And in separating these functions between the *Èmí* (the immaterial counterpart of the physical heart) and *Orí* (the physical head we assume), Mákindé creates more problems than he tries to resolve regarding the discourse on *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*. For instance, there is an implicit duplication of functions between the two. To take as an example, actions such as love, hope, and so on (identified as functions of the *Èmí*) are definitely derivative functions of the thought system (a function of the *Orí*). Above all these however, Mákindé’s account and views indicate to us that we should examine the *Èmí* carefully as an immaterial entity in discussing the nature and functions of the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* (human *will*) in Yorùbá thought system.

The trio of Ìdòwú, Oládipò and Oyeshile share almost similar views with regard to the discourse on the Yorùbá conception of the nature and function of the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* (human *will*),

¹⁷³ Mákindé, M.A. *African Philosophy: The Demise of A Controversy*, 2007, P 110

but with some slight modifications in their various accounts. In this account, Bóláji Ìdòwú acknowledges that all the internal organs – working in unison- are responsible for a person’s both psychical and physical actions and inactions. In this regard, Ìdòwú emphatically submits that,

...practically, all the internal organs of the body taken together or severally have emotional or psychical functions attributed to them..., therefore, all the internal organs of man taken together or severally function only as the seats of man’s psychical or physical actions or reactions¹⁷⁴.

From this standpoint, we can observe that Ìdòwú’s conception of the seat of conscious activities vis-a-vis that of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* (human will) in Yoruba traditional thought is radically different from that of Awólàlú and Dọpamú, Hallen, and Mákindé in the sense that he holds ‘all physical internal’ elements rather than their non-physical counterparts in a person as the faculty that engages in the deliberate act of initiating decision and action.

This position is borne out of the fact that Ìdòwú, as we suspect, takes the English word internal to be equivalent to ‘*Inu*’ in Yorùbá language. The correctness of this translation is doubtful as our discussion in the last section had shown. However, it is important for now to note Idowu’s association of conscious activities including that of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* with the notion of ‘*Inú*’ in Yorùbá system of thought; this is exactly what he attempts to establish when he submits that

When we say of a person that *Inú u rẹ́ le* or *Inú rẹ́ dí*- his inside is hard or his inside is inscrutable, we mean that ‘He is obstinate or he is not open-hearted’ respectively¹⁷⁵.

Therefore, Ìdòwú’s articulation and affiliation of the Yorùbá notion of ‘*Inu*’ with human conscious activities including the act of willing in Yorùbá ontology is also a fundamental point that ignites interest in the metaphysics of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

Towing Ìdòwú’s line of reasoning is Oládìpò, but with notable modification. Like Ìdòwú, he also admits that “conscious activities are product of the harmonious interaction between its various elements or sub-systems”¹⁷⁶. Although, there is nothing specifically he said relating to the Yorùbá notion of ‘*Inú*’ but Oládìpò seems to be cognisant of the inter-

¹⁷⁴ Ìdòwú, E.B. *Olódùmaré; God in Yorùbá Belief*, 1962, P 180

¹⁷⁵ *ibid*

¹⁷⁶ Oládìpò, O. “The Yorùbá Conception of A Person: An Analytico-Philosophical Study” in *International Studies in Philosophy*, xxiv/3, P 16

dependency of the physical and non-physical elements of a person in Yorùbá thought. Acknowledging this inter-dependence, he posits that,

...the Yoruba also postulate a spiritual principle as the source of breath, indeed the categorical basis of life itself. This fact alone, it would appear is sufficient evidence that their conception of a person is not a description of the elements that are known to make up a person and their functions, but a metaphysical postulate brought in to explain their experience of a human person as a complex entity¹⁷⁷.

Ọládìpò's submission above is a very interesting one. However, he did not make any attempt to tell us this 'metaphysical postulate' that collaborate with the physical elements in a person to produce conscious activities including the act to *will*; but we suspected that this metaphysical postulate must be the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. This suspicion results from his submission that,

...the Yorùbá do not regard the material aspects of a person as self-sufficient and self-enclosed. They see their capacity to function at all as dependent on a higher principle which animate them... And the way they go about it is by attributing that which is fundamental to human existence to a principle that is higher than any of the observable constituent of a person¹⁷⁸.

Thus, Ọládìpò's position concerning the metaphysical postulate is presumed to be referring to the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* (the human *will*) since it is clearly shown to be the harmonious interaction among the physical internal organs and their non-physical counterparts of a person. We arrive at this view when we consider the metaphysical postulate in Ọládìpò's account of Yorùbá Ontology. In this regard, Ọládìpò and Ìdòwú seem to share close consensus in their accounts of the nature and functions of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* (human *will*) in Yorùbá thought.

With a very critical modification, Oyeshile follows the thinking patterns and renditions of Ìdòwú and Ọládìpò on this issue. Principally, he addresses the inherent problem shown in Ọládìpò's account as appeared above. In his own wisdom, rather than articulate an unnamed category as the metaphysical postulation in Yorùbá belief responsible for human activities that relate to the acts of decisions and choices, he informs us that all the internal organs in a person have physical and their non-physical counterparts as constituents of a

¹⁷⁷*ibid*, P 17

¹⁷⁸*ibid*, P 21

person in Yorùbá thought¹⁷⁹. Thus, it is on this basis that he logically informs us that the combined efforts of all the physical organs and their non-physical counterparts can be regarded as the faculty of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and other conscious activities in Yorùbá belief system.

For instance, commenting on the *Ìfun* (intestines) as an example of what he endeavours to demonstrate, Oyeshile notes that:

There are other various common locutions about the intestine (*Ìfun*) and stomach (*Inú*) couched in physical language but which actually do not refer directly to the physical intestine and the stomach¹⁸⁰.

On this note, it is clearly shown that the physical internal organs as well as their non-physical counterparts play significant roles in Yorùbá ontology, particularly as it concerns attempts to establish the functions and nature of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá ontology.

As a matter of fact, we found that Oyeshile makes allusion to the Yorùbá notion of '*Inú*' (which he translated as stomach) as one of the important components of a person responsible for conscious activities in Yorùbá thought. Most important to us here in Oyeshile's account, therefore, is that both the physical and non-physical counterparts of all the internal organs of a person put together are regarded as the faculty of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. The correctness or degree of correctness of this we shall find out subsequently.

In summation, it appears that the scholars considered so far greatly disagree as to the faculty, nature, and functions of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in the Yorùbá conception of personhood, but a consistent cogitation presents to us a-not-too different picture from the above. One obvious point to take note in the various submissions by these scholars on different components constituting the human person in Yorùbá thought is their allusions to the notion of the word '*Inú*'; although, none of these scholars think that the word '*Inú*', whenever it is used by the people, connotes more than its literal English equivalent and meaning (the inside or internal). In addition, none of these scholars also think that the word '*Inú*' when taking on its own invites us to a discourse on the nature and function of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá system of thought.

¹⁷⁹Oyèsílẹ̀, O.A. *Conflict of Values Between The Community and The Individual in Traditional Yorùbá Belief System*, 2002, P 26-34

¹⁸⁰*ibid*, P 31

Thus, it is pertinent to note and conclude that the scholars' works discussed above established the interest in the issue of finding the nature and functions of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*; thus, we must acknowledge them all for one thing, and this is the simple fact that within and out of the information so provided by them, we are led and able to conclude that the concept of 'Inú' is very significant in their discourse on the nature and function of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá traditional thought.

2.3 Nature and Function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*

From all indications, *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is an important category in the Yorùbá conception of a person, but it has received no serious attention by scholars that have done so much in the area of Yorùbá ontology. Thus far, we have demonstrated that the English equivalence of the notion is the human *will*; we have also shown how some scholars referred to it without realising it in their various considerations of the Yorùbá conception of a person. It remains to show that *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is by nature immaterial and its fundamental function is to initiate decisions and actions in the human person.

Around the globe, traditional Africans are noted for lack of written records, and the Yoruba people are not exempted; their oral forms of keeping records have presented some challenges, yet these methods of preservation of knowledge continue to be relied upon to explain their worldview. It is on this note that we hope to embark on an exploration of *Òwe* (Proverbs) and the *Ifá* literary corpus of the Yorùbá people in order to extrapolate the nature and function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá belief.

In order to demonstrate the nature and function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, we turn to the oral sources of the *Ifá* literary corpus and *Òwe* (proverbs) in Yorùbá culture to buttress the supposition that *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is by nature non-physical and that by function, it initiates decisions and actions. In other words, we turn to these oral literatures in order to have a clear insight and understanding of the nature and function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* (human *will*) in Yorùbá traditional thought.

The significance of *òwe* among the Yorùbá cannot be undermined. In fact, it remains one form of Yorùbá oral tradition that plays fundamental roles in individual and societal

affairs of the people. In fact, it is a repository of Yorùbá philosophy, this view is clearly noted in the submission of Banjo¹⁸¹ that

... a repository of Yorùbá philosophy, namely Yorùbá proverbs. The value of proverbs is epitomised in this Yoruba proverb: ‘òwe l’ẹ̀ṣin ọ̀rọ̀; bí ọ̀rọ̀ bá nù, ọ̀we ni a fi ń wa a’, meaning ‘a proverb is a horse which can carry you swiftly to the discovery of ideas sought. This ‘horse’ is being constantly pressed into the service of elders during deliberations in council and at home settling disputes. A relevant proverb throws light on the subject and drives point home.

Further noting the importance of *òwe* in Yorùbá society, Délànò opines that the usage of appropriate *òwe* in discussions signifies an educated individual as well as one who is qualified to take part in communal discussions. In the words of Délànò¹⁸², he submits that

In Yorùbá society, no one can be considered educated or qualified to take part in communal discussions unless s/he is able to quote the proverbs relevant to each situation... Yorùbá proverbs form the main structural materials of the language. Appropriate and correct usage of proverbs is important in Yorùbá life.

It is in support of the above suppositions that Ọ̀ládàpò also informs of the clarificatory function of *òwe* among the Yorùbá. According to this writer, *owe* is used to deal with knotty and difficult issues among the Yorùbá; in his own words:

Bí iṣẹ̀lẹ̀ kan bá ti ṣẹ̀lẹ̀ nínú iran Yorùbá ń ṣe ni àwọn ọ̀we, ọ̀rọ̀-àgbà yóò máa ré lu ara wọn. Ṣe ohun tó bá sì jọra wọn n là á fi i wé ara wọn... bí ohun kan bá kókó ṣẹ̀lẹ̀, àwọn Yorùbá lè pa ọ̀we bí ogún bíi ọ̀gbọn láti fi lè yanjú ọ̀rọ̀ tó díkókó...¹⁸³

Translates as

Anytime an issue of concern presents itself on the front-burner, elders unknot such with deluge of proverbs. Once any riddle presents itself, they solve it by applying proverbs. They may relate twenty to thirty proverbs to one issue.

¹⁸¹ Banjo, S.A “Foreword” to *Òwe L’ẹ̀ṣin Ọ̀rọ̀*, 1979. P v

¹⁸² Délànò, I. Introduction to *Òwe L’ẹ̀ṣin Ọ̀rọ̀*, 1979, P ix

¹⁸³ Ọ̀ládàpò, O. *Fòwe Tùmò Ọ̀we* (1). 2014 P v

In dealing with knotty and difficult issues, *òwe* also performs the important function of ensuring that such issues are treated with laughter and the seriousness they required. That is, the use of *òwe* encompasses consideration for right moods of participants in discussions and this is in order to achieve desirable results. It is on this note that Adégbìtẹ¹⁸⁴ submits that

...àwọn *òwe* tó jẹ pé bí a bá ti gbọ wọn, ẹrín ni yóò paa èkẹkẹ ẹni tó pa á àti ẹni tí a pa á fún. Ẹyí tó fihàn pé kò sí ọ̀nà tí Yorùbá kò lè gbà bá èyàn sòrò àtàtà Ẹ̀gbón ẹ jẹ ká mọ pé kí í ẹ látí rín ẹrín nìkan ni ìsòrí irú àwọn *òwe* wònyí wà fún. Ó wà látí bá ni sọ ọ̀dodo ọ̀rò lónà àwàdà tàbí ẹfẹ̀ ni.

Translate as

...these are proverbs that enchant the speaker and the hearer in bouts of laughter. This clearly shows that the Yoruba have dynamic ways of passing information. But, essentially, these proverbs serve not only comic purpose, but also convey vital bits of truth in a less tensed manner.

Òwe, as an important form of oral tradition as shown above, speaks volumes about the nature and function of *Ìfẹ-Inú*. In a text by Akínlàdé titled *Òwe Pẹ̀lú Ìtunmò (A-Gb)*, we found some *Òwe* that explicitly exposed the nature and function of *Ìfẹ-Inú* as an important category in human personality. Thus, as a way to demonstrate the nature and function of *Ìfẹ-Inú*, we extracted some *Òwe* in available literatures as follows:

*Awo tẹ́rẹ́ bo inú kò jẹ́ kí a rí inú aṣẹbi*¹⁸⁵

In English language, the *Òwe* translates as

The skin that covers the intestine walls hinders one to see the enclosure of the self of an evil doer

And the *Òwe* as shown above simply demonstrates that the immaterial element that is responsible for initiating decision and action of a person (that is *Ìfẹ-Inú*) is fundamentally responsible for the wicked acts display by some people, otherwise it would have been possible to avoid associating with such people if their acts are known or can be determined.

*Dèngé tutù lókè, ó gbóná nínú*¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁴ Adégbìtẹ, O. *Èédégbèjọ (1500) Òwe Apanilẹ̀rìn-ín*. 2013, P iv

¹⁸⁵ Akínlàdé, K. *Òwe Pẹ̀lú Ìtunmò (A-GB)*, 1987, P 7

¹⁸⁶ *ibid*, P 134-135

In English, the *Òwe* translates as

Pap cannot be judged by its cold surface, for it is hot in the inside

This *Òwe* further confirms the immaterial nature of *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* when it (that is the *Òwe*) applies to human person, since it is the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* that determines the true nature of a person, which is known through character and attitude initiated by *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* and not what is observable like the look on the face or the appearance.

*Èni a fẹ́ l' a mọ̀, a kò m'eni t' ó fẹ́ ní*¹⁸⁷.

The simple English translation of this *Owe* is

We know those that we loved, and not those that love us

This *Òwe* points to the simple fact that one can only determine what one can do or say,; but one cannot determine what others can do or say. And the reason for not being able to determine the character or attitude of others at any point in time is that their *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* is not open to empirical knowledge because it is immaterial by nature.

*Gbogbo alamu l' ó dọ̀bálẹ̀, a kò mọ̀ èyí tí inú n run*¹⁸⁸.

The direct English translation of the *Òwe* is

All lizards move on their belly, one cannot decipher the one with stomach pains

However, its true translation when applies to human beings is “although we are all humans, no one knows the true self of another”. In this regard and as explicated above, it also reiterates the intangible nature of *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* as the defining category of the self.

*Èni a kọ ní ìkà, t' ó sì Ẹ́ é, ó tí ní ìkà nínú tẹ̀lẹ̀*¹⁸⁹.

The above *Òwe* translates into English as

Whoever does evil for being incited must have possessed evil tendencies before.

*A kì í fì èjẹ̀ dúdú sínú kí a tutọ́ funfun jáde*¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, P 152

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, P 194

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*, P 153-154

Translation: One does not have black blood inside and spit out white saliva. (“Black blood” connotes hatred in Yorubá)

This proverb admonishes an *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* to speak his or her mind rather than conceal one’s feelings. It is not good to pretend to love someone we hate.

*Bí inú bá ti rí ni obì nyan*¹⁹¹

Translation: As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is. This proverb explains the place of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, faith and character as important factors that determines a means circumstance. In other words, one must watch one’s conduct and thought, for out of it comes the issues of life.

*Eni tí kò ní owó kíl pe alákarà*¹⁹²

Translation: He who has no money does not call the bean-cake seller.

Literally, this *owe* beseeches an *ọmọ̀lúàbí* not to paddle his or her *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in the direction of what s/he can’t afford contentment is essence.

*Asúnmọ di ẹ̀tẹ; ẹ̀niyàn gbé òkèèrè niyì*¹⁹³

Translation: familiarity breeds disrespect.

This *owe* cautions an *ọmọ̀lúàbí* not to associate himself or herself too closely with a friend; because such intimacy leads to exposure of a person’s private life/confidential and thus, an era of disregard commences.

*Ahun n re àjò, ó gbé ilé rẹ̀ dání*¹⁹⁴

Translation: tortoise carries his house (shell) wherever he journeys.

This *owe* is a commentary on self-reliance and independence. It encourages an *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* and his *Ìfẹ́-Inú* to aspire to be self-reliant.

*Eni a bá ti jẹ̀ dódò rẹ̀, á maa nira láti sọ ọ̀dodo rẹ̀ ní gbangba*¹⁹⁵

Translation: It is impossible to expose the Augean stable of one’s master.

¹⁹⁰Délà̀nò, *Op.cit.* P 1

¹⁹¹*Ibid*, P 12

¹⁹²*Ibid*, P18

¹⁹³*Ibid*, P 128

¹⁹⁴*Ibid*, P 41

¹⁹⁵ Adégbítẹ̀, *Op.cit.* P 42

This *òwe* chides an *Omọlúàbí* to disallow his or her *Ìfẹ́-Inú* from being bias; to tell the truth.

From the above, it is also clear that the *Òwe* indicates that *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, which initiates decisions and actions that are either evil or good, is immaterial by nature; otherwise, it will always be possible to identify and distinguish between an evil-doer from one with goodwill.

Furthermore, the *Ifá* literary corpus being the most authentic store of knowledge about anything and everything in the Yoruba belief system, as it is confirmed by many scholars on Yorùbá culture, also provides us with the knowledge of the nature and function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. In fact, in the works of Wándé Abímbólá, Ayò Sàlámi, Akínbòwálé Akíntólá, Kólá Abímbólá, and so on, there is the confirmation that *Ifá* is the Yorùbá repository of knowledge.

According to Kólá Abímbólá, he submits that “*Ifá* is used to refer to the divination process related to the god of knowledge and wisdom” because “it (*Ifá*) is the name of the god of knowledge and wisdom”¹⁹⁶. For Ayò Sàlámi, *Ifá* “is the custodian of the Deity, moral, economic, language, origin, and metaphysical orders of the Yorùbá nation and of its believers throughout the world”¹⁹⁷.

To further ascertain this claim, Akínbòwálé Akíntólá also writes that

....*Òrúnmìlà*, the Yorùbá deity of wisdom, is the all-embracing fountain from which Yorùbá thought system derives..., thus, the thought pattern of the Yorùbá finds its fullest expressions in the *Ifá* corpus¹⁹⁸.

Furthermore, Wándé Abímbólá confirms the significant posture of *Ifá* in Yorùbá culture thus,

Ifá jẹ òrìṣà kan pàtàkì láàárín àwọn Yorùbá. Àwọn Yorùbá gbàgbó wi pé Olódùmarè ló ràn Ifá wá láti òde òrun láti wáá fì ogbón rẹ tún ilé ayé ṣe. Ogbón, Ìmò, àti Òye tí Olódùmarè fì fún Ifá ló fún Ifa ni ipò nílá láàárín àwọn Ọbọ ni ilèe Yorùbá. “A-kéré-fínú-ṣogbón”, ni oríkì Ifá¹⁹⁹.

This quote translates in English language as:

¹⁹⁶ Abímbólá, K. *Yorùbá Culture: A Philosophical Account*, 2006, P 47

¹⁹⁷ Sàlámi, A. *Ifa: A Complete Divination*, 2002, P XI

¹⁹⁸ Akíntólá, A. *Yorùbá Ethics and Metaphysics*, 1999, P 1

¹⁹⁹ Abímbólá, W. *Ìjìnlẹ̀ Ohùn Ẹnu Ifá – Apá Kejì*, 2006, P 9

Ifá is an important divinity among the Yorùbá. The Yorùbá believes that *Olódùmarè* sent *Ifá* to this world from heaven to use its wisdom to bring about peace and order onto the earth. Wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence that *Olódùmarè* bestows on *Ifá* give *Ifá* an important position among other divinities recognised by the Yorùbá. “Small-but-wise”, is the cognomen of *Ifá*.

We can see that the *Ifá* literary corpus is an important form of oral tradition in Yorùbá culture, especially to explore the nature and function of *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* as construed by the Yorùbá. Therefore, an exploration of *Odù Ifá* for the purpose of extrapolating the nature and function of *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* is not a misplaced task.

On this note, in the *Odù Ifá* called *Òwónrín Méjì*, there is a clear pointer to the fact that the act to make and take deliberate decision, choice and action is the function of an immaterial element in the ontological make-up of a person. For clarity, the *Odù Ifá Òwónrín Méjì*²⁰⁰ runs thus,

Àtéléwó kò hu'run héú-héú,
A d'ifá fún Bótiwù-kí-wón-ó-ṣe-mí-tó-Bí-n-ò-ṣàì-là,
Tí n lọ rè é k'ówó l'ódò Kì-í-fẹ̀-á-ní.
Nwón ní k'ó rúbọ, kí ó lè rí owó náà san padà;
Ó mú eyelẹ mērin àti ọpòlọpọ owó.
L'ẹhìn tí ó rúbọ tán,
Ó fẹra adìẹ tí yòo maa sìn;
Ṣugbón kò ní owó lówọ tí yòò fì ra adìẹ à-ṣe-sìn náà.
Ó wáá lọ kó'wó lódò olórò kan
Tí orúkọ rè n jẹ Kì-í-fẹ̀-á-ní.
Bí-n-s'ai-là k'ówó tán,
Ó fì ra adìẹ;
Ó wáá n lọ sìn- 'gbà t'alẹ-t'ààrò-à-t'òsán
L'óko olówó rè, Kì-í-fẹ̀-á-ní.
Nígbà tí ó ṣe gàda,
Adìẹ d'àgbà, ó yé eyin

²⁰⁰ Akíntólá, A. *op. cit.*, P 133-136

Ó sì pa ọmọ mẹwàá;
Ó tún se diẹ sii,
Adiẹ tún pa ọmọ mẹwàá miràn l'èèkejì,
Àti mẹwàá miràn lèèketa.
Nígbà tí adiẹ Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là n pò rekete báyii,
Tí ó n di bíi mọkànlé-lọgbòn;
Ni Kì-i-fẹ-á-ní wá ké sí Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là,
Ó bíi l'èrè báwo ní o ti fẹ ṣe àwọn adiẹ rẹ wònyí.
Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là wá á wí fún-un pé,
“Ọla ni àwọn alááróbò n bọ wá ra àwọn adiẹ náà”.
Bí Kì-i-fẹ-á-ní ti gbọ báyii,
Èrò búburú kó síi nínú, gégé bí orúkọ rẹ
Kò lè sùn,
Ó n ro èrò búburú sí Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là,
Pé tí ọmọ náà bá ta àwọn adiẹ rẹ l'ọla
Yòò kúrò ní oko òun nù un;
Nítorí pé bí ó bá ti ta àwọn adiẹ náà,
Owó tí yòò pa ti ju owó tí ó jẹ òun lọ,
Nínú èrò búburú yìi,
Ìwa kẹni-má-niì gb'ilẹ nínú Kì-i-fẹ-á-ní.
Ìgbà tí ó wáá di òru,
Kì-i-fẹ-á-ní wá yó kélé-kélé
Ó lọ wó ògiri lu àwọn adiẹ yìi;
Ní irètí pé tí àwọn adiẹ náà bá kú,
Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là kò ní lè kúrò l'óko-olówó mọ.
Gbogbo àwọn adiẹ yìi sì kú pátápátá.
Nígbà tí ilẹ mó ní ojọ kejì,
Tí Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là lọ láti fún àwọn adiẹ rẹ ní óunjẹ gégé bí ìṣe rẹ,
Òkú àwọn adiẹ l'ó bá ní' lẹ bẹrẹ-bẹ.

*Èkún ni Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là bú sí,
Nítorí ikú àwọn adìẹ yìi sọ ìrètí rẹ d'òfo;
Inúu rẹ sì bàjẹ gidi-gidi.
Bí ó ti ñ sunkún lówó,
ÈṢù rí i, ó sì sọ ara ẹ di èniyàn;
Tí ó wá ñ bí l'èrè ohun tí ó ñ paá l'ékún.
Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-la fi t'èdùnt'èdùn ẹ àlàyé fún un;
ÈṢù náà wáá pa àrọwà fún-un,
Ó ní kí ó má sunkún mọ;
Ṣugbón kí ó kó gbogbo àwọn òkú adìẹ náà.
Kí ó tójú wọn,
Kí ó má ẹ jẹkí wọn ó bàjẹ.
Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là ẹ gégébí a ti sọ fún un
Pé kó ẹ àwọn òkú adìẹ náà
Kò pé sí àkókò yìi,
Ara ọmọ-ọba Alára kò yá;
Wón wáa ní kí Alára lọ tójú òkú adìẹ mewaá
Láti fi ẹ ewé-ifá fún ọmọ rẹ,
Kí ara ọmọ náà lè yá.
Wón wá òkú adìẹ tí ní Ará àti gbogbo agbègbè rẹ,
Wón kò rí, à fi ìgbà tí wón dé ọdọ Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là.
Ṣugbón kí wón tóó dé ọdọ rẹ
Èsù ti dé ọdọ rẹ,
Ó sì sọ àsọtélé fún un
Pé àwọn kan yóó wá òkú adìẹ dé ọdọ rẹ;
Nítorí náà, ìgbà tí wón bá dé,
Igba-òké ni kí ó ta ọkòòkan fún wọn.
Nítorí pé Oba l'ó rán wọn wáá rà á.
Àwọn ọjìṢé-ọba dé ọdọ Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là,*

Ó sì d'íye lé òkú –adiẹ gégé bí ÈṢù ti wí fún un pé kí ó Ẹ.

Wọn sàn'wó;

Wọn lo lo òkú-adiẹ fún ọmọ Alára,

Ọmọ náà sì gbádùn.

Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là sì gbá owó tirẹ s'ówó.

Kò tì ju ọjó méta lọ,

L'ẹhìn tí Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là gba ẹgbàá òké fún òkú-adiẹ tí ó tà fún Alára tán,

Ara ọmọ Ajerò náà kò fi dá.

ÈṢù tún da'rí wọn sí ọdọ Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là,

Ó sì ní igba méjì òké ni kí ó ta ọkọkan fún Ajerò

Báyì ni Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là tún Ẹ gba ẹgbàájì òké

S'ówó l'óri òkú-adiẹ mẹwàá miràn.

Ìgbà tí ó tún yá,

Ọmọ Ọwàràngún-àgá tún Ẹ àisàn;

Wọn sì tún wá òkú-adiẹ mẹwàá fún ẹtùtù iwòsàn ọmọ-ọba.

ÈṢù tún kọ sí Bí-n-s'ài-là

Pé ẹgbèta òké ni kí ó ta òkú-adiẹ kọkan.

Ni Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là bá tún rọ ẹgbèwá méta òké owó-ẹyọ s'ápò.

Bí-n-s'ài-là di olówó l'óri àwọn òkú-adiẹ rẹ;

Ó san gbèsè rẹ fún Kì-í-fẹ-á-ní,

Ó kọ'lé, ó kan ààsè;

Ó wáá di olówó àti olókikí.

In English language²⁰¹, this *Odù* runs thus,

Palms do not grow hair,

Divined for Bótiwù-kí-wọn-ó-Ẹ e-mí-tó-Bí-n-ò-Ẹ ài-là,

Who was going to loan money from Kì-í-fẹ-á-ní.

²⁰¹ This translation is done with the assistance of Dr. Adésànyà, a lecturer in the Department of African Languages and Communication Art, Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University, 28/11/2012

He was asked to offer sacrifice, in order to be able to repay the loan;

He offered four pidgins with plenty of money.

Having offered the sacrifice,

He needed to buy chickens for grazing;

But he could not afford to purchase the chickens for grazing.

He now went to loan money from one rich man

Whose name is Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní.

Bí-n-Ş'ài-là secured the loan,

He purchased chickens;

He now began to serve three times daily

In the farm of the rich man that loaned him money, Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní.

After a while,

The chickens became matured, laid eggs

And reared ten chickens;

After a while again,

The chicken reared another ten chickens for the second time,

And another ten for the third time.

When Bí-n-Ş'ài-là's chicken reared for the third time,

His entire chickens amount to thirty-one;

Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní now called on Bí-n-Ş'ài-là,

He asked him what he intends to do with his chickens.

Bí-n-Ş'ài-là responded:

“It is tomorrow that the marketers are coming to buy the chickens”.

The moment Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní learnt about it,

He was filled with evil thought, as his name implies

He could not sleep,

He was thinking of evil plan towards Bí-n-Ş'ài-là,

That once he was able to sell his chickens the following day

He will be freed from servitude;

*Because as soon as he was able to sell these chickens,
The proceeds he would realised will be more than the money he is owing him,
In this evil thought,
Attitude of selfishness became rooted in Kì-í-fé-á-ní.
When it was around midnight,
Kì-í-fé-á-ní tip-toed
To pull the fence-wall on the chickens;
Expecting that if the chickens die,
Bí-n-Ş'ài-là would not be able to leave the rich man's farm anymore.
All the chickens actually died.
When it was day break the following day,
Bí-n-Ş'ài-là went to feed the chickens as his normal routine,
He met the bodies of the dead chickens littering the ground.
Bí-n-Ş'ài-là burst into tears,
Because the death of these chickens shattered his dream;
He became extremely sad.
As he was crying,
Èsù saw him, and turned himself to a person;
He now requested to know the reason for his weeping.
Bí-n-Ş'ài-là sorrowfully explained to him;
Èsù now commiserated with him,
And asked him to stop weeping;
He should pack all the dead chickens, keep them, and prevent them from
spoilage.
Bí-n-Ş'ài-là did exactly as he was told
To handle the dead the dead chickens
Not quite long from this moment,
The prince of Alára took ill;
Alára was asked to provide ten dead chickens*

*To prepare Ifa leaves for the prince,
So as to make the prince recover from his illness.
They sought for dead chickens in Ara and its environs,
They could not get, until they got to Bí-n-Ş'ài-là.
But before they got to him
Èsù has got to him,
He predicted to him
That some people will come to seek dead chickens at his place;
Hence, when they come,
He should sell the dead chickens to them at two hundred cowries per each.
Because it was the king that sent them to come and buy it.
The king's messengers got to Bí-n-Ş'ài-là,
He now placed price on the dead chickens as instructed by Esu.
They paid;
They went to use the dead chickens for Alára's prince,
The prince became well.
Bí-n-Ş'ài-là collected his own money.
Not more than three days later,
After Bí-n-Ş'ài-là collected two thousand cowries for the dead chickens he sold
to Alára,
Ajerò's prince also took ill.
Èsù also directed them to Bí-n-Ş'ài-là,
He told him to sell each dead chicken to Ajerò at four hundred cowries
This is how Bí-n-Ş'ài-là also collected four thousand cowries
For another ten dead chickens.
After a while again,
The prince of Òwàràngún-àgá also took ill;
They equally sought ten dead chickens for the healing of the prince.
Èsù hinted Bí-n-Ş'ài-là again*

That he should sell the dead chickens at six hundred cowries each.

This is how Bì-n-Ş'ài-là also collected six thousand cowries.

Bì-n-Ş'ài-là became rich from the proceeds on his dead chickens;

He paid his debt to Kì-í-fé-á-ní,

He built a house, roofed it;

He became wealthy and popular.

Clearly, the major information contained in this *Odu* is in two-fold: the first is the teaching that wickedness or selfishness is bad and that we should be calm whenever situation get worst, because it could turn out to be better if not best, provided that we fulfil all righteousness. Our own concern here is intertwined with the information stated above; most significantly, however, is with the first information that wickedness or selfishness is bad. Note that we are not concerned with the judgement aspect of the information, that is, the “bad” status of being wicked or selfish, rather we are concerned with the act of being wicked or selfish as appeared in the *Odu* in order to demonstrate the nature and function of *Ìfẹ-Inú*.

We can, therefore, observe that the *Odu* presents us with what transpired between two fellows. One is rich and the other is poor, and as a result of the extreme difference in their economic status, the poor becomes dependent on the rich one by virtue of obtaining a loan from him. And as custom demands, a borrower will have to serve the lender for as long as he is able to repay the exact loan; this means that the period of service is the interest on the loan.

Fortunately, the borrower used the money judiciously by investing it on poultry, which within a short period, he is sure of paying back the loan and stop being a servant to the lender. But this dreamt fortune was short-lived as a result of the wicked or selfish act of the lender because he wanted the borrower to continue to serve him.

It is at this point that the *Odu* clearly points out to us that it is the *Ìfẹ-Inú* of the lender, not seen by the borrower, which initiated the wicked decision and action of the lender towards the borrower. In other words, *Ìfẹ-Inú* as an immaterial constituent in the make-up of the personhood of the lender functions as the initiator of decision and action that is wicked/selfish towards the borrower. This is clearly shown in the aspect of the *Odu* that runs thus,

...Kì-í-fé-á-ní now called on Bì-n-Ş'ài-là,

He asked him what he intends to do with his chickens.

Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là responded:

“Poultry traders will come buy them tomorrow”.

The moment Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní learnt about it,

He was filled with evil thought, as his name implies

He could not sleep,

He was thinking of evil plan towards Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là,

That once he was able to sell his chickens the following day

He will be freed from servitude;

Because as soon as he was able to sell these chickens,

The proceeds he would realised will be more than the money he is owing him,

In this evil thought,

Attitude of selfishness became rooted in Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní.

When it was around midnight,

Kì-í-fẹ́-á-ní tip-toed

To pull the fence-wall on the chickens;

Expecting that if the chickens die,

Bí-n-Ṣ'ài-là would not be able to leave the rich man's farm anymore.

All the chickens actually died.

In another *Odu* of the *Ifá* literary corpus, it is also shown that the nature of *Ifẹ́-Inú* is immaterial and its function is to initiate decision and action in a person. In fact, this *Odu* reveals that *Ifẹ́-Inú* initiates good and benevolent decision and action in a person. This *Odu* is the *Àmúlù* (minor) *OduÒgúndá Ìrẹ̀tẹ̀*²⁰² (or *Ògúndákete*), and it runs thus,

Kúkùndùnkú a b'ewé gerùgerù

Òpò oògùn á gun'mọ̀ gálègàlè

Bí o bá l'ópò oògùn, bí o bá l'èkèè

Èké ò ní jé ó jé

Inú ire jéju ewé lọ

²⁰² Adéwálé-Somadhi, FAMA, *Sixteen Mythological Stories of Ifá (Ìtàn Ifá Mèrìndìnlógún)*, P 67

D'Ífá fún Oòni Alánàk'èṢùú
Èyí tí kò gbúdò kọ ohùn Ifá sílẹ̀

In English, this translates into

Sweet potato with fresh leaves
Possession and knowledge of too many charms and spells intoxicate
If you have potent charms and spells and you are dishonest
Your dishonesty will render the charms and spells impotent
Goodwill works better than charms and spells
Divined for Oòni Alánàk'èṢùú
Who must follow Ifá's advice and injunctions

The most obvious observation concerning the function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* from this minor *Odu* is that when *Ìfẹ́-Inú* initiates decision and action that can be described as good-will in a person, such is more potent than charms and spells. Most importantly, however, from the *Odu* is the implicit function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as portrayed by the *Odu*.

According to the *Odu*, the most significant function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is self-determination; from all indications. This is so because we need self control and protection over our lives since our decisions and actions produce either good or bad outcomes. In making decisions and taking actions that bring a person to control actions and protect lives of both his own and others, this function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as explicated by the *Odu* implies increased or diminished (depending on whether it is goodwill or ill-will towards others respectively) personality. And we must say that this is an important aspect of what defines each person's personality; hence, *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and its function is a measure of personhood.

Emphasizing this measure of personhood by *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and its function, *ÀmúlùOduÒbàràÒfún*²⁰³ reiterates this clearly and it runs thus,

Ahéré oko a b'ídí jèèrè jeere
Àgbàlagbà ejò ní í fí ìdobálẹ̀ ara re wọ'lé
D'Ífá fún Babaláwo méta
A bù fún Olùmòràn mẹfà

²⁰³ *ibid*, P 54

Ni'jò tí wọ̀n nǹjà àgbà lótù Ifẹ̀
Ñjẹ̀ ta ni àgbà
Ifá l'àgbà
Ìmòràn ni á kọ̀ dá, kí a tó dá Ifá

In English language, it translates thus,

The hut in the farm with a big buttock
Old snake debases itself crawling
Divined for three Babaláwos
Divined same for six clairvoyants
The day they staged a superiority contest in Ilé Ifẹ̀
Who is superior?
Ifa is superior
Decisions must be made first before one consults Ifá.

The last two lines of the above *Odù* clearly indicates that in consulting *Ifá* as well, one needs to first of all make the decision to do so as well as take the action to do so after one has decided. This means that it is by virtue of *Ifẹ̀-Inú* and its function of decision and action initiation that determines our humanity, since it is only humanity (and not any other category of beings) that have business with *Ifá* whether by way of consultation, practice, worship, and so on. In fact, that act as shown in the *Odù* determines even the choice of consulting the *Ifá*.

Furthermore, another *Odù* speaks paradoxically of the nature and function of *Ifẹ̀-Inú* as an important non-physical aspect of a person. In fact, it is unrattling the paradox of the *Odù* that makes it possible to reveal the nature and function of *Ifẹ̀-Inú* as contained in the *Odú*. The *Àmúlù Odù Ọ̀kànràn sogbè* is the *Odù* that speaks in paradox about the nature and function of *Ifẹ̀-Inú*. The *Odù*²⁰⁴ runs thus,

Inú wọ̀n nii kó burú
K'óri wọ̀n tó ó burú
Ìkà kii f'onikà silẹ̀;
Eni ó d'ásọ p'óri t'ọ̀o só

²⁰⁴ A. Akintola, *op. cit.*, P 146-148

Ara rẹ ní n ío ó pa.
A díá fún Àjá, ọmọ ì-kó-fá Ọrúnmilà
Tí nwọn ní óó má da 'lẹ s'Ọlórún
Sé nígbà iwásẹ
B'Ọrúnmilà ti wà l'áyé
Bẹẹ náà l'ojú rẹ n rí ọrun
T'ó sì n gbọ ohùn Olódùmarè
Èyí ni nwọn se n pè É ní
“A-gb'áyé-mò se-ọrun”
N'gbà náà
B'iyonu bá dé s'áwọn aráyé
Tàbí sí ará ilú
Ọrúnmilà ni nwọn á ké sí
Ètùtù tí ó bá sì ní kí nwọn ó Ẹ
Nwọn a Ẹ é
Ètùtù a sì gbà
Sùgbón nígbà tó wá yá
Oníràwo, èyí tí se ọmọ-ì-kó'fá Ọrúnmilà
Wá á bèrè iwà a-gb'èhìn-b'ebọ-jé
Njé tani Oniwàro sè?
Oniwàro ni orúko ti Àjá n jé ní isẹ-n-dá'lẹ
Kí wá á ni Oniwàro Ẹ?
Ìgbà t'Oniwàro yòò bèrè iwà búburú rẹ yí
Bí Ọrúnmilà bá ti pa ètùtù
S'óríta fún iwòsàn àti aájò ọmọ aráyé
Oniwàro, gégébí ọmọ ikófá rẹ
Yòò tẹlẹ e lọ
L'èhìn tí àwọn méjéjì bá kúrò l'óríta tán
Oniwàro yòò pa'radà

Yòò di Ajá
Yòò sì máa lọ f'enu gbé
Gbogbo ònkan inú ẹbọ
Tí Ọ̀rúnmilà ti pa s'óríta
Lọ sí ilé ara rẹ
N'gbàtí o bẹ̀rẹ̀ síí se ọ̀tẹ̀ yí
Kò jẹ́kí gbogbo ẹbọ Ọ̀rúnmilà
K'ó dé ọ̀dọ̀ àwọn irúnmoḷẹ̀ l'órun mó
Kò wá á dà mó
Ayé kò r'ọ̀jú-r'áyè síbẹ̀
Aláìsàn gbogbo kò sà̀n!
Ọ̀ràn yí wá a di kàyéèfi f'Ọ̀rúnmilà
L'Ọ̀rúnmilà bá ké p'Olódùmarè l'órun
Olódùmarè wáá sọ f'Ọ̀rúnmilà
Ó ní
“A-gb'èhìn-b'ẹbọ-jé ti n bẹ l'árin àwọn èniyàn àn rẹ
Àwọn ni kò j'ẹbọ ó fín!
Àwọn ni kò j'ẹbọ ó dà
'Tori náà, kí iwọ Ọ̀rúnmilà
Kiyè sí àárin àwọn èniyàn rẹ
Àti àwọn ọmọ ikófá rẹ gbogbo
Kí o sì kéde kílò fún gbogbo wọn
Pé àtubò-tán agb'èhìn-b'ẹbọ-jé kii dára
Lèhìn ikéde àti ikílò yí, f'árayé
Ọ̀rúnmilà tún ètùtù gbogbo se
Bí ètùtù ti dé oríta tán
Oníwàro, bíí se pa'ra dà di Ajá
Nàà wáá tún padà s'óríta
Láti lọọ kó ẹbọ náà

Dí-dé tí Ajá dé oríta láti kó ẹbọ
 Ó pàdé ẹkùn t'ó wà ní bùbá
 Rírí t'ẹkùn rí ajá
 Ẹkùn f'ẹran tí n sọ sílẹ̀
 Orí ajá l'ó mú bọ ẹnu
 “kíllí”, iyàwó ajá
 Bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí í kígbẹ
 Títí gbogbo ayé fì mọ pé
 Oko rẹ, ajá, níí máa k'ẹbọ wọn jẹ
 Ẹ̀gbọ̀n igbàtí àwọn èniyàn yóò fì dé oríta
 Ibití nwọn ti n gbọ igbe ibòòsí
 Orí lóṣòṣò, ẹ̀sẹ̀ lóṣòṣò, apá lóṣòṣò
 Ni nwọn bá
 Gbogbo ẹ wáá ti já jàtí-jàtí, jálaa-jàla
 Ni gbogbo ilú fì wá n wí pé
 “Ẹ wò ó jàtí-jàtí, ó rí jálaa-jàla
 Ẹ wo òkú ọ̀dàlẹ̀
 Ó já jálaa-jàla
 Láti ọjọ̀ ti orin yì ti w'áyé
 Ni Oníwàro, omọ̀ ikófá Ọ̀rúnmilà
 Ti wáa di ẹni ayé n pè ní ajá

The English translation²⁰⁵ of this *Odù* runs thus,

*The decision to be bad is initiated by the human will
 Before the corresponding bad actions
 Wickedness cleaves to the wicked
 One that covers up oneself with a blanket and fatted
 That person is engaged in self attack.*

²⁰⁵ This translation is done with the assistance of Miss Alimi Omósaléwá, a student in the Department of African Languages and Communication Art, Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University. 09/12/2012

*Divined for the dog, an apprentice under Ọ̀rúnmìlà
That was warned to desist from betraying the supreme being
At the beginning of earthly existence
As Ọ̀rúnmìlà is existing on the earth
He was also aware of the happenings in the spirit world
And was listening to the voice of the Supreme Being
This is why he was addressed as
“One-residing-on-earth-and-participate-in-the-spirit-world”
During this period
Whenever problems or difficulties visit human beings
Or visit the community
They always approached Ọ̀rúnmìlà with their problems or difficulties
Any sacrifice prescribed for them
They performed it
And their problems or difficulties become resolved
But at some point during this period
Oníràwo, an apprentice under Ọ̀rúnmìlà
Began to behave as a betrayal
Who is this Oníràwo?
Oníràwo is the name of dog at the beginning of earthly existence
What exactly did Oníràwo do?
When Oníràwo was going to start his betrayal character
If Ọ̀rúnmìlà performed sacrifice
At the cross-road to heal and deliver the people from problems and difficulties
Oníràwo, as an apprentice under Orunmila
Will follow him there
After the two of them must have left the cross-road
Oníràwo will change
To a dog*

*And began to use its mouth to carry
All that are inside the sacrifice
That Òrúnmìlà performed at the cross-road
To its own house
As it began this rebellious acts
It did not allow all sacrifices performed by Òrúnmìlà
To get to the deities in the spirit world
Hence, bad conditions are turning to worst
Life became turbulence
Sick people are not healed!
This situation began to baffle Òrúnmìlà
Thus, Òrúnmìlà had to consult the Supreme Being in the spirit world
The Supreme Being informed Òrúnmìlà that
“Their is a traitor among your people
That is responsible for upturning the sacrifice!
As well as destroying the sacrifice
Therefore, you Òrúnmìlà
Be observant among your people
And among the apprentices under you.
Also announce this warning to them all
That the consequences of betrayal is worst
After the announcement and the warning to the people
Òrúnmìlà performed the sacrifice again
Immediately the sacrifice was placed at the cross-road
Oníwàro, changed to dog
And went back to the cross-road
In order to go and loot the sacrifice
As the dog got to the cross-road to loot the sacrifice
It met the tiger in ambush*

When the tiger cited the dog
The tiger abandoned the ambush he layed
And went straight for the dog
“killi”, the wife of dog
Began to scream
Until everyone knew that
Her husband, the dog, is the one that is always looting the sacrifices
But by the time the people could get to the cross-road
Where the noise was coming from
They met
The head apart, the legs apart, and the arms apart
Everything was already in pieces and shreds.
This is the reason everyone began to say that
Look at it in pieces, it looked shreds
Look at the corpses of a traitor
Torn into shreds
It is since the inception of this song
That Oniwàro, an apprentice under Òrúnmilà
Became to be called the dog by the people

This *Odù* speaks of the difficulty in knowing the characters and behaviours of individual as a result of the un-empirical nature of the entity in a person that initiates decision and action. The manifestation of this difficulty, as appeared in the *Odù*, is what led Òrúnmilà – despite being the god of wisdom and knowledge – to seek the help of *Olódùmarè* in resolving the crisis at hand. Since it is difficult for Òrúnmilà to unravel the cause of the problem, *Olódùmarè* simply enjoins Òrúnmilà to be careful and warns the people to desist from their unwarranted characters, because the person responsible for the problem is someone he trusted. Literally, however, this *Odù* clearly confirms that *Ìfè-Inú* is a very significant aspect of a person that is immaterial by nature, and whose function is only knowable by the action and attitude that an individual exhibits.

On a final note, the significance of the first and most senior *Odu* in this regard cannot be undermined, that is, effort to demonstrate the nature and function of *Ifé-Inú* as encoded in the *Ifá* literary corpus may be inadequate without a consideration of *Odu Èjìogbè*²⁰⁶; although, this *Odu* also speaks in paradox but it is worthwhile to explore its own confirmation of the nature and function of our subject-matter. This *Odu* runs thus,

Erin je jee je
Bèè ni kò fowó kó aSá
Efòn je jee je
Bèè ni kòfèsè bọ pọ́lọ
Eyẹ kéékèkèké ñfò lókè
Bèè ni wọn ò forí gbági
A díá fún Rírí
Níjọ tí ñfomi ojúú sògbéré omọ
Wón ní reku méjì olúwéré
Kó reja méjì abiwègbàdà
Kó rú òbídiẹ méjì abèdò lùkélùkè
Ewúré méjì abámú rẹ̀dèrẹ̀de
Gbogbo rẹ̀ nàà ló rú
Ìgbà tí ó kọ̀ bí
Ó bọ̀nà
Ìgbà tí ótuún bí
Ó bójà
Ilé nikan ní sọmọ ikeyìin wọn lénje lénje
Rírí wáá múra
Ó lọ sẹ̀yìn odi
Ìgbà tó darí dé
Ó darí sọ̀dò ọ̀nà
Ọ̀nà sá kí i

²⁰⁶ Abimbóla, W. *op. cit.*, Pp 21-24. See also Akintóláop. *cit.* P 122-125

Ó yò kí i
Ó múlé pọtí
Ó mọ̀nà rokà
Ó fì gbogbo agbada dínran
Rírí ní ìwọ ọ̀nà, ọmọ ọ̀un
Mọ̀ tì múlé pọtí
Mọ̀ tì múlé rokà
Mọ̀ tì fì gbogbo agbada dínran
Nítòrí pé àrùn kan ńse ọ̀un
Ọ̀nà ní àrùn kín ní ńse ọ
Tí ọ̀un ò ní lè wò sà̀n?
Rírí ní àrùn ìgbònsẹ̀ ní
Ó ní ọ̀un fẹ́ẹ̀ su ní
Ọ̀nà ní níbo ní ọ́ ọ́ ha tí ráyè su?
Ó ní gbogbo èrò oko
Gbogbo èrò odò
Gbogbo èrò àlọ
Gbogbo èrò àbò
Ló ńgba ọ̀dọ̀ ọ̀un kojá
Ó ní máa lọ sọ̀dọ̀ ọ̀jà
Tíi ẹ̀ àbúrò ọ̀un
Nígbà tí Riri dọ̀dọ̀ ọ̀jà
Ọ̀jà sá kí i
Ó yò kí i
Ó múlé pọtí
Ó mọ̀nà rokà
Ó fì gbogbo agbada dínran
Rírí ní ìwọ ọ̀jà, ọmọ ọ̀un
Mọ̀ tì múlé pọtí

Mọ̀ tì mọ̀nà rokà
Mọ̀ tì fì gbogbo agbada dínran
Nítòrí pé àrùn kan ñse òun
Ọjàá ní àrùn kín ní ñse ọ
Tí òun ò ní lè wò sà̀n?
Rírí ní àrùn ìgbònsẹ̀ ní
Ó ní òun fẹ́ẹ̀ su ní
Ọjàá ní níbo lo ó ha ti ráyè su?
Igbá aláta nìyí
Igbá onírú nìyí
Igbá oníyọ̀ nìyí
Níbo lo ó ha ti ráyè su?
Máa lọ sọ̀dò ilé
Tí se àbúrò òun
Nígbà ti Rírí dọ̀dò ilé
Ó sá kí i
Ó yọ̀ kí i
Ó múlé pọ̀ntí
Ó mọ̀nà rokà
Ó fì gbogbo agbada dínran
Rírí ní ìwọ̀ ilé, ọmọ̀ òun
Mọ̀ tì múlé pọ̀ntí
Mọ̀ tì mọ̀nà rokà
Mọ̀ tì fì gbogbo agbada dínran
Nítòrí pé àrùn kan ñse òun
Ilé ní àrùn kín ní ñse ọ
Tí òun ò ní lè wò sà̀n?
Rírí ní àrùn ìgbònsẹ̀ ní
Ó ní òun fẹ́ẹ̀ su ní

*Ilé ní àti kín tún ni?
Ó ní Ẹ́ bí èmi ni mo nìtágé
Se bí èmi ni mo ni káà
Èmi ni mo ni sàré
Ni Rírí bá rá gíírí wọlé
Wíwò tó wọ káà
Ò ya òkúrú ajé sínú ilé
Wíwò tó wọ sàré
Ó ya òkúru ilèkẹ̀ sègi
Ìgbà tí ó wọ itágé
Ó ya àkònkótán ohun ọ̀rò nífẹ̀.
Ohun rere wáá kún gbogbo inú ilé pítipìti
Ijó nilé ñjó
Ayò ní ñyò
Ó ñyin àwọn awo rẹ̀
Àwọn awo rẹ̀ ñyin 'Fá
Agogo ní Ìpóró
Àrà ní Ìkijà
Ọ̀pá kùgùkùgù lójúde Ìsẹ̀rímọ̀gbẹ̀
Ó ya ẹ̀nu kótó
Orin awo ló bọ s tí lẹ̀nu
Èsẹ̀ tí ó nà
Ijó fà á
Ó ní bẹ̀è gégé
Ni àwọn awo òun ñsẹ̀nu rere pẹ̀fá
Erín jẹ jẹ jẹ
Bẹ̀è ni kò fọ̀wọ ko asá
Èfòn jẹ jẹ jẹ
Bẹ̀è ni kò fẹ̀sẹ̀ bọ pò̀òlò*

Èyẹ kérékèrèkéré ñfò lókè
Bèè ni wọn ò forí gbági
A diá fún Rírí
Níjọ tí ñfomi ojúu sògbéré ọmọ
Rírí ló bọ̀nà
Rírí ló bọ̀jà
Ilé nikan ní sọmọ ikeyìn wọn léhje léhje
Ilé niyí òun aya
Ilé niyí àtaya o
Ilé niyí òun aya
Èyàn é se fújà lài nilé
Ilé niyí àtaya
Ilé niyí òun ọmọ o
Ilé niyí òun ọmọ
Èyàn é se fújà lài nilé
Ilé niyí òun ọmọ

In English language, this *odù* translates as,

The elephant forages about in the forest
Yet it did not get itself under fire of the poisonous spear
The buffalo forages about in the forest
Yet it did not get itself ensnared by the string-trap
The little birds fly about in the sky
Yet they do not knock their heads against the trees
Divined for Rírí
The day she made consultation concerning her barrenness
She was told to buy two big rats
She should buy two big fishes
To make sacrifice with two big kolanuts
And two very matured goats

*She performed the sacrifice
And her barrenness was overcome.
When she had her first delivery
She had Ọ̀nà
When she had her second delivery
She had Ọ̀jà
Ile is the last delivery she had.
After a while these children became adults
Rírí now sets and prepares herself
For a long journey outside their community.
On her return from the journey
She visited Ọ̀nà
Ọ̀nà welcomed her
Very very well
He began to prepare drinks
He began to prepare foods
He began to prepare everything necessary for a feast
Rírí called Ọ̀nà, her son
Do not start preparing drinks yet
Do not start preparing foods yet
Do not start any preparation for a feast yet
Because there is this sickness that is troubling her
Ọ̀nà said what sort of sickness is troubling you
That he cannot heal?
Rírí answered that it is diarrhoea coupled with stomach-ache
Thus, she needs to visit the toilet in order to empty her bowel
Ọ̀nà said where will she get toilet to empty her bowel?
Giving the excuse that all people from the farm
All people from the river*

All people going
All people coming
Pass through his abode
Therefore, requested her to go and visit Qjà
Who is his own younger brother
When Ríri got to Qjà
Qjà welcomed her
Very very well
He began to prepare drinks
He began to prepare foods
He began to prepare everything necessary for a feast
Ríri called Qjà, her son
Do not start preparing drinks yet
Do not start preparing foods yet
Do not start any preparation for a feast yet
Because there is this sickness that is troubling her
Qjà said what sort of sickness is troubling you
That he cannot heal?
Ríri answered that it is diarrhoea coupled with stomach-ache
Thus, she needs to visit the toilet in order to empty her bowel
Qjà said where will she get toilet to empty her bowel?
Giving the excuse that the stands of those selling pepper is here
All those selling locust bean is here
All those selling salt is here
Therefore, where will she get toilet to use?
Hence, requested her to go and visit Ilé
Who is his own younger brother
When Ríri got to Ilé
Ilé welcomed her

Very very well
He began to prepare drinks
He began to prepare foods
He began to prepare everything necessary for a feast
Rírí called Ilé, her son
Do not start preparing drinks yet
Do not start preparing foods yet
Do not start any preparation for a feast yet
Because there is this sickness that is troubling her
Ilé said what sort of sickness is troubling you
That he cannot heal?
Rírí answered that it is diarrhoea coupled with stomach-ache
Thus, she needs to visit the toilet in order to empty her bowel
Ile asked and what again?
He said he owns the inner pavement
He owns the backyard
He owns the main apartment
Hearing this, she ran quickly
On getting to the backyard
She emptied very large amount of money there
On getting inside the main apartment
She emptied large quantity of expensive and prestigious blue-stone beads
By the time she entered the inner pavement
She emptied unquantifiable wealth.
All good things now filled all parts of Ile's apartment pítipìtì
He began to dance
He rejoices
He praises his own priests
His priests were praising Ifá

The elephant forages about in the forest
Yet it did not get itself under fire of the poisonous spear
The buffalo forages about in the forest
Yet it did not get itself ensnared by the string-trap
The little birds fly about in the sky
Yet they do not knock their heads against the trees
Divined for Rírí
The day she made consultation concerning her barrenness
Rírí begets Ònà
Rírí begets Ojà
Ilé is the last child she had.
The house, with wives therein, is indeed a thing of joy
The house, with wives therein, is a thing of prestige
The house, with wives therein, is indeed a thing of joy
A person's ego is deflated without a house of his own
The house, with wives therein, is a thing of prestige
The house, with children therein, is a thing of joy
The house, with children therein, is a thing of joy
A person's ego is deflated without a house of his own
The house, with children therein, is a thing of joy

Like the last *Odù* before this one, this *Odù* also speaks in paradox as we have earlier noted. The *Odù* recounts the story of three brothers and their mother. According to the story as contained in the *Odù*, after the three brothers have grown up to be independent of their mother, their mother embarked on a very long journey that took her years to return. On returning, she stopped by at the household of her first son who was very happy to see her after a very long time; however, for her to know how much she can be accommodated and she is loved by this her first son, she requested that she wanted to use the toilet which the son declined by giving unfounded excuse. Thus, the son told her to go to the second child for what she had requested for and she did not reject.

When she got to the second son, who also acted as if he was very happy to see her after a very long time, she equally requested that she wanted to use the toilet because she is very pressed; and like the first son, the second also declined by giving excuse that do not hold water. Rather, he also told her to leave and go to the last born, which she did not turn down. Thus, she went to the last son, and on arriving at the last son's house who was also happy to see her, she also requested that she needed to use the toilet because she is really pressed. And the last son, unlike the first and the second, simply told her to use any where in his apartment. And surprisingly, she was not really pressed as claimed by her but wanted to be sure of who should enjoy the benefits she had brought back from her journey among her sons.

In this *Odù*, what is significant to our discourse is the decision and action (initiated by the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*) of the mother. This decision and action, because it is not visible to any of the brothers, signifies the non-physical nature of the ontological category that is responsible for the initiation of the decision and action in the mother of the three brothers. For, if this ontological category that is responsible for initiating decision and action was to be materialistic (that is visible) by nature, the first son (that is *Ona*) that the mother got to would have enjoyed all the benefits that the last son eventually enjoyed. With this, there is no difficulty in accepting the supposition that *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is by nature immaterial as well as the supposition that the function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is to initiate decision and action in a person.

In summary, we have been able to show that the Yorùbá people have a clear conception of the human *will*, which we have identified as *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. This notion, as we have been able to demonstrate, derives from the combination of the words *Ìfẹ́* and *Inú* respectively rendered in English language as 'love' and 'the self'. we are able to show that the proper combination of the words serves as the Yorùbá equivalent of the *humanwill*.

In addition, we also demonstrate the nature and functions of this *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in Yorùbá thought using sources of information that are indigenous to the Yorùbá people. Most importantly, *Òwe* (proverbs) and the *Ifá* literary corpus are explored to get to know the ontologically nature and functions of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. Thus, it is our conviction that the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual is an important category in the ontological make-up of a person, especially with regard to societal and individual affairs; and this we hope to demonstrate in our subsequent chapters.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE QUESTION OF SOCIAL ORDER

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, titled “Historical Origin of the Discourse on Social Order”, we survey historical development of social order discourse in order to note the conditions that have been identified in history to be responsible for order in society. The second section titled “Theories Explaining the Existence and Persistence of Social Order” takes a look at theories that have been advanced by experts to explain the existence and persistence of order in the society. And in the last section, titled “The Particular Difficulties of the Theories”, we attempt a critique of the theories that have been treated in the second section in order to reveal the shortcomings of each of the theories and establish the concern of our study there in.

The significance of this chapter to our study cannot be over-emphasized because we shall demonstrate the fundamental difficulties that often arise from, or associated with, any discourse on social order. Our specific concern in this exercise is to reveal the neglected but important issue that pertains to personhood in the discourses on social order, and the connection that exists between this and our notion of *Ìfẹ-Ìmú*.

For instance, one of the important theories of social order is methodological individualism and a fundamental shortcoming of this theory resides in its basic assumption about the nature of the individual which derives from the ontological conception and conviction that the human *will* is a possession of the individual, therefore it is free. This conception of the *will* defines the free acting and deciding individual that forms the basis of explanation for methodological individualism. Therefore, individual’s decisions and actions which either threaten or sustain social order emanate freely from his unmediated *will*.

Thus, a clear understanding of the issue of social order demands that we should make clear what is meant by the concept ‘social order’, in other words, what is the meaning and in what context are we talking about social order in this work? The notion ‘social order’, as it appears, is an important concept to many fields of study both in the humanities and the social sciences²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁷ See texts in Sociology, Economics, Social & Political Philosophy, and so on.

Thus, this information suggests that any discourse on social order – the meaning, the context in which it is put into use, and intellectual consideration – will have to take us into some of these disciplines, particularly in the field of the social sciences for that matter. However, we must state that our interest should not be confused with the ‘scientific’ interest of experts in the field of social sciences. In other words, our interest is ‘philosophical’; therefore, our only business is to draw from the pool of knowledge of the social sciences on the concept of social order.

What is social order? Like any other concept or notion, this concept is characterised by as many meanings as there are many experts that have employed the term in one way or the other. According to one compendium of knowledge, the word ‘social order’ is defined as “the ranking in which a group of animals establishes itself with the most dominant one in the number one position and the most retiring one in the last position. The order is maintained unless new animals are introduced”²⁰⁸. This definition appears too wide for our usage here because it refers to animals of any kind in general, however, it is important to take note of the implicit idea that social order is about the maintenance of an organisation for an unspecified period of time.

In another dictionary, the notion ‘social order’ is defined as “the manner in which society is organized and the rules and standard required to maintain that organization”²⁰⁹. Unlike the first definition, this definition appears better for being concerned with the society, but a society can be a society of animals, human beings, and so on; thus, it also appears to be too wide rather than narrow on its surface appearance. However, we should also take note of the idea of maintenance of an organization and the rules and regulations required to maintain the organisation as important indices in the issue of social order.

In a more technical sense, social order is defined as “the concept of a society structure in its norms of relations expectation and plausible outcomes which might lead to peace and domestic tranquillity”, that is, it “refers to a set of inter-linked and inter-dependent social structures, social institutions, and social practices which play a significant role in maintaining a particular way of life or society”²¹⁰. Without any form of ambiguity, this definition is also broad but very useful in that it seems to incorporate all what social order can mean. However,

²⁰⁸ *Saunders Comprehensive Veterinary Dictionary*, 3rd ed., 2007

²⁰⁹ *Mosby’s Medical Dictionary*, 8th ed., 2009

²¹⁰ Pereira, S. “Social Control, Social Order, Social Mobility and Social Change”

the definition underplays a fundamental condition that is necessary for the existence of social order itself, and this is the human persons that make up the society.

What is important, however, is to show that we can have as many definitions of social order as many scholars that have touched on the subject. But for the purpose of our study, we are not concerned with any broad/narrow or technical/non-technical meaning of the term. For us, we consider our use of the term in the normative sense, that is, in prudential terms. Thus, the definition of social order as employed in this study is ‘the conditions responsible and necessary for the existence and persistence of peace in the social world of human persons’. It is important to state that the emphasis here is on the conditions responsible and necessary for the existence and persistence of peaceful cohabitation in human society.

3.1 Historical Origin of The Discourse On Social Order

In this section, our interest is to give an account of the historical development of the discourse on social order, that is, a historical account of the conditions that have been advanced to be responsible and necessary for the existence and persistence of order in human society. Thus, in simplifying this task, we categorise the history of intellectual development of the discourse on social order into three periods. We identified the following three periods: The Classical, The Early Modern, and The Modern periods.

In considering the historical development of the discourse on social order, the works of Plato and Aristotle were examined in the classical period. In the early modern period, the works of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke were explored. And in the modern period, we examined the works of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, and that of Max Weber respectively.

In intellectual history of the discourse on the society, Plato is always acknowledged as being the first to do so. He is also regarded as the first to engage in the discourse on order in society. In many of his *Dialogues*, especially *The Republic*²¹¹, Plato is often acknowledged by many as being concerned with how society ought to be organised in order to be peaceful, and thus giving the conditions necessary to have such society.

²¹¹ See the Introduction to Plato's *Phaedrus*, Trans. Jowett, 1999, P 15

According to Plato, the condition necessary to have order in the society is justice. Justice, Plato contends, is the only necessity for peaceful co-existence in the society. By justice being necessary for the existence of order in human society, he meant that justice must exist in the society so that justice can exist in the individual.

For Plato, justice in the individual exists when the lower appetites are subject to governance of reason, in his words

It is otherwise with a man sound in body and mind, who, before he goes to sleep, awakens the reason within him to feed on high thoughts and questionings in collected meditation. If he has neither starved nor surfeited his appetites, so that, lulled to rest, no delights or griefs of theirs may trouble that beller part, but leave it free to reach out in pure and independent thought, after some new knowledge of things past, present, or to come; if, likewise, he has soothed his passions so as not to fall asleep with his anger roused against any man; if, in fact, he does not take his rest until he has quieted two of the three elements in his soul and awakened the third wherein wisdom dwells, then he is in a fair way to grasp the truth of things, and the visions of his dreams will not be unlawful²¹².

What Plato is saying is that an individual person is just when all the elements of the soul (appetite, will, and reason) function properly in harmony and there is due subordination of the lower to the higher.

Thus, in the same vein that the soul of the individual is said to have three parts, Plato also divides the society into three classes. These three classes of the society were arrived at by Plato following the three parts of the soul. This means that any part of the soul that is ruling an individual determines the class that such individual should belong to. Therefore, Plato argues that to have order in the society, the society must be just, and justice in the society is attainable when all the classes and the individuals that make-up such society perform their due functions in the proper way. It is in this respect that Plato submits that

in a state destined to reach the height of good government wives and children must be held in common; men and women must have the same education throughout and share all pursuits, warlike or peaceful; and those who have proved themselves the best both in philosophy and in war are to be kings among them. Further, the rulers... will lead the soldiers²¹³.

²¹² Plato, *The Republic*, Trans., Intro., & Notes by Cornford, 1962, P 297

²¹³ *ibid*, P 266

In making his point very clear about the justice condition to have peace or order in the society, Plato further submits that

We shall... in all things pursue justice with the help of wisdom. Then we shall be at peace with Heaven and with ourselves, both during our sojourn here and ... in the journey of a thousand years²¹⁴.

In conclusion, we must note that Plato's conviction on the existence of order in the social world of the human persons is anchored on the concept of justice both in the individual and the society. That is, the condition necessary for the existence of social order in Platonic thought is justice. It is with this Platonic conviction that Aristotle contends with.

For Aristotle, the condition necessary for the existence of order in the society is not about justice in individual as held by Plato, but that the society itself is organised around stipulated rules and regulations because it is a natural creation, and therefore greater than the individual. That is, Aristotle is of the view that the society is greater than the individual, in fact, he believes that the society is a creation of nature and not of individuals, in his own clear words "It is evident that the state is a creation of nature"²¹⁵.

And since the state is naturally created, Aristotle contends that man is by nature a political animal; which means that man naturally possesses the ability to communicate and dialogue about issues of societal concern like justice and the good life.

Very clearly, Aristotle's argument is that the society is prior to the individual and thus, he is of the view that every individual should belong to a society naturally. On this, Aristotle posits that

...it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the tribeless, lawless, heartless one²¹⁶.

In making this point very clear, he further states that

...the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part ... The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-

²¹⁴ *ibid*, P 359

²¹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, Trans. Benjamin, J., 1999, P 5

²¹⁶ *ibid*

sufficing; and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature... such that when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all²¹⁷.

Aristotle's contention in the quotation above is that the state is responsible for the creation of order in the society through the necessity of laws. In other words, for order to be attained in any society, Aristotle is of the view that the only condition necessary for it is the law of the society. Thus, Aristotle's contention about social order is clear enough. According to him, "all matters ... are better regulated by law, than by the *will* of man"²¹⁸ and that "an order of succession implies law. And the rule of law, it is argued, is preferable to that of any individual"²¹⁹.

In clear terms, Aristotle contests against Plato's idea of justice as the necessary condition to create order in society. In fact, he states clearly that "it is evident that in seeking for justice men seek for the mean or neutral, for the law is the mean"²²⁰. Thus, rather than accept justice as the means of achieving order, Aristotle argues for the creation of law by the society.

Unambiguously, Aristotle's argument for the existence and persistence of social order can be summarised as follows: (1) that it is important to have laws in place, (2) that these laws must be the creation of the society rather than the individual, since the whole is greater than its parts, and (3) that these societal laws are the *sine qua non* or the condition necessary for the existence and persistence of order in society.

In conclusion, discourse on social order in the classical period recognises two categories as the conditions necessary for social order to exist and persist in the society. These categories are justice and law by Plato and Aristotle respectively. Obviously, the speculations of the thinkers of the classical period represent a very good foundation for the discourse on social order in subsequent periods.

²¹⁷ *ibid*, P 6

²¹⁸ *ibid*, P 46

²¹⁹ *ibid*, P 77

²²⁰ *ibid*, P 78

A fundamental difficulty associated with the classical discourse on social order is the inability to state in clear language whether the society possesses the mechanism to create law or justice naturally or that the constituting individuals of the society are responsible for the creation of law in the society. Although, we find in Plato that he made allusion to the fact that justice in the individual is in turn justice in the society; it is not enough to state this, as if justice is a phenomenon that decides by itself to occur in an individual or the society. It is on this note we now turn to the discourse on social order in the early modern period, to establish and demonstrate how this difficulty is being overcome.

In *Leviathan*, Hobbes explicitly sets out his discourse on the condition necessary for the existence of order in human society with regard to human nature, that is, how human persons behave among themselves as social animals in the state of nature – the natural condition of human interactions as a result of their nature. Thus, his discourse on social order rests on the conviction that it is only with an absolute sovereign in whom the power of the people is invested that social order can be guaranteed.

For Hobbes, it is fundamentally necessary to understudy human nature in order for anyone to have a clear understanding of how order exists in the society. Therefore, the state of nature is essential in Hobbes' construction of a society where order prevails. In order to make this explicit, Hobbes analyses his conception of human nature, and as a result, the state of nature; which necessarily leads to his account of order in the society.

Hobbes argues that a person is imbued with “the right of nature, which is the liberty that each man has to make his own decisions about how to use his own power for the preservation of his own nature – that is, his own life – and consequently the liberty of doing anything that he thinks is the aptest means to that end”²²¹. Furthermore, Hobbes contends that all men are equal in that they all believe the same of themselves, and thus, their equal status fosters equality in their minds to realise their desires.

The result of this is that where two or more men desire what they cannot all have at the same time, they become distrustful enemies. This point is made clear in his submission that “the condition of man is a condition of war of everyone against everyone, so that everyone is governed by his own reason and can make use of anything he likes that might

²²¹ Hobbes, T. *Leviathan*, 1994, P 59

help him to preserve his life against his enemies²²². Life therefore, according to Hobbes, is an egoistic quest for the satiation of desires²²³, and to this end, men will endeavour to destroy and subdue one another.

In distinguishing a person from other animals, Hobbes argues that it is in the nature of a person to seek glory. In making this view clear, Hobbes draws a comparison between persons and animals. According to him, a person is distinct in that he is concerned with glory, whereas for other animals there is no difference between the public and the private gain. In other words, a person is concerned with his gain as an individual, and in relation to that of other persons. And consequently among men, Hobbes argues, there is envy, hatred, and war; but among animals it is not the case²²⁴.

It is therefore on three main grounds that men disagree, and according to Hobbes, these are 'competition', 'distrust', and 'glory'²²⁵, and it is the resultant self-interested acts of persons that set out the foundations upon which Hobbes' vision of the state of nature is constructed.

Hobbes' state of nature, therefore, is that of anarchy, in the sense that there is no overarching power to constrain the actions of men, and is one in which there are limited resources. A person is thus driven by his desires as shown above, and in that all persons are essentially free, they pursue these desires while forsaking all other persons. As resources are limited, and all persons have the same essential desires, not everyone has the ability to realise these desires. The result of this is a state which Hobbes says "it is a war of every man against every man"²²⁶.

At this point, he argues, there is "continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short"²²⁷. Consequently, as a product of the state of war against all and man's need to use all he can in order to guarantee his conservation, Hobbes therefore posits that

...every man has a right to everything – even to someone else's body. As long as this continues, therefore – that is, as long as

²²² *ibid*

²²³ *ibid*, P 44

²²⁴ *ibid*, P 57

²²⁵ *ibid*

²²⁶ *ibid*

²²⁷ *ibid*, P 58

every man continues to have this natural right to everything – no man, however strong or clever he may be, can be sure of living out the time that nature ordinarily allows men to live²²⁸.

Therefore, in the state of nature there are no rights to anything, even the right to oneself, in that everyone else has a right to what you take as yours. Upon this assumption, Hobbes bases his idea of the willingness of the human persons in the state of nature to relinquish their absolute liberties in favour of a system that will guarantee peace and order in the society²²⁹. Hobbes therefore posits that man forms a covenant within him to surrender his right to a sovereign known as the *Leviathan*.

The *Leviathan*, according to Hobbes, is the greatest power; and it is that invested in one person, by all people. In Hobbes submission, he states thus “that great *Leviathan* called a ‘commonwealth’ or ‘state’, which is just an artificial man – though bigger and stronger than the natural man, for whose protection and defence it was intended²³⁰.”

Hobbes maintains that in order to escape the state of nature we must only recognise the rule of the sovereign as the legitimate source of power. This is because in recognising alternative sources of power we risk a return to the state of nature. For Hobbes, therefore, this is the necessary and sufficient condition that must be satisfied to have order in the society of human persons and to escape the state of nature.

In conclusion, the state of nature plays a crucial role in Hobbes’s discourse on social order in the society. It is this state of nature – which is arrived at through an analysis of human nature – that sets out the conditions (that of the self-serving nature of man, and the resulting state of war against all) for the only way to escape the state of nature and by extension to have order in the society, is the adoption of an absolute sovereign.

Locke has a different perspective from Hobbes concerning the condition necessary for the existence of order in the society. But like Hobbes, he also starts his speculation with an account of human nature cum state of nature that is different from that of Hobbes.

According to Locke, Human persons are endowed naturally to know what is right and what is wrong, and thus, are naturally capable well enough to resolve conflicts. In particular

²²⁸ *ibid*, P 59-60

²²⁹ *ibid*, P 60

²³⁰ *ibid*, P 63

and most importantly, they are capable of telling the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to someone else. In this light, Locke submits that

Because we are all equal and independent, no-one ought to harm anyone else in his life, health, liberty, or possessions. This is because (1) we are all the work of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker; (2) we are all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order to do his business; (3) we are all the property of him who made us, and he made us to last as long as he chooses, not as long as we choose; (4) we have the same abilities, and share in one common nature, so there can't be any rank-ordering that would authorize some of us to destroy others, as if we were made to be used by one another, as the lower kinds of creatures are made to be used by us. Everyone is obliged to preserve himself and not opt out of life willfully, so for the same reason everyone ought, when his own survival isn't at stake, to do as much as he can to preserve the rest of mankind; and except when it's a matter of punishing an offender, no-one may take away or damage anything that contributes to the preservation of someone else's life, liberty, health, limb, or goods²³¹.

According to Locke, reflecting on the state of nature is the best way to understand the condition necessary for order in the society. In the state of nature, Locke explains that each person has a right to perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions without the permission of any other person within the bounds of the law of nature. Each individual is perfectly equal with every other, and all have the absolute liberty to act as they will, without interference from any other²³². What prevents this natural state from being a violent one like Hobbes argues, according to Locke, is that each individual shares in the use of the faculty of reason²³³, so that the actions of each person are bound by the self-evident laws of nature.

Locke claims that if a person comes into power over another because of a violation of the law of nature, calm reason and conscience should dictate the punishment. He says that there are two reasons that provide justification for punishment. First, The punishment should be proportionate to the transgression. Second, The punishment should serve for reparation and restraint²³⁴. Locke argues that in a state of nature each person is the judge of his/her own

²³¹ Locke, J. *Two Treatise of Government*, 2005, P 4

²³² *ibid*, Pp 10-19

²³³ *ibid*, P 3

²³⁴ *ibid*, P 4-6

cases. However, Locke believes that human nature is such that warrant each person to favour oneself and one's own friends.

A state of nature is a state of equality in the sense that the power of each individual is distributed among mankind on a relative balance. The reason that Locke gives for this is that

no-one has more power and authority than anyone else; because it is simply obvious that creatures of the same species and status, all born to all the same advantages of nature and to the use of the same abilities, should also be equal in other ways; with no-one being subjected to or subordinate to anyone else, unless God, the lord and master of them all, were to declare clearly and explicitly his wish that someone be raised above the others and given an undoubted right to dominion and sovereignty²³⁵.

Locke goes on to argue for a balance of power. He believes that these checks and balances are the best way to avoid any kind of partiality that might take place if another system is adopted. These checks and balances and the idea of fundamental natural, moral and legal rights are the foundational conditions for order in the society²³⁶.

The formation of a civil society requires that all individuals voluntarily surrender this right to the community at large. By declaring and enforcing fixed rules (that is, human laws) for conducts, the civil society thus serves as "umpire" in the adjudication of disputes arising from property acquisition and ownership among those who choose to be governed in this way.

Securing social order through the formation of civil society that will adjudicate over property disputes invariably requires the direct consent of those who are to be governed. Locke demonstrates this clearly when states that

Men all being naturally free, equal, and independent, no-one can be deprived of this freedom etc. and subjected to the political power of someone else, without his own consent. The only way anyone can strip off his natural liberty and clothe himself in the bonds of civil society is for him to agree with other men to unite into a community, so as to live together comfortably, safely, and peaceably, in a secure enjoyment of their properties and a greater security against outsiders. Any number of men can do this, because it does no harm to the freedom of the rest; they are left with the liberty of the state of nature, which they had all

²³⁵ *ibid*, P 3

²³⁶ *ibid*, P 46-52

along. When any numbers of men have in this way consented to make one community or government, that immediately incorporates them, turns them into a single body politic in which the majority have a right to act on behalf of the rest and to bind them by its decisions²³⁷.

Thus, it is the contention of Locke that each and every individual must concur to the agreement to form such a society, but it would be enormously difficult to achieve unanimous consent with respect to the particular laws it promulgates. So, in practice, Locke supposes that the consent expressed by the majority must be accepted as determinative over the conduct of each individual who consents to be governed at all. All people who voluntarily choose to live within a society have implicitly or tacitly entered into its formative agreement, and thereby consented to submit themselves and their property to its governance²³⁸.

The structure of civil society so established is a matter of relatively less importance in Locke's view. What matters is the ability to provide the common good by setting standing laws over the acquisition, preservation, and transfer of property; and this common good is the protection of private properties of individuals in order to guarantee peaceful co-existence. Because the laws are established and applied equally to all, Locke argues, this is not merely an exercise in the arbitrary use of power, but an effort to secure order that is more secure than would be possible under the independence and equality of the state of nature. Hence, for Locke, the necessary condition to have order in the society is nothing but human laws that will regulate and secure acquisition and ownership of property. So we may say that protection of property is central to Locke's thesis on civil government.

In the modern era, scientific rather than pure philosophic approach to the study of human society was introduced by Auguste Comte. By extension therefore, social phenomena like order were also studied scientifically. Comte's scientific approach to the study of human society derives from his conviction that human understanding of the progress of any society is in three stages. This three-stage model remains Comte's attempt to explain how human understanding of society develops overtime. According to Comte,

From the study of the development of human intelligence, in all directions, and through all times, the discovery arises of a great fundamental law, to which it is necessarily suggest, find which has a solid foundation of proof, both in the acts of our organization and in our historical experience. The law is this: - that each of our leading conceptions, - each branch of our knowledge, - passes successively through three different

²³⁷ *ibid*, P 32

²³⁸ *ibid*, P 56

theoretical conditions: the Theological, or fictitious; the Metaphysical, or abstract; and the Scientific, or positive²³⁹.

For Comte, in the theological stage of human development, that is the first stage of progress any society must pass through, the workings of society are explain based on the will of a divine being or beings. As a result, he further subdivides this stage into three. The first stage was the fetishistic or animistic stage, in which objects were ascribed supernatural powers. Next is the polytheistic, in which a pantheon of gods with different personalities was created. The most advanced stage was the monotheistic stage, in which humans believed in a single divine being²⁴⁰.

At the next stage after the theological stage, which is the metaphysical stage, Comte explains that knowledge about society is always with reference to abstract concepts. These abstract concepts, he argues, were believed to exist on a higher plane, outside of society itself. Comte believes that this stage is the first stage in which individuals began to question and investigate rather than simply accept the beliefs of their ancestors without question²⁴¹.

The last stage in the development of human thinking about society is the positive stage. Comte argues that the investigation of society stops being merely philosophical, and becomes scientific. This stage is only possible once the physical sciences had progressed through their own three stages of development, going from attributing natural phenomena to gods or spirits, to understanding them in scientific terms²⁴².

Having explained each of the three stages any society must pass through as envisaged by Comte; he therefore argues that the condition that is necessary for social order to exist in the society is nothing but scientific study of society as a whole itself. For him therefore, it is only the last stage of human thinking about society that can bring about order in the society. Comte submits thus,

While stability in fundamental maxims is the first condition of genuine social order...Till a certain number of general ideas can be acknowledged as a rallying point of social doctrine, the nations will remain in a revolutionary state, whatever palliatives may be devised; their institutions can be only provisional. But whenever the necessary agreement on first principles can be

²³⁹ Comte, A. *The Positive Philosophy*, Trans. Harriet Martineau, 2000, P 27

²⁴⁰ *ibid*, P 28

²⁴¹ *ibid*

²⁴² *ibid*, P 228

obtained, appropriate institutions will issue from them, without shock or resistance; for the causes of disorder will have been arrested by the mere fact of the agreement²⁴³.

From the above submission, we can understand clearly that Comte's position regarding the condition necessary for the existence of social order is nothing but the appropriation of a general rule that will arise from the scientific study of the society. In other words, Comte considers establishing the general principles upon which the society operates naturally as the only condition necessary for the existence of order in the society.

Writing at about the same period, Marx's thinking contrasts sharply with that of Comte. Marx takes the evolution in man's material conditions as his point of departure, that is, he commences his discourse with the varying ways that the human persons put together in order to gain a livelihood. According to Marx,

When an individual appropriates natural objects for his livelihood, no one controls him but himself. Afterwards he is controlled by others. A single man cannot operate upon Nature without calling his own muscles into play under the control of his own brain²⁴⁴.

Basic to this observation is that an individual is born into society in which property relations have already been determined. These property relations in turn give rise to different social classes. Once a man is ascribed to a specific class by virtue of his birth, once he has become feudal lord or a serf, an industrial worker or a capitalist, his mode of behaviour is prescribed for him. According to Marx, class role largely defines a person. In the preface to his *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Marx submits that,

Individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class-interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains²⁴⁵

Against this background, human nature for Marx, changes in various societies depending on the classes that exist in them. However, in spite of his emphasis on the

²⁴³ *ibid*, P 39

²⁴⁴ Marx, K. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Trans. S. W. Ryazanskaya, ed. by M. Dobb, 1971, P 354

²⁴⁵ *ibid*, P 7

determinants of a person's class-bound behaviour, Marx is not reifying society and class at the expense of individual actors. According to him, a person is inevitably enmeshed in a network of social relations which constrain his actions; therefore attempts to abolish such constraints altogether are bound to fail. A person is human only in society, yet it is possible for him at specific historical junctures to change the nature of these constraints²⁴⁶.

In addition to this large structural features and observed regularities, Marx considers human action to be an important feature of social structure and social change. For Marx, it is group – like classes, trade unions, political parties, and so on – rather than individual that provides the setting within which human action takes place.

According to Marx, therefore, society comprises of a moving balance of antithetical forces that generate social change by their tension and struggle. Marx's vision is based on an evolutionary point of departure. For him, struggle rather than peaceful growth is the engine of progress, and social conflict is the core of historical process. Hence to Marx, the motivating force in history is the manner with which people relate to one another in their continuous struggle for their livelihood from nature²⁴⁷.

The quest for sufficiency in feeding, shelter, and housing is every person's primary goals since the beginning of existence, and these needs are still central when attempts are made to analyze the complex anatomy of modern society. But a person's struggle against nature does not cease when these needs are gratified. Thus, the division of society into classes gives rise to political, ethical, philosophical, and religious views of the world, views that express existing class relations and tend either to consolidate or to undermine the power and authority of the dominant class. Marx submits thus

My view that each special mode of production and the social relations corresponding to it, in short, that the economic structure of society, is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political, and intellectual life generally, all this is very true for our own times, in which material interests preponderate²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ *ibid*

²⁴⁷ *ibid*, P 354

²⁴⁸ *ibid*, P 57

The sum total of the relations of production, that is, the relations that people establish with each other when they utilize existing raw materials and technologies in the pursuit of their productive goals, constitute the real foundations upon which the whole superstructure of society comes to be erected. By relations of production, Marx does not only mean technology, though this is an important part, but the social relations people enter into by participating in economic life²⁴⁹.

Thus, Marx emphasizes the role of coercion and power in producing social order; for he considers the society as fragmented into groups that compete for social and economic resources. Social order is maintained by domination, with power in the hands of those with the greatest political, economic, and social resources. When consensus exists, it is attributable to people being united around common interests, often in opposition to other groups. Therefore, Marx believes that the rich and powerful classes force social order on the poor and the weak.

However, Marx argues that every social order is marked by continuous change in the material forces of production, that is, the forces of nature that can be harnessed by the appropriate technologies and skills. As a consequence, he argues that the social relations of production are altered, transformed, with the change and development of the material means of production, of the forces of production²⁵⁰. At a certain point the changed social relations of production come into conflict with existing property relations, that is, with existing divisions between owners and non-owners.

According to Spencer, society can be equated with an organism whose different parts perform various specialised functions that maintain it (that is the organism) in a stable and healthy state; following this line of thinking, he argues that the various elements of society also perform specialised functions that are responsible and necessary for peaceful co-existence in human society. Thus, Spencer posits that just as biological organisms become more differentiated as they grow and mature, so do homogeneous communities become increasingly complex and diverse as a result of population growth. In his own words,

The change from the homogenous to the heterogeneous is displayed in the progress of civilization as a whole, as well as

²⁴⁹ *ibid*

²⁵⁰ *ibid*, P 63-65

in the progress of every nation, and it is still going on with increasing rapidity²⁵¹.

On this basis, he believes that human society evolves from the very simple to the very complex, in other words, Spencer holds that the development of human society is evolutionary, because it moves from simple (whose stability is based on control, because the individuals that constitute it are minimally dependent on one another for meeting their survival and that of the community in order to have peaceful cohabitation) to complex (whose stability is based on freedom, because as the size of the population increases, homogeneity is replaced by heterogeneity and a specialized division of labour emerges).

Therefore, in a complex society, individuals become interdependent on one another as essential tasks are divided among the society's inhabitants, thus, individual's well-being becomes tied more and more to the general welfare of the larger society. Ensuring the functional integration of individuals now becomes the central issue for the existence of social order in the society. Spencer submits thus,

The consensus of functions becomes closer as evolution advances. In low aggregates, both individual and social, the actions of the parts are but little dependent on one another, whereas in developed aggregates of both kinds that combination of actions which constitutes the life of the whole makes possible the component actions which constitutes the lives of the parts²⁵².

On this basis, Spencer argues that the existence of peaceful cohabitation in complex society derives from each atomistic individual's conduct that are free from constraints, in other words, Spencer maintains that social order in human society is the outgrowth of individuals freely seeking to maximize their advantages. Spencer submits as follow:

As I heard remarked by a distinguished professor 'when once you begin to interfere with the order of Nature there is no knowing where the result will end'. And if this is true of that sub-human order of Nature to which he referred, still more is it true of that order of Nature existing in the social arrangements of human beings. The well-being of existing humanity and the unfolding of it into this ultimate perfection are both secured by that same beneficent, though severe, discipline which is pitiless in the working out of good: a felicity-pursuing law which never

²⁵¹ Spencer, H. *Essays, Scientific, Political and Speculative* – 2 Vols, 1892, Vol. I, P 9

²⁵² *ibid*, *The Evolution of Society: Selections from Herbert Spencer's Principles of Sociology*, ed. R. Carneiro, 1967, P 25

swerves for the avoidance of partial and temporary suffering. The poverty of the incapable, the distress that come upon the imprudent, the starvation of the idle, and those shouldering aside of the weak by the strong, which leaves so many 'in shallows and in miseries' are the decrees of a large, far-seeing benevolence²⁵³.

Conclusively, Spencer argues that the condition that is necessary for the existence of social order in any given society is the conducts of each individual that are freely exercised.

In his account on the discourse on social order, Durkheim starts with the view that economic affluence stimulates human desires and carries with it the dangers of anomic²⁵⁴ conditions. Like Marx, Durkheim argues that

It is not sufficient that there be rules, however, for sometimes the rules themselves are the cause of evil. This is what happens in class-wars. The institution of classes and of castes constitutes an organization of the division of labour, and it is a strictly regulated organization, although it often is a source of dissension. The lower classes not being, or no longer being, satisfied with the role which has devolved upon them from custom or by law aspire to functions which are closed to them and seek to dispossess those who are exercising these functions. Thus civil war arise which are due to the manner in which labour is distributed²⁵⁵.

Hence, Durkheim disagrees with Marx that human desires are unlimited. According to him, he writes that

In the nature of things, the apportioning is made through aptitudes, since there is no reason for doing otherwise. Thus, the harmony between the constitution of each individual and his condition is realized of itself. It will be said that it is not always sufficient to make men content, that there are some men whose desires go beyond their faculties. This is true, but these are exceptional and, one may say, morbid cases. Normally, man finds happiness in realizing his nature; his needs are in relation to his means²⁵⁶.

²⁵³ *ibid*, *Social Statics*, 1954, P 288-289

²⁵⁴ The word 'anomic' derives from the word 'anomie'; and anomie, in Durkheim postulations, describes a situation in a society where there is absence of clear rules of behaviour, normlessness, unrealistic aspirations and expectations. See Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society*, 1893.

²⁵⁵ *ibid*, P 374

²⁵⁶ *ibid*, P 376

Thus in a well regulated society, Durkheim contends, it is social control that set limits on individual propensities. According to him, “since the appreciation of things cannot be determined *a priori*, but comes out of exchanges themselves, the individuals who are exchanging must have no other force than that which comes from their social worth if their labour is to be properly evaluated”²⁵⁷.

Thus, Durkheim believes that it is the society as a systemic whole that can make the existence and persistence of social order possible through regulations of the activities of the constituting individuals. According to Durkheim,

It is false to believe that regulation is the product of constraint; it happens that liberty itself is the product of regulation. For from being antagonistic to social action, it results from social action. It is far from being an inherent property of the state of nature. On the contrary, it is a conquest of society over nature...In short, liberty is the subordination of external forces to social forces, for it is only in this condition that the latter can freely develop themselves. But this subordination is rather the reverse of the natural order....*And* in so far man...becomes a social being...he can escape nature only by creating another world where he dominates nature. That world is society²⁵⁸.

Durkheim's over-riding problem, as we can observe, concerns the sources of social order and disorder. And for him, regulation created by the social system is the most fundamental condition that can assured social order. In other words, Durkheim strongly believes that the only condition that can necessitate order in the society is nothing but societal regulation of individuals' conducts.

Another notable scholar of note who also contributes to the discourse on social order during this period is Max Weber. In his view on the subject-matter, he first identifies three conceptions of the idea of power corresponding to his three dimensions viz class, status, and party as social stratification. According to Weber, each of these conceptions plays significant role in considering the necessary condition responsible for the existence of social order in human society.

According to Weber, class power corresponds to the class dimension in his social stratification, and it signifies the unequal access to material resources of the society; social power corresponds to the status dimension, and it represents the social superiority of one over

²⁵⁷ *ibid*, P 383-384

²⁵⁸ *ibid*, P 386-387

the other; and political power corresponds to the party dimension, and it suggests the ability to influence the decision-making process, particularly the making of the laws that govern the society.

For Weber, in reality each dimension tends to be very closely related to one another such that anyone with economic power tends to possess a status (that is social power) and can use the two forms of power to whither political power. On this note, Weber supposes that social order is created in the society through social interaction among individuals or group of individuals possessing power; and this interaction, he emphasizes, involves the conscious behaviours of individuals with power that could be social, economic, political, or combination of any two or all. This is why he states in the forward to his *Protestant Ethics* that,

The capacity of human beings to departmentalize themselves is surprising, but it is not unlimited. It is obvious that, in so far as doctrines as to man's place in the universe are held with conviction, they will be reflected in the opinions formed of the nature of the social order most conducive to well-being²⁵⁹.

In this sense, therefore, power relation/interaction is responsible for the occurrence of order in human society.

3.2 Theories Explaining the Existence Of Social Order

In the field of the philosophy of the social sciences, two major and distinct theories of social order are recognisable, and they are methodological holism (henceforth referred to as holism) and methodological individualism (henceforth referred to as individualism). Each one of these two theories seeks to explain the existence and persistence of social order either in terms of the individual as a constituent of the whole or in terms of the larger whole as the sum total of the constituting individuals. However, among the disciplines in the field of the social sciences, there exists numerous numbers of theories of social order.

In order to have a meaningful discussion in this section, we limit our discussion to the two major theories identified above; and make attempt to touch on some of the many theories that exist in the field of the social sciences. This is so because each of the theories of social order in the social sciences falls under one of the two major theories identified in the field of

²⁵⁹ Weber, M. *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*, 1930, P 5

the philosophy of the social sciences. For instance, in the disciplines of sociology and economics, experts in these disciplines share some concerns about the problem of social order, thus, they develop their own theories of social order that sometimes overlap, related or distinct. However, each of their views falls either under holism or individualism depending on where the emphasis of such theory lies between the individual or the larger whole in its explanation of social order.

3.2.1 Methodological Holism

In general, this theory states that social whole is more than the sum of individuals in the society because the whole often determine the characteristics, beliefs, actions, and decisions of individuals. Thus, in explaining social order, holism is committed to the view that the existence and persistence of social order can only be explained through an understanding of the social system rather than through the activities of the constituting individuals. This theory is well-articulated by McNeil and Chapman, when they submit that holists

see 'society' as more important than the 'individual'. For example, they point out that individuals are born, take their place in society and then die, but society continues largely undisturbed. Moreover, *holists* suggest that people are the puppets of society, i.e. they are controlled by social forces emanating from the organisation of society. This is because they believe that just as there are natural laws governing the behaviour of chemicals, elements, plants, animals, e.t.c., so there are social forces or laws governing and determining the operations of the social world, particularly our everyday experiences and life chances. Such laws are the product of the way society or social group is socially organised, i.e. its social structure, and are beyond human influence²⁶⁰.

From this standpoint, holists often maintain that facts about the society cannot be reduced to facts about individuals. For them, society is autonomous with regard to the individuals that constitute it and this is because there are social forces that give directions to individuals' conducts and actions. Hence, social order as a social phenomenon exists and persists because there are societal mechanisms that dictate kinds of characters and behaviours

²⁶⁰ McNeil, P. & Chapman, S. *Research Methods*, 2005, P 15

that should be observed by individuals and that are tailored towards the maintenance of order in the society.

This theory takes a number of forms across social science disciplines, that is, there are varieties of the theory of holism that exist in the many fields of the social sciences. In sociology, for instance, there is the sociological doctrine of functionalism and the conflict theory. Within this discipline, functionalism (also called structural functionalism) is the view that the society is a conglomeration of parts and that the society itself is responsible for the structuring of these parts in order that the parts can in turn maintain the stability of the society itself. That is, functionalism emphasizes the way that the parts of a society are structured by the society itself to maintain its stability²⁶¹.

Furthermore, this variant of holism, that is functionalism, is also what Philips (as quoted by Boldeman) called consensus doctrine; according to this scholar, consensus doctrine is a theory of social order and it states that social order is made possible by a consensus about shared values and meanings. That is, it is the view that institutions or institutional patterns are defined as normative patterns, which define what are felt to be proper, legitimate, or expected modes of action or of social relationship in society²⁶². Strong advocates of this form of holism include Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons.

Still within the province of the social sciences, the conflict theory is also a variant of holism and it is particularly a variant of holism that is in opposition to functionalism on the basis of the consensus that is held on to by functionalists as the causal rudiments of peace and stability in the society. This is well articulated in *The Sociological View* when it states that

in contrast to the functionalists' emphasis on stability and consensus, conflict *theorists* see the social world in continual struggle. Proponents of the conflict perspective assume that social behaviour is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups. Such conflict need not be violent; it can take the form of labour negotiations, party politics, competition between religious groups for members, or disputes over the governments' budget²⁶³.

²⁶¹ *The Sociological Review*, P 14

²⁶² Boldeman, L. *The Cult of The Market: Economic Fundamentalism and Its Discontents*, 2007, P 76

²⁶³ *The Sociological Review*, P 15-16

Against this background, the theory states that social life is mainly a fight over the resources, therefore, the various factors of power, coercion, control of resources and the likes produce social order. Furthermore, the conflict theory considers conflict as functional and necessary to structure the larger social environment by assigning positions to the various subgroups within the social system and by helping to define the power relations between them²⁶⁴. A very strong advocate of this theory is Karl Marx.

In sum, holism with all its varieties within the field of the social sciences considers the existence and persistence of social order in the society as a key manifestation of the society itself either through consensus as advocated by the functionalists or through conflict as supposed by the conflict theorists. Most important for the holists is that societal stability comes about as a result of a common goal and vested interest generated by the society itself. In this regard, Aristotle, Locke, and Comte qualify as holists.

3.2.2 Methodological Individualism

In contrast to holism, methodological individualism construes of social phenomena as the outcomes of the actions of self-determining individuals. That is, it is the doctrine that argues for the importance of the conducts of constituting individuals in explaining social reality. Most precisely, it states that social outcomes are the aggregate result of the actions, inactions, decisions, and indecisions of individuals²⁶⁵, put in other words, Individuals' behaviours and conducts constitute the causal factors of social outcomes.

In this general sense, this theory is formulated in varieties of ways: social facts constitute facts about individuals; social entities are assemblage of individuals behaviours and conducts; explanations of social phenomena are derivable from facts about individuals; statements about society must be reducible to statements about individuals; social laws are derivable from general facts about individuals; and so on²⁶⁶.

Thus, in its formulation about social order, methodological individualism as a theory holds the actions, conducts, and behaviours of individuals as important factors for the existence and persistence of social order in the society, that is, it is the theory that approaches

²⁶⁴ Boldeman, L. *op. cit.*, P 76-77

²⁶⁵ See Schumpeter, J.A. "Methodological Individualism" in *Institutum Europaeum*, 1908.

²⁶⁶ *ibid*

the explanation of social order by attaching importance to the decisions and actions of individuals.

Like its rival theory, this theory also enjoys different forms across the disciplines in the social sciences. For instance, the private-interest doctrine²⁶⁷ as identified by Philips is a form of individualism; and according to this theory, individuals are guided entirely by considerations of self-interest and the pursuit of this self-interest formed a self-regulating mechanism in society²⁶⁸. Prominent advocates of this doctrine include Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, and Thomas Hobbes.

The situational analysis theory of social order²⁶⁹ is also a form of individualism, according to this theory, social order exists and persists because people are narrowly self-interested, acting out their roles as public means to private ends, hence, society is a pseudo-moral system in which everyone is engaged busily in the exchange of impressions by stressing the importance of the properties and structures of situations in influencing social conduct²⁷⁰. A prominent exponent of this variety of individualism is Erving Goffman.

Another important brand of individualism is what is called the rational choice theory. In his article titled “Rational Choice Theory”, Scott notes that “basic to all forms of rational choice theory is the assumption that complex social phenomena can be explained in terms of the elementary individual actions of which they are composed, and this standpoint is called methodological individualism; thus the rational choice theory holds that ‘the elementary unit of social life is the individual human action. To explain social institutions and social change is to show how they arise as the result of the action and interaction of individuals’²⁷¹.

In sum, methodological individualism and its varieties offer explanation of social phenomena with considerable incorporation of the human factors, that is, the theory takes interest in individuals and their actions within society than in social whole. Thus, mere appearance of the individual as well as individual’s feelings and thoughts in the explanation of social phenomena is the hallmark of methodological individualism. That is, this theory depicts the importance of the individual in the explanation of social phenomena like order in

²⁶⁷ See Boldeman, L. *op.cit.*, P 75

²⁶⁸ *ibid*

²⁶⁹ *ibid*

²⁷⁰ *ibid*, P 75-76

²⁷¹ Scott, J. “Rational Choice Theory”, 2000, P 2

the society. In this sense, Plato is also an individualist for holding justice in the individual as the prerequisite for justice in the society in order to have societal stability.

Conclusively, both methodological holism and methodological individualism are doctrines with varieties that aimed at explaining and understanding broad society-wide development and progress contending with each other on the basis of which should take prominence between social whole and its parts (that is the individuals) in the course of explaining social reality or phenomena like the social order in our case. In the next section, we hope to demonstrate the shortcomings of each of these theories and reveal which one enjoys wide acceptability among contemporary thinkers in the field of the philosophy of the social sciences and why.

3.3 The Particular Difficulties of the Theories

Directed at the form of methodological holism called functionalism is the criticism that it is not capable “to account for social conflict, making too much of control mechanisms and too little of human spontaneity and inner conflict” and proponents of this form of the theory “are not committed to morality as such, only to a moral that yields order, *thus they* can say nothing...about the moral status of a particular society”²⁷². In this direction, the reality of moral relativism raises a fundamental shortcoming against this doctrine.

In spite of this criticism directed at this form of holism, it is important to identify with the advantage that comes with this doctrine, thus, we note that it provides room for the idea that individuals are motivated to act in accordance with normative standards through internalisation²⁷³. However, this doctrine fails in a very fundamental way to identify which aspect of human nature that makes it possible for ‘internalisation’ to occur in each individual as member of any given society.

An important criticism against the conflict theory variant of holism is that it affirms the negative and conflicted state of society as normal behavior. In addition, it also challenges the status quo and firmly believes that the ruling class is responsible for enforcing social order in the society. Furthermore, it discounts all acts of kindness as having an ulterior motive or personal agenda. Humanitarian efforts, acts of altruism, democracy and the civil

²⁷² Boldeman, L. *op. cit.*, P 76

²⁷³ *ibid*

rights movement, according to the conflict theory, were designed to control the masses rather than to promote peace and social order²⁷⁴.

Above all, a most important difficulty of holism in general is that it conceives of individuals as machines subject to the control of the society, that is, the mechanistic conception of the human persons by holism poses serious problem to its tenability and acceptability as a viable theory of explanation in the face of individuals' ontological reality. In other words, a mechanistic conception of individual dominates the analysis and explanations of methodological holists, and this mechanistic conception of individual makes it an inadequate and unreliable theory to explain any social phenomena.

And the reason for this is that it did not take into account the reality of human conducts and behaviours, and the fundamental roles they play in shaping and reshaping social affairs. In fact, Durkheim's classical position – being a foremost representative of this theory – could not stand the test of time because “Durkheim did not consider the thoughts and feelings of individuals within society”²⁷⁵, and therefore completely falls out of favour as an adequate explanation of social order.

The private-interest doctrine version of methodological individualism suffers its own setback the moment it is neither capable to explain how there could be sufficient similarities among individuals and enough continuity through time to have created organised societies, nor is it possible to explain all obedience to rules and laws by the calculation of benefit derived from them, or from fear of punishment. That is, the existence of shared social norms is ignored by this version of individualism, thus it creates no room for moral notions such as right and wrong, thereby, omitting the moral dimension in human relations and thus making discourse on morality an impossible task²⁷⁶.

Against the situation analysis variety of individualism is the critique that it

lacks an adequate account of what it is to be human and of human beings possessing a sense of personal identity. Also missing is any commitment to moral standards other than those

²⁷⁴ Lee, S. “Limitations of the Conflict Theory” culled from www.ehow.com/info_8042572_limitations-conflict-theory.html @ 10:47 a.m. on the 12/11/2012

²⁷⁵ Thomas, L. *Sociology: The Study of Human Relationships*, 1995, P 12

²⁷⁶ Boldeman, L. *op. cit.*, P 75

found in social situations. Nor can *it* account for moral rules opposed to any derived from those social situations²⁷⁷.

Basically in its most general sense, methodological individualism's difficulty lies in its reliance on the fierce assumption that the ontological nature of the human person is characterised by a fundamental element that defines the absolute autonomy of the individual, without any possibility of individuals that can generate self-cultivating attitudes and conducts that are not necessarily imposed either through society or its mechanisms of social control.

Upon the criticisms levelled against both methodological individualism and methodological holism, it appears that methodological individualism enjoys wide acceptability among contemporary philosophers of the social sciences for two technical reasons: one is that it is the individual rather than the society that has ontological existence, and two is that the whole is in the final analysis reducible to the individual. In other words, "social phenomena are a result of individual behaviour and action and therefore any attempt of analysis above the individual is not possible...thus the focus on individualism is on explaining human behaviour because it is only the individual that exists"²⁷⁸.

Thus, inherent in methodological individualism is the salient and fundamental issue of ontological orientation about the human *will*, particularly as it regards the question of the existence and persistence of social order. For instance, *why* does individual take decision and action that sometimes (or often times) threatens or enhances social order? This fundamental problem has more to do with the underlying ontological conception of human nature especially the human *will*, this view receives clarity in the assertion that

implicit within this perspective (that is methodological individualism) is that humans have total free *will* and are thus given complete agency in regard to their behaviours and attitudes²⁷⁹.

In this regard, it is clearly revealed that methodological individualism identifies with a fundamental element in human nature that allows the theory to remain faithful to the analytical core of individualism. In other words, methodological individualists stress the emergence and sustenance of social institutions and phenomena as the consequences of

²⁷⁷ *ibid*, P 76

²⁷⁸ Bone, J.D. "The Social Map and The Problem of Order: A Re-evaluation of *Homo Sociologicus*" in *Theory and Science*, 2005, P 7

²⁷⁹ *ibid*

human actions (intended and unintended); therefore, points to the view that knowledge of human *will* is significant and worthy of theoretical exploration.

In fact, the important arguments against methodological individualism as shown above are directly connected to the ontological conception of the human *will*. That is, the criticisms against methodological individualism, that it provides too much autonomy to the individual and that it has low predictive power, which arises out of the ontological conviction that individual's *will* is free and remains absolutely free in performing its function of initiating decision and action in individual.

Hence, the shortcomings of methodological individualism fundamentally reside in its basic assumption about the nature of the individual which derives from the ontological conception and conviction that the human *will* is a possession of the individual, therefore it is free. This conception of the *will* defines the free acting and deciding individual that forms the basis of explanation for methodological individualism. Thus, an individual decides and acts 'freely' (by aid of the *will*) to either threaten or sustain social order.

CHAPTER FOUR

ÌFÈ-INÚ AND CULTURE

In chapter two, we did a thorough exposition of the notion of *Ìfè-Inú* (human will) in Yorùbá thought and it is important to recall that in that chapter we demonstrated the nature and function of *Ìfè-Inú* as an important component in the Yorùbá conception of a person. As reflected in the title of this present chapter and as an important component in the Yorùbá conception of a person, we want to take a look at the correlation between it (that is *Ìfè-Inú*) and culture with a view to demonstrate the influential power of culture in mediating the *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual, particularly the significance and specific ways that the Yorùbá culture mediates the *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual.

And since the conception, nature, and function of *Ìfè-Inú* has been taken care of in our second chapter, it is equally of importance to demonstrate our understanding of the notion of culture before we can attempt to demonstrate any correlation between culture and *Ìfè-Inú* as appeared in the title of this chapter. Most specifically, our discussion largely covers the mediation of *Ìfè-Inú* by the Yorùbá culture. Also, we expand our discussion in this chapter to include the interconnection between the existing correlation (between culture and *Ìfè-Inú*) and the existence of social order in Yorùbá society and orientation.

In the light of the above, we divided this chapter into the following four sections: (1) ‘Discourse on Culture’ to examine the meaning and characteristics of culture in order to narrow down our own conception of it in this study; (2) ‘Culture and the Individual’ to explore the intricacies of relation between the individual and culture; (3) ‘The Group and Culture’ to examine the symmetrical relation between the group as an existing concrete reality and culture (4) ‘Yorùbá Culture, The Mediation of *Ìfè-Inú*, and The Existence of Social Order’, will underscore the influential power of culture in shaping (and reshaping if necessary) the *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual; this section also involves demonstrating the significance and specific ways that the Yorùbá culture mediates the *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual to engender social order.

The essence of this chapter, as stated above, is to capture and reveal the significance of culture in human affairs. Hence, the importance of this chapter in this work cannot be over-emphasised because it gives an account of the role of culture in the development of person(s), particularly in character formation.

4.1 Discourse on Culture

A discourse on any issue that would count as reliable or useful resource demands that an unambiguous definition and conception of the subject-matter be presented. In this light, therefore, a discourse on the notion of culture, as we want to do in this section, requires that we present: (1) clear statements about our understanding of the notion, that is, a working understanding of the notion (definition), (2) clear statements about the notion's features (characteristics), (3) clear statements about the necessity or inevitability of the notion (importance), and (4) clear statements about the uniqueness of culture (significance).

4.1.1 What is Culture?

It is pertinent to start with different definitions of culture, in order to establish a working definition or meaning of the notion for the purpose of our discourse in this study. According to the *Chambers Twenty-First Century Dictionary*, for instance, the notion of culture is defined variously as “1. The customs, ideas, values, e.t.c of a particular civilization, society or social group, especially at a particular time. 2. Appreciation of art, music, literature e.t.c. 3. Improvement and development through care and training...4...the cultivation of e.g. plants, trees, animals e.t.c. especially for commercial purposes...5...a population of micro-organisms (especially bacteria), cells or tissues grown in a CULTURE MEDIUM usually for scientific study or medical diagnosis”²⁸⁰.

In the sense in which the dictionary noted above defines culture, it is indicative that the word ‘culture’ is an example of words, concepts, and expressions that are called polysemy by experts in the field of linguistic study. Having said that, the different definitions of culture as derived from the dictionary and as shown above can be useful to us only in one sense which is implicit in the different definitions as given; and this is in the sense that the invigoration of culture in whatever ways as given is only possible with the efforts of individual human species.

In this regard, any discourse on culture is a discourse on what is only possible with the efforts or activities of the human race. More specifically, the need to expound this term is important, that is, it will amount to futility if we do not attempt to have a working

²⁸⁰Robinson, M. (ed.), *Chambers Twenty-First Century Dictionary*, 2004, P 327

understanding of the notion. In doing this, it is important to note that the number one, three, and four of the definitions as given by the dictionary above are useful in our quest to have a working definition.

And this singular reason explains why many experts working on culture in the fields of humanities and the social sciences have different meanings of the term. In justifying this claim, it is important to present some definitions of culture as differently conceived by experts in these fields of study.

According to Useem and Useem, culture is “the learned and shared behaviour of a community of interacting human beings”²⁸¹. From this standpoint, it will be observed that culture seems to be all about behaviour that is learned and shared within a community of individuals. This definition is useful but limited because some other scholars have defined culture to incorporate other things other than learned and shared behaviour.

In presenting a definition that appears to be all-embracing, in his 1987 published work *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension on the Language Classroom*, Damen defines culture as the “learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day- to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism”²⁸².

From all indications, it seems at first that this definition is adequate for the kind of working understanding of the notion of culture that we seek. Although, it needs to be stated that it is broader and incorporates all aspects of humanity other than behaviour by referring to them as patterns and models, it is defective because it fails to identify with the relative character of culture. That is, the definition is over-generalised without taking into cognizance what makes a particular culture unique in itself.

As a way to address this shortcoming, Hofstede defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another”²⁸³. This definition is highly interesting to us in this study because it partly speaks of the important task that we have set out to achieve in the last section of this chapter, however,

²⁸¹ Useem, J. & Useem, R. *Human Organizations*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1963, P 169

²⁸² Damen, L. *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension on the Language Classroom*, 1987, P 367

²⁸³ Hofstede, G. “National Cultures and Corporate Cultures” in L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter (eds.), *Communication Between Cultures*. 1984, P 51

as interesting as this definition is, it is inadequate in our current business of having a working definition.

The reason for this inadequacy is implicit in the opening phrase of the definition which states that it is “the collective programming of the mind”. This phrase simply suggests that culture is just a process, note that we are not saying that it is not a process, but we are saying that the definition considered culture as purely a process; which needs a restatement to also capture it as a phenomenon.

In this regard, Lederach in his 1995 work, titled *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*, defines culture as “the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them”²⁸⁴. Accordingly, Sofola also defines culture as “a learned pattern of behaviour, ideas, beliefs, and the artefacts, shared by a people and socially transmitted by them from one generation to another”²⁸⁵. These definitions actually address most of the shortcomings that characterised the definitions stated before them. However, they are also inadequate because they only address culture as being ‘created’ phenomenon, leaving out the important part of how culture is assimilated by or inculcated in individuals as members of a given culture.

Thus, for the purpose of this study and drawing from virtually all the definitions noted above, our working understanding of the notion of culture is that it is the shared patterns of behaviours, cognitive constructs, understandings, and interactions that are assimilated by individuals through the process of mental indoctrination, which can be formal, informal, non-formal, or all. With this definition, it will be realized that it is implicitly implied that culture is created, a process, and a phenomenon.

The most explicit and significant implication of this working understanding of culture as stated above is that a member of a given cultural group is identifiable and distinguishable from a member of another cultural group. Most important signification of our working definition of culture is that it is a notion that captures the dynamics of how patterns of behaviours, cognitive constructs, and interactions are inculcated in each member of a given culture. That is, culture is seen as an important phenomenon, tool, and process that is used by the human species for indoctrination.

²⁸⁴ Lederach, J.P. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*, 1995, P 9

²⁸⁵ Sofola, J.A. *African Culture and the African Personality*, 1973, P 9

4.1.2 Characteristics of Culture

Having established a clear and an unambiguous working understanding of the term, we are now in a better position to discuss the characteristics of culture. By doing this, its advantages and possibilities in this study will be revealed, that is, the significant of culture within the context of this study shall be unveiled. The following characteristics²⁸⁶ are important in any discourse on culture:

1. Culture is Shared – By this, it means that a culture cannot exist with just an individual, that is, it is not something that an individual alone can possess. Thus, this character of culture suggests that important traits of culture such as customs, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values, morals and so on must all be shared by a group of people before one can claim to have culture in existence.

Thus, sharing being an important feature of culture requires that social interaction must always take place for it to occur, and this may take many forms in order to be able to transmit the beliefs, values, and expectations embedded in culture from one generation to another. That is, sharing is pivotal to culture because it facilitates the exchange of social ideas required to provide understanding of culture itself.

2. Culture is Learned – This feature of culture is significant because it speaks of the fact that culture is not inborn, but that it is learnt. In sociological parlance, the terminology that best describes this characteristic of culture is called cultural transmission or enculturation; it is with this feature that we understand how an individual acquires information about culture that he/she finds himself/herself.

Usually, it is through all forms of education that culture is learned across generation. The parents provide the early education of their children from the way they live in the family and society. The social influence taken from their friends and relatives including their actual experiences provides the actual learning on a given societal culture.

Most significantly, it is with the aids of language, literature, arts, music and local history that are passed across generation that an individual member of a given cultural group learns to understand and apply certain ideals, values, expectations, beliefs and traditions within the culture. This is why the younger generations readily accept the

²⁸⁶ Kottak, C.P. *Mirror of Humanity*, 2007, P 41-58

norms of the society as part of their education to sustain the cultural traits within their family or tribe.

3. Culture is Dynamic – It is a necessity for any culture to be characterised by this feature, otherwise such cannot pass as culture. And by this characteristic, it means that no culture ever remains constant. Every culture must be subjected to change which can be slow or constant. In fact, culture responds to changing conditions of the physical world. As a result, it is said to be dynamic. Thus, continuous changes of culture always derive from new ways of life that evolved as a result of the changing conditions of the societal life.

4. Culture is Adaptive – By this, it means that culture must adjust itself to the various forces obtainable in the external world, this is why the evolutionary process that modifies the social life of a group of people in a given natural environment is describes as cultural adaptation. And this is because the social evolutionary process is created by the condition of the natural environment; hence human beings are constantly adapted to any change.

Thus, the biological modifications and adjustments are always flexible enough to adapt even in the harsh conditions of the environment. Therefore, the human adaptations uses innovative way to create new cultural dimension or its ways of life from the cultural transformation such as clothing, food, shelter, music, arts, beliefs, traditions and history.

5. Culture is Integrative – With this characteristic, we mean that culture has the tendency to integrate members of a given group; this integrative nature of culture is patterned by specific dimensions of social life such as the economic and political activities. It is these dimensions that constitute norms of conformity that individuals are made to subscribe to, in order to meet the psychological and social mentality standards required of each individual member of the cultural group.

For instance, innovations and inventions of a given cultural group, in the area of values, are patterned to be followed in such a way that each member of the group needs to be integrated into the unique social life of the cultural group.

6. Culture is Compulsory – This characteristic indicates the authoritative bounds of beliefs, expectations, and values as imposed on members of a given culture, and how harmonious relationship is achieved within a given cultural group in a particular period of time. In other words, this characteristic speaks of compulsory of behavioural

conformity and the specific sanction that follows the non-compliance with such conformity.

This characteristic of culture, therefore, is important because it invigorates the common goals that inform the collective activities and social interactions of members of a given cultural group, that is, collective activities such as the observation of specific norms, traditions, and beliefs serve as blueprints to the distinctiveness of a given cultural existence.

4.2 Culture and the Individual

The discourse on culture as demonstrated above points to an important direction in respect to the individual; and the individual, as we hope to show, is also an important factor in the (re)creation and sustenance of culture. Indicative from our last section is that each individual is a product of a culture.

The tenability of this claim is shown by the fact that it is through culture that each individual has understandings about anyone or all of the society's values, morals, law, philosophy, economics, politics, technology, standard of social relations, and so on. In fact, all achievements of talent and sanctity is made possible by culture.

Also, vices and negative conducts made manifest in some individuals are indoctrinated through culture. For instance, religious fanaticism, dogmatism, mass murder in the name of God, and fundamentalism which are destructive of other individuals are products of cultural orientations.

In spite of this, we must still acknowledge that culture made it possible for each individual to be more intelligent, more original, creative, and flexible than the behaviour of any non-human animal, whose nature is devoid of the ability and capacity to assimilate or transmit accumulated bodies of knowledge that come with culture.

As individuals, our take and response to issues is a curious mixture of immediate experience with culturally conditioned mentality, that is, our actions, inactions, and reactions are of sense impression with preconceived ideas about the nature of things; in fact, this culturally conditioned mentality is always more important than the contributions of immediate experience to actions, inactions, and reactions of individuals to issues.

Each unique event in the life of an individual is instantly and automatically classified as concrete illustration of one of the culture-hallowed and verbalised abstractions indoctrinated into the personality of such individual right from childhood. This goes to show the inevitability of culture in the raising of each individual into a personality that carries with it dignity. Thus, many of the ideas handed down to each person through culture are eminently sensible and realistic; otherwise, human existence would have ceased to be.

Along with these useful concepts, each culture hands down a stock of unrealistic notions some of which never made any sense or irrational, why others may once have possessed survival value, but no longer relevant because of the changed and changing circumstances in the physical world or the environment, which in turn bring about the changed and changing nature of culture itself.

Therefore, there is no controversy over the significant role that culture plays in the life of an existing individual, and even about the corpse of once existed individual. Culture has been identified by experts in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences as a key factor that determines an individual in totality both in respect to the self and the others. In fact, this idea of what and how culture shapes and reshapes an existing individual in respect to self and others is what Markus and Kitayama dealt partly within their article titled “Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation”²⁸⁷.

In that article, the authors affirmed in clear terms that “construals of the self and others are tied to the implicit, normative tasks that various cultures hold for what people should be doing in their lives...and...such construals can influence, and in many cases determine, the very nature of individual experience”²⁸⁸. This supposition goes to confirm that culture is significant and mandatory in the life of each existing individual, since it (culture) determines the very nature of experience of an individual.

Furthermore in that article, Markus and Kitayama demonstrate how culture consequently determines the mental disposition of an individual, particularly in relation to the self and the others. Specifically drawing from the two different cultures of the West and Asia, they argue that cultural affluences and influences of these cultures respectively produce individuals that are independent and interdependent; it is in this regard that they submit that

²⁸⁷ Markus, H.R. & Kitayama, S. “Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation” in *Psychological Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2, 1991, P 224 - 253

²⁸⁸ *ibid*, P 224

construals of the self, of others, and of the relationship between the self and the others ... is clearly reflected in differences among cultures. In particular, we compare an independent view of the self with one other, very different view, an interdependent view. The independent view is most clearly exemplified in...many Western European cultures. The interdependent view is exemplified ... in Asian cultures. But it is also characteristic of African cultures, Latin-American cultures, and many Southern European cultures²⁸⁹.

From this standpoint, the authors move on to show how culture is fundamentally the pivot that determines the independent or interdependent dispositions that characterised an individual in a given culture between the two that they examined as examples. According to them,

The exact content and structure of the inner self *of an individual* may differ considerably by culture. Furthermore, the nature of the outer or public self *of an individual* that derives from one's relation with other people and social institutions may also vary markedly by culture. *Therefore*, the significance assigned to the private, inner aspects versus the public, relational aspects in regulating behaviour will vary accordingly²⁹⁰.

On this basis, the authors argue that an independent construal of individual self as an attribute of Western tradition is a function of Western cultures. That is, the culture of Western Europe is the most significant factor in shaping and reshaping the personality of an individual. Thus, they submit in this regard that

In many Western cultures, there is a faith in the inherent separateness of distinct persons. The normative imperative of this culture is to become independent from others and to discover and express one's unique attributes. Achieving the cultural goal of independence requires construing oneself as an individual whose behaviour is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one's internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings, and action, rather than by reference to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others. According to this construal of the self ... the person is viewed as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social and natural background²⁹¹.

²⁸⁹ *ibid*, P 224 - 225

²⁹⁰ *ibid*, P 226

²⁹¹ *ibid*

This imperative of culture in shaping and reshaping an individual is also shown in non-Western cultures. According to these scholars, in most non-Western cultures, particularly those of Asian tradition, an individual construal of the self is interdependent – by this they meant that the definition of oneself by an individual is always in relation to others rather than in relation to oneself alone which is obtainable in Western tradition as invigorated by culture. That is, the interdependent construal of the self by an individual is conditioned by these non-Western cultures; in their own words, they submit that

In contrast, many non-Western cultures insist ... on the fundamental connectedness of human beings to each other. A normative imperative of these cultures is to maintain this interdependence among individuals. Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one's behaviour is determined, contingent on, and to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship²⁹².

Most clearly, the influencing nature of culture on an individual cannot be denied. Also, the unavoidability of culture by an individual is well articulated in the above discourse. On this note, it appears that the relationship between culture and the individual is directional, but this cannot be the case as some experts have shown that the relation between the individual and culture is one of reciprocation. Hence, it will be a disservice if we fail to touch on the significance of the individual in the preservation and transmission of culture as a fundamental factor, a process, and a phenomenon in human existence; that is, the role of the individual as custodian of culture.

We have demonstrated how culture conditions the individual by giving the individual his/her identity. Symmetrically, it is the individual that helps to preserve both the material and immaterial elements of culture, that is, the individual is shaped or reshaped by culture in a way that the individual in turn becomes the custodian and transmitter of that same culture. In this light, MacIver and Page submit that,

The relationship between culture and personality involves, on the one side, the total social heritage available to the individual and to which he consciously and unconsciously responds, and on the other, the integral character of the individual being... The culture-personality focus is one that reminds us that the pattern of any culture basically determines the broad contours of

²⁹² *ibid*, P 227

individual personality and that these in turn give evidence of the culture pattern and tend to strive (that is the individual) for its (that is culture's) perpetuation²⁹³.

Thus, as members of a given cultural group, apart from being representatives of this culture, each one of us as individual (mother, father, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, cousin, and so on) transmits this culture to each individual member of generation next, the same way that generation before did to us.

4.3 The Group and Culture

As numerous as conglomerations of persons (that is groups) that exist in the universe, each one is distinct from the others by virtue of culture, that is, culture gives distinctiveness to each group that exists in the world such that one cannot be mistaken for another. Some of the most important categories of culture that give uniqueness to each group are languages, values, festivals, dance, music, food, works of art, mode of dressing, and so on.

These categories of culture create various observable identities for a group, such that at the notice of any one of these categories, one can easily identify the group with which such identified category is known with. In situations where two or more groups share some of these categories in common, there are other forms or kinds of categories of culture that will make them distinguishable from one another.

For instance, whether in sub-Saharan Africa or in the Diasporas, the colour of the skin is the first category of culture to identify a member of any group or conglomeration of persons that are indigenous to the continent of Africa. However, when there is the need to identify further which group among the various ones occupying sub-Saharan Africa an individual belongs, then we have to look to other categories of culture like the dressing mode, language, or food, before we can establish the identity of the group such an individual actually belongs.

It is important to note that among the various categories of culture that give identity to a group, language is one fundamental category. Therefore, language as an important category of culture that gives distinctiveness to a group needs to be properly examined and articulated in order to demonstrate why it is a fundamental category of culture.

²⁹³ MacIver, R.M. & Page, C.H. *Society: An Introductory Analysis*, 1996, P 56

Language, according to Oyeshile, involves and assumes a lot of things about human cognition process, and thus, has the following characteristics: attributes of universality, culture-relatedness, contextualness, transparency, and meaningfulness²⁹⁴. From all indications, the culture-relatedness feature of language as identified by Oyeshile is more basic than other features, for Oyeshile notes that this feature indicates that “the meaning of a language depends upon the cultural background of the speakers of the language”²⁹⁵.

It is in this regard that language enjoys the status of being a fundamental category of culture that imposes identity on the group. Within the Yorùbá culture, for instance, there are variants of the Yorùbá language that distinguish the various sub-groups and give each of these groups its distinct identity. On this note, we can say that without language, it will be very difficult for culture itself to enjoy the kind of special attention that it commands among both experts and non-experts.

Another significant category of culture that is worthy of note is values. This category of culture, unlike language, is non-material – that is, one requires mental disposition to comprehend it. In spite of its non-tangibility, it gives uniqueness and identity to a group; in fact, it is through values associated with a particular group that we can know whether such group or an individual member of such group construal of the self as independent or as interdependent as Markus and Kitayama have opined. It is also through the same values that we can know the degree to which a group or its members construal of the self. This is why Markus and Kitayama submit that “within a given culture..., individuals...vary in the extent to which they are good cultural representatives and construal the self in the mandated way”²⁹⁶.

There are other categories of culture that give identity to the group like we have earlier noted, but they are too numerous to be discuss by us here; and the reason for this is not far-fetch: they do not fall among the core issues for discussion in this study, but to the extent to which they are important to demonstrate how they give identity to a group, that is why we have only touched on the two that we have treated. In fact, the two fundamental categories of culture are important to our subsequent discussion, particularly in the section that

²⁹⁴ Oyèshilè, O.A. “What has Philosophy got to do with Language?: The Nature and Relevance of the Philosophers interest in Language” in *West Africa Journal of Philosophical Studies*, Vol. II, Dec. 2008, P 130-131

²⁹⁵ *ibid*, P 130

²⁹⁶ Markus and Kitayama, *op. cit.*, P 226

immediately follows this section, therefore, it is not a waste of time or resource to have briefly touched on them here.

4.4 Yorùbá Culture, The Mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, and The Existence of Social Order

It is pertinent to recall that *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is the Yorùbá equivalent of the human will, and that it is an immaterial element in the Yorùbá conception of a person, thus it is possessed by each and every existing individual. The importance of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in the ontological make-up of a person, as we have demonstrated in chapter two of this work, is principally concerned with conducts, decisions, and character of an individual. In that chapter, we have shown that *Ìfẹ́-Inú*'s primary function in human ontology is to initiate decisions and actions, which are manifested through individual's behaviours. This means that individual behaviour is a product of the decisions and actions initiated by the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

The question to be addressed is this: what relationship exists between culture and the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual? To provide a meaningful response or answer to this question, it is important to recall some of the things we have said earlier about culture itself. For instance, we have said that culture is shared and learned, and by this, it means that each individual member of a given cultural group partakes in the sharing and learning of the group's culture whether as an infant or as an adult without any option to opt out.

The implication of this is that each one of us is given to a culture, and this is what the existentialists called being thrown into the world. Of course, the advantages of being given to a culture or being thrown into the world overrides the disadvantages (that is, if there is any), because it is an individual that is given to a culture that acquires a personality status. It is on this note that Service posits that "human achievement was the creation of culture, the means by which societies tame and govern their members and create and maintain their complex social organisation"²⁹⁷.

In this regard, culture plays significant roles in the existence of an individual. And among these various roles that culture plays in individual's existence is the mediation of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual – which is the most fundamental role that serves as the basis or foundation of other roles. *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, in spite of its nature, is strongly conditioned by culture such

²⁹⁷ Service, E.R. *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution*, 1975, P 3

that an individual is raised within a cultural group to always initiate decisions and action in line with the expectation of members of the cultural group. This is the point Markus and Kitayama attempt to make when they submit that “...construals of the self, of others, and of the relationship between the self and others may be even more powerful than previously suggested and that their influence is clearly in differences among cultures”²⁹⁸.

Thus, the role of culture in mediating the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual cannot be undermined. Through the categories of culture, the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual is mediated to suit the standard of behaviour that a cultural group considers to be most appropriate. In other words, an individual’s *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is mediated by culture through its categories that we have discussed as part of our last section in this chapter. Focusing on the two categories of culture that we have treated, that is, language and values, we will now demonstrate how culture mediates the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual.

Using the language category of culture, culture mediates the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* through the power of communication inherent in language. The communicative power of language makes it possible for an individual to easily associate with members of his or her cultural group; and because culture is learned and shared, the function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* to initiate decision and action in an individual is always constrained to perform this function in accordance with what is obtainable in and with the language of the cultural group. In other words, it is with the communicative power of language that the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual is mediated by culture. This view is reiterated by Oyeshile when he notes the universality and contextuality of language respectively as indications that everyman speaks a language or the other and that these spoken expressions have meanings within the context of given culture²⁹⁹.

Thus, the communicative power of language plays significant role in the conditioning of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual by culture. For instance, it is with the aid of communicative power of language that an individual from childhood identifies a woman as a mother and a man as a father, and not the other way round in spite of having the capability to do otherwise. In more clear statements, as an individual possessing an *Ìfẹ́-Inú* whose function is to initiate decision and action in each of us as one pleases and under any circumstance, we cannot see a woman and call her a father or see a man and call him a mother. The reason for this is because each

²⁹⁸ Markus and Kitayama, *op. cit.*, P 224

²⁹⁹ Oyeshile, *op. cit.*, P 130-131

individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is being conditioned or mediated by culture through the communicative power of its category of language.

Another power of language that culture uses to mediate the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual is understanding. With this aid of the power of language, an individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is conditioned in such a way to always subject whatever decision and action it purports to initiate or take to one's personal understanding and the group's understanding. In other words, understanding is a fundamental property of language, and language itself can only be known when spoken by two or more persons; and for language to function as a medium of communication, understanding must be shared by both speaker and listener of such language. It is in this light that we have said that the understanding power of language plays significant role in culture's mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

Culture also uses its values category to mediate the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. In this regard, an individual conception of good, bad, wrong, right, God, evil, and other non-tangible concepts that characterise human vocabulary are all products of the conditioning of values category of an individual's group culture. In other words, values as intangible category of culture is deployed by group to mediate the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual, such that whatever the group considers as wrong, evil, or bad is what an individual as member of that group will also take as such despite the free initiation of decision and action by an individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. It is this point that drives MacIver and Page to state that,

...conditioning and imitation and suggestion, incorporated in numerous child-training techniques, produce individuals whose interests and attitudes are consistently in line with cultural demands. Each society... "interiorizes" in its members its standards of right and wrong, its mores and institutional values³⁰⁰.

On this note, we now turn to discuss the mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* by Yorùbá culture for two obvious reasons: (1) the notion of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as we have unveiled in chapter two of this work is roughly the Yorùbá equivalence of the human will, thus, for the singular reason that it is a notion that derives from Yorùbá culture and language, therefore, the need to discuss its mediation process within the Yorùbá culture arises; and (2) is that, the whole goal of our entire work is anchored on how the Yorùbá conceive and mediate this *Ìfẹ́-Inú* through culture in order to achieve social order, in other words, it is important to demonstrate how the

³⁰⁰ MacIver and Page, *op. cit.*, P 57

Yorùbá people through their culture mediate the *Ifè-Inu* of an individual in order to achieve peaceful co-existence in the society.

As we have noted in the immediate past section that language and values categories of culture play important roles in mediating the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of an individual, the Yorùbá culture is not an exception. Within and outside the confine of Yorùbá culture, each individual is a representative of both his own family (immediate and extended) and the cultural group. That is, embedded in the values and language categories of Yorùbá culture is the understanding imprinted or indoctrinated into the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of each individual member of the culture that he/she is not alone in (or thrown into) this world and that his\her own existence is meaningful only in relation to fellow members of the human race. In affirming this point, Fádipè writes that,

...the average Yorùbá, whether educated or uneducated, maintains contacts of a more or less intimate character with a much larger circle of blood and affinal relations, neighbours, and friends...These various relationships have a way of bringing together a very large group of people whose opinion the individual must take into account in his behaviour³⁰¹.

Maintaining similar position, Sofola also submits that,

... the personality we see functioning today and at all times – that predisposition or organised, personal, psychological tendencies to act, react, and respond in certain peculiar way, the African way, to peoples and events... are those inner propellants propelling the Africans from within themselves to be what they are known and seem to be in our observed daily lives – altruistic men rich in humanity, sociality, and unpolluted morality³⁰².

From the foregoing, the inner propellants that are so identified by Sofola which propel the Africans from within are, no doubt, the generated outcomes of the culturally conditioned individual's *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*. In fact, the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of an individual is conditioned in Yorùbá culture that it defines “the basic personality which comprises the deeper, more unconscious aspect of the personality often referred to as the “character-structure” said to be more stable and more difficult to change”³⁰³.

³⁰¹ Fádipè, N.A. *The Sociology of The Yoruba*, 1970, P 309

³⁰² Sofola, *op. cit.*, P 14

³⁰³ *ibid*, P 1

Thus in Yoruba culture, the *Ifé-Inú* of each individual (regardless of age or gender) is nourished and mediated on a daily basis by the language and values categories of the culture, and these carry with themselves the injunction that altruism, helpfulness, love, and service to others are the foundation virtues³⁰⁴ of the culture. And these foundation virtues are wrapped up in the Yorùbá concepts of *Ìwà* (character) and *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* (a virtuous person).

Ọmọ̀lúàbí is an important concept both in the individual and social psyche of the Yorùbá people. For instance, Daniel³⁰⁵ describes the concept of *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* thus: *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* is formed from Ọmọ-Olú-iwà-bí, that is, a child with a high moral background...the Yorùbá people are emblems of morality. The average Yorùbá man is brought up to portray good morals

Also, in an attempt to reiterate who an *ọmọ̀lúàbí* is in Yorùbá culture, Fálétí³⁰⁶ quoted Johnson as describing an *ọmọ̀lúàbí* as very virtuous, loving, kind, polite, respectful, dutiful, hospitable, devoid of theft, fornication, unhyprocritically friendly and generally social.

Also quoting Fágúnwà, Fálétí³⁰⁷ further states as follow,

*Ìwọ ènìyàn, iwọ bímọ́bímọ́
Tọ ọmọ rẹ nígbà tó ó wà ní ọmọ́dẹ...
Má se jẹ kí ọmọ rẹ jẹ àbùkọ́
Bí ọmọ rẹ bá jì, fì isé fún-un
Má jẹ kí o bàjẹ mọ ọ lówó*

Meaning:

You parents, train your children when s/he is young
Do not let him/her be a delinquent
When s/he wakes up, allot him/her duties
Do not let him/her be a scallywag...

Furthermore, in stating the significance of *ọmọ̀lúàbí* as an important concept that warrants peaceful and progressive co-existence among the Yorùbá in their pre-colonial setting, Ògúndèjì³⁰⁸ submits as follows:

³⁰⁴ Akintólá, A. *Yorùbá Ethics and Metaphysics*, 1999

³⁰⁵ Daniel, G. "Foreword" to *Ọmọ̀lúàbí: Its Concept & Education in Yorùbáland*, e.d. by Ògúndèjì, A. & Àkàngbé, A., 2009 P ix

³⁰⁶ Fálétí, A.A. "Ọmọ̀lúàbí – The Golden Attribute of Yorùbá man: Growing or Dying?" in *Ọmọ̀lúàbí: its concept & Education in Yorùbáland*, e.d. by Ògúndèjì, A. & Àkàngbé, A. (ed.) 2009, P 117

³⁰⁷ Ibid, P 127

The concept and practice of *omolúàbí* is taught children using the Yoruba language in an informal setting at home.

Adéyínká³⁰⁹ succinctly corroborates Ògúndèjì's point by submitting thus:

Children sit after dinner to listen to moonlight folktales, as entertainment, which aimed at teaching moral lessons from grandmother or grandfather whereby the young get instructed and get cultivated into the *omolúàbí* concept.

This nocturnal gathering as Akínjògbìn points out is what transcends to *elégbéjégbé* (categorical) societies. He elucidates thus:

...elégbégbé yìí³¹⁰ ní ó kó gbogbo ebí ní ilú kòòkan tàbí ijoba kòòkan papò. Àkíyèsí ní wí pé kékeré ní àwọn elégbéjégbé wònyí ti mò pé itójú ilú, idágbàsókè ilú àti idáàbòbò ilú jé iṣẹ gbogbo wọn ní àpapò. Láti kékeré náà ní wọn sì ti mò pé àgbájọ ọwọ ní a fi í sọ àyà, ọ̀sùsù ọwọ ní a fi í gbá ilẹ̀. Ohun ti ó bá bá ojú yóò bá imú.

Translates as

'This categorical social societies unites the whole families of a society of note, members of these groups know from a very tender age, that the well-being development and protection of their community is their collective onus.

All the above clearly show that the idea of *omolúàbí* cannot be devoid of peaceful co-habitation. However, it is important to state that this is not to say that the Yorùbá belief pre-empts the possibility of existing individuals whose *Ifé-Inú* are either disallowed or refused to be mediated by culture; in fact, it is in this regard that an individual who portrays unexpected action or decision is described as *Àkòògbà* (tamed but non-conformist), and one of the consequences or sanctions for such attitude is public rejection.

³⁰⁸ Ògúndèjì, P.A. Ede Yorùbá gégé bí ọkò tí a fi n tu iwa *omolúàbí* gúnlẹ̀ sébùtẹ̀ ayọ̀ lówùjọ (Yorùbá Language as a vehicle that conveys *Omolúàbí* to the shore of joy in the society) In *Omolúàbí: its concept & Education in Yorùbáland*, e.d. by Ògúndèjì, A. & Àkàngbé, A. (Ed.) 2009, P 69

³⁰⁹ Adéyínká, A. "Chairman's Address" to *Omolúàbí: its concept & Education in Yorùbáland*, e.d. by Ògúndèjì, A. & Àkàngbé, A. (Ed.) 2009, P xxi

³¹⁰ Akínjògbìn, I.A "Kí a wo èyì, kí á lè tẹ̀ síwájú (Let's consult history to unravel today's mystery) in *Omolúàbí: its concept & Education in Yorùbáland* e.d. by Ògúndèjì, A. & Àkàngbé, A. (Ed.) 2009, P 20

Similarly, there are situations when this mediating culture is anti-thetical to an individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú's* desires and aspirations that can promote either personal or common good. With self conviction and commitment, the Yorùbá culture warrants such rare situations provided such individual will take responsibility for such especially when the common good is jeopardised. In this case, the Yorùbá describe such individual as an *Akínkojú* (A brave person) if his or her action or decision turns out to promote the common good, if otherwise, the individual is labelled *Onímò-ara-ẹni nìkan* (A self-centred person) or *A dójú tìni ẹ̀niyàn* (A disgraceful fellow).

Thus, in exploring the concepts of *Ìwà* and *Ọmọ̀lúàbí* in order to demonstrate how the Yorùbá culture mediates the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual for the purpose of achieving social order, there is the need to turn to the Yorùbá oral literatures. Like we have done in chapter two of this work, we will examine some *Òwe* (proverbs) and some *Esẹ̀* (verses) in the *Ifá* literary corpus to expose the kind of doctrine that are incorporated by virtue of the language and values categories of the Yorùbá culture, most in respect of the Yorùbá concepts of *Ìwà* and *Ọmọ̀lúàbí*.

In day to day activities, the Yorùbá often postulates *Òwe* (proverbs) to caution or control either self or others in order to continue to conform to cultural expectations of altruism, helpfulness, togetherness, collectiveness, and so on. It is on this point that Fádipẹ̀ submits that “the proverbs are used in bringing out clearly the meaning of obscure point in arguments”³¹¹. In this regard, the following proverbs will illustrate some of these articulations as noted above:

1. *Àbí-Ìkọ̀ àti Àkọ̀-Igbó, Òde ni wọn tí i kọ̀ wọn wá'lé*

English – *Untrained and the recalcitrant are corrected from outside their homes*

This proverb encourages each individual to be of good conduct, especially outside one's domain as a representative of not just one's family but also one's culture. Anything contrary to exhibiting good conduct, the proverb teaches that such individual will be punished by the outsiders (the public).

2. *Àísí ẹ̀nikẹ̀ta, L'ẹ̀ni méjì n ja àjàkú*

English – *Two persons fight ceaselessly only in the absence of a third person*

³¹¹ Fádipẹ̀, *op. cit.*, P 302

For the purpose of social coercion, this proverb reiterates the need for each one of us to be an ambassador of peace where there is conflict. The reality of this proverb in Yorùbá culture is clearly noted by Fádipè when he writes that,

It is one of the accepted norms of the Yorùbá society that two persons who are fighting each other must be separated for the sake of peace and humanity. After the combatants have been separated and efforts have been made to pacify them, either of them who remains aggressive and uncompromising will find himself in a very awkward situation³¹².

3. *Igba Èniyàn, Kò rópò Ènikan*

English – *Two hundred people cannot replace a person*

This proverb indicates that each existing individual is important, and that each individual cannot be replaced by another or combination of other individuals. Thus, it admonishes us to recognise and appreciate the intrinsic worth of human personality of each individual. Therefore, as far as the Yorùbá culture is concerned, each person is significant and thus participates meaningfully in the affairs of the group like any other individual.

4. *Ká fì ọwọ wẹ ọwọ, òhun ni ọwọ fì ñ mó*

English – *There's strength in unity; a threefold cord is not quickly broken*

This proverb emphasizes the importance of cooperation in Yorùbá culture among the people, and thus it promotes collective responsibility. For this reason, it is common to observe individuals that are enmeshed in Yorùbá culture with the spirit and carriage of togetherness. In fact, the idea of cooperation or collective responsibility is not just indoctrinated into an individual; it is also institutionalised in some respects.

For instance, there is what is called *Òwe*³¹³, which according to Fádipè, is a system of communal or collective assistance rendered to an individual in getting personal works (particularly house (re)building or (re)roofing) done; and another example of this institutionalised collective responsibility is called *Ààro*³¹⁴, which is a system of mutual-aid group established primarily for the purpose of agricultural works on an individual member's (of the mutual-aid group) farmland.

³¹² *ibid*, P 310

³¹³ *ibid*, see P 150 & P 332

³¹⁴ *ibid*, P 150 & P 331

5. *Tíntín ni mo fi bá lágbájá tan, Kò Ẹ é fi òbẹ̀ bù dànù*

English – *The seeming trivial kinship of two individuals cannot be cut-off*

This proverb reveals the connectedness that exists among people, that is, it propagates the idea that we are connected with one another; and that this connectedness cannot be subsumed, no matter how much we try to pretend about or avoid it. Sofola articulates this view unmistakably when he writes about the sociological functions of *Aṣọ-Èbí* which “literally translated to mean the cloth of the family or kin. In other words, it is the clothes worn by members of a kinship group or a family”³¹⁵; in stating these functions, he notes that,

The well-wishers, by their individual and collective act of buying and wearing the *Aṣọ-Èbí* are eloquently saying in the peculiar African altruism: “We are united in brotherhood one with the other (you and I) and all others who join you in this celebration”³¹⁶.

6. *Àjéjé ọwọ̀ kan kò gbé igbá dé orí*³¹⁷

English: *A single hand cannot lift the calabash to the head*

This proverb emphasizes the place of cooperation for socio-economic development. Its crux is that there are many things which can be better achieved through alliance. This is especially through of the training of children which needs the co-operation of husband and wife.

7. *Awínná owó kò yẹ̀ ní, àgbàbo Ẹkoto kò yẹ̀ ọmọ̀ ènìyàn, bí kó fún-un lẹ̀sẹ̀, á á Ẹ ó, ohun ẹ̀ni ní í bá ní mu*³¹⁸

English: *It is not proper for a respectable man with when a subscription is kept to spend it, it is not proper for him to borrow another man's belonging. If it is not too big for him, it will be small, what is one's fits one perfectly.*

This proverb preaches the ideals of self-contentment as a necessary composite of *omolúàbí* and *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*

8. *Alàààdúgbò ẹ̀ni ní ọmọ̀ iyá ẹ̀ni*³¹⁹

³¹⁵ Sofola, *op. cit.* P 125

³¹⁶ *ibid.*, P 127

³¹⁷ Délànò, I. O. *Òwe L'ẹ̀sin ọ̀rọ̀*, 1983, P 5

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, P 9

English: One's neighbours are one's brothers or/and sisters

This proverb reiterates the place of communal hood as a vital entrenchment in the values of *omolúàbí* and the determinant of an individual's *Ífẹ́-Inú* to his neighbour.

9. *Iwà ni òrìṣà's bí a bá ti hù ú sí ni i fí i gbe' ni*³²⁰

English: Character is a good; it supports or opposes you according to what you sown.

This is what is termed the law of karma in western belief system. This proverb recognizes the reciprocity of behavior in Yorùbá thought system. It is vital consciousness to every *omolúàbí* to recognize the place of retaliation of one's behavior. Thus, this affects his/her *Ífẹ́-Inú* to tilt towards good and not subscribe to evil, because whether good or bad, it must definitely boomerang later in the future.

10. *Awo ní í gbe awo ni gbònwó, bí awo kò bá gbe awo ní ìgbònwó, awo a té.*³²¹

English: A cult member supports his fellow to avoid collective disgrace; when one's brother is disgraced, one is definitely shame-faced.

This proverb amplifies the place of an *omolúàbí* as being his brother's keeper. This act of *Ífẹ́-Inú*, consequently, fosters social order and communal unity.

11. *Ibì gbogbo ní í rọ àdàbà l'órùn*³²²

English: The dove finds everywhere comfortable for cohabitation (dove connotes peace).

This proverb avers non-discrimination as a value of *omolúàbí*. It advocates that, non-discrimination, if strewn in an individual's *Ífẹ́-Inú*, will foster peace and social order.

12. *Ááké kò ẹ́ hó ọ̀ṣà̀n ọ̀bẹ́ kò ẹ́ gé ẹ̀dú, ọ̀mọ̀ à̀lè kò ẹ́ ràn ní ẹ́ ọ̀mọ̀ ọ̀kọ.*³²³

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, P 47

³²⁰ *Ibid*, P 25

³²¹ *Ibid*, P 129

³²² *Ibid*, P 23

*English: The axe cannot unflesh the unedible skin of an orange.
Likewise, a knife cannot fall a tree; everyone is of peculiar
advantage/benefit.*

This proverb recognizes the place of peculiarity of each person. It explains that no one is disposable, that every person is indispensable to an ọmọlúàbí. Thus, he/she must desist from esteeming a selected group and belittling some. This is counter-productive to social order.

13. *Eni tí kò lẹ̀ni (lẹ̀yàn) mú un so, kì í sínwín*³²⁴

English: One who has the support of his kith and kin is not liable to disgrace

Like the preceding proverb, the proverb is exaltation to communal support as a necessary attitude to be imbued in the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of every ọmọlúàbí for sociological development.

14. *Orun n̄ ya bọ̀, kì í ẹ̀ ọ̀ràn ẹ̀nikan*³²⁵

English: War and anti-peaceful threat cannot be subdued by just one person

This proverb emphasizes solidarity and formation of alliance as necessary qualities of an ọmọlúàbí and determinant of his/her *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. It further strengthens that no man is an island as far as human existence is concerned. A three-fold cord is not quickly broken.

15. *Ọ̀ràn hànnià, hànnià, ọ̀rọ̀ hànnià, hànnià, èniyàn ni à n̄ fì í hàn*³²⁶

English: Consultation of all sides of an issue must precede deliberation upon such issue.

This proverb advocate even consultation before resolution of a matter as sign of fairness of ọmọlúàbí's *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. This proverb further stresss it positive against the idea of imposition as major reason for conflict and strife. Wide and even consideration of all concerned partly in an issue definitely brings about peace; socio-economic development and avoidance of war.

³²³ Adégbìtẹ̀, O. *Èdédégbèjọ (1500) Ọ̀we apanilẹ̀rìn-in*, 2013, P 6

³²⁴ *Ibid*, P 47

³²⁵ *Ibid*, P 86

³²⁶ Délànò, *Op.cit.* P 105

16. *Bí gbogbo èyàn bá jẹ elégún sàngó, ta ni yòò jẹ Babámogbà?*³²⁷

English: If everyone is a hunter, who will be a farmer?

This rhetorical proverb is a vote against imitation. It condemns the idea or behaviour of aping others and encourages exclusivity as an invaluable condiment in the way of life of *omoluàbí* and consequently in his or her *Ìfẹ-Inú*. This development is fostered in all spheres of human life in an all-round turn-around manner.

17. *Ajítóní tó n bímọ àbíkú: èrè iṣẹ̀ òun loun jẹ*³²⁸

English: The wicked encounter wickedness

Like the above, this proverb establishes the place of of *Èrí-ọkàn* – (conscience) and *èsan* (revenge) as a guide or preventive compass in an *omoluàbí's* *Ìfẹ-Inú*. Same as *Ìgbèyìn tó máa n dun olókùú àdà á sí* which literally means the end reflects the good or bad sown in the beginning/past. These proverbs are charge to position an *omoluàbí's* *Ìfẹ-Inú*. It canvasses for good actions, selflessness, amongst many other pristine virtues as necessary factors, on the part of each individual, for sociological growth and peaceful co-existence.

Furthermore, extracts from the *Ifá* literary corpus are also use through the language and values categories of the Yoruba culture to mediate the *Ìfẹ-Inú* of each individual. The messages contained in three (as examples) of these *Èsẹ Ifá* confirm this supposition. In one *Èsẹ* of the *Olódù Èjì Ogbè*³²⁹ which runs thus,

Ìwa-pèlẹ̀ ni n o'maa hù

Kí n máa baa f'ogbón ọlọgbón Ṣ'ogbón

Ìwa-pèlẹ̀ ni n o'maa hù

Kí n máa baa f'owó olówó Ṣ'owó

Ìwa-pèlẹ̀ ni n o'maa hù

Kí n máa baa f'aya aláya Ṣ'aya

Ìwa-pèlẹ̀ ni n o'maa hù

Kí n máa baa f'omọ ọlómọ Ṣ'omọ

³²⁷ Adégbìtẹ̀, *Op.cit.* P 29

³²⁸ Oládàpò, O. *Fòwe Tùmọ̀ Òwe (1)*, 2014, P 12

³²⁹ Akíntólá, *op. cit.*, P 200

Ìwa-pẹ̀lẹ̀ ní ò' máa hù
 Kí n máa baa f'ílẹ̀ onílẹ̀ Ẹ̀ ilé
 Ó dífá fún Ogbè
 Tí n lọ rẹ̀e ra
 Èèkàn òhun Owú l'èrú
 Ó ní,
 “Èrín Ẹ̀Ẹ̀-è l'owú rìn pàdé ọ̀lókó
 Èrín Ẹ̀Ẹ̀-Ẹ̀ l'èèkàn rìn pàdé owú!
 wón wáá wí fún un pé,
 Bẹ̀ni o ò le sin èèkàn àti owú bí?
 Nítorí, àwọn méjèjì kì Ẹ̀ ẹ̀ran rírò!
 Nnkan lílé, t'ó sì nípa
 Ni wón n Ẹ̀!
 Ọ̀gbón wo l'òò wáá fí mú wón
 Tí wón ó fí máa f'èrín Ẹ̀Ẹ̀Ẹ̀ pàdé è re?
 Ó wáá dáhùn
 Ó ní iwà pẹ̀lẹ̀ ní òun ó máa hù

The English translation of this *Odù* runs thus,

*I will always behave gently and kindly
 That I maybe truly wise
 I will always behave gently and kindly
 That I maybe truly rich
 I will always behave gently and kindly
 That I may have a wife that is truly mine
 I will always behave gently and kindly
 That I may have children that are truly mine
 I will always behave gently and kindly
 That I may have a house that is truly mine
 Divined for Ogbè*

That is going to buy
Èèkàn and Owú as slaves
He says:
It is with laughter that Olókó is welcomed by Owú
It is with laughter that Owú is welcomed by Èèkàn!
They began to tell him that,
So you can keep both Èèkàn and Owú?
Because they are both wild animals!
They are dangerous and can be harmful
That is what they are!
Which wisdom did you apply to catch and have them
And both of them welcome you with laughter?
He answered
I will always behave gently and kindly

In this *Eṣe*, each person is enjoined to possess *Ìwà* (good character like gentleness and kindness) in order to enjoy peaceful, progressive, and fruitful co-existence with other members of the society. Closely knitted with this, is the messages contained in *Olódù Ògúndá Méjì* and *Ọyèkú Jóhóódá*. The *Olódù Ògúndá Méjì*³³⁰ runs thus,

Akànmólẹ̀ tí báá a-b'orí gáro-gáro
Ó d'ifá fún Àkókó, Amèrè, Fọwómókùú
Tí wọn ní bọ wá s'oko ọde
A ní kí wọn fì imò se ọkan,
Kí òkan lè dára,
wọn dé oko-ọde,
wọn ri erin
Àkókó taá ní ofà
Amèrè taá ní okùn-orún
Erín lọ ní tirẹ̀

³³⁰ Akíntólá, *op. cit.*, P 203

*Oró ti Fọwómókùú mú dání,
wón paá pò mò ofà Akoko
wón tún wáá paá pò mò
Orún ti Améré
wón pa wón pò tán,
wón taá sí erin:
Erín wó
wón ní ènyin kò mò pé:
Ofà ti Àkókó
Orún ti Améré
Oró keremjegben,
Ìyen ti Fọwómókùú
Njé kí ẹ fi ìmò ẹ òkan
Kí ẹ tóó pa ẹran.
Bí ìmò bá jé òkan,
Adirankú a pa ẹran*

In English language, this *odù* translates as,

*Àkànmólẹ that is coming to overcome gáro-gáro
Divined for Àkókó, Améré, Fọwómókùú
That are going for hunting
They were told to cooperate with one another,
So that their hunting expedition may be better,
They got the hunting ground,
They saw an elephant
Àkókó hits it with his spear
Améré hits it with his hunting rope
The elephant just keep going
The deadly portion owned by Fọwómókùú,
They combined it with Àkókó's spear*

They also combine that with
 Améré's hunting rope
 After combining these hunting items,
 They use the combined items to hit the elephant:
 The elephant fell
 They said don't you know that
 The spear belongs to Akókó
 The hunting rope belongs to Améré
 The deadly portion,
 The one that belongs to Fowómókúú
 Make sure you cooperate
 Before you attempt to hunt an animal.
 If there is cooperation,
 Adirankú will hunt down an animal

And the Ọyèkú Jóhóódà³³¹ runs thus,

Ọyèkú-Jóhóódà, gúnugún n í s'awo orí igbá
 Apòkèkè, awo idèfun yè
 Bóoyè, awo ọ̀dòfín,
 L'ó dífá fún Rójú-forítì
 Tí ó n f'omí ojú s'ògbéré ọ̀mọ bí-bí sùúrú-sùúrú
 Bí a bá rọ̀'jú f'orí tì, a máa l'áya
 Bí a bá rọ̀'jú f'orí tì, a máa ríre gbogbo
 Bí a bá rọ̀'jú f'orí tì, a máa kọ̀'lé
 Bí a bá rọ̀'jú f'orí tì, a máa bí'mọ
 Èdá kí o rọ̀'jú f'orí tì í o
 Ọyèkú-Jóhóódà, ọ̀jótí mo dá kò tì pé;
 Atorí máa kọ̀ bẹ̀lẹ̀njé, ìmọ̀ wọ̀n kò tù jọ
 Kékeré erè, ni kò re kéké kó máa kí ni

³³¹ Akíntólá, *op. cit.*, P 159-160

Àgbàlagbà erè ni kò kò dọ̀bálẹ̀ fún ènìyàn

L'ó kífá fún Èléya-asọ

Tí n bẹ l'áàrin òsírí

Tí n bẹ l'áàrin ọ̀tá

Tí n f'omi ojú s'ògbéré ọ̀mọ

Nwọn ní kí ó wáá sa'lé

Èbọ ni k' ó Ẹ

Èléyà sa'lé, ó sì rúbọ

Ó sì bí'mọ

Kékeré erè, ni kò re kéké kó máa kí ni

Àgbàlagbà erè ni kò kò dọ̀bálẹ̀ fún ènìyàn

L'ó dífá fún Ewúro

Tí n bẹ l'áàrin òsírí

Tí n bẹ l'áàrin isé

Tí n bẹ l'óko já-ń-lele-já-ń-lele

Tí n fí omi-ojú s'ògbéré ọ̀mọ bí-bí sùrú-sùrú

Kékeré erè, ni kò re kéké kó máa kí ni

Àgbàlagbà erè ni kò kò dọ̀bálẹ̀ fún ènìyàn

L'ó d'ifá fún Olókun

Tí n bẹ l'áàrin òsírí

Tí n bẹ l'áàrin isé

Tí n fí omi-ojú s'ògbéré ọ̀mọ bí-bí sùrú-sùrú

Ọ̀jọ náà ni wọn wá mú Olókun jẹ àgbà omi

Ọ̀jọ náà ni wọn wá mú Èléya jẹ àgbà asọ

Ọ̀jọ náà ni wọn wá mú Ewúro jẹ àgbà igi

Àwọn mẹ̀tẹ̀ta parapọ

Ènu tí wọn gbé s'ókè

Orin awo l'ó bọ sí wọn l'enu:

Gbogbo igi oko, ẹ f'àgbà f'Éwúro

Ewúro mà l'àgbà
Gbogbo aso, ẹ f'àgbà f'Éléya
Éléya mà l'àgbà
Gbogbo omi, ẹ f'àgbà f'Ólókun
Olókun mà l'àgbà

In English language, it translates thus,

Òyèkú-Jóhóódà, vulture has occult relation with the head of calabash
Apòkéké, occult member of idéfun yè
Bóoyè, occult member of òdòfin,
Divined for perseverance
That is crying heavily for not having children
If we persevere, we will own wives
If we persevere, we will own good things of life
If we persevere, we will own houses
If we persevere, we will own children
People always persevere
Òyèkú-Jóhóódà, my days are not numbered;
Swindled from the head, because cooperation is lacking between them
The small python, will not be too small to avoid to greet one
The big python will prostrate before human being
Divined for Eléyà-aso (the best of all clothes)
That was in the midst of poverty
That was in the midst of enemies
That is crying for not having children
They said it should listen
Sacrifice is what it should offer
Éléyà listened, it offers sacrifice
It had children
The small python, will not be too small to avoid to greet one

The big python will prostrate before human being
Divined for Ewúro (bitter leaves)
That was in the midst of poverty
That was in the midst of abject poverty
That was in ja-n-lele-ja-n-lele's farm
That was crying heavily for not having children
The small python, will not be too small to avoid to greet one
The big python will prostrate before human being
Divined for Olókun (water goddess)
That was in the midst of poverty
That was in the midst of abject poverty
That was crying heavily for not having children
It was that day that Olókun was crowned the goddess of all water bodies
It was that day that Èléyà was crowned the best of all clothes
It was that day that Ewúro was crowned the eldest of all trees
The three of them joined together
They opened their mouths
And raised their voice to sing that:
All trees in the farmland, respect and honour Ewúro
Ewúro is the eldest
All clothes, respect and honour Èléyà
Èléyà is the best
All water bodies respect and honour Olókun
Olókun is the goddess

The messages in these *Èsẹ̀ Ifá* are clear enough, the first *Èsẹ̀* enjoins us to cooperate with one another for the sake of oneself and the entire humanity; and the second teaches that we should have patience and perseverance particularly in difficult times in order to gain the good things of this life and to ward-off bad lucks. Messages of these kinds are carried on in the everyday activities of the Yorùbá people through the use of language and values categories of their culture. Thus, it is not surprising that the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of each individual is

mediated in this manner to always be interested in guaranteeing peace and harmony in the society, for each person already carries with the self the spirit of the culture which encourages togetherness and helpfulness.

Thus, the suppositions above are a confirmation that the Yorùbá have a clear and distinct conception of the idea of social order. In day to day activities, the Yorùbá endeavour to sustain the existing and persisting progressive and developmental co-habitation in the society. For instance, it is common to hear the people say that *Ìròrùn Igi ni Iròrùn ẹyẹ* – in English language, it translates as *The comfort of the tree is the comfort of the bird*. An application of this saying to human society is a clear indication that each individual within a Yorùbá society strives to make life comfortable for other individuals. In this regard, it means that social order, for the Yorùbá, is not about the enforcement of law or coercing individuals into cooperation, togetherness, and peaceful co-habitation. This point is clearly noted when Agulana states that

Africans believe that it is only in the community where the life of the individual acquires true meaning. In other words, it is not in living as an isolated being but in mutually interacting with other members of community that the individual can ever hope to realize his social aspirations in life³³².

The emphasis in the above submission is not just about acquiring true meaning by an individual in and through the community; it is also about the individual mutual interactions with other members of community. Obviously, therefore, the above submission goes to show the insignificance of law enforcement or forceful cooperation in bringing about social order in Yorùbá society as well as the fundamental moral choices initiated and activated in the conduct of each existing individual in society.

From this perspectives, we can begin to appreciate the distinctive feature in Yorùbá understanding of the idea of social order; and without sentiment, we can observe clearly that this distinctive feature is rooted in the ontological composition of the individual. To make the

³³² Agulana, C. “Community and Human Being in An African Culture” in *TRAMES*, 2010, P 288

point clear, we turn to *Ìrosùn-Òfún*³³³ in the *Ifá* literary corpus – an important source of information about the Yorùbá value and belief system³³⁴ – which runs thus

Ni-oferefe-ni-sa-n-gele-sa
A difá fún Sòkòtò
A bù fún Ìdí
Tí wón jé ọ̀rẹ́
Tí wón jìjọ́ n ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀
Èdèkòyedè dé sààárín wón
Ìdí ní òun l'òun n gbé Sòkòtò jáde
Sòkòtò ní Ìdí kò lè jáde láì-sí òun
Ìdí wá jáde láì-sí Sòkòtò
Ayé hó bò ó
Ìdí sá padà lọ s'ílẹ́
wón parí àrìyàn-jìyàn àárín wón.
Ibi tí Sòkòtò n lọ
Ìdí gbé e lọ ọ
Ibi tí Ìdí n lọ
Sòkòtò báa lọ
Ifá ní ìrẹ̀pò l'ó dùn
Kí á bá ara ẹ̀ni rẹ́
Kí ayé ba a lè yẹ ni

In English language, this *Àmúlù Odù* translates as follow

Ni-oferefe-ni-sa-n-gele-sa
Divined for the trouser
And the buttock
That are friends

³³³ Akíntólá, *op. cit.*, P 197

³³⁴ Abímólá, W. “*Ìwapèlẹ́: The Concept of Good Character in Ifá Literary Corpus*” in *Yorùbá Oral Tradition: Poetry in Music, Dance, and Drama*, 1975, P 359

And collaborate in everything they do
Unfortunately, they had quarrel
The buttock claims that it takes the trouser out
The trouser also claims that the buttock cannot go out without it (the trouser)
The buttock went out without the trouser
People shouted at it
The buttock ran back inside the house
They settled the quarrel between them
Wherever the trouser is going
The buttock carries it there
Wherever the buttock is going
The trouser follows suit
Ifá enjoins that cooperation is the best
We should cooperate with one another
So that the world will be a better place for all

In the *Àmúlù Odù* recounted above, we can glean that each individual – most especially the social psychology (informed primarily by moral imperatives) of an individual which is mediated by culture and morals – is pivotal to the existence and persistence of social order in Yorùbá traditional society. In fact, this idea of the individual in respect to social order derives from the manner with which an individual is educated in Yorùbá indigenous society, according to Awóníyì,

It is in character building that the Yorùbá education is manifested in its entirety... Nothing mortifies a Yorùbá more than to say that his child is ‘*àbíkó*’ (a child that is born but not taught). A child is better *àkòṣgbà* (a child that is taught but does not learn), where the responsibility is that of the child and not his parents. Many factors go into character-building in Yorùbá education: honesty, morality, intelligence, knowledge, diplomacy, respect for customs, and so on. A combination of methods is therefore employed to mould the individual... The whole society is his ‘school’ and the individual is guided by the

unwritten norms of the society. Morality is not only taught; it is lived³³⁵.

On this note, we can therefore say that the notion of social order is moralistic in Yorùbá thought, thus, there is the consistency of harmonious and peaceful co-existence among constituting members of the society which we can ascribe as moral order. In other words, social order from the Yorùbá perspective is the peaceful co-habitation arising from the moral choices, decisions, and actions initiated by the culturally-mediated *Ìfẹ́-Imú* of each constituting individual. Therefore, in Yorùbá culture and society, moral order is social order since elements of force and cohesion of individuals are significantly absent.

The sense of social order in Yorùbá thought, like we have shown, is rooted in each existing individual, and this existing individual is culturally inclined to decide and act in a manner to enhance peaceful co-existence with others within and outside his own domain. Therefore, this suggests that there are non-negotiable indices that underlay each individual's characters toward others, and most prominent among those indices are conformity, cooperation, generosity, and hospitality.

Each of these indices shall be discussed to show its relevance and significance in the attainment of social order.

1. Conformity

In Yorùbá indigenous culture, there are unwritten moral standards of behaviour that define an individual as an *Èniyàn* (a person) and not an *Èranko* (an animal). This is adequately implied in the Yorùbá expression that *Èniyàn, láì kí ń Ṣe Èranko: O n'iwà jàti jàti, O n'iwà jàla jala*, which translates into English as *A person, when not an animal: one with bad character, one with rubbish character*.

Also, there are standards of behaviour that determine whether an individual is an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* (a virtuous person) or not; for an individual to be identified or called an *Ọmọ́lúàbí* means that the said individual must possess *Ìwapèlẹ́* (good character).

Ìwapèlẹ́, according Abimbólá, means good character and

³³⁵ Awóniyi, T.A. “*Ọmọ́lúwàbí: The Fundamental Basis of Yorùbá Traditional Education*” in *Yoruba Oral Tradition: Poetry in Music, Dance, and Drama*, 1975, Pp 375-376

every individual must strive to have *Ìwapèlẹ́* in order to be able to lead a good life... The man who has *Ìwapèlẹ́* will not collide with any...human being...and therefore live in complete harmony. *In fact*, this is why the Yorùbá regard *Ìwapèlẹ́* as the most important of all moral values and the greatest attribute of any man³³⁶.

Thus, to possess *Ìwa* demands that an individual must conform to the unwritten but specified moral standards of behaviour. For instance, an individual is said to possess *Ìwapèlẹ́* if he/she has respect for elders, has loyalty to one's parents and local traditions, has honesty in public and private dealings, and if he/she is devoted to duty as well as readiness to assist the needy and the infirm, and so on³³⁷. Conformity to these moral standards of behaviour, for the Yorùbá, determines an *Omọ̀lúàbí*.

An *Omọ̀lúàbí*, by all indications, is one that would not indulge in activities or takes decisions and actions that will undermine the peaceful co-existence of the society. It is on this note that Oyeshile submits that

The emphasis on *Ìwa* (character) buttresses the belief of the Yorùbá that the community is kept in existence if the individuals are of good character, otherwise there will be problem of stability. In fact, the continued flourishing of the community will be in jeopardy. In thus promoting values through which the community will continue to survive, through adherence to its moral norms, the individual promotes his own survival. The existence of individual freedom is not just for its own sake, it is means towards the survival of the individual. It is through his freedom that he orders his action, sets priority and pursues them not in isolation but within a given community. Good character (*Ìwa-rere*) therefore ensures that everyone exercises his freedom in such a way that the freedoms of others are guaranteed³³⁸.

Hence, it clearly shows that conformity is one of the fundamental indices upon which social order is anchored in Yorùbá society. Note, this is not to say that in Yorùbá society, there are no non-conformist individuals, in fact, Gyekye adequately noted this when he writes that

It might be supposed that communitarianism, with its emphasis on and concern for communal values, will have no truck with the doctrine of rights, for that doctrine is necessarily an

³³⁶ Abimbólá, W. *Op.cit.*, Pp 394-395

³³⁷ Oyèsilẹ̀, O.A. *Conflict of Values between the Community and the Individual in Traditional Yoruba Belief System*, 2001, P 213

³³⁸ *ibid*, P 179

individualistic doctrine. Right belong primarily and irreducibly to individuals: a right is the right of some individual. Yet the supposition that communitarianism has little if any place for rights is false both in theory and in practice...³³⁹

2. Cooperation

As a result of communal nature of Yorùbá society, cooperation (or collective responsibility and benefit) is fostered into the psychology of each individual member of the society through the mediation of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of each individual. Cooperation as one of the fundamental indices upon which the existence and persistence of social order is anchored requires that each member of the society must cooperate with other members to achieve whatever feat. This cooperation we must say, encourages mutual understanding among differing individuals in all ramifications. On this note, Gbádéḡṣin submits thus

A high premium is placed on the practical demonstration of oneness and solidarity among members of a community. Every member is expected to consider him/herself an integral part of the whole and to play an appropriate role towards achieving the good for all. Cooperation is voluntary given and is institutionalized in several ways... Everyone is expected to be keeper and protector of the interests of others which are, by extension, their own too. All the above point to the value that traditional Yorùbá place on community and communal existence, with all its emphasis on fellow-feeling, solidarity, and selflessness. This leads to the social order of communalism.³⁴⁰

Furthermore, the *Àmúlù Odù Ọ̀sẹ́-Ọ̀di*³⁴¹ identifies the consequences of non-cooperation as hatred, disunity, backwardness, and destructiveness in its corpus which runs thus

Ọ̀gbólógbòò àgbò n k'ìlẹ̀ kì-kì-kì:

A d'ifá f'Éwé

A bù f'Ékọ

Àwọn méjèjèjì jọ da iṣẹ̀ pọ̀

Á ní kí àwọn méjèjèjì rúbọ

³³⁹ Gyekye, K. "Person and Community in African Thought" in *The African Philosophy Reader*, 1998, P 328

³⁴⁰ Gbádéḡṣin, S. "Individuality, Community, and The Moral Order" in *The African Philosophy Reader*, 1998, P 294-295

³⁴¹ Akíntólá, A. *op.cit.*, P 200

Kí aráyé má r'ídìi wọn
Àwọn méjèjèjì kò rúbọ
Ayé r'ídìi wọn
Àwọn méjèjèjì n tààkà iyì ara wọn
Ewé ní òun ni n b'àṢírí Èkọ
Òun l'ó sì n jékí a da aṣọ bòó
Èkọ ní òun ni ó jékí Ewé t'oko wá lé
Wón ro'jọ ara wọn fún ọmọ-aráyé
Àwọn ọmọ-aráyé ní àwọn yòò kọ wọn l'ògbón
Wón tú Ewé ara Èkọ
Wón jẹ Èkọ
Wón da Ewé s'óde
Èran àti ohun-òsìn ọmọ-aráyé
Fi Ewé jẹ
Ewé àti Èkọ ṣe bẹ̀ẹ̀ di ẹnì àwátì
Nípa ijà àti títú àṢírí ara wọn

In English language, this translates as

A hardened goat roughens the ground:
Divined for the leaf
And the pap
The two have a joint work to do
The two were told to make sacrifice
So that people will not know their secret
The two refused to make sacrifice
The people knew their secret
The two began to show off to each other
The leaf boasted that it covers the secret of the pap
Because it gives it shelter
The pap boasted that it brings the leaf home from the farm

They exposed themselves to people
The people vow to teach them lessons
The removed the leaf covering pap
And consume pap
And threw the leaf outside
For domestic animals own by people
To consume
The leaf and the pap became products for consumption
As a result of the quarrel and exposé of their secrets

Furthermore, individuals' *Ifé-Inú* (both old and young) are mediated by culture to cooperate among themselves, as a result, of such cooperation productive for each and everyone as shown in the expression below

Ọwọ ọmọdé ò tó pepe
T' àgbàlagbà ò wọ akèrègbè
Iṣé èwe bá bẹ àgbà kí ó máṣe kọ
Gbogbo wa ni a l'óhun ṣe fún ra

The English language translation is

The hands of the child do not reach up to the mantle piece
Those of an adult cannot enter into a gourd
Whenever the child appeals to an adult for help, the request may not be denied
We exist to collaborate with one another³⁴²

Clearly, the above accounts imply that social order exists and persists in Yorùbá society because cooperation among members of the society flows freely from within each member of the society. Otherwise, social disorder will be the order of the day as shown above by the *Àmúlù Odù Ọsẹ-Òdí*.

³⁴² Olúwólé, S. "Madonna and The Whore in African Traditional Thought" in *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, 1994, P 21

3. Generosity

Generosity is an important virtue in Yorùbá indigenous belief system, and it is believed that a generous individual can never lack any good thing of life, and this is because as such individual is being generous he/she is also noted by all and sundry for his kindness and quality of behaviour. Most significantly, generosity begets good fortune and this is shown in the *Àmúlù Odù Òyèkú-Ìkà*³⁴³ which runs thus,

Ş'èké-şè-ké máa kú, ó kú s'ápò iná
Şèkà-şèkà máa kú, ó kú s'òdàn oòrùn
Oní-níu-re máa kú, ó f'èhìn ti àmù ilèkè
Ó kó owó méjèjèì lé orí ọmọ ténké
A difá fún Jàkùtè tí ẹ ọmọ-òdò Iréwojé
Jàkùtè dé, ọmọ-òdò Iréwojé
Èyí ti kò mọ pé Onínúure ni ìmàle n gbè

In English language, this translates as

The untruthful has a fiery end awaiting him
So it is, also, for the wicked
Who, when he dies, will be scorched dead
But, when the kind-hearted dies
He'll die in prosperity
And with his good children all around him
This was the advice given by Òyèkú-Ika to Jàkùtè, Iréwojé's servant
Thus, Jàkùtè became wiser than ever before Ifá's advice
Given time, before he ever realise that
It is only the kind-hearted whom the gods favour

Aside this direct outcome of generosity, this virtue also engenders the existence and persistence of social order; and this is in the sense that a society of generous individuals suggests that such a society can hardly breeds or produces individuals that are characterized by greed that is inimical to the persistence of social order.

³⁴³ Akíntólá, A. *op. cit.*, P 121-122

4. Hospitality

An essential value that is rooted in Yoruba culture is hospitality. To be hospitable, Oyeshile notes, means to be accommodative particularly to strangers, in his own words, he writes that

Hospitality is an important component of good character in Yorubá culture. It is believed that the Yoruba people are generally hospitable or caring to other people especially strangers on a journey. Except for Western influence and the sophistication of contemporary society, the traditional Yorubá never thinks twice in accommodating strangers in his home. They also provide food for such strangers at their own expense. They believe that this is right because one can be in the situation of the stranger on a future date³⁴⁴.

Couple with this important purpose of being hospitable is the enhancement capability of sustaining social order. Being hospitable to strangers practically connotes the containment of any vice that may emanate from such strangers to undermine the peace and tranquillity of the society. For instance, if hospitality is encouraged in Hausa culture of the northern Nigeria, the current impasse of the *Boko Haram* insurgency may have been detected earlier. Thus, hospitality as an important index in ensuring social order is encouraged and incorporated into the psychology of each individual member of the society through the mediated *Ifé-Inú* of the individual. This is adequately noted in the *Ifá* corpus *Òsẹ̀-Ògúndá*³⁴⁵ which runs,

Òsẹ̀ ó mọ Olú
Òsì ò m'awo
Àdà o m'ojú eni tí ó rẹ̀'hun
Ebi ojó kan pa omọ àlejò
Ojú u rẹ̀ tó lé, ojú u rẹ̀ tó'kó
D'Ífá fún Olófin a t'èsuru orí j'èfó
Eni gb'ẹ̀bọ nibẹ̀ k'ó rú'bo

In English language, it translates as

Òsẹ̀ treats everybody equally
Poverty is no respecter of status

³⁴⁴ Oyèsílẹ̀, O.A. *op. cit.*, 2001, P 79

³⁴⁵ Adéwálé-Somadhi, FAMA, *16 Mythological Stories of Ifa*, P 84

Machete does not respect its carver

A bad hunger will bring the worst out of a guest

The hunger will make him rampage his host's house for food

Divined for Olófin, who bartered his beaded crown for food

In summary, we invigorated the discourse on the significance of culture in mediating the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* (being the component in a person that initiates decisions and actions) of an existing individual, that is, discourse on the role of culture in taming and influencing characters and conducts of a person. Accordingly too, we were able to demonstrate the inevitable role of the individual to culture and vice versa. We also explored the significance of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, as the component that initiates decisions and actions in an individual, in the existence and persistence of social order by interrogating the Yorùbá culture and values.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ÌFÈ-INÚ AS A BASIS FOR SOCIAL ORDER

Our concern in this chapter is to explicitly show the significance of *Ìfè-Inú* as an important category in the ontological structure of a person in engendering social order. Although, in the last chapter, we identified some important indices in Yorùbá culture and society that serve as foundations responsible for the prevention of social disorder – which is the absence of social order; and in the discussion of each of these indices, we indicated the place of the *Ìfè-Inú*. Therefore, we want to show the exact ways and manners by which the *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual provides the basis for engendering social (dis)order; and in addressing this task, we have divided this chapter into four sections in order to eliminate any form of ambiguity in the presentation and explanation of our conviction.

As a way of setting a clear discourse, we have titled the first section of this chapter as “*Ìfè-Inú* and The Instinct of Self-Preservation”, and our interest here is to demonstrate the factorial significance of *Ìfè-Inú* – which is primarily mediated by culture – to pursue the instinctual interest of self-preservation that engender the existence and persistence of social order. That is, we demonstrate that in Yorùbá society, individual self-preservation towards the attainment and sustenance of social order is primarily a function of the mediated *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual.

In the section that follows, which we have titled “The Mediated *Ìfè-Inú* and The Imperative of Social Order in Yoruba Society”, and this is to unveil the normative conception and the significance of *Ìfè-Inú* as an imperative of social order. In addition to this, we show that the absence of a mediated *Ìfè-Inú* often leads the possessing individual into living a life of un-fulfilment where living appears meaningless and difficult for him/her.

In the third section, we take a look at some means by which the existence of social order is predicated on the mediated *Ìfè-Inú* of an individual. In this direction, we examine some codes of conduct that engender social order, and argue that these codes of conduct are functions of mediated *Ìfè-Inú*; and that conducts that negate these codes can only derive from an unmediated *Ìfè-Inú*. In this regard, we have titled this section as “Social Order As A Predication of Individual Mediated *Ìfè-Inú*”

And in the last section, which we have titled “Individuals’ Unmediated *Ìfè-Inú* As Determinant of Contemporary Realities in Africa”, we examined some of the social problems

that are currently undermining the existence of social order in Africa and explore the connection between these problems and the dominant individuals with unmediated *Ifé-Inú*, that have been brought about by the process of Westernization in the name of civilization and globalization. Most importantly in this section, we argue that the dearth of social order in Africa is a function of individuals with unmediated *Ifé-Inú*.

5.1 *Ifé-Inú* and The Instinct of Self-Preservation

In Yorùbá society, just like most other African societies, the communal system of living dominates. Thus, it always appear as if it is almost impossible to identify the place of an individual in the scheme of things. That is, one may want to assume that self-preservation of an individual must be an impossible task.

However, this assumption is itself impossible for many literatures have been written on most African cultures confirming and showing the possibility of self-preservation of an individual. Couple with these literatures, there is abundant oral literatures that also clarify how an individual preserved the self within the scheme of communal life.

A classical example of a written literature on this subject in an African society is the work of John Mbiti titled *African Religions and Philosophy*. In that text, Mbiti informs us that an individual of an African extraction preserves the self with regard to others because it is the existence of others that gives meaning to his/her own existence. According to him,

In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes this existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create, or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group...whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'. This is the cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man³⁴⁶.

Thus, this view suggests that an existing individual within an African society is an embodiment of other individuals. In this case, it means that an individual carries with himself/herself the psychology of the idea or knowledge that for his/her own existence to be

³⁴⁶ Mbiti, J.S. *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1969, P 108

preserved and meaningful, he or she must take serious the care for the existence of other members of the society.

This idea of self-preservation by an individual, as demonstrated above, has its strongest root in Yorùbá culture; and this is why Fádipè states that

...as a rule, the Yorùbá cannot afford to pretend to be indifferent to the public – however anonymous – and its opinion. In the first place, the public has begun to have a meaning for him from early childhood, and from inside the compound. By one means or another, he has always been made amenable to the opinion of the group. Various members of the extended-family have, at various times, taken their turn in bringing to bear upon him and his conduct various methods of social control namely: instruction, advice, persuasion, reward, and punishment. And just as he learns, under pain of disagreeable consequences, to avoid doing things which will earn him the disapproval of the small group inside the compound, so also does he learn to respect the opinions and prejudices of the larger society³⁴⁷.

Other sources of knowledge within the culture also give credence to this supposition. For instance, it is common to observe the following expressions among the people:

A kii ṣọ ori olóri, kí àwòdì gbé t'eni lọ – You do not protect other people's properties while yours is stolen off.

Eni ti a fẹ́ rí ni a fẹ́rí, kii se pé a kò rí Èniyàn – It is that we do not see people, but we see who we choose to see.

Each of these sayings portrays the fact that an individual identifies with his/her preservation from the group, however it is within the group that his/her self-preservation can be meaningful and not in isolation from the group. Otherwise, such an individual will be faced with tough and hard conditions that could make life to be difficult for him, this is what is implied by the Yorùbá saying *Àìrìn pò ejò ní ñ mú ọmọ ejò j'iyà*, which means *the isolation of a snake from its team makes such snake suffers*; thus, it is within the group that the existence and self-preservation of an individual acquires meaning.

Furthermore, the *Odù Ifá Ìrosùn-Méjì*³⁴⁸ also speaks of this fact, and it runs thus,

³⁴⁷ Fádipè, N.A. *The Sociology of the Yorùbá*, 1970, P 309-310

³⁴⁸ Oral rendition by Oluwo (Dr.) Adéyemí Sùènú, an *Ifá* practitioner that resides in Odógúnýán at Ikorodu, Lagos

Àkùkò f'ogbe lèbè-lèbè Ẹ'yi
A diá fún Opílíkì
Tí ó fi tiẹ sílẹ̀
Tí ó maa gbọ́ ti ẹnì-ẹ̀lẹ̀ni k'áyé kiri
Ọ̀rúnmilà ní ó ò bá a tún tẹ̀e náà Ẹ
wón ní kí Opílíkì ó rú'bo
Kí ó lè baà níyì l'áyé
Ó sì rú u
Ìgbà t'ó rú'bo tán
wón ní kí ó máa tún ti ọmọ ẹ̀lòmíràn Ẹ
Ju bí ó ti ń tún ti ara a rẹ Ẹ lọ
Orin awo ní ń kọ
Ó ní kín ní o bàá mi tún wàa t'èmi Ẹ?
Ọ̀rúnmilà, ibaa mi, Èrìgì Àlọ
Ni yóò bá mi tún wàa t'èmi Ẹ

In English language, this translates as,

The cock flies and did what it did
Divined for Opílíkì
That leaves his own
To attend to other people's problem
Ọ̀rúnmilà will always solve his own problems too
Opílíkì was told to make sacrifice
So that he will earn prestige and honour in life
He sacrificed
After making the sacrifice
He was to told to continue solving others problems
Much more than he solves his own
He began to sing the praises of his priest
Asking what solve his own problems?

Òrúnmilà, I pay homage

For solving my own problems

Most intriguing about this self-preservation of an individual as revealed above is the question that “what makes it possible for an individual to acquire such a social psychology about himself/herself?” or we can rephrase the question as “how does this self-preservation by an individual come to form part of the social psychology of the individual?”.

To answer this question, there is the need to remind ourselves of our discussions in chapters one, two, and four. Specifically, in chapter one, you will recall that we explored the idea of personhood in Yorùbá traditional belief system, and precisely we identified that many of the written literatures on Yorùbá ontological idea of a person failed to identify the component in a person that initiates decisions and actions. You will recall that it is this failure that informs our interest in chapter two where we identified and examined the ontological component that initiates decisions and actions in a person from the perspective of the Yoruba belief system.

And in chapter four, we demonstrated how this component, the initiator of decisions and actions in a person, is mediated by some identified categories of culture. Most precisely, we dwelled on how this component is mediated in Yorùbá culture. Thus, having these recollections in our minds, it is important to go back to the question raised above about how an individual incorporates the others in his/her psychology of self-preservation in Yorùbá culture.

Yorùbá culture itself makes it possible that an individual cannot preserve himself/herself in isolation, that is, the Yoruba culture has mediated the *Ìfẹ-Inú* of an individual such that it is the values that promote the good life in the society it comes to appreciate and those condemned by the society it comes to reject. In this regard, the Yoruba will say that *Àti kékeré ni Ìmọle ti n kọ omọ rẹ lásẹ*, meaning *the Muslims teach the children how to soliloquize from childhood* in English language; a saying that goes to confirm that the *Ìfẹ-Inú* of an individual is mediated right from childhood to identify with social expectations as part of his own existence.

In addition, in the story told of *Afòn* and *Odíderé*, we were made to see the significance of mediating the *Ifẹ-Inú* of an individual. The story taking from the *Ifá* corpus *Ogbè-Wónrín* is told³⁴⁹ thus,

In the ancestral times, no action could be taken without due consultations with *Ifá*. This was the reason why *Afòn*, on having the intention of marrying a beautiful bird, *Odíderé* (parrot) consulted the *Ifá* oracle. He went to his *Ifá* priest and they counselled him against marrying to *Odíderé* (parrot) as the bird would subject him to ridicule and deprived him of his honour. They added further that the proposed bride would send away all the relatives of *Afòn*. *Afòn* only requested to know from *Ifá* if the bird would consent to his proposal if he approached her because he dreaded the bird. The reason why this bird was feared was that she had astonishing beauty and several important dignitaries had been toasting her before. The Diviner, after casting *Ifá*, assured *Afòn* that the woman would consent. *Afòn* then shrugged and did not bother to inquire if there could be any sacrifice to offer in a bid to neutralize the bird's craftiness.

Afòn toasted the lady and they got along well. They formalized the union and *Odíderé* moved in with her husband. The woman gradually became domineering and the husband became her tool. The other wives were also victims of this obnoxious circumstance. Whenever there was any slight misunderstanding among them, instead of *Afòn* to handle the situation with forbearance, he would just sent the "erring" wife out. The wives soon left *Afòn* one after the other. While his relatives distanced themselves from him as he would not take any advice concerning the bride, insisting that everybody should mind their own business.

After some time, *Afòn* started having rough times to the extent that he had to go and borrow before he could eat. Whenever he told his wife about the situation, she would reply that *Afòn* should sell one of his clothes in order to obtain money. *Afòn* began to do this until he gradually exhausted his wardrobe.

One particular day, there was no money left on *Afòn* and the only important cloth he had left was the one people usually hailed him for whenever he put it on. Apart from this, this cloth was like fortune or ego-booster for him. This is because he usually found the favour of all whenever he puts it on. He used to make a lot of money from people whenever he wore it. But when the situation of *Afòn* grew intolerably worse, and there seemed to be no way out for him, he told his wife to offer suggestions as to how they could survive their predicament. *Odíderé* advised that he should sell the fabric of honour in his wardrobe and used the proceeds to maintain the house.

³⁴⁹ Elébuibon, Y. *Ifá: The Custodian of Destiny*, 2004, P 20-21

This suggestion made Afòn to grow annoyed. Odíderé did not take the refusal kindly either. Odíderé therefore vacated Afòn's house seeing that he had virtually become poor.

After Odíderé had deserted Afòn. The truth then dawn on Afòn. He remembered the various anomalies that had been perpetrated by Odíderé at one time or the other. As if to worsen the situation, Odíderé started mocking Afòn and making jest of him.

Interestingly, it is shown in the story above that the *Ifé-Inú* is responsible for the non-negotiable preservation of the self by the *Afòn* who did not incorporate the significance as well as well-being and welfare of other members. In fact, the story further confirms that an individual, without others, is not successful and complete as a person

In summation, the driving force of an individual to admit, without coercion, the reality and significance of other individuals to his own self-preservation is the *Ifé-Inú*, which is mediated by the Yorùbá culture to admit the responsibility of ensuring the peaceful and harmonious co-existence of others with self.

5.2 The Mediated *Ifé-Inú* and The Imperative of Social Order in Yoruba Society

Communal existence is the bane of life in Yorùbá indigenous society as well as most other African societies. As we have noted in the earlier chapter of this study, culture plays significant role in ensuring that the bonds that bind the individual members of the society together is intact. These bonds remain intact, we opine, as a result of individual's commitments to the goals and aspirations of communal existence. This view is clearly expressed by Wiredu when he submits that

...in the consciousness of moral humankind there is a finely graduated continuum of the intensity of this feeling – *i.e. the sense of human solidarity* – which ranges, in an ascending order, from the austere delimited social sympathies of rigorous individualism to the pervasive commitment to social involvement characteristics of communalism. It is a commonplace of anthropological wisdom that African social organisation manifests the latter type of outlook.³⁵⁰

Although, we have shown that the individual is still at liberty to make choices among competing alternatives. This is why the Yoruba have the saying that *B'òmò bá bọ lówò nínà*,

³⁵⁰ Wiredu, K. "The Moral Foundations of An African Culture" in *The African Philosophy Reader*, 1998, P 311

Á di àwò mójú, in English it translates as: *an individual become incorrigible if s/he is not tamed during formative years*. This saying simply suggests that an individual is at liberty to choose any course of actions that may or may not show any commitment to communal existence.

However, self commitments to communal existence is rampant among existing individuals in Yorùbá society because each member of the society strongly holds the belief that it is when the society enjoys peace and justice, that is when he or she can also have self-fulfilment. That is, it is part of each individual's moral self interest to be committed to the success of communal existence; otherwise, an erred individual will also find it difficult to enjoy peace within oneself.

Thus, the basis of self-commitments to communal existence is primarily informed by self-interest and social justice. Though, the kind of self-interest being referred to here is devoid of seeing oneself as the only existing individual. Here by self-interest, it means that which incorporates the well being and welfare of others into one's own social psychology, this is similar to the theme of inter-subjectivity which is found in the existentialism of Martin Heidegger and other existentialists³⁵¹.

In fact, this self-interest is well portrayed by the Yoruba proverbs that say that

*Iṣẹ̀ èwe bẹ̀ àgbà, kí àgbà ó má ẹ̀ kò, gbogbo wa la ní ohun tí a lè bẹ̀ ara wa*³⁵² – *The elderly should not fail to heed the call of younger ones; both young and old have one or two things of peculiar capacity.*

*Omọ̀dé tò ó, àgbà tò ó: ilú tí a bá dìjọ̀ tò, gégé ní í gún*³⁵³ – *A community administered together is enjoyed together*

*Eni tí ó dá iṣu ní igún ba ègbòdò nínú jẹ́*³⁵⁴ – *A harm inflicted on one's supposed foe invariably affects one's kin*

*Ida ahun ni a f ii pa ahun*³⁵⁵ – *The tight-fisted suffers miserliness when s/he needs help*

³⁵¹ See Oyeshile, O.A. *Reconciling the Self with Other: An Existentialist Perspective on the Management of Ethnic Conflicts in Africa*, 2011

³⁵² Oládàpò, *Op.cit.* P 44

³⁵³ *Ibid*, P 44

³⁵⁴ Délànò, *Op.cit.* P 66

This opening remark is an indication that as an individual (the priest), he needs the collaboration of other individuals (unseen and seen individuals) despite the fact that he is aware that he is at liberty to do otherwise, that is, go ahead with his divination without asking for the collaboration of others. This is a sign that the individual (the priest) is convinced of his commitment to collaborative existence which is the communal existence.

Furthermore, the self-commitments to communal existence in Yorùbá society is also indicative in social affairs. It is common among the Yorùbá to observe that each member of the society must belong to a group which could be religious, social and so on. This practice is still common till today, and this has its basis in the psychological maxim that *Eni tí kò bá ní ẹgbẹ́ láyẹ, kò lè ní ẹgbẹ́ lórùn*. On this note, Fádipè writes

The tendency to form associations and corporations is very strong among the Yorùbá. To a large extent it derives from the organisation of the people into compounds. They are formed for the purpose of promoting common interests in the fields of politics, economics, religion, recreation and enjoyment. So strong is their influence that, in some communities, slaves in the days of slavery organised themselves into convivial associations...One interesting result of this tradition of associations is that wherever there is an appreciable community of Yorùbá, either outside Yorùbáland or even only outside their own particular communities, an organisation will spring up complete with officers. This organisation will certainly have judicial functions, and will have its convivial and mutual help features strongly developed. It has been said that even in the New World, during the time of the slave trade, the genius of the Yorùbá for organising associations found expression in ways that were not always welcome to their masters³⁵⁶.

In this regard, self commitments to communal existence remain the hallmark of any Yorùbá indigenous society, and without sentiment, some of these commitments still survive till date. Traces of this can be observed in the pattern of lives of modern Yorùbá individuals – educated or uneducated; today, most individuals are still committed to the ideas of the values attached to the traditional marriage system and *Aṣọbẹ́*. In making this point clear, Sofola writes that

There is a system of mutual obligation and aid created by use of *Aṣọbẹ́*. For according to the Yoruba custom, an individual who

³⁵⁵ Adégbìtẹ́, *Op.cit.* P 56

³⁵⁶ Fádipè, N.A. *op. cit.*, P 243

buys an *Aṣoṣeṣi* for his friends' celebrations expects the friend to reciprocate in kind when it is his own turn to have celebrations. Thus, by this act an invitation for a future participation and sharing of one's joy and sadness is extended. The Yorùbá receive good psychological gratification and satisfaction from seeing many invitees or well-wishers joining in their celebrations. But to assure this for the future, one must make the sacrifice, financial and social, in supporting others in their own celebrations. If he fails, the individual is stigmatised and no one would turn up when he has any celebration. The greater the numbers of well-wishers present at the individual's celebration the higher the person's prestige. The well-wishers, by their individual and collective act of buying and wearing the *Aṣoṣeṣi* are eloquently saying in the peculiar African altruism: "We are united in brotherhood one with the other (You and I) and all others who join you in this celebration". And herein lays an integrative function of *Aṣoṣeṣi*³⁵⁷.

Thus, individual self-commitments which result from the decisions and actions initiated by individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is a *sine qua non* for the survival and continuance of communal way of life in Yoruba society. That is, the significance of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in ensuring the continued existence of communal way of life in Yoruba society can neither be undermined nor underestimated. This standpoint takes us to examine individual self-convictions, which is also an offshoot of mediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual, as a basis of social order.

The idea of social order, invokes as self-commitments to communal existence, is instilled in each individual as a self conviction in Yorùbá culture. From the perspective of the particular meaning of social order in Yorùbá society as peaceful co-habitation arising from the moral choices, decisions, and actions initiated by the culturally-mediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of each constituting individual, it means that self-convictions of an individual is primarily the basis upon which the existence and persistence of social order is anchored. Oyèshílẹ̀ encapsulated this thinking when he writes that

Given our communal conception of man in traditional Yorùbá belief system, it is very easy to understand how social order was achieved. The reason lies mainly in the fact that his social psychology which was directed toward the well-being of others enables the community to make the individual's action to be amenable to social control through public opinion³⁵⁸.

³⁵⁷ Sofola, J.A. *African Culture and the African Personality: What Makes an African Person African*, 1973, P 127

³⁵⁸ Oyeshile, O.A. *Conflict of Values between the Community and the Individual in Traditional Yorùbá Belief System*, 2001, P 209-210

In this regard, it means that the existence and persistence of social order in Yorùbá society is a state of affair that emanates from the aggregate of self-convictions of individual members of the society. That is, the conscious efforts and sentiments shared in common among members of the society towards communal existence or peaceful and harmonious co-existence of the self with the others translate to the attainment and sustenance of order in the society. This is the point made when Sofola writes that

Any consideration of solidarity or none of it in African society must include the probing of the family. For within this institution are reflected the very core of African life and world-view in more active and practical terms. The close relationship between the life of, or the life in, the community and that in the family is such that are would be correct to say that the existence of one is the existence of the other and that the solidarity of one is the solidarity of the other³⁵⁹.

On this note, it is important to interrogate the source or foundation of these self convictions of each individual; this is in order to be able to demonstrate the significance of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as the basis of social order. You will recall that we are able to re-echo the fundamental significance of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and its process of mediation by culture in an individual; this mediated ontological category, as we have shown in chapter two of this work, principally defines a person as a person, and in chapter four, as a particular kind of a person belonging to a particular kind of culture. The significance of these suppositions is to remind us of the definitive function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in an individual.

Thus, the ontological source and foundation of individual psychologies, beliefs, commitments, choices, decisions, convictions, and actions is the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*; and as a result, the idea or knowledge that an individual has convictions to behave in certain ways to engender the existence and persistence of social order and to behave otherwise or not to behave in certain ways to generate social disorder has root in the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual.

Convictions rooted in individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* to engender social order are adequately acknowledged in Yoruba social psychology. The Yorùbá will say that *Omọ tí a ò bá kọ, Òun ló maa gbé ilé tí a bá kọ tà*, in English language it means *An untrained child will turn out to be a reckless estate manager*. This saying indicates that the importance of rooting certain convictions, through the process of mediation of *Ìfẹ́-Inú*, in an individual cannot be undermined.

³⁵⁹ Sofola, J.A. *op. cit.*, P 136

This issue takes us back to the inevitable foundations of social order. These inevitable foundations are parts of the fundamental convictions that are rooted in an individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* when undergoing the process of mediation by culture. To buttress this claim, the Yoruba saying that *Ká fí ọwọ́ wé ọwọ́ ní ọwọ́ fí ñ mó* meaning *more is achieved in solidarity than in solitude* is an indication that individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is mediated and rooted adequately with certain convictions about the society in general.

Therefore, we are obliged to state that the existence and persistence of genuine social order that is devoid of compulsion or coercion can be achieved only by refocusing attention on the individual by studies and intellectual disciplines interested in social affairs; most particularly on the ontological category responsible for the initiation of decisions and actions in an individual, which is the *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

5.3 Social Order As A Predication of Individual Mediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú*

The manifestation of mediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is revealed by the actions and decisions of an individual that are exhibited towards the well being of oneself and others, that is, the decisions and actions of each individual member of a given society towards the peace, harmony, and hospitality of oneself and the others are functions of mediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú*. This view enjoys wide and acceptable orientation among Yorùbá people in general, and this is why Sofola notes that,

Yorùbá by common custom treat their visitors, both the familiar and stranger, unknown ones alike, with spontaneous and uninhibited reception... This attitude emanates primarily from the altruistic good naturedness of the people, the attitude which they normally express towards their own kith and kin in the community³⁶⁰.

In fact, in day-to-day activities and language, this orientation pervades the psychologism of the people such that many of their sayings connote and denote this orientation; for examples, the following Yorùbá proverbs depict and affirm this claim,

Bí a bá ẹ́ igi nínú igbó, kí á fòrò ro ara ẹni wò, literally it means whenever a person breaks a stick in the forest, let him consider what it would feel like if it were himself that thus broken. In other words, do to others as you wish them to do to

³⁶⁰ Sofola, J.A. *op. cit.*, P 95

you. Have a consideration for the feeling of others whom every action of your life would be affecting³⁶¹.

Bí ó ti ñ dun ọmọ ẹkùn, bẹ̀ẹ̀ náà ló ñ dun ọmọ ẹyẹ, literally it means, pain is not relative. That is, just as you as an individual are sensitive to pain so also are others whom your acts would be affecting if they are wicked acts. Thus, as character it is that makes for good and wholesome human relations in the community, it is a compulsory rule binding every member to act in ways that would promote the good of all the community³⁶².

In view of the above, conscious efforts to mediate individual's *Ìfẹ-Inú* in order to engender social order with his/her actions and decisions (that are predicates of the *Ìfẹ-Inú*) warrant a process of socialization that begins right from the birth of the individual. It is in this regard that Gbádéḡṣin writes thus,

A child who misbehaves *in an agbo ile (a large compound occupies by kith & kin)* is corrected immediately and may be punished by any of the elders or older members of the household. This is the first exposure to socialization... in this kind of environment; children in their formative years are able to see themselves as a part of a household and not as atoms. They see their intrinsic relation to others and see the interdependent existence of their lives with others... There is therefore a feeling of solidarity among its members and this is neither forced nor solicited. It develops naturally as a result of the experience of love and concern which the growing child has been exposed to³⁶³.

Therefore, as an important way to engender social order, there are socially approved codes of conduct that individuals are expected to live up to with their characters and decisions. These codes of conduct in the form of unwritten social norms, values, rules, regulations, and expectations are the very basis that guarantees the existence and persistence of social order in all ramifications. On this note, Fádípè submits that,

The Yorùbá is gregarious and sociable; life under the conditions which exist in compounds would have been intolerable if ways and means had not been devised for living together in harmony in such comparatively confined places where large numbers of men and women are thrown together. There is an elaborate code of manners and etiquette, the observance of which serves to

³⁶¹ *ibid*, P 121

³⁶² *ibid*

³⁶³ Gbádéḡṣin, S. *African Philosophy: Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary African Realities*, 1991, P 62 – 63

reduce the strains and frustrations of interpersonal relationships³⁶⁴.

In this regard, one of such codes of conduct, to follow Fádìpè's recognition, is salutation or greeting. As a way of ensuring the continued existence and persistence of cordiality in relationships between two or more people, there is the social expectation that each individual must take greeting seriously and importantly, thus, greeting constitute an important way of life among the Yorùbá (and Africans in general) because it performs the social function of averting conflict or enmity among members of the society and promote social existence in peaceful co-habitation. According to Fádìpè,

The Yorùbá has a salutation for every conceivable occasion and situation in which he may find a fellowman anytime of the day... He extends these modes of salutation to friends, acquaintances and, even strangers... The process of salutation is a long one on the first meeting in the course of a day for two people who do not belong to the same compound since general and specific inquiries must be made about the well-being of close relatives. *And* an extension of the greeting code is the obligation to offer condolences to anyone who is bereaved, ill, injured and so on³⁶⁵.

In the same spirit, Gyekye also notes thus,

In African societies, human relations are highly valued. Greeting people one meets is an important element in enhancing human relations and in making people feels good about themselves. The greeting is considered a way of acknowledging the other persons as a fellow human being. And a person may feel deeply hurt if you pass him by without greeting him. The failure to greet him would be regarded as a failure on your part to recognise that he shares your humanity. The recognition of individuals by social act of greeting is therefore a social as well as a moral obligation³⁶⁶.

With this, it means that greeting or salutation is a critical imperative that engenders the existence and persistence of social order because it serves the important purpose of ensuring peace, harmony, and cordiality in the social existence of the people. Not to imbibe and exhibit this code of conduct gives rise to social disintegration and subsequently social disorder. This is clearly shown when Fadipe further notes that,

³⁶⁴ Fádìpè, N.A. *op. cit.*, P 301

³⁶⁵ *ibid*, P 301

³⁶⁶ Gyekye, K. *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*, 1996, P 26

Failure to offer... greetings usually give rise to bad feeling especially among close friends and relatives. In some cases it may lead to suspicion of sorcery or witchcraft, the idea being that only the ... hard-hearted and without feeling will not offer greetings. Habitual offenders are particularly vulnerable to this kind of suspicion³⁶⁷.

As demonstrated above, an individual whose *Ifé-Inú* remains unmediated will exhibit non-conformist attitude towards this important code of conduct that engenders social order. This is because it is only such an individual (with unmediated *Ifé-Inú*) that can be an habitual offender, that is, one who has made it as an habit not to greet or salute others in any situation.

Another important code of conduct that engenders social order in Yorubá society is cooperation. Without compulsion, an individual whose *Ifé-Inú* is adequately mediated is witnessed as an embodiment of cooperation; his decisions and actions are often tailored toward fellow-feeling. Thus, by so doing, mutual understanding as well as intimacy sets into the social relations that exist among members of the society.

Cooperation, according to Sofola, is one act of good character that would promote the good of all in the community; and this is the pure message that is been propagated by the Yorubá proverb that says *Òtún wẹ òsì, òsì wẹ òtún ni ọwọ́ fì ñ mó*. i.e. when you rob my palm and I rob yours, life will be easy and going³⁶⁸. In this wise, cooperation as a code of conduct that is not negotiable is ensured to be part of the social psychologism of an individual whose *Ifé-Inú* is adequately mediated.

In this light, some forms of cooperation or collaboration are institutionalised in Yorubá social setting for the purpose of ensuring voluntary social cohesion and collectiveness. Good examples of these institutionalized forms of cooperation are the '*Ọwẹ*' and '*Aro*' systems³⁶⁹. The *Ọwẹ* system, Fádipẹ notes, is commissioned by desiring individual to be used on the farm or building project. According to him,

Of the two kinds of collective help of a productive nature which the farmer may rely on in certain circumstances, one has to be specially commissioned by the party desiring it. This is known as *Ọwẹ*. It is used for the building of a house or the rebuilding or reroofing of one, and the clearing of land or bush or forest growth. In this kind of cooperative help, a man's sons-in-law

³⁶⁷ Fádipẹ, N.A. *op. cit.*, P 301

³⁶⁸ Sofola, J.A. *op. cit.*, P 121

³⁶⁹ see Fádipẹ, N.A. *op. cit.*, P 150 and Gbádẹgẹşin, S. *op. cit.*, P 66

and other relatives together with friends and neighbours will take part³⁷⁰.

In the same spirit but in a different submission, Gbádéḡsin corroborates this view when he writes that,

There is the system of *Òwẹ̀*, a cooperative endeavour in which people help one another on a specific task; for instance, building a new house or clearing a forest for farmland requires help from others. Such is freely given on the basis of reciprocity. Sometimes a male adult with married female children may seize this opportunity to call on his sons-in-law to help with the task³⁷¹.

The *Àro* system, however, is an actual association formed for the purpose of collaborative economic agenda among farmers in the society. In this attempt to distinctively distinguish *Òwẹ̀* from *Àro* system, Fádìpẹ̀ submits that,

Besides *Òwẹ̀* there is a form of standing association for mutual help known as *ààro*. A member of an *ààro* association is entitled to call upon the entire group to come and help him on his farm, either to clear the land of weeds preparatory to planting, or to plant seeds. All the obligation that falls upon the host is, as in the case of the *Òwẹ̀*, to feed his associates, and, second, to reciprocate in kind³⁷².

Cooperation as a code of conduct is also observed in all areas of life in so many forms. There is cooperation in the form of assistance, when getting married, in the period of crisis, and so on. The important point to be observed about cooperation as a code of conduct that must be demonstrated by the decision and action of individual, and as shown in the submissions above, is that it (cooperation) enhances social order. In other words, the social consequence of the institutionalised forms of cooperation noted above, and all other forms of cooperation is the insulation of the society at large against social disorder.

It is important to note, however, that it is practically impossible for all members of the society to exhibit the attitude of cooperation at all times, that is, there is always situations when some individuals by their deeds, decisions, and actions will threaten or undermine the cooperative spiritedness of the society at large. In situations like this, when the individual in question is known or identified to be a defiant to social expectations, it is the view of the

³⁷⁰ Fádìpẹ̀, *ibid*, P 150

³⁷¹ Gbadegesin, *S. op. cit.*, P 66

³⁷² Fadipe, *op. cit.*, P 150

society at large that such individual is an outcast with the conviction that his/her *Ìfẹ́-Inú* remains unmediated. But the number of individual of this kind is negligible compare to the number of the larger society that comprises of individuals whose *Ìfẹ́-Inú* are mediated.

However, if the individual whose actions and decisions threaten or undermine the cooperative spiritedness of the society is known to be promoter of corporate existence, it is the case that there must have been some misunderstanding somewhere; and therefore, the society will be interested in taking a serious look at such situations.

In Yorùbá society, therefore, at any point in time that it is observed that this code of conduct is threatened between two or more people, the elders and respected members of the society will ensure that they see to the solution of the threatened relationship. As an effective approach to ensuring solution to threatened cooperation, the council of elders are always at hand to settle quarrels and the message that is sent to the members of the society is very indicative that cooperation among all cannot be undermined. This message by the town-crier is delivered as,

Ká gbòhùn, A tótó o, Arére o, kí onikó pa ikó rẹ̀ mó. K'ábiyamọ̀ tójú omọ̀ rẹ̀, kí elénu pa ẹnu rẹ̀ mó. Okùn ayé já, Okùn ọ̀rẹ̀ méjì já; Okùn ebi já, àwọn àgbàlagbà fẹ́ tún-un so. Ẹnikéni tó bá dí wọn lówó àwọn àgbà yòò jẹ́ ẹ́ níyà.

Literally, it means:

Be calm, be quiet everybody; let the cougher conceal (or refrain from) coughing, let nursing mothers take care of their young (to prevent them from making noise). Let everyone keep his mouth shut. The cord of humanity is broken, the cord of human friendship is broken, the family cord is broken and the elders are now ready to re-tie the cord and if anyone should disturb them in this work of reorganisation, such a disturber shall be seriously dealt with³⁷³.

From the above, it is very obvious that cooperation is an important code of conduct that engenders the existence of social order; thus, decisions and actions of individuals whose *Ìfẹ́-Inú* are mediated must be seen to exhibit this code of conduct, any decision or action of any individual that is contrary to this social expectation is nothing but derivative of unmediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

³⁷³ Sofola, J.A. *op. cit.*, P 69 -70

A fundamental code of conduct that appears to encompass other codes of conduct is what is called *Sùúrù*, which is literally translated as patience. Beyond the literally translation of this code of conduct, *sùúrù* connotes behaviours and attitudes that enhance the solidarity of members of the society, in other words, in Yorùbá parlance and psychology, *Sùúrù* is the pinnacle as well as the very foundation of the conducts of an individual whose *Ìfẹ́-Inú* is mediated.

In ensuring and engendering social order, the Yorùbá ensures that individuals that constitute the society are not just committed but also possess *sùúrù* because it promotes societal well being. This is because *sùúrù* itself embodies and depicts behaviours and attitudes that must necessarily contribute to the well being and unity of all. The encompassing nature of *sùúrù* is adequately noted when Gbádéḡṣin analysis that,

Sùúrù means patience. Patience is therefore symbolically the father (we may say master) of *Ìwa* in any sense... *Sùúrù* is the source of gentle character (or *Ìwa pẹ̀lẹ̀*) and good character (*Ìwa-rere*)³⁷⁴.

From the above, it is glaring that *Sùúrù* begets other important codes of conduct like *Ìwa-pẹ̀lẹ̀* (gentle character) and *Ìwa-rere* (good character) that the Yoruba do not underestimate in promoting social order. *Ìwa-pẹ̀lẹ̀*, for instance, indicates that individual that possesses it must be wary to avoid conducts that may cause trouble or chaos in the society. This point is articulately noted when Gbádéḡṣin further submits that “a demonstration of *Ìwa pẹ̀lẹ̀* is to be mindful of the individuality of others, to treat them gently, to be tolerant and accommodating of the peculiarity of others’ existence³⁷⁵ .

It is also in line with this view that Sofola has also recognised that the human wholesome relations demands that each individual must incorporate the personality of other individual into his/her own personality, and it is with the possession of *Ìwa-pẹ̀lẹ̀* (gentle character) that such individuality can be possible. In his own words, he submits that,

An individual, in his actions takes into account what he considers to be the expectations of others and his behaviours, in turn, means that he expects others to act toward him in a certain way. These mutual expectations and a person’s evaluation of them represent his social role. *And* an African takes his social

³⁷⁴ Gbadegesin, S. *op. cit.*, P 80

³⁷⁵ *ibid*, Pp 80-81

role as far as the social relationship is concerned with such tenacity³⁷⁶.

Thus, *Ìwa-pèlẹ* as one of the cardinal offshoots of *sùúrù* reinforces commitment to actions and decisions that guarantee peaceful and progressive co-habitation among members of the society. This is firmly affirmed when Sofola further submits thus,

Everyone has a stake in the maintenance of the wholesome social relationship... and everyone will contribute to its further enhancement and sustenance. What we have we share in order to nurture, and all our actions will be calculated towards reinforcing rather than breaking the cord of human relationship³⁷⁷.

Another cardinal offshoot of *sùúrù* as a fundamental code of conduct that promote social order is *Ìwa-rere*. As mentioned above, *Ìwa-rere* which literally translates as good character tends to propagate behaviours that are helpful, hospitable, benevolence, honest, trustworthy, and other positive behaviours with admirable qualities or desirable features. *Ìwa-rere* as an imperative to achieving social order is reflected by some Yorùbá proverbs. For example, *Omi l'ènià, Bí ó bá Ẹ̀n wá, Á tún Ẹ̀n padà*. Which translates as *human being is stream water which flows to and fro*³⁷⁸.

This proverb informs each individual to be good towards other individuals for no one is in the know when this act of goodness can be reciprocated. In other words, the proverb holds the view that goodness of character at all times in all places and situations by all individuals can only translate to unquestionable understanding that is required to obtain peaceful social existence in any society. An English proverb that is close to the above view but not synonymous in richness of meaning is *one good turn deserves another*.

It is in recognition of the above that Sofola clearly notes that

there is a belief among the people that one good act of kindness done is never lost. *Oore kì i gbé*. In the same vein any act of evil done is never lost. It would have its own reward, too. The Yoruba, in recognition of this fact would say: *Eni ti n Ẹ̀n rere kó máa sé lọ. Eni tí n Ẹ̀kà kó máa Ẹ̀ lọ, tìkà tore ìkan kì i gbé* i.e. He who is accustomed to doing good as well as he who is

³⁷⁶ Sofola, J.A. *op. cit.*, P 68

³⁷⁷ *ibid*, P 69

³⁷⁸ *ibid*, P 95

accustomed to doing evil should continue unceasingly for neither would ever be lost, each being rewarded accordingly³⁷⁹.

In clear language, *Sùúrù* (patience) which begets other positive behaviours like *Ìwapèlè*, *Ìwa rere*, *Ọmọ̀lúàbí*, and the rest of them constitutes the very basis and epitome of conducts of individuals with mediated *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*. And we make bold to claim that the many social conflicts that have rocked and continue to rock the boats of most contemporary societies, most especially Nigeria and Africa in general, emanate from the issues we have identified here. This claim is supported by Sofola when he writes that,

The crisis of this century is a crisis of human relationships. It is a widely known fact, a fact that is widely propagated in many of the literature of lament that filled the literary world, that mankind's achievements in the area of social relationships have not equalled his achievements in physical science and technology... Unfortunately, these technological advances have not brought with them a comparable degree of conquest over man's problems of relationship with other persons. His success in social relationships generally has not approached his progress in his physical environment³⁸⁰.

A careful scrutiny of most social disorder in contemporary societies will reveal the degree of human conducts and behaviours that are contrary to the codes of conduct recognised above as unavoidable imperatives that engender social order in any given society. As it has been shown above, contrary behaviours, decisions, and actions to these codes of conduct can only lead to the kind of situations we are having in most contemporary societies.

In summary and conclusion, where there is lack or absence of salutation as it is understood and explained above, there we shall witness mutual suspicion among existing individuals or groups. Where there is no cooperation, we shall experience isolationism and disintegration of constituting individuals as we have it today in the continent of Africa, and Nigeria in particular. And where patience is totally absent, all manners of negative vices and behaviours shall dominate. That is, there will be greed, corruption, assassination, abuse of all kinds, and so on as it is the case today in our societies.

Therefore, it is our candid opinion and view that we should retrace our steps in order to make things better. Otherwise, we may need to get prepared as a country and a continent to

³⁷⁹ *ibid*, P 98

³⁸⁰ *ibid*, P 70-71

spend more on fighting terrorism and vandalism which are features of social disorder and direct consequences of the vices mentioned above.

5.4 Individuals' Unmediated *Ifé-Inú* as Determinant of Contemporary Realities in Africa

Theoretically, many reasons have been adduced to be responsible for Africa's problems: socio-political instability, cultural dislocation, religious conflicts, and many more that have not been mentioned here. It is important to state that the task of the present section do not include a presentation of the various reasons that have been articulated as causes of these problems; but clearly, it is our interest to examine some of the problems stated above as they constitute the dearth of social order in Africa. Most importantly, our concern in this section also entails the demonstration of unmediated individual's *Ifé-Inú* as the very foundation of these problems.

The most notable problem in the continent of Africa today is political instability. Anyone will agree with the view that Africa appears to be the only continent where political upheavals are gradually becoming a form of political norms and values. Oyèshilè corroborated this view, using the Nigerian situation as an epitome of the general African predicament, when he writes that,

Nigeria is a country with multi-faceted socio-political problems. The problems range from ethnicity, class-stratification, corruption, and religious violence to unmitigated poverty, which has compounded the plight of the common man. These problems did not just emerge overnight. They have their history....³⁸¹

In this case, the most critical moment in the life and history of Nigeria (and that of Africa in general) is the moment of political crisis. From the north to the south through the east to the west, political crisis remains a constant index that is characterizing most polities in the continent. Ali in his inaugural lecture points out some of these problems in some specific countries of the continent. As examples, Ali states thus,

For instance, the fall, after decades of chaotic reign, of Laurent Gbagbo of Cote D'voire, Ghadafi of Libya, Mubarak of Egypt, and the warring situation in Somalia, politically chaotic condition in Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe, the spate of

³⁸¹ Oyeshile, O.A., *op. cit.*, 2011 P 14

Armed Robbery and attacks on Banks, in the South-West Nigeria, Boko Haram and bombings in the Northern Nigeria, Niger Delta militants in the South East and South-South Nigeria and the high level of corruption, fraud and scams in Nigeria polity constitute a questionable indicator to the socio-political transformation of African states³⁸².

Practically speaking, therefore, it is not misplacement that the continent of Africa is enmeshed in serious socio-political crises that come in different forms and with different names. However, consistent in these different forms and names is what experts called social disorder or absence of social order, in other words, it is nothing but a mirage to co-habit peacefully in any part of the African continent because there is always one form of social disorder or the other in most parts of the continent.

This critical observation leads us to raise the fundamental question of “What is the core of the foundation of these problems?”. It is important to note this question because we have not ask the question of “what is the foundation of these problems?” nor have we ask the question of “what is/are the cause(s) of the problems?”. We do not have business with the latter because any provided response would be either historical or scientific by nature which will be a physical manifestation of any answer that would be offered to the former as well as our distinct question, thus it is important to state the distinction between the former and the distinct question we want to address.

The former question and the one we want to address appear to be similar, but they differ by the degree of dept in the answer that will be provided to each. We can further say that the answer to the distinct question an extension or an expansion or modification of the answer that would be offered to the question of “what is the foundation of problems?” What this implies is that some notable scholars have responded to the former question adequately but not satisfactorily; therefore, this question has been raised in an attempt to provide a satisfactory solution

To further clarify our submission, to the question of “what is the foundation of Africa’s problem?” Falaiye strongly identifies “man” as the fundamental foundation of Africa’s problem when he submits that,

³⁸² Ali, S.A. *Philosophy, African Philosophical Template and the Question of Man*, 2012, P 31

In my view, two main factors militate against... growth in Africa. The first is a lack of understanding of the true nature of man. *And the second is nurture for in the making of the character of a human being, nature is as important as nurture*³⁸³.

In another vein to the same question, Ali shares similar view with Falaiye when he also writes that “the problem in the contemporary Africa is man as several African leaders in power have, in so many ways, demonstrated their ignorance”³⁸⁴.

Thus, we can see clearly from the above that answer has been provided to the question of the foundation of the problem; and ‘man’ is the very foundation. But what is it about man that is not pointed out in the submissions above? That is, there is something that is important about man in understanding that this problem is function of it. To prepare our minds for further discourse, it is the unmediated *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of man that is responsible for the kind of behaviour and decision of man that instigates all forms of socio-political disorders that pervade the continent of Africa.

Falaiye and Ali are very correct to have identified man as the very foundation of Africa’s socio-political problem, but their responses are not deep enough to lead them to interrogate and identify the exact reason why man is the bane of socio-political crises in Africa. Although, Falaiye is close to it to have identified the nature and nurturing of man as shown above, but what is it about this nature and the nurturing of man that would have warranted the many socio-political crises in Africa? And what Ali has called man’s ignorance as the bane of the continent’s socio-political crises must have been said out of subtleness or pity for man. In our own understanding, what Ali could mean is that man’s (African leaders’) purported orientation is inconsistent with the obtainable socio-political reality in Africa.

Thus, we acknowledged the efforts of both Falaiye and Ali in this direction that man is the very foundation of Africa’s socio-political problem. No doubt, it is an adequate response to the problem; however, it remains unsatisfactory in the light of our discovery in previous chapters of this work. In order to have a grand understanding of man as the basis of the problem, let us remind ourselves of our earlier argument that it is the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*, which is not mediated, of man that drives him into engaging in socially disapproved behaviours that are capable of undermining social order.

³⁸³ Falaiye, O.A. *A Philosopher Interrogates African Polis: How Can We Get It Right?*, 2012 P 29-30

³⁸⁴ Ali, S.A. *op. cit.* P 31

In other words, we have shown that individuals whose *Ìfẹ́-Inú* are not mediated are capable of taking decisions and actions that endanger the existence and persistence of social peace; and this is exactly the case with the ‘man’ that Falaiye and Ali have identified as the bane of Africa’s socio-political problem. African leaders have been separated from the culture that grows out of their indigenous societies that would mediate their *Ìfẹ́-Inú*; instead, they have embraced and are enmeshed in Western culture which affords their *Ìfẹ́-Inú* to be unmediated.

As a result, African leaders are made to be insensitive, indifference, isolated, careless, and unmindful in the matters of statecraft and the society. If the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of these leaders have been mediated, their choice of actions and decisions would not have been other than to be mindful, careful, sensitive, and be concerned about the issue of statecraft and the people. This is where Falaiye’s presupposition, that the nature and nurturing of man, which is the core – and the solution – of the problem, appears to be close to our position. Because by nature, it suggests that there is a significant ontological element in man that drives him into taking actions and making decisions, and that element is no other than the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of man. And by nurture, it is an indication that this *Ìfẹ́-Inú* requires to be mediated in order to have leaders that will exhibit behaviours and attitudes that engender social order.

Another important problem that has led to the dearth of social order in Africa is religious practices. Religious crises have taken the tow on the continent in recent times, everywhere one looks to within the continent is enmeshed in one crises or the other that are directly or indirectly linked to religious practices. It is important to state that in pre-colonial Africa, the idea of religious crisis is alien to the people; however, with the coming of Islam through the north of Africa into the continent and the intrusion of Christianity through the water ways of the south, Africa began to experience what is known today as religious conflicts.

Although it now belongs to history, but the manner with which Islam devotees invaded the continent and established the religion, for instance, give impetus to the view that Africa was immune against religious crises in spite of its multiplicity of religions until the introduction of Islam and Christianity into the continent. In other words, Africans practiced their different kinds of religion with mutual respect and understanding for one another before the coming of Islam and Christianity. In fact, there was freedom to join any religious group at anytime and the freedom to withdraw one’s membership from any religious group as one

wishes, thus, there was no forced or foisted religion on any one. This is clearly noted by Abimbólá when he observes concerning Yoruba religion that,

Yorùbá Religion has a purpose. It is not merely concerned with faith and the afterlife, but also with practical guidelines on how to live together in a diverse, multicultural, global and cosmopolitan world³⁸⁵.

In this regard, the crisis of religion in Africa has a single characterisation of appearance, which is always faithful of Christianity versus that of Islam. Ironically, the values, doctrines, and tenets of these foreign religions support and preach peaceful co-habitation in social existence with all and sundry regardless of religious affiliations. However, adherents of these religions portray non-committal to these doctrinal demand of their religions; and hence, the often erupting crisis of religion.

Again, what is at the core of the foundation of this problem? Adequate answer has been provided to the question of what is the foundation of the problem by Gbadegesin when he clearly submits that,

There is religious violence and conflict because the various devotees of *Christianity and Islam* are intolerant of the views of their rivals, and this is so in spite of the fact that all these religions preach peace. How can the phenomena of intolerance be explained? I think it has to be explained in terms of the distorted understanding of devotees concerning their roles in spreading the good news of their religions. Many of them seem to believe that there is great reward for them... if they successfully convert others to their faith or prevent conversion from their faiths. It then becomes a life and death affair; and this is not always restricted to followers alone. Leaders have their own ways of fuelling the fire of intolerance among their followers, by urging them to defend their faith against 'infidels' or encouraging them to promote the 'superior' truth of their faith³⁸⁶.

In the above submission, it is clear to deduce that the very foundation of the problem is human because Gbádégesin clearly noted that devotees (both the followers and their leaders) of these religions are responsible for all the religious crises been experienced in the continent; and these devotees without any contradiction are human beings. Therefore, the supposition boils down to identifying human as the very foundation of the problem.

³⁸⁵ Abimbólá, K. *Yorùbá Culture: A Philosophical Account*, 2006, P 102

³⁸⁶ Gbádégesin, S. *op. cit.*, P 158

Thus, the important question of “what is at the core of the foundation of the problem?”, that is, what is it about human being that fuels religious crises in the continent. Gbádéḡṣin also provides adequate but unsatisfactory response to this important question because he did not address the very depth of the core of the foundation. According to him,

If religion is to contribute to the promotion of social peace in Africa, and thus help towards the resolution of our contemporary realities, the various religious leaders have to cultivate the spirit of tolerance that has been a characteristic feature of traditional religion. To do this, however, and get their followers in the right frame of mind, they also need to jettison their selfish instrumental conception of religion in material terms and use it as a means of getting people to cooperate for the resolution of their common problems³⁸⁷.

It is very correct, as Gbádéḡṣin noted, that the spirit of tolerance needs to be cultivated by religious devotees in order to address the problem of religious conflict; but the issue of cultivating such spirit is deeper than the way it is been presented, because to cultivate such spirit will require that the devotees themselves have been made to undergo ontological orientation that will bring about a change in their *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*. In other words, it is only an unmediated *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of an individual that cultivates such spirit of intolerance and selfishness in the first place; therefore for any religious devotee to cultivate the spirit of tolerance, the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of such devotee must first and foremost be mediated.

This very point explains the very reason why adherents of traditional religions (that Gbádéḡṣin and Abím̀bòlá referred to as good examples that can be emulated) are tolerant of other religions other than their own. Till now, these traditional religions promote social unity and peaceful co-habitation among their devotees as well as between themselves and devotees of other religions. The point of emphasis here is that every religion is a product of a culture and in conformity with the producing culture, the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of a devotee of the produced religion is either mediated or unmediated to be capable of cultivating the spirit of tolerance or intolerance respectively. Hence, the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of adherents of traditional religions are mediated and therefore they are tolerant, unselfish, accommodating, hospitable, and kind. However, the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of the devotees of both Christianity and Islam are unmediated and therefore they are intolerant, selfish, fanatics, fundamentalist, and extremist. Therefore, religion can engender social order if the producing culture is committed to mediating the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of individual as devotees.

³⁸⁷ *ibid*, P 159

Dislocation and degeneration of African indigenous cultures and values has also led to the dearth of social order in the continent. Indigenous cultural values that have supported and sustained the existence of social order have been swept away and replaced by alien ones, that now undermine social peace and orderliness in Africa. This view receives clear and distinct support in the submission of Gbádégèşin that,

...the explanation for contemporary African reality can be traced to the fact that majority of Africans have either forgotten or ignored their cultural roots and have assimilated foreign cultures and foreign ideas. These ideas have done an incalculable damage to the social and economic reality of Africa and are responsible for the experience of the moment³⁸⁸.

The damages that have been done to Africa as a result of the destruction of indigenous cultures remain uncountable just as Gbádégèşin has noted above; in order to situate this claim in concrete reality, it is worthwhile to examine at least one of the damages that have been done to the continent.

One of the values that sustained social order in pre-colonial Africa is the absence or minimal number of greedy and selfish individuals; for the culture do neither supported nor encouraged greediness and selfishness. This point is clearly elicited when Gyekye states that,

In the communal society, such as the traditional African society, bringing up children to feel that they have responsibilities toward others is part of the whole process of socialization. The ethic of responsibility, rather than the ethic of individual rights, is inculcated from the outset. Children are taught to be motivated in their actions more by their obligations to contribute to the welfare of the community than by consideration of their own rights and self-interests from the outset. Children are made to realize that responsibility to communal welfare comes first, even though the fact that as individual human beings they have individual rights is not ignored. Rights are seen as secondary to responsibilities; they are never stressed to the point of diminishing the importance of obligations and responsibilities³⁸⁹.

In traditional societies of Africa, therefore, greediness and selfishness remain values that are detested. Although, this does not mean that greedy and selfish individuals do not exist in pre-colonial Africa, what is meant is that indigenous African cultural values do not

³⁸⁸ *ibid*, P 161

³⁸⁹ Gyekye, K. *op. cit.*, P 60

encourage such, and therefore, there is always negligible number of greedy and selfish persons in the societies.

However, with the incursion of Western culture, greediness and selfishness became ways of life for most individuals; and this is as a result of the Western cultural values of extreme individualism and private ownership of property or personal pursuit of wealth as against communal spirit. In other words, Africans' contact with Western culture redefined African value system from being one of 'ethic of responsibility' to 'ethic of individual rights', to borrow the language of Gyekye.

The worrisome manifestation of the change in cultural value, as Gbádégesin notes, accounts for the various social vices that lead to the breakdown of social order in most African societies of today. According to him,

With cultural degeneration, he (i.e. an African) becomes his brother's killer. This accounts for the phenomenon of armed robbery, suicide, and murder³⁹⁰.

At this point, the question that comes to mind again is "what is the core of the foundation of the problem?" Like other problems that have been discussed earlier, the African man is the foundation of this problem, and by extension, the core of the foundation (the foundation being man) is nothing but the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of man. Hence, in addressing the problem, Africans must be prepared to rediscover their original selves whose morality rejects greediness and selfishness. In a well captured manner, Gyekye identifies this morality thus,

A social morality, such as evolved in traditional African societies, repudiates ethical egoism, the doctrine that everyone ought to pursue his or her own welfare and interests. Selfishness, which ethical egoism amounts to, is totally rejected in the moralities of African societies – and for good reasons³⁹¹.

Going by our discussion, therefore, it would not be a misplacement to generalize by way of conclusion that the very foundation of the multiplicity of problems that are militating against social order in Africa, and in the world indeed is the human person. The human person as we have shown constitutes the very bane of all problems – both individual and social ones. More importantly, we have shown that the decisions and actions of individual that engender social integration and peace are functions of the individual's *Ìfẹ́-Inú* and that

³⁹⁰ Gbádégesin, S. *op. cit.*, P 161

³⁹¹ Gyekye, K. *op. cit.*, P 59

those decisions and actions which undermine social unity and peaceful co-habitation are functions of unmediated *Ifè-Inú* of an individual.

In summation, we have argued in this chapter that genuine solution to the problem of social disorder, as it appears in every aspects of life, lies with the human person. This solution demands that each person should take seriously and important the matter of mediating one's *Ifè-Inú*; although, this solution sounds utopia, but its' practicality is in the one result (to live in peace with one another) that we all seek together irrespective of any differentiating factors.

In the light of the above, it is important to state that a serious and continuous commitment to the plan of promoting the mediation of individual's *Ifè-Inú* in any given society would invariably leads to social or collective consciousness which in little or no time transforms into a national ideology of a country like Nigeria that requires national rebirth, flourished with common vision, mission, and goal in all strata of social and corporate existence as a country.

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CONCLUSION

On a general note, our study has been concerned with the analysis of the connection between the physical existence of social disorder in human societies and the unempirical element that is identified as the propellant of action and decision in human species; in other words, the examination of the relation that exists between social disorder as a real manifestation in most existing human societies and the immaterial entity recognised as initiator of behaviour and character in the ontological nature of a person is the general concern of this study.

Specifically, we focused on the Yorùbá belief system that leads us to interrogate the knowledge system that is indigenous to Yorùbá society on the issue of the non-physical element that initiates action and decision in the ontological structure of a person. We must note, however, that this exercise is not done without an established intellectual tradition that serves as a template upon which we proceed and guide our interrogation of the Yorùbá belief concerning this entity. Upon interrogation, we revealed in the course of our study that the Yorùbá notion *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* – Yorùbá equivalent of the human *will* – is the entity that initiates decision and action in a person.

Specifically too, our study concerned itself with the identification and analysis of the role of culture in mediating individual's *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* as given in Yorùbá worldview and reality. In this case, we showed that Yorùbá culture plays very significant role in recognising and taming the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* as an important ontological element in an individual, and this is in order to have individuals whose behaviour and thinking will not undermine social peace and harmony.

In the light of the above, we also focused on the issue of social order itself in the study; and specifically, we examined the meaning and the historical development of the discourse on social order. As an important aspect on the issue of social order, we also take a look at the various theories of social order that have been propounded to explain the existence and persistence of order in the society, and in this regard, we examined the flaws and inadequacies of the theories so identified. Thus, we discovered and pointed out that there is no theory of social order or historical intellectual figure that discussed the issue of social order and realizes the strong connection between the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* (human *will*) of an individual and the realization of social order.

Most specifically, therefore, we argued and demonstrated in this study that the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of individuals, when tamed or mediated as done by Yoruba culture, is *sine qua non* to achieving social order. Part of the argument we used to demonstrate the significance of mediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú* in engendering social order include the exploration of some concrete realities of social disorder in Africa, and showed through analysis that individual persons are the very foundations of the problem and that the core of these foundations is their unmediated *Ìfẹ́-Inú*.

In a more elaborate manner, in chapter one of this study, we dealt with the conceptions of a person from the perspectives of both the Western and the Yorùbá traditions. We showed that Western conceptions of a person identify the *will* of a person as the ontological entity that propels decision and action in a person. Using this as a template, since our interest lies in Yorùbá worldview, we showed that the idea of the human *will* is muddled up in Yorùbá conception of a person as presented in written literatures; which makes it appear as if the notion (i.e. human *will*) is elusive of the Yorùbá people. This problem led us to the next chapter.

In chapter two, we looked at various knowledge systems that are indigenous to the Yorùbá culture – which are mostly oral traditions. Upon critical investigation and interrogation of these knowledge systems, we discovered and adopted *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as the operational definition and equivalent of the human *will* in Yorùbá language and thought system. On this basis, we explored the groundwork of the metaphysics, nature, and function of *Ìfẹ́-Inú* as embedded in Yorùbá knowledge systems.

As a way to be connected with the overall essence and objective of our study, we examined the question of social order in chapter three. Principally, we looked at the various philosophers from historical perspective as well as various theories that have concerned themselves with the problem of social order. Most significantly, we demonstrated the inadequacies that characterised the treatments of the problem of social order by both the philosophers in history and the theories. In this regard, we showed that the undermining of the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* (*human will*) in the explanation of the problem of social order underscores the various inadequacies that characterised the treatments of the issue by the philosophers and the theories.

In chapter four, we considered the role of culture (specifically the Yorùbá culture) in mediating the *Ìfẹ́-Inú* of an individual, that is, we were concerned with how Yorùbá culture

helps to mediate the *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of an individual. We examined various categories of culture (like language and values) and how these categories of culture are employed to tame an individual's *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*. Importantly, we showed that an individual whose *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* is adequately mediated by culture can only takes decisions and actions that will be in conformity with the social expectations of peaceful co-habitation, avoidance of action and inaction that leads to social conflicts, and other expectations that engender social order.

In chapter five, which is the last, we examined our discoveries (that individual's *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* is the most essential in the matter of social order) in the light of real existence; in other words, we looked at contemporary realities in Africa and showed the relevance of our discovery in understanding both the problems and the solutions to them. Thus, we discussed some of the problems facing the continent of Africa, particularly leading to the dearth of social order in the continent. Specifically, we examined the problem of governance that accounts for socio-political conflicts, the problem of religious practices that accounts for numerous religious crises, and the problem of cultural denigration that accounts for the many crises of cultural values and norms. Upon critical analysis, we showed that these problems are the results of the unmediated *Ìfẹ̀-Inú* of individual actors in these areas of life. Therefore, as a genuine remedy to these problems, we argued in this chapter that we should take seriously the mediation of individual's *Ìfẹ̀-Inú*, if truly we require a lasting social peace and harmony.

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