



Original Article

The Challenge of Genetic Engineering to the Spirituality and Morality of Human Destiny in the Traditional Yoruba Concept of Àdáyé bá

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Abstract: With the colossal strides recorded in the arena of Genetic Engineering, conviction in *Orí*, among traditional Yorùbás, as the bearer of an individual's destiny and life course among the Yorùbá wanes. Through critical analysis and hermeneutical interpretation, the present study revisits the relation between physiognomy and human destiny in traditional Yorùbá idea of destiny. Generally, the Yorùbá allegorical account of human destiny depicts *Òrìṣàṁlá* as the primordial divinity casting human body (*Ara*) from clay or sand, providing life-force (*Ẹmí*) and another primordial divinity (*Àjàlá*) by the Higher God (*Olódùmarè*), the maker of *Orí* (destiny) which must be acquired pre-natally. Hence, it seems that it is impossible for the Yorùbá, to believe in *Orí*, in one hand and genetically modified individuals on the other hand. Hence, the onus of this research is to revisit the idea of destiny among the Yorùbá to bridge the seemingly loose gap between genetic engineering, traditional Yorùbá morality and Yorùbá spirituality.

Keywords: *Orí*, Àdáyé bá, genetics, environment, Lombroso.

Introduction: As a result of the impact which genetic engineering has commanding regarding the alteration of genes, it is now possible to decide the physical attributes of a human being via plastic surgery and similar endeavours. Religious persons with strong interests in the Abrahamic monotheisms would call this, an act (or art) of playing God¹. In

traditional Yorùbá parlance however, this may be dubbed: "Playing *Òrìṣàṁlá*". The essence of this research is to explore the place of *Orí* as the bearer of human destiny and to interrogate the effort of *Òrìṣàṁlá* who casts the human body primordially, consequent of the scientific challenge posed by genetic manipulations, cloning and cases of plastic surgery.

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There are several publications redolent with the impression that belief in *Orí* among traditional *Yorùbás* is inconsistent and incoherent with the lived realities of the people. This thinking is present but not limited to: Segun Gbadegesin². Debola Ekanola³. Richard Oyelakin⁴ and Emmanuel Ofuasia⁴. However, the find from these scholars, inspires a deeper investigation or scrutiny of the *Yorùbá* belief system that would be pragmatic in a jet age. This revision is necessary given the obvious that belief in *Orí* is very resilient among the *Yorùbás*. Hence, the end of the present research is to reconstruct and propose an idea of *Orí* that is faithful to the lived realities of the *Yorùbás*, void of anachronistic tendencies and in tune with scientific and genetic (or Biological) advancements of the 21st century.

Employing the method of analysis and hermeneutical interpretation, this essay proposes that *Àdáyé bá* (i.e. *destiny that is lived after birth or during earthly existence*) is the most plausible for a consistent and coherent belief in *Orí*. And *Àdáyé bá*, literally translates as that kind of destiny that is encountered in the world. Relying on the breakthroughs from Genetic Engineering as well as Cesare Lombroso's Theory of Crime, the foregoing thesis is substantiated with arguments. However, the next section begins with the myth of creation in traditional *Yorùbá* cosmogony. It reveals some of the epistemic issues replete in *Yorùbá* human creation allegory and concurs with Debola Ekanola and Richard Oyelakin that to save the *Yorùbás* from irrationality and metaphysical incoherence on the discourse of *Orí*, the allegory and every belief surrounding it needs revision. It is not an incorrect generalization that no one recalls a pre-natal existence where they acquired an *Orí*. If no one recalls events leading to the acquisition of *Orí* pre-natally in the face of genetically expounded cause for human existence, why build the root of their belief on human personality and life course on it? When the third stratum answers this query, the fourth rift concludes this exercise.

The *Orí* Allegorical Account: Some Philosophic Enigmas and Random

Comments: *Orí* is unanimously ballyhooed as the “bearer of a person’s destiny as well as the determinant of one’s personality”⁵ in traditional *Yorùbá* thought system. It is not an understatement that several scholars⁷ have tinkered on the subject. However, only a handful⁸ has engaged with the role played by Biology and Environment in an individual’s *Orí*. It is therefore pertinent to argue the point explicitly in such a way that does not make the *Yorùbá* belief in *Orí* otiose in entirety.

Literally, *Orí* in the *Yorùbá* language means head, the physical head upon which hair grows. However, when the *Yorùbás* speak metaphysically, “the concept enters the fray as one of the entities that make up a human person”⁹. Erudite scholar Segun Gbadegesin, a notable personality of the *Orí* discourse expatiates:

*It refers to the physical head, which is considered vital to the physical status of a person. It is, for instance, the seat of the brain. But when a typical Yorùbá talks about Orí, she is, more often than not, referring to a non-physical component of her person. For there is a widely received conception of an Orí as the bearer of a person’s destiny as well as the determinant of one’s personality.*¹⁰

The foregoing as expressed by Segun Gbadegesin has been corroborated by all scholars on the discourse. For the *Yorùbás*, a human is composed of *Ara* (physical body), *Èmí* (life-force or soul) and *Orí*¹¹. However, there are other spiritual elements tied to the overall constitution of the human person. *Qwó* (spiritual hand) and *Èsẹ* (spiritual leg) have been added as the elements that make up the complete *Yorùbá* view of the person. From another perspective, it may be gleaned that “*Orí* is usually typified as the carrier of the destiny of a human being”¹². How can this be the case? A perusal of the creation myth would be helpful at this interval.

According to consensus, *Qbátálá* or *Òrìṣàńlá* (one of the primordial divinities in the *Yorùbá* world-view (fond of drinking palm wine)

fashions a human body (*ara*) out of clay or sand. Meanwhile, *Olódùmarè* (the Supreme Deity) gives life-force or soul (*Èmí*) to the 'craft' of *Òrìṣànlá*. The animated *ara* then proceeds to *Àjàlá's* abode (another primordial divinity who makes *Orí*) to make a choice of *Orí*. It is in this sense that *Orí* becomes the carrier of human destiny. *Orí* refers to the experiences and life course that a human person would encounter on Earth. The selection process of an *Orí* in Ekanola's view has three important aspects. Firstly, freedom to choose an *Orí* is assumed. Secondly, the *Orí* selected determines the life course and personality of its possessor on Earth. Third, each individual is unaware of the content or quality of the chosen *Orí*, that is, the person making the choice does not know if the destiny embedded in an *Orí* is good or bad.¹³ These points are substantiated in the works of other scholars on destiny.

Furthermore, destiny, *Orí* may be acquired through any of the following ways: *Àkúnlẹ̀yàn* (that which is *chosen* while kneeling); *Àkúnlẹ̀gbà* (that which is *received* while kneeling); *Àyànmọ* (that which is *affixed* to oneself); *Ìpín-Orí* (allotment); and *Àdáyébá* (that which is *encountered in the world*)¹⁴. With each of the ways of acquiring a destiny subtly stated, it is not inappropriate to question the place of genetic and biological factors. However, before engaging with that, it is imperative to illuminate or clarify that the models: *Ìpín-Orí*, *Àkúnlẹ̀gbà*, and *Àyànmọ* indicate the idea of bestowment, where choice and information is almost non-existent. Although *Àkúnlẹ̀yàn* accommodates freedom to a considerable level, there is absence of deliberation and lack of information leading up to the choice, more on this later.

Another impression that needs elucidation is that both *Àkúnlẹ̀yàn* and *Àkúnlẹ̀gbà* occur in a kneeling posture. The word *Ìkúnlẹ̀* literally means kneeling down but in the hermeneutic sense it connotes respect; lacking in resistance or self-effacement. Sometimes when a *Yorùbá* person says: "*Orí Ìkúnlẹ̀ ni mo wá*" (*I am on my knees*), s/he may say that standing or bowing, without being practical (i.e. kneeling) in posture. What is being

emphasized is that the humble but not arrogance is the disposition in play. This is more glaring when the *Yorùbá* says: "*Má dúró lé mi lórí*" (*do not stand on my head*). People do not stand on the head of others practically but standing while a superior or elder is talking indicates lack of respect or humility. A child is therefore expected to be on his/her knees while being advised or reprimanded.

This foregoing clarification is necessary and further reveals that *Àkúnlẹ̀gbà* is almost synonymous with *Àyànmọ* and the one could be hermeneutically interchanged with the other without betraying the concept and context. To amplify, they both indicate calisthenics that were done by a superior being to a lower person with total humility and inability to reject. As a consequence, the belief in freedom and choice surrounding the process of acquiring a destiny is almost non-existent. In this mould, Segun Gbadegesin who marshals four arguments against the idea of acquiring a destiny harps:

Choice presupposes freedom, information, and genuine alternatives. None of these conditions is present in the case of the "choice" of destiny. The body-plus-emi entity is unfree since he or she has to have a destiny. So he or she cannot avoid making a "choice" and cannot walk away. Second, this entity is unfree to choose in the sense that he or she has no personality, without which it is impossible to have preferences of life-patterns. Destiny is what confers personality; for it is what confers tastes and preferences, important elements of personality. But without a specific personality, one has no basis for choice. Third, this being has no full information to make a choice. There is no recitation of what is in each of the Orí. So this being has no basis for comparison between them, without which it is impossible to make a real choice. Finally, there are no genuine alternatives, since there is no

*way of differentiating in any intelligent way between the available Orí, at least as far as their real essence is concerned. On the outside, each Orí looks exactly like the other*¹⁵.

The foregoing is a clear indication of the problems that a pre-natal existence leading to a choice of Orí through any of *Àkúnlẹ̀yàn*, *Àyànmọ́*, *Ìpín-Orí*, and *Àkúnlẹ̀gbà*, admit. But *Àdáyébá* overcomes all of the problems latent in each of the other modes of acquiring Orí. This is the case since *Àdáyébá* literally translates as: “the kind of destiny which is encountered in the world”. In other words, *Àdáyébá* promotes a form of destiny that is social in nature. It takes cognizance of the social ideologies that shape the destiny, character and life-course of an individual. It is also not shy of the role that genetic scientists play on the physiology and genetics of a human personality. In today’s world, with the aid of genetic manipulations and a fat cheque book, anyone can decide to or not to have twins. They can decide what colour of eyes, shape of nose, ear, mouth that a baby should or not have. And if genetic scientists have not been building castles in the air, *Òrìṣàhlá*’s authority as the one who fashions human body becomes moot. On first showing, the two beliefs (possession of destiny and genetic and environmental impression on individuals) are mutually exclusive. Logic would say that one has to be false for the other to be true. It will be argued that it is possible to hold each belief consistently without contradiction. Hence, the problem that this treatise thereby, concerns with is embedded within the following propositions:

- (1) Every individual, for the traditional Yorùbá has an Orí – a determinant of a person’s life course and personality;
- (2) Orí is acquired mainly pre-natally;
- (3) But environmental and genetic simulations also play massive roles in an individual’s life course and personality, regardless of choice and modus of acquiring an Orí;
- (4) If (3) is valid, it would not be the opposite of the truth to posit that the pre-natal strands of acquiring Orí in (2) may be

taken to be “metaphorical or humanistic”¹⁶; and

- (5) Therefore, the only plausible kind of Orí is *Àdáyébá*, taken literally as “that which is encountered in the world.”¹⁷

For the Yorùbás, (1) is not deniable. It is intrinsically bound in their belief system and the aim of this study is to see how (1) can still be held consistently in the face of overwhelming implications and challenges presentable in (3) and (4). This work takes as axiomatic Debola Ekanola in (4) that (2) may only pass muster as a metaphor. The rest of this study is committed to the explanatory justification for (5) in the case of possible ripostes from non-apologetics of (3) and (4).

Àdáyébá: The Genetic and Social Theory of Orí: In this stratum, *Àdáyébá*, the idea of Orí that is consistent with freedom, choice, responsibility and physical existence is expounded. It is the case that no one recalls a pre-natal existence where they made choices of Orí. Whereas this does not wish away cases of reincarnation where people recall instances of previous lives, it conceives as metaphor, the belief that an *Ara-plus-Èmí*, is compelled to ‘acquire’ a life course under the veil of ignorance, for which it would be held responsible. Hence, given the problems presented in the preceding section by Segun Gbadegesin for *Àyànmọ́*, *Àkúnlẹ̀yàn*, *Ìpín-Orí*, and *Àkúnlẹ̀gbà*, how does *Àdáyébá* overcome? For the sake of the purpose of this study, it would be prudent to justify that (2) cannot be held rationally, once and for all. While arguing for the metaphorical nature of the myths, Debola Ekanola expatiates thus:

I am of the opinion that the fact that hereditary and environmental factors, which influence the situations in which people find themselves, exist prior to and independent of the birth of the individuals they affect contributes to the Yorùbá view that certain aspects of human lives are determined prior to birth in heaven. But there seems to be no good reason supporting the Yorùbá prenatal thesis. Rather than maintain that

there is a prenatal choice of Orí which determines one's destiny, personality, and entire life course, I argue that the idea of a chosen Orí is no more than a combination of all the various acts of free choice made by an individual up until any specified time in his life¹⁸.

It is the case that the above excerpt may be interpreted as a justification for *Àdáyébá*. The allegorical or metaphorical idea of picking an *Orí* in *Òrun* (spiritual world), before sojourning to *Ayé* (Earth) may be accepted uncritically, perhaps for instructional purposes synonymous with the Genesis account where two individuals graced the Garden of Eden nakedly, even when no one remembers to ask how these first species of the *Homo sapiens*, fared during winter. In spite of the obvious that these stories have influenced minds, they are meant to be taken as justification, albeit a weak one, as to why humans fell into sin and how evil entered the world. There is no one, not even the writer of Genesis that witnessed the event before and inside Eden, first hand. In the case of picking an *Orí*, pre-natally, the situation does not improve. No one has documented or recalled that s/he proceeded to either *Olódùmarè* or *Àjàlá* to acquire the required *Orí*. To save the discourse from unnecessary logjam and impasse, it is interesting to be fortified with the idea that:

Nonetheless, Biology and Evolution have fortified us with the most rational explanation regarding the origin of life. The fusion of an ovum and sperm cell led to an embryo, then a foetus and lastly a human baby. This baby could suffer from some form of physical or mental deformities. This baby could either be an albino or Caucasian or dark-skinned¹⁹.

Since no one remembers even the pain of circumcision, going further to debate over the kind of *Orí* acquired pre-natally is needless. These are the grounds upon which (2) founders. Hence, it is pertinent at this interval to expose some of the trends in Genetic Engineering and employ Cesare Lombroso's theory of crime to show how genes, but not pre-natally ordained *Orí*, shape human

character and disposition in the world. We commence with the former.

In the words of Satyajit Patra and Araromi Adewale Andrew : "Genetic engineering can simply be explained as the alteration of an organism's genetic, or hereditary, material to eliminate undesirable characteristics or to produce desirable new ones"²⁰. It is an undeniable fact that "human genetic engineering relies heavily on science and technology. It was developed to help end the spread of diseases"²¹. With the advent of genetic engineering, scientists can now change the way genomes are constructed to terminate certain diseases that occur as a result of genetic mutation²². In a related development, Desmond Nicholl avers:

The term genetic engineering is often thought to be rather emotive or even trivial, yet it is probably the label that most people would recognize. However, there are several other terms that can be used to describe the technology, including gene manipulation, gene cloning, recombinant DNA technology, genetic modification, and the new genetics. There are also legal definitions used in administering regulatory mechanisms in countries where genetic engineering is practiced²³.

While it is not the scope of the present study to delve fully into the nitty-gritty of Genetic Engineering, scholars such as Babajide Dasaolu²⁴ have chronicled in this mould. It is pertinent to however, hint that there are many areas, according to Desmond Nicholl²⁵ in which genetic manipulation is of value, including:

- Basic research on gene structure and function;
- Production of useful proteins by novel methods;
- Generation of transgenic plants and animals; and
- Medical diagnosis and treatment.

Clearly, one of the greatest benefits of this field is the prospect of helping cure illness and diseases in unborn children. Having a genetic

screening with a fetus can allow for treatment of the unborn. Overtime this can curb the growing spread of diseases in future generations. Is *Òrìṣàṅlá* therefore responsible for this spread? Perhaps!

It is however consoling that humanity has been able to correct the 'gaffes' of *Òrìṣàṅlá*. Today genetic engineering is used in fighting problems such as cystic fibrosis, diabetes, and several other diseases.²⁶ Today genetic engineering is used in fighting problems such as cystic fibrosis, diabetes, and several other diseases²⁷. In a similar vein, Tina Kafka expounds:

Once genetic engineers learned to cut and recombine genes, the possibilities of developing drugs to treat human diseases and even organs for human transplant became almost limitless. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, genetic engineering is still in its infancy. But already, the magnitude of the possible medical applications of this new technology is apparent²⁸.

It is important to hint at this juncture that genetics and genetic engineering are not recent activities. In the words of Lisa Yount:

The study of genetics, and even genetic engineering, is as old as humankind. People have always noticed that members of families tend to look alike, having similar hair or eye color, for instance. Sometimes parents and children share a certain trait or way of behaving, such as singing talent or a quick temper. Those qualities seem to have been passed down from one generation to the next. People who observed such similarities were seeing genetics in action.²⁹

The above is not the opposite of the truth if we consider that family semblance is taken seriously among Africans as a form of paternity determination. However, much as the temptation is rife, that *Òrìṣàṅlá* fashioned human bodies in *Ọrun*, the idea in the

foregoing excerpt calls for a revision of the idea – Is *Òrìṣàṅlá* also concerned about family semblance during his molding session? Perhaps!

There is no doubt that there are arrays of moral issues surrounding the science of genetic engineering. However, the present study is not committed to the moral or ethical implications therein. The crucial point is to establish that genetic engineering has come to stay as humans can now play the role of *Òrìṣàṅlá*. How is this possible? In the words of Christopher Gyngell:

The ultimate goal of gene editing technologies is the capacity to make precise, controlled modifications to very specific areas of the genome. This would be a powerful ability. Gene editing unlocks access to an entirely novel way to fight disease which has been unreachable until now.³⁰

The above necessarily raises some questions regarding the acquisition of destiny in Yorùbá cosmogony. It clearly questions the expertise of *Òrìṣàṅlá* and the role of *Orí* acquired from *Àjàlá* or *Olódùmarè*. If the entity making *Ara* does no better job, it does not matter the kind of *Orí* acquired, one's destiny already has some limitations. To amplify, the allegory implies that there is no connection between one's destiny and one's physiognomy, whereas reality has shown that the latter has a role to play in assisting the fulfillment or miscarriage of the former. Given that individuals must acquire an *Orí*, one needs to question whether the *Orí* is the cause of some birth defects or the genetic (even if we grant for the sake of argument, that the divinity knows about gene manipulation) error of *Òrìṣàṅlá*, while molding an individual. Birth defects are not uncommon among newborns and this is the starting point for assessing the originality in *Òrìṣàṅlá*'s 'craft'. Speaking on physiological defects in human babies, Christopher Gyngell announces:

Around 7.9 million children each year are born with a serious birth defect that has a significant genetic

contribution. If we could safely and easily correct these errors at the embryonic stage it would be possible to virtually eradicate this disease burden. In addition, 30% of all deaths worldwide are due to chronic diseases (such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes) in those under 70. We all know of people who seem innately resistant to the perils of ageing and flourish well into their 80s and 90s. Gene editing could ensure we all have the best chance to live healthily into old age³¹.

It is clear from the above excerpt that humans have not only detected the errors and negligence of *Òrìṣàṁlá*, they seem to have found what could be ways to avert some of these defects and bring about improved species. In a related development Sarah Griffiths amplifies:

The procedure is designed to get rid of genetic mutations that can lead to blindness, epilepsy and other medical problems. Mitochondria convert energy from food into essential ingredients that human cells need in order to function. Critically, they also carry their own DNA as well as the nuclear DNA in humans' chromosomes which store most of our genetic information. Only mothers pass on mitochondrial DNA to their children, which sometimes contains mutations that can lead to epilepsy, diabetes, blindness and other medical problems. It is estimated that one in 5,000 to 10,000 women carry mitochondrial DNA with mutations.³²

If we acquired some of our genes from our mothers, as the foregoing entails, what essence does a primordial god play in our physiognomy? Taking the allegory as a metaphor is crucial, for it serves no end if admitted hook, line and sinker. If taken otherwise, it only reinforces folly. It is therefore not an error why some ancient beliefs among

the *Yorùbás* are practiced as a consequence of the medical and genetic ignorance that follows from this fallacy. It had already been argued that the divinity synonymous with wisdom in *Yorùbá* pantheon, *Òrúnmìlà*, has no idea of some of the conditions humans find themselves ailing from.³³ This is owing to the fact that *Òrúnmìlà* is only sighted at the place where destinies are acquired but not where bodies are molded. Oladele Balogun amplifies in this vein that:

In all these myths, Òrúnmìlà (arch-divinity), the founder of Ifá (oracle) system of divination, is noted to be a witness of man's choice of destiny. Little wonder he is referred to as Eleri-Ìpín (the witness of destiny) and the only one competent to reveal the type and content of 'Orí' chosen by each person³⁴.

From the foregoing, Emmanuel Ofuasia infers that:

Òrúnmìlà would have no idea of women suffering from Mullerian agenesis, for instance. This is because he did not witness Orishanla, omitting the womb during his sand or clay session of such women. Neither is Òrúnmìlà able to recommend that couples with AS genotype ought not to copulate to avoid a high mortality SS offspring. It would be recalled that in traditional Yorùbá societies, there are reports of children born to die at infancy. Whereas Yorùbás call these 'abiku', some other groups in Nigeria refer to these children as 'ogbanje'. Poems from Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka and John Pepper Clarke already attest to this belief. With the advancement and development in medical technology and research, it has come to light that the problem is actually genetic but not spiritua³⁵.

So far, this essay has been able to argue that the myth surrounding human creation in *Òrun*, as presented in *Yorùbá* thought system

founders in the face of the revelations and researches in gene manipulation and cloning. The next task is to argue for the role of genetics and environmental in the life-course of an individual relying on Cesare Lombroso's Theory of Crime.

Cesare Lombroso's Theory of Crime explains robustly, how individuals born with genetic or biological defect necessarily engage in crime but posits that they would not be able to manifest this criminal behaviour if genetic and social conditioning (*Àdáyébbá*) does not influence them.

It should be stated categorically that Lombroso's theory of crime is a biological scheme, which attempts to incorporate the social and psychological factors in the production of crime. Lombroso explains that the social causes of crime were simply the stimuli of organic and psychical abnormalities of the individual. These abnormalities are latent in the genetic and physiological make-up of the individual. We glean that his theory may say more on the causes of failure or individual success. If one has the physique of a wrestler, such an individual's genetic destiny will not be realized if the society one belongs to does not create the environment for the game. So, both good and bad behaviours have genetic roots but they become manifest when society stimulates them.

Lombroso exposes the relation between social and even climatic factors, on the one hand and the lure or repression of crime in human personality on the other hand. In the words of Charles Ellwood: "With a wealth of learning which amazes, Lombroso discusses successively meteorological and climatic influences in the production of crime, the influence of geographical conditions, the influence of race, of civilization, of the density of population, of alcoholism, of education, of economic conditions, of religion, of sex and age, of civil status, of prisons and of political conditions³⁶. Lombroso's theory is that crime is primarily due to biological or organic conditions³⁷. In other words, Lombroso traces the psychological and social defects of the criminal to biological causes. For Lombroso,

the perfectly normal individual from the biological angle, would never be a criminal. Social circumstances, in other words, could not create a true criminal out of a naturally honest or normal man, although social circumstances may be necessary to call forth the latent criminal tendencies in the abnormal or degenerate individual.³⁸ Lombroso admits that these criminal tendencies are found regularly in the normal child, and rightly says that "the most horrible crimes have their origin in those animal instincts of which childhood gives us a pale reflection"³⁹.

Lombroso's thoughts on crime have far-reaching consequences when one tinkers on the notion of *Àdáyébbá* in traditional *Yorùbá* destiny acquisition pattern. This is because before coming into the world, the society into which the child would be born, the genes of the parents as well as other factors play crucial and corpulent roles in character and personality formation. Ofoasika is therefore not in error when he points out that "The child grows in a community with its own distinct ideology. The environment shapes the way the child would think. At this point, it really matters where the child is raised."⁴⁰ A child born with the destiny of being a great footballer should be born into a family that loves football or who allows children to express themselves freely. Otherwise, the child may not actualize the destiny because a social condition is missing.

Conclusion: This research has been able to show in clear terms, how pre-natal and spiritual acquisition of destiny, among the *Yorùbás* is to be taken as metaphor, owing to the undeniable realities of scientific advancements. It must be put into consideration, the social and biological dimensions to personality and life course. *Àdáyébbá*, in traditional *Yorùbá* world-view therefore makes the case very explicit for the possession of destiny that is faithful to the *Yorùbá* metaphysic-religious tradition and biological and sociological factors. This is striking if we recall that *Yorùbás* consult *Òrúnmilá* for guidance when perplexed about life's challenges. If, as the *Yorùbás* believe that there is symmetry between the consultations and the recommendations, then

it is the case that character and spirituality are important. In most instances, individuals are recommended by *Ifá* to amend their characters or deepen their spiritual ties. All of these are accommodated by *Àdáyéḃá*. It may therefore be pertinent to develop a Metaphysics that would admit the biological and the mystical within the *Yorùbá* context. But this is beyond the scope of the present research.

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