

The Question of Postmortem Existence and African Cosmology

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Abstract

The problem of what happens at death, and after death, is a perennial issue that has agitated the minds of philosophers from antiquity. The problem continues to reverberate because death is pervasive. The question is rendered a conundrum by the absence of experience of death such that all postulations on death are comeuppance of mere speculations and extrapolations that have obfuscated rather than demythologize issues surrounding afterlife. The subsisting issue is whether there is anything like post-mortem existence and what it is like if there is. In fact, Western philosophy has reduced the question of post-mortem existence to the question of immortality of soul, which appears even more obfuscating because of its identification of the soul with the intellect. This prompted this search for answer to this question in African cosmology. This piece strives to demonstrate that the solution to the question of post-mortem existence can be found in African cosmology. It employs the analytic and hermeneutic methods. Critical exposition and analysis of African cosmology, and the consistency that tailors its conceptions of the world, human person and death, show a better and more assuring solution to the problem of afterlife. For the African, post-humus existence is part of human essence. Everyone is assured of continuous existence but has to work for the level and mode of the existence they wish to live in the materialistic-spiritual world of afterlife.

Keywords: Postmortem, Existence, Africa, Cosmology.

Introduction

Martin Heidegger rightly postulated that man is the only being capable of raising the question of Being.¹ This possibility resulting from man's consciousness as well empowers man to interrogate not only the

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 27.

universal Being but also his own being – his existence and all the paraphernalia that follows it. This introspection and interrogation of one's being brings man face-to-face with one of the possibilities of his existence, the facticity of life – death. Death seems to portray the absurdity of all human endeavours since it is inevitable and imposes limitation on all other possibilities of man.

Yet, the possibility of auto-transcendence and other experiences of man such as near-death experience (NDE) insulate man from conceding death as his ultimate possibility that liquidates his other possibilities. It is therefore not out of place that man developed the idea of posthumous existence to allay the dread of absurdity of man's essence and existence which death represents.

The problem of the possibility of life after death has been so widely discussed that Nwigwe fears that anything new could be added.² The problem is rendered much more difficult and tantalizing by the absence of true death experience to serve as foundation of speculation on what actually happens to man at death and thereafter. However, the cap apparently placed on the discussion on the question of afterlife is blown off once death visits the doorstep of a thinker. The gadfly of death stings one into contemplation of how much the worth human life really is; why some people's lives are cut short, sometimes, at the prime of the endeavour; whether death as an end is actually the true end or there is something else to look forward to beyond death – something like having the dead again in our company, may be some time, somewhere. In fact, whether there is actually life after death. Nwigwe summarizes the problem thus: ‘the unanswerable question is this: How far can we

². Boniface E. Nwigwe, “The Concept of Immortality of the Soul in Western Philosophy and Igbo Culture – An Essay in Conceptual Analysis” *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 4, (2001): 5.

identify a dead man with this corpse that lies in front of us? How are we sure that after this bodily existence, there is no other existence involving the same person?"³

Discussions on post-mortem existence throughout the history of Western philosophy has been circumscribed by the wide acceptance of Aristotle's conception of substance as inexorable composition of matter and form, in addition to most religions' overemphasis on soul as against the body. The concomitance of this is the narrowing of the discourse of post-mortem existence to the polemic of immortality of soul, consequent upon conception of human person as dissoluble composite substance and death as dissolution of this composite. On account of this, Western philosophy has been unable to prove the actuality or otherwise of immortality of soul.

Conversely, the problem of post-humus existence does not exist in African philosophy due African cosmological conception of the human and his world. The African person, though constituted of many elements, is an integrated, indissoluble totality which finds his definition only within his social milieu, community, comprising the living and the dead, in seamless two worlds. Consequently, death rather than be the dissolution of the human person, opens a new vista, a new horizon of operation in the spiritual world of the living-dead. Thus death in African conception is a mere passage from one world to another – another level of existence – in which the dead continues his normal life activities as an embodied spirit. This is the thought being exposed in this discourse.

Historical Perspectives of the Debate on Post-Mortem Existence

Man's curiosity to have a glimpse of what follows after death is part of his natural tendency for quest for knowledge. Man always desires to know.

³. Nwigwe, "The Concept of Immortality of the Soul", 23.

Obscurity of any object exacerbates this desire and diversifies his speculations on it. Thus, absence of experience of death and any certainty concerning what becomes of man after death has generated lots of assumptions and adumbrations of afterlife since antiquity. Yet it is false to claim that any of these adumbrations, in favour of posthumous existence or otherwise, has sated man's curiosity on the matter. Hence man continues his speculations in support or against afterlife and what man should hope to be after consummation of his physical state.

Battista Mondin summaries various conjectures on the consequence of death upon human existence into four, namely: 1. Total dissolution of the human person which claims that death is the absolute end of man, a nihilistic occurrence that liquidates in its entirety all aspects of human existence. 2. Partial survival through the karma, which is a proposal that man continues to live after death in the ripples of the actions he took while alive. 3. Survival through reincarnation which holds that the dead are reborn in new persons, in transmigration of souls. 4. Survival as immortality of soul which suggests that man has many elements and part of these, precisely the soul, survives the decomposition of the body at death.⁴ each of these groups has variants; still none has satisfied the rational mind in the absence of empirical evidence.

Mondin, however, tends to favour survival through immortality; for he avows that:

The absoluteness of the man-value requires survival or otherwise it would be a lacking in absoluteness. The spiritual dimension of man, in that it cannot be filled by the scythe of death, also postulates an eternal destiny for the man-value. Thanks to the soul, the man is made for eternity, and for this

⁴ Battista Mondin, *Man: An Impossible Project?* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1985), 276-277.

reason he aspires to this immortality with all his forces.⁵

Yet upon this conviction, Mondin raises important issue, much neglected in the discourse of post-mortem existence, that is, whether immortality includes the body or is the sole preserve of the soul.⁶ This shows that none of the proposals actually sated man's curiosity about what happens to him at death. For better appreciation of Mondin's concern, a cursory look at how the issue of post-mortem existence has been handled in Western philosophy through the ages is necessary. Each philosopher involved in the discourse based his postulation on his conception of the human person.

Plato, based on his doctrine of form, sees man as fundamentally spiritual. The soul which is the form of man is the real man. The body is a mere capsular which the soul uses and disposes at will. So, being a form, the soul is self-subsisting entity, unchanging, spiritual and eternal like other forms, which only employs the body for the purpose of fulfilling certain physical functions. Thus, for Plato, the body is mortal as a composed entity while the soul is divine. In his *Phaedo* he puts this idea in the mouth of Socrates and Cebes his interlocutor. Socrates asks Cebes, "when the body and the soul are joined together nature directs one to be slave and to be ruled and the other to be the master and to rule. And this being the case, which seems to you like divine, and which like the mortal?"⁷ Cebes answers in affirmation of Plato's take that the soul is divine while the body is mortal.⁸ Thus, death, for Plato, affects only the body and never the soul. He explicitly maintains that:

When returning to herself the soul reflects, then she passes

⁵. Mondin. *Man*, 277-278.

⁶. Mondin. *Man*, 278.

⁷. Plato, *Phaedo*, 78b–79c

⁸. Plato, *Phaedo*, 78b–79c

into the other world, the region of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever lives, when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways, and being in communion with the unchanging is unchanging.⁹

This position influenced the thoughts of many philosophers, especially the religionists, on the issue of immortality. Plato even bought the idea of transmigration of the soul from the Pythagorean school of Orphism, implying that the soul is capable of leaving a body at death to inhabit another.¹⁰

Aristotle's ambivalence on spiritual realities due to his materialistic tendency reflects on his position on post-mortem existence. Thus, it is difficult to determine whether he conceives death as the annihilation of human person in its entirety or a kind of separation of the elements of man which leaves some aspects surviving the scourge of death. This ambivalence gave his interpreters the liberty to present him as representing either side. Apparently, his hylemorphic definition of substance (man inclusive) as a composite of matter and form poses a serious threat to the idea of life after death even in terms of immortality of soul. The soul for him is the form of the body as its principle of life and as such can hardly be thought of as having independent existence.¹¹ However, his admission of spiritual element of the rational soul and its capacity to carry out some specific intellectual functions without recourse to the body opens avenue for construing him as conceiving the soul as immortal.¹²

^{9.} Plato, *Phaedo*, 79d

^{10.} Joseph I Omoregbe, *History of Western Philosophy*, Vol. 1, (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Limited, 1991), 43.

^{11.} Aristotle, *De Anima*, bk 1, 402.

^{12.} Nwigwe, *The Concept of Immortality*, 9-10.

The scholastic era gave much impetus to the affirmation of immortality of the soul. In fact, it was simply frantic efforts to give philosophical base to extant theological doctrine of the soul as the real person, living in an earthen ware that breaks at death to liberate the soul back to its original state of eternal spiritual existence. To achieve this purpose, the religious philosophers drew heavily from Plato's conception of the soul. Even ardent disciples of Aristotle like Aquinas and Averroes had to bracket Aristotle's hylemorphism to rely on his conception of the spirituality of agent intellect to buttress their claim of immortality of the soul.

However, William of Auvergne was disenchanted with such interpretation of Aristotle. Oguejiofor reports his dissatisfaction thus:

William warns about the opinion that Aristotle's words meant that only the intellect is separable from the body and immortal. For him, there is no sense at all in talking of parts of the soul, since the absence of such parts constitutes one of the bedrocks of his defence of incorruptibility.¹³

Such was the difficulty of the scholastics in adumbrating Aristotle's stance on afterlife. Nonetheless, Aquinas's eclectic combination of Plato and Aristotle positioned him to aver that it is not only the soul but also the body; in fact, the entire human nature is incorruptible since every particular nature tends towards perpetual existence.¹⁴

Modern philosophy through the Renaissance showed the exit to the theologico-philosophic affirmation of the possibility of immortality of the soul and re-inaugurated the original problem. Descartes' methodic doubt brought scepticism of received traditions while his *Cogito ergo sum* gave birth to duality of substance which obfuscates the relationship

^{13.} J. Obi Oguejiofor, *The Philosophical Significance of Immortality in Aquinas*, (New York: University Press of America, 2001), 5.

^{14.} Oguejiofor. *The Philosophical Significance of Immortality in Aquinas*, 143.

of the body and soul. However, Descartes' position gives better credence to immortality of the soul when compare with that of Aristotle. Since the body and soul are conceived as two different substances of different nature, the dissolution of one does not necessarily imply that of the other. Thus, Descartes maintains that:

We have no argument and no example persuading us that death, or the destruction of a substance such as the spirit, must follow from a cause so light such as a change of figure, which is no more than a mode, and more than a mode of the body, is not of the spirit. We have no argument or example which convinces us that there are spiritual substances subject to being destroyed.¹⁵

Put simply, the soul being spiritual is not destroyed at the destruction of the body.

Avoiding the issues generated by Descartes' identification of two substances in man, Baruch Spinoza avers that there is only one substance which has infinite attributes and manifestations. This solo substance, infinite in attributes, eternal and divine in nature, he calls God or Nature (*Deus sive Natura*). Since all things according to him, are expressions and modifications of the mono-substance, all things are consequently eternal and divine. Thus, neither the body nor the soul perishes at death. They both return to nature in an impersonal eternal and divine existence.¹⁶

For Immanuel Kant, it is impossible to have a rational proof of posthumous existence because man lacks experience of such existence. Concepts of God, self, immortality, and freedom do not arise from experience. They are products of the natural tendency of reason to

^{15.} Rene Descartes, *Sixth Meditation*, (tr. Laterza, Bari 1954), 156.

^{16.} Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, (London: Everyman's Library, 1910).

ruminate upon its own concepts.¹⁷ However, Kant presents what he calls moral postulates – concepts which reason cannot prove but must be assumed for the sake of morality, namely, God, freedom and immortality. Freedom, because man cannot be morally responsible unless he is free; God, because man cannot reward himself for moral actions and immortality because man's life is too short for his moral rewards hence the need for hereafter.¹⁸

The idea of immortality of soul in the West suffered a devastating blow with the emergence of the existentialists especially of atheistic inclination. For them, man has no pre-established essence. He is the creator of himself and can only become what he makes himself. Life has no purpose or meaning and being his own master has the duty to infuse meaning into his life by making significant presence. Man has only the present ephemeral world to live and achieve all he could for there is no hereafter to look forward to. Man for them is a bundle of possibilities and the ultimate of these possibilities is death; for man is a being unto death. "Death as the end of Dasein is Dasein's own most-own possibility: non-relational, certain and as definitive, not to be outstripped. Death is, as Dasein's end, in the Being of this entity towards its end."¹⁹ This implies that death is the fulfilment of Dasein's Being and nothing follows. This is why man is always in fearful anticipation of death which is as certain as uncertainty of its time; for once man is born he is old enough die. This defines man's finitude, upon his infinite possibilities to create himself and his relational world, death as man's ultimate end poses limitations to him. Iroegbu, reflecting on Sartrean absurdity and existence, summarizes existentialist disposition towards post-mortem existence

¹⁷. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (New York: Everyman's Books, 1974).

¹⁸. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, INC., 1956), 126 -127.

¹⁹. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 258 - 259.

thus, "[.... atheism blinds any possible transcendental longing".²⁰

Although the existentialists tried to foreclose and erase the idea and possibility of post-mortem existence, the idea still lives on even among Western philosophers. Thinkers are coerced into revision of the thought when confronted by the vicissitude of death especially of a dear one.

The Human Person, Death and Post-Mortem Existence in the Light of African Cosmology

The African human person appears diametrically different from that of Western philosophy, with destination as different as their being. The African person though a composite is an integral whole which strictly speaking is indissoluble even at death. Thus, the African person is a being destined for eternal existence though he momentarily changes his mode of being.

Just as the Western conception of human person, the African conceives human person as composed of many elements, not just body and soul. However, his being and existence transcend those elements which do not actually define his personality and destiny. That is to say the personal identity of the African is far beyond his constituents.

In Akan (Ghana) traditional thought, a person is composed of three basic elements – the *Okra* (soul), *Sunsun* (spirit) and *Honhom* or *Nipadua* (body). However, authors still have variations of this general outline and the interpretations given to various constituents of human person. For instance, Kwasi Wiredu maintains that the Akan Human person has five

²⁰. Pantaleon Iroegbu, *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*, (Owerri: International Universities Press Ltd, 1995), 255.

different rudiments – *Okra* (soul), *Sunsun* (character), *Nipadua* (body), *Ntoro* (paternal genes) and *Mogya* (maternal blood).²¹

Among the Bantu, *Muntu*, the living person, according to Kagame, is related to *bugingo* – duration of life, *buzima* – biological life, *magara* – spiritual life and *Nommo* – the life force, "the genuine Muntu".²² Similarly, the Yoruba conceive human person (*eniyán*) as composed of *Ara* – body, *emi* – life/spirit, *Ori* – personality self, *A-kunle-yan* – acquired destiny, *A-kunle-gba* – received destiny and *Ayan-mo* – affixed destiny. A variant of this shows *eniyán* as made up of *ara* (body), *è mí*, (spirit/life), *okàn*, (mind/heart) or soul and *Orí*, (the personality self).²³ All this can be simplified into the inner self – *Ori-inu* and the outer person – the body. *Ori* is the essence of one's personality which controls and guides one's life in line with the destiny one received prior to birth.²⁴

For the Igbo of Nigeria, *mmadu* (the human person) is a composite of *ahu* – body, *muo* – spirit/soul and *uche/echiche/ako-na-uche* – intellect/mind/reasoning. Uche as a faculty may exist potentially as in children, attenuate as in the senile or be lost as in the insane. Iroegbu argues vehemently that *ahu* (body) is the *mmaduness* of *mmadu* (the humanness of the human) since without it man becomes a pure spirit.²⁵ In Igbo cosmology, *ahu* (body) is so much important component of man such that even the dead are embodied spirit, not pure spirit.

²¹ Kwasi Wiredu, "The Concept of Mind with Particular Reference to the Language and Thought of the Akans" in G. Floistad (ed.), *Contemporary Philosophy*, Vol. 5, *African Philosophy*, (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff Publ. 1987), 161.

²² Janheinz Jahn, *Mutu*, (New York: Grove Press Inc. 1961), 107.

²³ Teresia Mbari Hinga, "Afterlife: African Concepts", *Encyclopedia of Religion* (2005), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/afterlife-african-concepts>, Accessed: 20/05/2022.

²⁴ Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, (London: Longmans, 1962), 170.

²⁵ Iroegbu, *Metaphysics*, 352.

Corroborating this stance Nwigwe writes: "[...] the concept of 'ahu' – 'body' does not stand merely as physical body, because bodily organs are believed to exercise mental function. 'Ahu' – 'body' is applied to stand for a living human being".²⁶

To be added to this is that the importance of the body is not limited to the living human person. The living-dead have bodies too. The only difference is that the bodies of the latter are so rarefied, meta-materials that can act contrary to physical laws. Body serves as the basis for individuation and recognition of both the living human person and the living-dead. This conception of the body pervades most African cultures and can be observed in the rituals of burial. Thus the idea of separation of body and spirit at death and the decaying of body is foreign to African conception. In principle, African body does not decay and that it is not discarded anyhow; it is laid to rest rather than buried.

Flowing from the above is the complexity of the human person in African thought. Gyekye attests to this and avers:

From the point of view of the Akan metaphysics of the person and of the world in general, this seems to imply that a human being is not just an assemblage of flesh and bone, that he or she is a complex being who cannot be explain by the same laws of physics used to explain inanimate things....²⁷

Though a composite, the human person is an integral whole whose components are not actually separable and do not define him. Thus, there are three fundamental aspects that constitute the human person in African sense – the transcendental, the communal, and the individual.²⁸ Being

^{26.} Nwigwe, *The Concept of Immortality*, 19.

^{27.} Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 103.

^{28.} Iroegbu, *Metaphysics*, 80.

transcendental, he is not confined to ephemeral life. He is an individual, yet his individuality is meaningless outside the community that defines, recognizes and perfects such individuality. He is per se a communitarian individual – an individual comprehensive only in a community of both the living and the living dead.

The human person in Africa finds its definition in life-in-community, that is, "the social, communal and relational self".²⁹ This being-with-others is what Mbiti expresses in the "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am".³⁰ Iroegbu captures this in these words:

While in the Western metaphysics of personality, personhood is defined by the distinctness of individuality from the society; in the African one, the community plays a critical role in the individual's acquisition of full personhood. Using the Mbitian phrasing 'I am because we are' Ifeanyi Menkiti argues further that it is the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static rationality, will or memory.³¹

This African conception of human person as a relational self in communion with the living and the living dead calls of African conception of death; for the death of a person so defined cannot be the separation of body and soul. To achieve this, African notion of the universe is necessary. For the African, the universe is two dimensional – the physical world (the realm of the living) and the spiritual world (the realm of the living-dead and the spirit). One spectacular thing is that the realms are not separable or distant as the heaven from the earth in Christian conception. The living-dead and the spirits are very much involved in the daily events of the physical world and so are the living

^{29.} Iroegbu, *Metaphysics*, 79

^{30.} John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, (London: Heinemann, 1969), 108.

^{31.} Iroegbu, *Metaphysics*, 355.

who are spiritual enough privy to the activities in the spiritual world. The events of the spiritual world are not so distinct from the activities of the physical world. Expressing this with regards to the Yoruba's hereafter, Bolaji Idowu avers that life in the "good orun" is but a larger and freer copy of this worldly life, in the absence of earthly vicissitudes.³²

From the above view of the universe, death in Africa is a mere transition from the physical realm to the spiritual realm. It is "a change of status, an entrance into a new and deeper relationship with the clan, tribe and family",³³ all before one and after. Thus, death is a mere departure from physical life and not a complete annihilation of man nor does it alter the personality of the individual. This informs egalitarianism and industriousness in the African because what one is here one continues to be hereafter. Even the idea of immortality of soul and decay of the body is not truly African. In the grave the body rarefies into a metaphysical body. Asouzu tries to capture this by saying that "The physical decay of the body is a consequence of its corporeality but the real body continues its existence after death and constitutes an integral part of the totality that is evident in its appearance as corporeal spirits and re-personated of reincarnated bodies ...".³⁴ Thus:

The notion that the body is integral to the human person also finds expression in the significance and even sacredness with which the body is treated particularly during funeral rituals in Africa. Such rituals and related "oratures" (myths, stories, and songs) constitute a commentary by humans on their experiences in this world and its beyond and offer significant clues regarding concepts of the afterlife.³⁵

^{32.} Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, (N. Y.: Wazobia, 1994), 177.

^{33.} L. Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Tradition of Abundant Life*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1998), 145.

^{34.} Innocent I. Asouzu, *The Method and Perspectives of Contemporary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy*, (Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2004), 168.

^{35.} Hinga, "Afterlife: African Concepts"

This shows that death does not strictly speaking destroy any aspect of the human person. Although death dissolves bodies, the deathless soul remains inseparable with the body even after death. So death is a continuation of human life which the African perceives as long journey with interludes within which rituals are used to catapult man to the next stage. Death can only be bad if it occurs when man has not fulfilled his mission on earth. The primary goal of an African is to beget children that will maintain his personal immortality by constant invocation, libation and sacrifices. Secondly, the African has a mission to amass wealth that will enable him get proper and befitting burial to facilitate his joining the ancestors and occupy rightful social stratum among the dead. So, bad death is dying without children or proper burial. In a nutshell, "[...] to die without possibility of receiving proper burial rites is not to complete well the race of life".³⁶

It is noteworthy that the state of the dead is decided by the living who can condemn evil doers by denying them proper burial. The good ones even when they die without children are redeemed by giving them namesake or marrying wives for them.

We can now say that the human person in African conception is not just immortal but eternal. He belongs to the supernatural world and returns to that after his sojourn on earth. Death marks this return and as such not truly a negative occurrence. Death may appear frustrating because it takes away dear ones and deprives people of the companionship and other gifts that such a relationship brings. It is however not an annihilation of the person. The deceased may be physically gone, but they are still here as persons and the living can still communicate with

³⁶. Isidore O. O. Igwegbe, *The Meaning of the Beginning Our World, Our Vision: Relevance of African Identity in Popular Religious Philosophy*, (Enugu: Snaap Press Nig. Ltd., 2002), 5.

them. The paradox is that the dead are not really dead³⁷ they continue to live in the spiritual realm and exert a lot of influence on the living, both positively and negatively.

Conclusion

Man throughout the ages has continued to nurse the feeling that he is a being whose existence is beyond this ephemeral short spanned life. He looks forward to continue living after death. However, the inability to experience death and stage back with the information about hereafter has combined with this feeling to produce in man a tantalizing hope of post-mortem existence. Since man's curiosity propels him to a continuous search for answers to his existential problems, he has not given up in his quest to get a glimpse of what follows his demise. His consciousness prevents him from accepting death as facticity that terminates his indefinite possibilities.

Philosophy has not truly helped man in this puzzle as it raises more questions than answers, unable to settle the problem of posthumous existence with certainty, either affirmatively or pessimistically. Man is thus tempted to abandon the quest to ascertain what follows dying but the demise of a dear one stings him back to the thought. Then the question of what his auto-transcendence implies is regurgitated. He wonders what to make of dreams, near death experience, extra-sensory experience and the likes and wonders whether they are not pointers to post-mortem existence.

Western conception of human person and death itself compound the problem. It defines the human person as a composite of body and soul and death as the dissolution of this composition which only the soul is pessimistically held as capable of outliving. Yet, such aspects of man as

^{37.} Hinga, "Afterlife: African Concepts"

his capacity for auto-transcendence which points man as other-world oriented being could not be properly addressed.

African cosmology bridges the yearning gap by conceiving the world as made up of two seamlessly inseparable realms in which one is a continuation of the other; the human person as indissoluble composite whose being lies beyond its components and death as mere transition from one realm of life to another. Thus, African cosmology guarantees post mortem existence in which not only the soul but the entire personality of man including his individuality and sociality survives death. From the foregoing, one can safely conclude that African cosmology has very much assuring answer to the question of post-mortem existence, insisting that upon the fluidity of human life man has continuous existence as an embodied-spirit.

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