

CONCEPTION OF 'ORI' (HEAD) IN THE YORUBA BELIEF SYSTEM: AN ETHICAL APPRAISAL

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Abstract

This paper attempts an ethical appraisal of the Conception of 'Ori' (head) in the Yoruba belief system in a bid to confront the inconsistencies the various meanings the concept has generated and suggests panacea to the absurdities. Considering the stimulating debate about the nature of African philosophy, both academia in Africa and Nigeria origin generally focused more on the exercise of critical analysis and conceptual clarifications. One of such exercises that attracted the attention of philosophers in this regard is the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head). This study was informed by many ambiguous interpretations of the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) in which 'Ori' was referred to as 'Personality Soul', 'Guardian Angel', 'Destiny', 'Character', and 'An Entity' which sounds so confused. This research sets to demystify and unburden this confusion. Consequent on this, employing the analytic and conversational methods, this research looked at the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' from comparative study of different individual's interpretations. This paper submits that until African philosophers especially scholars from Yoruba speaking area of Nigeria agree on a particular and coherent meaning of 'Ori', or admits that 'Ori' can be used to refer to different things depending on the context of use, the concept will continue to lead to contradictions and absurdities

Keywords: 'Ori' (head), Conceptual Clarifications, Analytical methodology, Character, Comparative study.

Introduction

For decades the stimulating debate about the nature of African philosophy has been irresistibly strong in which philosophers of African descent and especially of Nigeria origin in general seem to have begun to face the more rewarding exercise of critical analysis and conceptual clarifications (Abimbola 1991: 89). A concept that has attracted the attention of philosophers in this regard is the Yoruba concept of 'Ori'. This could be seen in the works of scholars from the Yoruba speaking area of Nigeria such as Wande Abimbola's *The Concept of Human Personality*, (1991), Bolaji Idowu's *Olódùmaré: God in Yorùbá belief*, (1962), Makinde M.A, *A Philosophical Analysis of the Yoruba Concept of Ori and Human Personality*, (1985) and Olusegun Oladipo's *Predestination in Yoruba Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation*, (1992) among others (Amodu 2000:33).

The analyses of the concept of 'Ori' as shown in available works on the concept seem not to yield a consistent and coherent clarification, that is, they are ambiguous and vague. This lack of consistent and coherent interpretations could be seen at the level of individual's interpretation and at the level of comparative study of the interpretation of different individuals. The objective of this work is to attempt unburden the Yoruba concept of 'Ori'. The concept is so burdened with many meanings that it becomes almost unintelligible. In Yoruba traditional belief system, the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) is believed to be a metaphysical concept which was important to Yoruba spirituality and way of life. Also, in Yoruba tradition, it was generally believed that human beings are able to heal themselves both spiritually and physically by worshipping their 'Ori' (inner head) subject to Olodumare-the Supreme Being's approval through Orisa (ministers or divinities). Significantly, when a person is facing a kind of misfortune, he/she is advised to go and beg or worship his/her 'Ori' (inner head). This way, the person concerned will live a

peaceful and prosperous life. Suffices it to say that the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) has close affinity with the concept of a person because without a person there cannot be 'Ori' (inner head), it is just like a relationship between an egg and a chicken.

According to Ogunyemi (2023), the Yoruba people with population of over 30 million on the African continent and many millions in the diasporas inhabit a world of myths, allegories, poetry and the love and wisdom of ifa (oracle) knowledge system. Also, the Yoruba people (Western Nigeria) are conversant with the normative characteristics of what made up of human person just as was argued by Gbadegesin that "the bodily part is part of what makes up the human person." (Gbadegesin 1984:179) Thus, ara (body) emi (soul), okan (heart) and ori (head) (the focus of our discussion) are essential characteristics of human person. These physical characteristics could be said to have spiritual dimensions. Also, the creating of human beings according to the Yoruba mythological account is in four stages: First is Orisanla, the god of creation who moulds ara (body). Second is Olodumare (the Supreme Being) who gives the moulded ara emi (life) by breathing into him/her, and third the activated ara (body) now moves to the house of Ajala (believed to be fashioner of destinies) to choose his Ori (inner head)-an analysis which is the crux of our attention. Fourth, the fully fashioned human being then moves to Ile-Aye (the earth surface) through a place called Ibode (boundary between Ile-aye and Orun for earthly existence. These four stages account of creation is widely believed among the traditional Yoruba. Can we say in the affirmative that these four stages accounts of creating of human being as widely believed among the traditional Yoruba is acceptable Worldwide? Does it logically follow that a person can deliberately pick a bad 'Ori' (inner head) having known that whatever 'Ori' (inner head) he/she picks would decide his/her success in life?

This study was informed by many ambiguous interpretations of the concept of 'Ori' (inner head). Is there any difference between inner head and physical head? What is the relationship between the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) and destiny? What is the role of character in shaping one's destiny? So, the inability to have consistent and coherent interpretation of the meaning of the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) could be viewed from individual interpretation and comparative study of different individual's interpretations. This research sets out to demystify the ambiguities the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) has generated.

2. An Exposition of the Mythological Account of the Concept of 'Ori'

Like every other important culture of people as enunciated by M. Okoye "the Yoruba culture has its own interpretation of the nature and significance of man which was usually formulated in terms of man's relationship with God." (Okoye 1964:217) It therefore becomes imperative to note that the Yoruba traditional interpretation of nature is deeply religious in the sense that the Yoruba has a religious metaphysics which was seen in the mythological account and linguistic framework of the Yoruba language.

According to this mythological account, the Yoruba people see reality in a spirito-physical hierarchical order i.e the order comprises of spiritual and physical entities like gods and trees among others. For Yoruba, there is no dichotomized view of reality in which a spiritual world having little or distant affinity with the physical world. The Yoruba belief system is that both spiritual world and physical world are inseparable aspects of the same reality. As was enunciated in the works of Bolaji Idowu, the peak of this mutually interacting world is Olodumare (the Supreme Being), its primary place of existence is Orun (heaven, a spiritual place of existence), He is also believed to be Olorun, that is, He who owns Orun (heaven). As Bolaji Idowu notes, the Yoruba thinks of Olodumare "as one who possesses superlative greatness and fullness of all excellent attributes." (Idowu 1962:38) Existing alongside Olodumare in Orun (heaven) is His

Orisa (divinities or ministers). The Orisa are lesser gods created by Olodumare as assistance in the creation and theocratic government of the world (Idowu 1962:57). Principal among these are Orisanla, the great or arch-divinity who was responsible for creative and executive functions; next in line was Orunmila, the oracle divinity charged with omniscience and wisdom matters and then Esu the right-hand divinity to Orunmila who was believed to be public relations officer between the physical world and the spiritual world.

In the Yoruba hierarchical world view, next to the Orisa is the oku-orun (spirits of departed aged members of the community). These are followed by human beings who have spatio-temporal existence in Ile-Aye (the earth surface). There is one concept in this mythological account that has not yielded to clear and unambiguous interpretation and analysis which is the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head). This shall lead us to the second section in which we shall enumerate the ambiguities involved in the numerous attempts to interpret and analyse the concept.

3. Ambiguities in the Analysis of the Yoruba Concept of 'Ori' (inner head)

Bolaji idowu (1962:38) is one of the exemplary scholars whose analysis of the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) is incoherent and ambiguous. In his influential work titled "*Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*." Idowu maintained that "Ori" is "head"- the name for man's physical head. Idowu avers: "it means also however (and I think primarily) the essence of personality, the ego." (Idowu 1962:60) The researcher adds that an individual 'Ori' (inner head) derives "the great source of all life and being, the source from which all take their origin." For this researcher, "the soul for the Yoruba is the "inner person", Yoruba name for it is 'Ori' (inner head). This is the personality soul." (Idowu 1962:38) In Idowu's analysis, Yoruba believe that it is 'Ori' (inner head) that rules, controls and guides the life and activities of a person.

The researcher perceives an important peculiarity of the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head) in which 'Ori' (inner head) also serves the purpose of a guardian angel or protector. Idowu opines that "the idea of 'Ori' (inner head) is further complicated when it is conceived as a semi-split entity in consequence of which it is at the same time the essence of the personality and the person's guardian or protector.

From all indications, it could be inferred that Idowu's analysis failed to indicate what the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head) is and going by the above peculiarity 'Ori' (inner head) cannot be out rightly said to be soul. The reason for this position is that if the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head) serves a dual-purpose, given its translation to mean 'soul' is not suitable. Thus, an analysis of the 'soul' in English word clearly shows that the concept does not carry the idea of guarding angel. In *Oxford English Dictionary*, the soul is the principle of life in man. The soul is "the principle of thought and action in man, commonly regarded as an entity different from the body...the seat of emotions, feelings, and sentiment; the emotional part of man's nature (Amodu 2000: 33). It is argued that if the idea of soul is not in consonance with the idea of guardian angel, then the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head) cannot be referred to as the soul. So, the absurdity involved in translating 'Ori' (inner head) to mean soul is seen in the following Yoruba saying:

Example A – A remarks

When the Yoruba say of a person that '*Ori' inu re lo ba ti ode e je*

(It is his/her (*inner head*) that spoils the outer one for him/her), he is passing the ethical judgment that it is the person's bad character (inner person) that spoils his life.

Example B- An advice to a bride

Mu 'Ori' lo ma mu ewa lo: oojo lewa bo, 'Ori' ni bani gbe ile oko

(take 'Ori' (good conduct) along; do not take beauty along, beauty returns in a day (it is ephemeral) it is 'Ori' that abides with one in the husband's house). In this case, the bride is being advised to go to her husband house with good character and not with beauty.

In Example A, the inner head cannot refer to the 'soul' otherwise we should be talking of inner soul and outer soul. In example B, the 'Ori' (inner head) which the bride is being advised to take along also cannot be the 'soul'-a non spatio-temporal phenomenon. Additionally, within the framework of Yoruba language, it is possible to say that an individual 'chose' or 'picked' a good 'Ori'(inner head). But it is unreasonable to say an individual picked or chose his/her soul (Amodu 2000:33)

It would be appropriate to also consider the ambiguity and contradiction involved in the analysis of the Yoruba concept of 'Ori' (inner head) at the angle of a comparative study of two analysis described by the three scholars mentioned earlier which are Olusegun Oladipo, Wande Abimbola, and Bolaji Idowu. Here, a misrepresentation of M. A Makinde by Olusegun Oladipo was suspected. Our comparison shall begin against a background of identifying that misrepresentation.

Giving input on the ontological status of 'Ori'(inner head), 'Ori' (inner head) is capable of living "a separate existence of its own" as suggested by Makinde. This researcher went further "'Ori' (inner head) which performs a metaphysical function presumably leaves the body after death, and goes back to heaven where it was originally moulded waiting to be used by souls at another cycle of reincarnation." (Makinde 1983:46) The import of Makinde's analysis is that "Ori" or "inner head" is not "soul". This researcher was of the opinion that "Ori" (inner head) must be distinct of "soul" because if "Ori" (inner head) is capable of being used by souls at another cycle of reincarnation, then it simply means that it cannot be souls that are reusing souls. By implication for Makinde, "Ori" (inner head) though not synonymous with soul shares the characteristic of imperishability with soul. Further, to this extent, one would think that Olusegun Oladipo misrepresented Makinde in his exposition of Makinde's analysis of the Yoruba concept of "Ori" (inner head). The misrepresentation could be seen in Oladipo categorizing Makinde as part of many scholars who saw "Ori" (inner head) as distinct from the physical head, as the "soul." (Oladipo 1992:39)

This in no doubt explains why Oladipo and Makinde will be suggesting that "Ori" (inner head) is an "actual entity" like emi (life giving aspect of a person) as interpreted by Oladipo. Having misrepresenting Makinde, Oladipo's work presents a fresh analysis of the concept of "Ori" (inner head), the analysis which shall be used against Abimbola and Idowu's analyses. Abimbola and Idowu are examples of scholars who conceive "Ori" (inner head) as an "actual entity" like Makinde . Idowu posits that "Ori" (inner head) is a destiny-carrying entity as exemplified in this common Yoruba saying in which Idowu interpretes "Ori" (inner head) to mean destiny:

Eni lori rere ti ko niwa, iwa lo ma bori re je

(However

happy a person's destiny may be, if he has no character, it is (lack of) character that will ruin his destiny." (Idowu 1962:155)

While in Abimbola's opinion, which also suggest "Ori" (inner head) as a destiny-carrying entity writes "the choice of a good "Ori" (inner head) ensures that the individual concerned would live a successful and

prosperous life in earth while the choice of a bad “Ori” (inner head) condemns the individual to a life of failure.” (Abimbola 1991:80)

Oladipo (1992:32) quickly identifies a theoretical difficulty generated by an “actual entity” conception of “Ori” (inner head) which according to him has to do with the determination of “an adequate characterization of the nature of “Ori” (inner head). The difficulty as enunciated by Oladipo is that if “Ori” (inner head) is an entity at all it is either spiritual or physical. If it is spiritual, then, given its non-empirical status, its nature may be difficult to affirm, and if it is physical, then, it should be easy to perceive, yet this is not the case. This difficulty is like comparing an individual’s “Ori” (destiny) with the biographical events that characterize the person’s physical existence. Oladipo therefore suggested a non-entity concept of “Ori” (inner head) having identified the problem the entity conception of “Ori” (inner head) gives rise to. According to this conception, “Ori (inner head) should be regarded as a covenant or agreement with Olodumare as to what a person intends to become in the world.

According to Oladipo’s analysis of the Yoruba myth concerning the nature of man, it is the physical head (an entity) that receives the destiny from Olodumare, hence the physical head (an entity) is being worshipped among the Yoruba; this researcher opines that “it is a representation (symbol) of person’s destiny.” (1992:32) Oladipo pressed further that a person’s destiny is not something allotted arbitrarily to individual, rather it is a ‘covenant’ sealed following reverential negotiations between one’s physical head and Olodumare (supreme being). It is “Ori” (inner head) then that represents the content of that covenant. However, Oladipo did not tell us how his interpretation of Ori (inner head) “as a series of events agreed to in a covenant with Olodumare,” (1992:32) was arrived at. What is important to us in Oladipo’s analysis is his claim or the idea that “Ori” (inner head) is not an entity but rather a covenant.

In respect of the actual ontological status of the concept of “Ori” (inner head), the first two sections identifies some things: the unclear and indeterminate use of concept of “Ori” (inner head) which in a confusing manner means different things like ‘soul’, ‘personality soul’, ‘destiny’, ‘an entity’, and ‘agreement’; it therefore appears to be loaded but the question is: must it be so? And the answer is No, then why does it appear in that manner? These questions now usher us to the next section.

4. Demystification of the Inconsistencies and Contradictions in the Yoruba Concept of ‘Ori’ (inner head)

In his exposition of myths, Adesanya (1953:37) made reference to the Yoruba saying in interpreting Ifa oracle and avers that:

Owe in ifa npa, omoran ni nmoo (The Ifa oracle speaks in parable but the intelligent will follow).

It is therefore instructive to comprehend the Yoruba mode of thought within which the ontological-mythological account of “Ori” (inner head) is situated in an attempt to clarify the concept of “Ori” (inner head). As expressed in the Yoruba language, the use of symbols is pivotal to the Yoruba mode of thought. Under the Yoruba mode of thought, to convey messages, the use of symbols are employed by making use of tales of human or animal adventures etc.

The reason for the usage of such symbolic expression was predicated on the fact that the African Yoruba mode of thought is pragmatic. It is basically concerned with the concreteness of life, with its subject matter as the challenges of living and life itself. Socializing function in the Yoruba mode of thought personifies

animals and human experiences. Such personifications attempt to give answers to puzzles or challenges of human existence. Thus, it could be affirmed that the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) looks at one of such concepts that have been so personified.

We shall therefore begin our argument in respect of 'Ori' (inner head) equivalence of 'soul'. If there is idea in the Yoruba mythological account with a near approximation of 'soul', it will be said of 'emi' (the life force). According to Yoruba myth, it is 'emi' that activate 'ara'. 'Emi' is the life force which Olodumare breathes into 'ara'. Since Yoruba have the belief that 'emi' is not distinctive of human life, it cannot be said to be that which absolutely distinguishes man from animals and trees. Since goats, hens and dogs also have 'emi', emi-aja (the life force of a dog) and emi-adie (the life force of a hen) etc. Resultantly, 'emi' for the Yoruba links man with Olodumare and with other things in nature which also has 'emi' to an extent, approximates 'soul', the question that may be asked here is: if 'Ori' (inner head) is not soul and it is not that aspect of the eniyan (human person) that approximates soul, then what is it?

In our opinion, what can be deduced from the use of the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) in the Yoruba ontological account is meant to prove the idea that 'Ori' (inner head) is an ontologically distinct entity which exists independently like the 'soul', rather, the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) unlike 'emi' that is distinctively applicable to humans, is not a concept that carries the idea of a soul, but rather carries the idea of character. It is a value-loaded concept employed and strictly employable by humans, to refer to actions, history and aspirations of human persons; hence the mythological account that 'Ori' (inner head) symbolizes human destiny (Idowu, 1962:7).

4.1 Human Person

An analysis of Yoruba ontology of a person shows that the Yoruba see head as the locus of the 'ase' (divine power) of Olodumare (the Supreme Being) in individuals which constitute the source of a person thereby controlling his/her personality and destiny. Lawal (1985) identified three different ways head can be represented in Yoruba traditional belief system which are: the naturalistic, which refers to the external or physical head (ori ode), the stylized, which is inner or spiritual head (ori inu) and the abstract which symbolized the principal material (oke ipori) of which the inner head was made. It is also important to state that the myths suggestion that individuals 'picked' their 'Ori' (inner head) has a social significance, that is, your life is what you make of it.

Man according to Babasehinde Ademuleya (2007:212) has often been described in connection to 'body' and 'soul'. Yoruba refers to man as *eniyan*. Human body (ara) comprises of the head (ori), neck (orun), apa and ese. The outer covering of the body consist of the skin i.e awo, hair-irun and nails-eekanna. These body parts together with the flesh and bones covered by the skin constitute an aspect of the human entity which is perceptible to our senses and described analytically in anatomical terms. Your Akunleyan (another term for destiny) is that way of life you have chosen. Also, your Ayanmo (signifying destiny) is that which is sure to be the end of your chosen way of life which is in consonance with existential orientation which emphasizes the importance of unrestricted freedom for individual to make their own choices which is a major bone of contention between freewill and determinism.

4.2 Freewill and Determinism

One of the central focuses of metaphysics is the question of whether human beings are free or not to make choices and carry out specific actions. Also related to this are issues bordering on assigning moral

responsibility and the practice of blaming or praising individuals for their actions. This question with its related issues also arises in African philosophy where it is always treated within the context of the African belief in predestination. Taking the traditional Yoruba as an example, there is enough proof that they believe that the individual exercises his freewill and is morally responsible for his actions.

Paradoxically also, there is ample evidence that the Yoruba believe that the individual person is predestined in life that his/her life course has been predetermined by factors or forces over which she/he does not have much control in life. This paradox has been the subject of different analyses as African philosophers try to resolve and render the African belief in destiny meaningful and consistent with the belief that human beings exercise freewill and are morally responsible (Oladipo 1992:81).

Furthermore, some philosophers according to Oladipo, argue that the Yoruba belief in freewill is an illusion and a product of the human tendency to reject a bad destiny, an effort which is not always fruitful to improve upon one's destiny while others try to substantiate the Yoruba belief in freewill. Here, two general attempts to substantiate the Yoruba belief in human freewill are recognized. The first which subscribed to a rigid deterministic view of destiny opines that 'humans exercise freewill only when they are making a pre-natal choice of 'Ori' (inner head) which is the final and sole determiner of destiny. (Oladipo 1992:82) This view inferred that once an 'Ori' (inner head) has been chosen in heaven, the issue of exercise of freewill does not arise again as the whole of life becomes a predetermined script that must necessarily be acted out. This led to a debate about whether or not it is sensible to ascribe any exercise of freewill to a pre-natal selection of 'Ori' (inner head). For example, Makinde (1983, 46) contends that:

The selection of 'Ori' is not of free choice because the person making the selection does not have any information on the contents of available 'Ori', it is highly probable that no one would have chosen a bad one. According to him, "all choices are preferential choices" and the possibility of having preferences is completely ruled out in the pre-natal selections of 'Ori'.

The second group known as soft determinism posits that what the pre-natal choice of 'Ori' (inner head) determines is the potentials of the bearer. The actual contents and the direction of the life of the bearer remain subject to specific decisions and actions freely taken by him/her.

As was mentioned earlier, other efforts to make the notions of freewill intelligible within the context of the Yoruba thought of human person is to encourage an individual to work hard, have good character and consult Ifa (oracle of divination) and offer relevant sacrifices if necessary. Suffice it to note that, like other perennial problems in philosophy, the issues of freewill and destiny within the context of the Yoruba philosophical discourse is far from finally settled. It is open to further debates, clarifications and analyses.

5. Ethical Appraisal of the Yoruba Concept of 'Ori'

The concept of 'Ori' (inner head) when de-mythologized serves a social function just as Idowu elucidates. It guides, directs and controls individual life or conduct in the society. It is also important to highlight some linguistic support for the plausibility of our social interpretation of the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) because when employed in the ordinary day-to-day usage of the Yoruba language, the concept of 'Ori' (inner head) has an ethical significance which refers us to the two examples mentioned under the second section.

Example A – A remarks

When the Yoruba say of a person that *'Ori' inu re lo ba ti ode e je*

(It is his/her (*inner head*) that spoils the outer one for him/her), he is passing the ethical judgment that it is the person's bad character (inner person) that spoils his life.

Example B- An advice to a bride

Mu 'Ori' lo ma mu ewa lo: oojo lewa bo, 'Ori' ni bani gbe ile oko

(take 'Ori' (good conduct) along; do not take beauty along, beauty returns in a day (it is ephemeral) it is 'Ori' (inner head) that abides with one in the husband's house). In this case, the bride is being advised to go to her husband house with good character and not with beauty (Amodu, 2000:33).

Example C- General advice

'Ori' la ba bo, a ba forisa sile,' (it is the inner self we ought to venerate, and let divinity be), here, we are being told that our character is of paramount importance.

While in Abimbola's opinion, which also suggests "Ori" (inner head) is a destiny-carrying entity writes: "the choice of a good "Ori" (inner head) ensures that the individual concerned would live a successful and prosperous life on earth while the choice of a bad "Ori" (inner head) condemns the individual to a life of failure". Here, it is shown that 'Ori' (inner head) has a prominent role to play in the success or otherwise of a person.

The plausibility of our social concept of 'Ori' (inner head) is also buttressed by the Yoruba belief that 'Ori' (inner head) is not unalterable; however, supposing we infer that 'Ori' (inner head) or destiny is unalterable. Then we shall commit ourselves to admit that Yoruba attitude to life is a fatalistic one with the implication that when a man is said to be poor, he will have no choice than to accept his faith. The reality however (Idowu 1962:15) is that the Yoruba believe that they can influence and determine their lot in the society. Again, when a man/woman is facing a kind of misfortune, he/she is advised to go and beg or worship his/her 'Ori' (inner head). It is however, believed that it is Orunmila (the god of wisdom) alone that can tell the contents of one's 'Ori' (inner head) and thereby prescribe remedies where necessary. The usual prescription by oracle to remedy one's 'Ori' (or one's chosen way of life) is that the individual should change his ways i.e he should avoid stealing, be hard working as *ise ni ogun ise* (work is the panacea to poverty), go and beg whoever he/she may have offended and be of good character. This way, the person concerned will live a peaceful and prosperous life.

6. Conclusion

For the Yoruba, the individual and the society determine to a large extent the way of life they live. Making references to the problem of freewill and determinism, our analysis points to the fact that Yoruba have a rational attitude to life. In our opinion, the reality is that Yoruba believe that they can influence and determine their lot in the society. Suffice it to say that one central philosophical inference that are drawn from this work is that Yoruba language which is a vehicle for conveying Yoruba myth and rationalization about the questions of existence is a philosophical language and the problem of philosophy is a problem of language. It perhaps accommodates concepts that are not translatable into other languages. The inconsistent and incoherent clarifications of the concept of 'Ori' should be demystified by scholars from Yoruba speaking area of Nigeria simply because meaning can be determined in context and the word 'Ori' is a name that can be used to refer to different things. We believe that if African philosophers especially scholars from Yoruba speaking area of Nigeria can come together and agree on a particular meaning of the concept

of 'Ori', or admits that 'Ori' can be used to refer to different things, that is, 'Ori' in Yoruba interpretation could mean destiny, character, guardian angel, etc, -all depending on the context of use, this no doubt would remove the contradictions and absurdities the debate has generated.

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