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## An Analytical Approach to the Human Body from the Perspective of Transcendental Wisdom and Yoruba Philosophy

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT	
<p><b>Article History:</b>                      Received: 15 November 2023                      Revised: 20 January 2024                      Accepted: 10 February 2024</p>	<p><b>SUBJECT &amp; OBJECTIVES:</b> This research paper aims to delve into the foundational beliefs and principles of Yoruba Philosophy and Transcendental wisdom regarding the human body, including its composition, function, and significance, aiming to explore the similarities and differences in their interpretations and comparative analysis between these two philosophies.</p>	
<p><b>Key Words:</b>                      Human Body                      Imaginal Body                      Orunmila                      Yoruba Philosophy                      Transcendental Wisdom</p>	<p><b>METHOD &amp; FINDING:</b> By utilizing library research, descriptive analysis, and analytical approaches, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the concept of the human body in the realms of Yoruba Philosophy and Transcendental Wisdom. It investigates how these philosophical perspectives influence cultural practices, rituals, and beliefs related to the human body in Yoruba and Islamic societies, critically reflecting on the implications of these varied philosophical views for understanding the nature of the human body, its connection to the soul, and its place within cosmology and metaphysics.</p>	
<p><b>DOI:</b>  <a href="https://doi.org/10.22034/imjpl.2024.9506">10.22034/imjpl.2024.9506</a></p>	<p><b>CONCLUSION:</b> The study conducts a comparative analysis of the human body in Yoruba Philosophy and Transcendent Wisdom, highlighting the divergent perspectives. In Yoruba Philosophy, the human body is viewed as an essential aspect of an individual's holistic existence, intricately connected to spiritual and material realms. It is considered to embody various spiritual essences and energies crucial for achieving internal equilibrium. The body also holds significant cultural and social value, representing personal and communal identities. Conversely, in Transcendental Wisdom, the human body is seen as a transient vessel facilitating the soul's pursuit of enlightenment and divine knowledge, portraying it as a means for its transcendental journey.</p>	
		
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## Introduction

Understanding the human body through *Yoruba Philosophy* is significant for many reasons. It highlights the body's spiritual aspects, viewing it as a vessel for the immortal soul and its connection to the environment. Traditional *Yoruba* healing practices emphasize body balance, reflecting personal and cultural identities. *Segun Gbadegesin* notes the body is a temporary home for the soul (*Gbadegesin, 1996*).

In contrast, *Mulla Şadrā's Transcendental Wisdom* also views the body as a vessel for the soul, introducing the "imaginal body" that bridges the physical and spiritual realms world (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*).

This research explores the human body concept in both philosophies, focusing on their holistic nature.

As the primary research question, what is the human body concept in *Yoruba Philosophy* and *Transcendental*

*Wisdom*, and what common aspects do both schools share?

I will conduct a thorough examination using library, descriptive, and analytical methods. Engaging with *Yoruba Philosophy* is significant for its intricate connections between the human body and cultural, spiritual, and existential insights, allowing nuanced comparisons with *Transcendental Wisdom* and highlighting unique ontological and epistemological viewpoints.

## Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

### 1. Human Body

The concept of the "human body" can be understood in various contexts. In Latin, it is called "Corpus" (*Wysiadecki et al., 2024*). The human body is defined as the physical substance of an organism, composed of living cells organized into tissues, organs, and systems (*The Encyclopaedia, 2024*).

Biologically, it consists of tissues and organs forming a single structure while containing

billions of cells that work together to sustain life. The study of the human body encompasses physiology (functions) and anatomy (structure) (*Villa-Forte, 2022*). Essentially, the body is a complex entity of organs and systems cooperating to fulfill vital functions (*Wysiadecki et al., 2024*). *Wieczorkiewicz Anna* (2000) notes that the body enables existence in time and space. Definitions of the human body and soul vary across philosophies (*Wysiadecki et al., 2024*).

## 2. Imaginal Body

The term "Imagination" in philosophy has two qualifiers: continuous and discontinuous. "Imagination" as discontinuous refers to the soul's perceptive faculty, while continuous pertains to the imaginal world, where the imaginal body exists (*Rahimian & Mohammad Zadeh, 2015*).

## 3. Orunmila

*Shopie Bosede Oluwole* explores three perspectives to reveal the essence of *Orunmila*: the

Mythical, Corporate, and Historical. The Mythical *Orunmila* is depicted as a celestial figure providing wisdom to the community, while the Corporate *Orunmila* embodies *Yoruba* philosophical thought and the continuity of teachings across generations. The Historical *Orunmila*, born around 500 B.C., propagated *Ifa* teachings and influenced its evolution through the *Babalawo* tradition. *Oluwole's* analysis positions *Orunmila* as a philosopher, the founder of *Ifa* divination, and a mentor to many brilliant minds, similar to *Socrates* in European culture (*Olúwoḷé, 2017*).

## 4. Yoruba Philosophy

The Yoruba people, a major sub-Saharan ethnic group primarily in Nigeria, make up 21.4% of the country's population, accounting for about 45,668,000 individuals (*World Data, 2023*), mainly in *Lagos, Oyo, and Ogun* (*Childs & Falola, 2005*). In the Benin Republic, they represent 12.2% of the population, totaling

1,586,000, with their presence extending from southern Nigeria to the *Weme River* and into the *Atakpame* region (*World Data, 2023*). *Yoruba* communities are also found in *Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire*, and the *diaspora* (*Akyeampong, 2000; Aribidesi, 2008*).

As articulated by *Prince Yemi D. Ogunyemi* (2018), *Yoruba Philosophy* is a narrative, cultural, and folk philosophy that explores the nature and origins of both physical and spiritual realms. It comprises narratives and customs aimed at understanding the universe's essence and causes (*Ogunyemi, 2015*). While it is a branch of African philosophy, it specifically centers on the *Yoruba* people, their environment, and their existence.

Practiced by *Yoruba* scholars, it acknowledges *Oduduwa* as the founder of the *Yoruba* nation and philosophy (*Agai, 2015; Kamau, 1976*). Topics encompass literature, folklore, proverbs, love, wisdom, religion, metaphysics, ethics, epistemology,

ontology, and anthropology. *Yoruba* philosophers investigate the physical and spiritual worlds through three key elements: *Ori, Ifa (Orunmila), aphorisms, and proverbs*.

### 5. Transcendental Wisdom

*Al- Hikmat al-Muta'āliyah* (Transcendental Wisdom) was pioneered by *Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzi*, known as *Mulla Şadrā*. The term *Şadrāi* refers to *Mulla Şadrā's* disciples and students interested in his philosophical methods. Before *al-Hikmat al-Muta'āliyah*, four major schools of thought existed in the Islamic world, namely Peripateticism, Illuminative philosophy, Mysticism, and *Kalām* (theology). *Mulla Şadrā's* unique approach instigated a significant scientific revolution in Islamic philosophy, shaping its history, now recognized as the *Transcendental Wisdom* school (*Motahari, 1996*).

The term *al- Hikmat al-Muta'āliyah* was originally coined by *Avicenna* in *al-'Ishārāt* for his philosophical school,

now associated with Peripatetic Philosophy (Avicenna, 1997). *Transcendental Wisdom* blends intuitive and mystical experiences with rationality to address philosophical problems (Tusi, 1996; Ibrahim & Gorjian, 2023).

Like its predecessors, it discusses special and general theology. Mulla Şadrā introduced new topics, such as the "Primacy of Existence," which helped resolve various philosophical disputes, including those between philosophy, mysticism, and theology (Mulla Şadrā, 1981; Obudiyyat, 2014).

### Literature Review

*Yoruba Philosophy* and *Transcendental Wisdom* have each examined the concept of the human body. Notable works include Temitope Adefarakan's article "8 Integrating Body, Mind, and Spirit Through the Yoruba Concept of Ori" (2018), Akin Makinde's (1984) study on "An African Concept of Human Personality: The Yoruba Example," Khademi et al (2021) research on the "Nature of Soul and Body in Sadraic

*Solution to Soul and Body Problematique*," and Mousavi Hadi's (2016) study on "The Concept of Body in Mulla Şadrā's Perspective." However, no comparative analysis between the two schools has been conducted to date.

### The Concept of the Human Body in Yoruba

The term 'body' in *Yoruba* is 'Ara, which refers to the physical aspect of a human being, encompassing both external and internal components (Gbadegesin, 1996; Makinde, 1984). In *Yoruba Philosophy*, Ara is not limited to just the body frame but includes all material constituents (Oladipo, 1992), such as the external (*ori, oju, apa, ese, eti, imu, enu*) and internal organs e.g., brain, skull, intestines, kidneys, and liver (Dingemanse, 2006).

Each part has vital functions that sustain life (Jegede, 2005). Segun Gbadegesin views the body as a vessel representing various aspects of a person, facilitating interaction with the world through the senses. He



describes it as a temporary home for the soul, emphasizing its physical attributes. *Yoruba* thinkers largely agree there is more to a human than just the body (*Gbadegesin, 1996*).

### 1. The Creation of the Human Body

*Yoruba Philosophy* posits that the creation of the human body entails a division of labor among *Olodumare*, *Orisanla*, *Ajala* (*Gbadegesin, 1996*), and *Ogun* (*Makinde, 1984*). It is believed that *Olodumare* collaborated with these Gods i.e. *Orisanla*, *Ajala*, and *Ogun* to create human beings (*Gbadegesin, 1996*). *Orisanla*, in particular, was responsible for constructing and shaping the physical body (*Ibid*). This system can be likened to the system of creation of human beings aided by four supreme psychic forces known as the four great angels in *Transcendental Philosophy* (*Abdul Haq, 1972*). *Olodumare* then infused the soul into it (*Gbadegesin, 2004*).

Subsequently, the body, along with the living force (*emi*),

proceeds to the reservoir of inner heads (*ori*), which are molded by *Ajala*, where the individual selects their destiny (*ori*) (*Ibid*).

### 2. The Interconnection Between the Human Physical and Spiritual Bodies

The interconnection between the physical and spiritual bodies is a key concept in *Yoruba Philosophy*, where the physical body serves as a vessel for the spiritual body, encompassing the individual's essence or soul. Each body influences the other; the health of the physical body affects the spiritual body and vice versa. *Segun Gbadegesin* (1984) distinguishes the Material world (physical body) from the Non-material world (spiritual body), which is home to spiritual beings like *Olodumare*, *Orisa*, and *ancestors*. *Olodumare*, the supreme deity, operates indirectly through *Orisa*, who acts as an intermediary between *Olodumare* and humans while also protecting them from evil threats.

*Ancestors* are the forebears who transition from the material to the immaterial after death, acquiring divinity (*Gbadegesin, 2004*). *Abimbola* (1971) describes death as a transformation enabling individuals to gain greater authority and become an *Orisa* for their lineage. The connection between parents and children persists after death, with ancestors protecting their descendants from misfortune, while *Orisa* safeguards all humanity. Honoring ancestors is crucial for ensuring their protection and avoiding their wrath. This highlights the holistic nature of *Yoruba Philosophy*, where physical and spiritual realms are intertwined, and through rituals, the Yoruba aims to maintain balance and harmony, influencing their ethics, morality, and identity.

### **3. The Human Body's Fate After Death**

*Yoruba Philosophy* emphasizes the duality of human beings, consisting of body and soul, referred to as the material (body) and non-material (soul)

worlds (*Gbadegesin 1984*). The material world includes physical entities like the human body, plants, animals, and land, while the non-material world is home to *Olodumare*, *Orisa*, and *ancestors*.

The material is mortal, while the spiritual is immortal, with the material world ultimately coming to an end, whereas the spirit world endures (*Ibid*). *Gbadegesin* suggests that the body is a temporary abode for the soul, enabling it to navigate the physical realm and fulfill earthly responsibilities (*Ibid*).

In *Yoruba* beliefs, death marks the end of earthly existence and the start of an afterlife, indicating that the 'end' refers to the fate of the body rather than the soul. Consequently, *Yoruba* philosophers focus more on the soul's fate after death rather than the body's.

Although there is a belief in reincarnation (*atunwaye*), where individuals return to fulfill uncompleted dreams, this manifests in three forms: *Ipadawaye* (ancestor's rebirth),

*Akudaaya* (die and reappear), and *Abiku* (born to die) (*Osanyinbí & Falana, 2016*).

### **The Concept of the Human Body in Transcendental Wisdom**

The nature and definition of the body in *Mulla Şadrā's* philosophy is a complex and ambiguous issue within the transcendental philosophical system (*Mousavi, 2016*). Various perspectives emerge from published works, highlighting significant differences in interpreting the body based on *Mulla Şadrā's* expressions (*Ibid*). Consequently, finding a comprehensive definition that reconciles all his contradictory expressions proves challenging.

*Mulla Şadrā* often uses multiple adjectives to describe the body rather than a single term (*Ibid*). In *Transcendental Wisdom*, key foundations of the human body include the originality of existence, substantial motion, and the relationship between the soul and the body.

The term "body" refers to a natural organic entity capable

of vital functions and actions through various instruments (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981; Khademi et al, 2021*), applicable even to vegetative bodies. The soul is defined by philosophers as the "first entelechy of a natural body," (*Khamenei, 2003; Afzali & Ghasempour, 2014*) implying that a natural organic body is synonymous with the concept of a body (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981; Khademi et al, 2021*).

In *Transcendental Wisdom*, "organic" is interpreted as "possessing faculties," encompassing celestial, human, animal, and vegetative souls (*Ibid*). *Mulla Şadrā* posits that the body is a composite of conflicting elements tending toward separation, sustained by a force beyond itself (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981; Sajjadi, 1982*).

The body is a natural organic entity whose movement begins at conception as substantial motion (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*). The body's quality relies on the soul's attachment; without the soul, the body lacks life



and resembles any inanimate object (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*). The body represents the material aspect of the soul, and the unity of both is essential for regulation and sustenance (*Mulla Şadrā, 2003*).

According to *Transcendental Wisdom*, the decline of the soul leads to the body's decline, as the soul's excessiveness is linked to the body (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*). If the soul diminishes, so does the body's existence, which depends on the soul's connection and its excessiveness (*Ibid*). *Mulla Şadrā* distinguishes between the material body and the real body, the latter being devoid of natural characteristics and inherently connected to the pure origin (*Ibid*). He identifies three categories of the body, namely the material body, the subtle body, and a new category called the imaginal body.

### 1. Material Body

The material body is a composite entity of matter and form, relying on matter for its existence (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*;

*Azarian, 2021*). It consists of "matter" as the foundation and "form," and is primarily examined in physics. Both matter and form share a three-dimensional structure and are composed of the four elements (*al- 'Anasir al-Arb 'ah*) in various proportions (*Ibid*; *Sheikh, 2019*).

The material body exists in the physical world, displaying its effects and characteristics (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*). *Mulla Şadrā* viewed the material body as made up of metaphysical elements that are in conflict and tend toward separation and disintegration (*Ibid*). These elements require the soul to maintain their balance and unity (*Mulla Şadrā, 2003*). According to *Transcendental Philosophy*, the material body is a composite entity with multiple facets and temporal qualities, marked by transient and unreal perceptible parts susceptible to decay (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*; *Zamaniha & Yavari, 2018*).

The body's outward appearance differs from substances governed by the soul, which is achieved through intermediaries (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981; Khademi et al, 2021*). The material body serves as the vessel for the soul, preserving its essence and temperament; without it, the body decays, leaving no means for the soul's expression (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981; Obudiyyat, 2014*).

The soul is essential for the natural body, just as form is for matter. Matter lacks substantial form without the soul, and similarly, the soul cannot exist in the material world without the body. The soul's connection to the body is natural, resulting from the body's development through substantial movement. While the soul and body coexist in their natural states, in the afterlife, the body, having shed imperfections, becomes the form of the soul (*Mulla Şadrā, 2012*).

## 2. Imaginal Body

*Mulla Şadrā* was the first philosopher to demonstrate the

existence of a body beyond the material one, known as the "imaginal, exemplar, or ideal body" (*Mulla Şadrā, 2002; 1981; Obudiyyat, 2014; Miri, 2021*). He sometimes refers to this body as the psychic animal, intermediate animal, or animal soul (*Ibid*).

The imaginal body is distinct from matter but has material consequences, being superior to the material body, which serves merely as an outer shell between the pure soul and the physical body. Like the physical body, it has size, shape, and form, but it is immaterial and lacks mass.

*Mulla Şadrā* describes imaginal bodies as intermediaries between two worlds, blending abstraction and corporeality. They are akin to a shadow of the soul, inseparable from it, unlike perishable earthly bodies. The afterlife's elements, such as trees and rivers, take on conceptual forms based on perception, which embodies their essence (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*).

The imaginal body, as described in *Şadrā*'s works,

enables us to interpret *Nafs* (soul) as an ideal body, serving as the source of vital activities and life in humans, thus aligning with the definition of the soul (*Ibid; Obudiyyat, 2014*). This relationship illustrates the complexity of the issue while offering potential solutions to philosophical problems, such as bodily resurrection, embodiment of actions, and dream interpretation.

A key function of the imaginal body in Transcendental wisdom is to clarify the connection between the soul and the body. *Mulla Şadrā* provides proof of the imaginal body's existence in *Asfar*, stating that it is the form perceived in dreams, where individuals experience sensory actions through spiritual faculties rather than physical organs (*Mulla Şadrā, 1981*).

### 3. Subtle Body

*Mulla Şadrā* describes the true primary human body as the subtle body, also referred to as the real body, luminous body, or primary body. In the ninth

volume of *Asfār*, he states that the soul operates not in the heavy body, which inherently induces slackness, but in a subtle, balanced, luminous entity that represents the primary (subtle) body, while the heavy body acts as its outer covering (*Mulla Şadrā, 2003*).

He emphasizes several characteristics of this real (subtle) body. They come as follows;

- It is a luminous essence.
- It can be enveloped by the physical body.
- It does not provoke tremors or shivers.
- It is one of the faculties of the soul.
- Light, perception, and life flow through it.
- Its relationship with the soul resembles that of light with the sun.
- The soul has essential control over it.
- It does not manifest through ordinary senses.
- It interacts with similar entities.
- It is inherently alive and immortal.

- It possesses an existential union with the soul (*Mulla Şadrā, 2003*).

*Mulla Şadrā* uses "luminous" for entities with a degree of abstraction (*Ibid*). The soul serves as the sheath of the luminous body only if the physical body's ultimate stage is viewed as the initial stage of the luminous body, allowing both to coexist. While the subtle body can be seen as a lower degree of the soul and the physical body as its covering, there is no existential unity between the two; they possess distinct levels of existence that allow for connection. This correspondence between their levels establishes the conditions for the soul's governance over the body (*Mousavi, 2016*).

One might wonder if Yoruba Philosophy divides the human body or recognizes another body as in *Transcendental Wisdom*. However, *Yoruba Philosophy* sees humans as having a single body that functions as a vessel for the

soul in the material world (*Gbadegesin, 2004*).

#### **4. Human Body through the Lens of Substantial Motion**

*Mulla Şadrā* viewed the body not just as a material aspect of humanity but as evolving toward abstract perfection through substantial motion (*Mulla Şadrā, 2003*). His philosophy emphasizes that the material world serves as the foundation for humanity's evolutionary journey toward pure abstraction.

According to the theory of substantial motion, the entire material universe transitions gradually from materiality to abstraction, and the human soul embodies this process. The soul starts as a corporeal entity and evolves spiritually through life in the earthly realm.

Initially, the soul requires a material body for its existence. As it progresses through stages of perfection, it manages the body and influences its faculties and organs, remaining dependent on it. *Mulla Şadrā* states that the

body is the material cause of the soul, which serves as the formal cause and essence of humanity (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 2003*).

The connection between the soul and body is mediated by a subtle, luminous spirit that possesses both corporeal and spiritual attributes. Once the soul attains perfection, it no longer needs the body, and its attachment diminishes until it eventually discards the body at natural death. *Mulla Ṣadrā* argues that the soul persists after death, associating with a liminal or otherworldly body (*Ibid*).

### 5. The Creation of the Human Body

Delving into the creation of human beings in *Transcendental Philosophy* necessitates referencing the Holy Qur'an and Ḥadīth. *Ṣadrāians* believe that God has incorporated the essence of all material elements into the physical constitution of human beings (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981; Abdul Haq, 1972*).

They provide evidence from these texts to support their claims, asserting that humans

synthesize both the material and spiritual worlds. In material terms, humans embody the total form of matter, integrated with the essence of all physical elements (*Ibid*).

Various verses of the Qur'an elucidate human creation, covering both body and soul (*Misbah Yazdi, 2010; Tabatabai, 1997*). The Qur'an mentions multiple stages and materials involved in this creation, including earth (*The Qur'an, 11: 61; 53: 32*), water (*The Qur'an, 25: 45; 21: 30; 77: 20; 32: 8; 86: 5-6; 25: 54*), sperm (*The Qur'an, 16: 4; 18: 37; 22: 5; 23: 13-14*), dust (*The Qur'an, 3: 59; 13: 5; 18: 37; 22: 5; 32: 7*), clay (*The Qur'an, 6: 2*), quintessence or extraction of clay (*The Qur'an 23: 12; 32: 7-9*), sticky clay (*The Qur'an, 37: 11*), sounding clay and mud molded in to shape (*The Qur'an, 15: 26,28,33*), sounding clay like the pottery (*The Qur'an, 55: 14*), and the Spirit breathed into humans (*The Qur'an, 15: 29; 38: 72*).

*Ṣadrāians* interpret these terms as follows: dust represents



primary matter; clay indicates a mixture of water and dust; quintessence refers to refined clay; sticky clay denotes malleable clay; sounding clay suggests air-molded clay; and the last forms signify the effects of fire (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 2000; Ibid, 2001; Abdul Haq, 1972*).

Ultimately, God completes the human body by breathing His Spirit into it (*The Qur'an, 15: 29; 38: 72*).

*Transcendental Wisdom* posits that the creation, maintenance, and reality of humans involve four supreme psychic forces or angels, namely *Isrāfīl*, *Mīkā'īl*, *Jibrīl*, and *'Āzar'ēl*. *Isrāfīl* breathes life into human bodies, while *Mīkā'īl* provides food and sustenance. *Jibrīl* conveys divine messages to prophets, and *'Āzar'ēl* abstracts forms from matter and transitions souls from the physical to the spiritual realm (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 2001*).

Each angel interacts with different human faculties: *Isrāfīl* influences thought and imagination, *Mīkā'īl* aids memory

and assimilation, *Jibrīl* enhances speech and comprehension, and *'Āzar'ēl* oversees the change from physical to spiritual existence (*Ibid; Tabatabai, 1997*).

## 6. The Human Body's Fate After Death

To understand the fate of the human body in *Transcendental Wisdom*, one must explore the material body's nature. According to *Ṣadrāians*, the body is a "Material body", a composite of matter and form, dependent on matter for existence (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981; Azarian, 2021*). It embodies metaphysical elements and consists of conflicting parts that naturally tend towards separation and disintegration (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981*).

The visible aspects of this body are transient, unreal, and subject to decay (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981; Zamaniha & Yavari, 2018*). The soul is essential for maintaining the body's balance and unity (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981; Khademi et al, 2021*), acting as its vessel and preserving its essence. Without

the body, the soul lacks the means for growth and expression (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981; Obudiyyat, 2014*). The soul's presence is as vital to the body as form is to substance; without the soul, the body lacks purpose (*Ibid*). In this philosophy, death signifies the body's decay and serves as the soul's transition to a higher realm, allowing it to fulfill its purpose and ascend.

*Transcendental Wisdom* categorizes existence into three realms: the lowest is the material world, transient and corrupt; the middle comprises ideal forms separated from matter; and the highest realm consists of intellectual forms and divine likeness. Only the human soul integrates these three realms while retaining personal unity. Throughout life, humans evolve, refining their essence and progressing towards a spiritual realm, eventually attaining intellectual capacities (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981*). Thus, death signifies the body's end in the material realm, confirming

the body's nature as part of the material world.

### **Comparative of Yoruba Philosophy and Transcendental Wisdom**

This section investigates similarities and differences between *Yoruba Philosophy* and *Transcendental Wisdom*.

#### **1. Creation of the Human Body**

The creation process in *Yoruba Philosophy* parallels the human creation in *Transcendental Wisdom*. In *Yoruba* belief, creating the human body involves a collaborative effort among *Olodumare* (the Almighty), *Orisanla*, *Ajala*, and *Ogun* (*Gbadegesin, 1996; Makinde, 1984*). *Olodumare* directly creates the human soul, while *Orisanla* shapes the physical body and acts as a mediator between *Olodumare* and humans, protecting them from malevolent forces. *Ancestors* and *Orisa* both serve protective roles, but *Orisa* safeguards all humanity, whereas *ancestors* protect their

descendants (*Gbadegesin, 2004*). *Ajala* molds the inner heads (*ori*) and determines destiny, while *Ogun*, the God of Iron, shapes limbs and digits (*Makinde, 1984*).

*Transcendental Wisdom* similarly attributes the creation and reality of humans and the physical world to four supreme psychic forces known as the four great angels, namely *Isrāfīl*, *Mīkā'il*, *Jibrīl*, and *'Āzar'ēl* (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 2001*). *Isrāfīl* breathes life into human bodies, while *Mīkā'il* provides sustenance and ensures balanced growth. *Jibrīl* communicates divine revelations to prophets, and *'Āzar'ēl* separates the rational soul from the body, transferring it to the spiritual realm (*Tabatabai, 1997*).

- **Fate of the Human Body**

A significant similarity between both schools is their view on the fate of the human body after death. *Yoruba Philosophy* states that the material world

will eventually cease to exist, while the spirit world is eternal (*Gbadegesin, 1996*). The body serves as a temporary dwelling for the soul, allowing it to fulfill earthly duties, but its journey ends in the ground (*Ibid*). Death represents the end of human existence on earth and the beginning of an afterlife (*Gbadegesin, 2004*).

Similarly, *Transcendental Wisdom* views the material body as a vessel for the soul, essential for its development and expression (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981*). Without the body, the soul lacks a medium (*Obudiyyat, 2014*). The body's purpose is tied to the presence of the soul (*Azarian, 2021*). In this philosophy, death and decomposition signify the material body's role in facilitating the soul's transition to a higher realm beyond the material world (*Mulla Ṣadrā, 1981*).

- **Philosophical Foundation**

The main difference between

*Yoruba* and *Transcendental Wisdom* lies in their philosophical foundations. However, these distinctions can also be viewed as resemblances. *Yoruba Philosophy* is based on three key elements: *Ori*, *Ifa* (*Orunmila*), *aphorisms*, and *proverbs*. Similarly, *Transcendental Wisdom* relies on three essential elements for philosophical discussions: intellectual reasoning, revelation (intuition), the Holy Qur'an, and tradition (*Ibrahim & Gorjian, 2023*), though they vary in content, principles, and outcomes.

- **The Classification of the Cosmos**

Another difference between the two schools is their categorization of the universe. *Yoruba Philosophy* divides it into two realms: the material world and the non-material world. The material world is further split into two levels: the first level is the realm of direct experience, which includes the earth as a habitat for plants, animals, and

humans, where the body is a temporary residence for the soul. The second level lies beneath the ground, where individuals rest eternally. The non-material world consists of spiritual entities: *Olodumare*, the supreme deity who interacts with humans through *Orisa*, and *ancestors*, who were once humans (*Gbadegesin, 2004*).

In contrast, *Transcendental Wisdom* categorizes the universe into three realms: the material world, the ideal world, and the world of intellect (*Azarian, 2021*). The material world, characterized by motion, space, and time, represents the transition from potentiality to actuality and is seen as the most fragile realm (*Ibid*). Everything in this realm serves as a symbol of the ideal and intellectual realms (*Mulla Sadrā, 1981*).

The ideal world, which is relatively immaterial, exists between the material and intellectual worlds, exhibiting attributes of matter without physical substance (*Ibid*). The

world of intellect consists of entirely immaterial beings (*Ibid*). This hierarchical structure places the ideal world above the material world and the intellectual world at the apex, symbolizing the presence of the Almighty God as the source of all existence (*Ibid*).

• **Classification of the Human Body**

*Yoruba Philosophy* views humans as having one body that serves as a vessel for the soul to fulfill its purpose in the material world. (*Gbadegesin, 2004*). In contrast, *Transcendental Wisdom*

categorizes the body into two types: the material body belonging to the material world and the ideal body belonging to the non-material world (*Mulla Sadrā, 1981*).

The table below highlights similarities in shaded areas, while differences are presented in white.

Comparative of *Yoruba Philosophy* and *Transcendental Wisdom*

No	Title	Yoruba Philosophy	Transcendental Philosophy
1	Creation of the Human Body	involves a division of labor among <i>Olodumare, Orisanla, Ajala,</i> and <i>Ogun</i> .	Involves distributing tasks among the four great angels: <i>Isrāfīl, Mīkā'il, Jibrīl,</i> and <i>'Āzar`ēl</i> .
2	Fate of the Human Body	Its journey concludes with death	Its journey ends through death.
3	Philosophical Foundation	<i>Ori, Ifa (Orunmila), aphorisms,</i> and <i>proverbs</i> .	Intellectual reasoning, revelation, Holy Qur'an, and tradition.
4	Classification of the Cosmos	The material world and the non-material world.	The material world, the ideal world, and the world of intellect.
5	Classification of the Human Body	Material body	Material and imaginal body



### **Conclusion**

*Yoruba Philosophy* views the human body as essential to an individual's existence, linking the material and spiritual realms. It is seen as housing vital spiritual energies, with its well-being crucial for harmony and balance, while also reflecting cultural identity. Conversely, *Transcendental Wisdom* regards the body as a temporary vessel for the soul's journey toward enlightenment. Despite differing perspectives, both philosophies highlight the body's spiritual connection and the importance of maintaining its health for spiritual growth. This comparative analysis enriches our understanding of the body across cultures, emphasizing holistic health and fostering respect for diverse beliefs in a global community.

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