

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN
CHRISTIANITY AND YORUBA RELIGION**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved wife Deaconess Florence Olayide Akindele, for her support both spiritually and physically; to my Late mother Deaconess Mary Adeola Akindele for her unforgettable love; and to my children Eunice, Israel, Thaddeus and Luke Akindele for their endurance when I was undergoing the course

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned Internal Examiners, hereby certify that AKINDELE, Samson Kehinde (10/68CP001) has satisfactorily effected all the necessary corrections pointed out to him during the internal Oral Examination of his Thesis entitled "A Comparative Study of the Concept of Evil in Christianity and Yoruba Religion" held on 26/01/2017.

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ABSTRACT

The problem of evil is explicit on how to reconcile the existence of the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God with the stark reality of evil in the world. Many theists have made several attempts to solve the problem but their proffered solutions are inadequate. The aim of the study was to examine the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion. The objectives of this thesis were to (i) define the co-existence of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion, (ii) probe into the understanding of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion (iii) examine the variables that are involved in the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion; (iv) Examine the meeting point of Christianity and Yoruba religion on the problem of evil. (v) Investigate the teachings of Christianity and Yoruba religion on how to cope with the problem of evil.

The research methods used were interpretative, comparative and phenomenological interpretative method was adopted to explain the meaning people assigned to the problem of evil, comparative method was to compare and contrast the submissions of Christian and Yoruba religious

adherents, while phenomenological method was employed to examine the events and experiences of evil in Christianity and Yoruba Religion.

The findings of this study were that

- i. God is conceived as omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omnipresent in both religions has not changed.
- ii. God is an ontological Being that is fundamental to the belief systems of both Christianity and Yoruba Religion.
- iii. Yoruba religion synthesize the relationship between Satan and *Olodumare* they protect God's Omnipotence by perceiving Satan as God's messenger while Christianity tends to rob God of His Omnipotence by regarding Satan as God's arch enemy who is always mounting pressure on good things created by God.;
- iv. The meeting point of Christianity and Yoruba religion is the willingness to accept the goodness of God in spite of evil in the world He created and that man is essentially responsible for evil; and
- v. Yoruba religion down play the problem of evil by their dualistic approach to it. Good and evil are not two distinct realities in isolation they are related to each other. They are dialectical. Therefore, evil does not contradict divine reality Christianity on the other hand proposes a Christ-centered, God's Spirit controlled life, as a way out of the dominance of evil experiences.

The study concluded that; Yoruba religion has more convincing solution to the problem of evil than Christianity. Evil is consistent with the world as created by God. Therefore, the thesis recommended that scholars in relevant fields should consider the solution proffered by Yoruba religion and endeavour to promote African philosophy in universal scholarship.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0

According to Oshitelu, evil is inevitable as long as man lives.¹ It is palpable that man/woman is not *ab-initio* free from evil because the man / woman is confronted with several unwanted incidences in the world he/she found himself/herself. The problem of evil is, perhaps, as old as man, since man always experienced what he pondered as suffering.² The question: “why is there suffering” has been inquired in almost every culture, religion and philosophy and it will continue to be asked as long as man exists³. The epistemic grilling posed by evil is whether the world contains unwanted state of affairs that provide the basis for an argument that makes it irrational for anybody to be certain of the being of God.⁴

The puzzle of the problem of evil was first observed by Epicurus, of Samos (341-270BC) he put the dilemma of evil, thus:

Is God competent to avert evil in the world, but is reluctant to do so?
Then He is wicked. Is He enthusiastic to prevent it, but is incapable to do it?
Then He is weak. Is He both capable and disposed? Why then is evil?⁵.

The puzzle reveals a rational inconsistency between the existences of an omnipotent, Omni-benevolent God with the blunt veracity of evil in the ecosphere. Evil is sensibly fickle with the certainty of God with stated attributes. So much have been argued in this regard which are discussed in the work. It is unquestionably true that nothing shakes the faith of man than the problem of evil; for instance, poverty, sickness, premature death, accident etc.

Probably, no charge has been made with grander rate or with more passion against the

Christian faith than the being of evil, which cannot be synchronized with the actuality of the inestimable God of the Bible.⁶ This is the argument offered by many among whom is H.J. McCloskey, who wrote, “Evil is a problem for the theists, in that a paradox is tortuous in the datum of evil on the one hand and the conviction in the all-powerful and perfection of God on the other hand. God cannot be both almighty and faultlessly good if evil is real”.⁷

This research work attempted a thorough study of the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion in asserting to decide the degree to which it affects both. In addition, an attempt was made to recommend convincing explanation of the problem of evil.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The problem of evil is an old issue that has always provoked debate in philosophical circles. It is a recurrent issue in philosophical discourse. However, this research work did not join issues in the hypertrophy debate. In this work, care was taken to study the varieties that are involved in the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion. To be specific, Christians cannot deontologise the being of God in the light of the qualities of God. In the Yoruba religion, God is taken as a necessary being and as a result, He is an ontological being. Indeed, it is often acknowledged both by the Christians and adherents of Yoruba religion, that regardless of evil, the good God created the world. The way to reconcile the blimey of God and the problem of evil in the cosmos He created is one of our problems in this work.

The dynamics of reasoning and thoughts on this matter of evil, both among the Christians and the devotees of Yoruba religion seem to have a meeting point in matters of details. This meeting point is the willingness to accept the goodness of God in spite of evil in the sphere He created. When evil happens, Satan is accused while God is justified.

The problem is, is God permissive in cases like that, or, is Satan mounting pressure on the

good things that God created? This constitutes our second statement of the problem.

Some have maintained that man/woman should be created as quasi-automata capable of doing good only but without withdrawing his/her freewill. Is this possible with the consideration of God's almightiness? This is necessary for investigation.

1.2 Objective of the Study

Preceding the coming of the European missionaries Africans were already religious. There appears to be some circle of thoughts on the concept of God by some African scholars when we engage in comparative studies of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion. For example, the perception of Olodumare seems to approximate the traits of God in Christianity and God in Yoruba religion, but, Christianity has created a distinction.

Our Objectives are:

1. To define the coexistence of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion;
2. To probe into the understanding of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion;
3. To examine the variables that are involved in the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion;
4. To examine the meeting point of Christianity and Yoruba religion on the problem of evil;
5. To investigate the teachings of Christianity and Yoruba religion on how to cope with the problem of evil.

1.3 Justification of the Study

In spite of the commendable efforts of some scholars in Philosophy, Sociology, Religion and Psychology, there is still need for research on the problem of evil. It is obvious that as long as humanity exists debate on the problem of evil will continue.

This is because evil is a perennial problem for humans and it is making the human world

almost inhabitable. It is perplexing that, an omnipotent, Omni benevolent, omniscient God could create a world infested by evil. The aggregate of evil in the world raise questions on the type of God conceived by theists. Although this work did not join issue in the hypertrophy debate, it is intended to contribute to the debate by joining Yoruba religion with Christianity on the subject.

The Western scholars have written considerable theses on the subject. Numerous exertions have been made to grapple with the problem of evil, but most of the postulated solutions have failed. The problem has hatched lot of polemics, but there have not been a general agreement on the convincing explanation to the problem.

In addition, there has not been abundant research or literature in Yoruba religion on the subject. Therefore, it is required to consider Yoruba retort to the problem. It is also imperative to join the crusade against the misconception of the whites that Africans are not philosophical that their intelligence is too low to engage in any logical exercise. However, we have discovered through the academic advancement that Africans are highly intelligent with a profound ability to reason intelligently and practically. Therefore, it is relatable to give attention to African Yoruba theodicy as a way of proffering solution to the problem of evil. The assessment of the reaction of Christians and Yoruba religionists to the subject was done by comparing the varieties that are involved in the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion.

The considerations of the proffered solutions by the adherents of each of the religions suggest the most tenable solution to the problem. Furthermore, the consideration of the Yoruba submission on the problem of evil would amount to another pragmatic victory for Africans in the scholarship. It would also reveal to the world that Africans also possess the profound ability to argue philosophically and that philosophy and critical mindedness are not strange to the African

continent.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this research work is limited to the comparative study of the dynamics of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion. The work has examined some intractable issues relating to the problem of evil. The positions of theists and atheists have been investigated with an open mind. The heart of this work is to find better solutions to the age-old problem of evil. Special considerations were given to the solutions proffered by Yoruba religionists.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

It is vital to have an efficient data organization and results analysis. The following specific hypotheses guided the study.

1. Evil ravages the world created by omnipotent, omnibenevolent God
2. The problem of evil in the creation jeopardizes divine reality
3. There have not been convincing answer(s) to the problem of evil
4. Yoruba religion and Christianity reacted to the problem of evil, but Yoruba religion has created a distinction

1.6 Research Methodology.

In this work, so much relied on secondary sources. This involved interpretative, comparative and phenomenological research methods. Interpretative method was used as one of the indispensable research methods. The logical base of interpretative research is hermeneutics. It tries to understand occurrence through the meaning people ascribe to it. The problem of evil is an age long debate; we considered related books and articles to know the meaning people assigned to the problem.

Comparative research method deals with contrasting/ juxtaposing two or more things

with a view to discerning something about one or all of the things being compared. We have tried to compare and contrast, with the aim of discovering the variances and resemblances in the notion of evil both in Christianity and Yoruba religion. This helped us to know the magnitude which the perception of evil affects the faith of people in both religions.

Phenomenological research method seeks to describe life experience. It allows an individual to describe phenomena in experiential terms. It deals with the study of awareness from the standpoint of the individual. Research tools such as conversations, discussions or focus meetings and scrutiny of peculiar texts were used. This enabled us to be pragmatic and to discuss the topic in practical terms.

1.7 Literature Review

Some scholars in Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, and Religion have paid considerable attention to the problem of evil and theodicy. Therefore, this work reviewed some relevant books on the subject in order to discover the contributions of some scholars.

Our literature review is under the following headings:

The Problem of Evil

C. E. M. Joad states that, the problem of evil is an age -old problem. He wrote:

The problem of evil is perhaps as old as man, since man always experienced what he considers as suffering. The question, why is there suffering? Has been asked in almost every Culture, Religion and Philosophy and it will continue to be asked as long as man exists.⁸

Joad's observation is understood. He points out the true nature of the world. Evil is a permanent structure of the universe. Human existence is full of grief; pain is so common that, if the ears

should open to all the agonies of people in the world one shall become deaf. The presence of a considerable expanse of evil in the world challenges the existence of the omnipotent, Omnibenevolent God. Attempt needs be made to suggest answers to the perennial question of human suffering. The faith of people in God dwindles on a daily basis because of the attendance of evil in the world. This work hopes to examine the teachings of Christianity and Yoruba religion on how cope with the problem of evil.

Epicurus of Samos was the first to identify the dilemma of evil in the world. He states his poignant agitation thus:

Is God able to check evil in the world, but is averse to do so? Then He is malicious. Is He alacritous to inhibit it, but is inept to do so? Then He is powerless. Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil.⁹

Epicurus's observation appeals to a logical mind. God the omnipotent must be capable to stop evil if He wishes. If He is undeniably good He must be willing to stop evil. If He is eager but unable He is impotent and if He is able but unwilling He is malevolent. However, the God of classical belief is proficient to do whatever He likes. It is also held that He is all –good.

The dilemma is obvious from this poignant agitation composed by Epicurus. He justly pointed out the weakness in the structure of the world. One would expect a world fashioned by a good God to be far better than this. This weakness pointed out by Epicurus is one of the rocks of atheism. This is one of the reasons a tenable solution should be proffered to the problem of evil. Although theists have argued that, God has morally abundant reasons for permitting evil in the world He created. Evil may happen for a greater good; nevertheless, atheists have contended that there are many gratis or futile evils in the sphere too many to justify the reason for evil in the world. According to atheists, evil negates the reality of the Christian God. However, God cannot

be robbed of His attributes simply because of evil in the creation; man is so limited in knowledge to understand God. This work coupled Christianity and Yoruba Religion on the problem of evil in order to attempt an answer to the problem.

Gabriel Oshitelu in his book *The Philosophy of Religion: An introduction* states that nothing shakes a man's faith than the problem of evil.¹⁰ It is evident that evil is capable of shaking people's faith in God. However, some Christians have argued that evil at times make people look for God. The perpetual occurrences of evil in the world are a threat to the faith in God who is all potent and all good. The manifestation of evil is rationally irreconcilable with the Judaeo – Christian God. When evil happens, believers are confused. This may lead to unbelief and syncretism. To prevent lack of faith and retain believer(s) faith in God, attempt must be made to create a convincing theodicy.

A pragmatic tactic to the problem of evil would greatly assist us to proffer a better solution to the problem. An answer to this aged-old problem must be sought with the special consideration of people's Culture and Philosophy hence we need to peruse African Philosophy to proffer elucidation to the problem of evil. Therefore, this work attempted to approach the problem in an African way with special consideration of Yoruba Religion.

This would at least appeal to the African Yoruba. Further research and emphasis may promote African Philosophy in the universal scholarship.

Albert Camus further expressed the dilemma of evil in his book, *The Plague* when he protests by speaking through Rieux the main character in the plague. He gives his view as to why he rejected the existence of God. He said this is because of the impossibility of integrating the reality of an infinitely good and supreme God with the blatant authenticity of evil in a world, which was supposed to have been created by a virtuous, and supreme being.¹¹ Camus's

submission indicates his disbelief in the veracity of God. This suggests he was an atheist, it has been said earlier that, the problem of evil is one of the rocks of atheism. It is true that, it is grim to reconcile the blunt reality of evil with the existence of the Omnipotent, Omnibenevolent being. However, the theists cannot take Camus's opinion. The willingness to accept the golly of God in spite of evil in the world is obvious in the submission of Christians and Yoruba religionists.

It is essential to maintain Omnipotence and Omni benevolence as traits of God in all situations. God must be Omnipotent and Omnibenevolent to deserve the worship of humans. In addition, the existence of God cannot be objected simply because of evil in the world. It is glaring that the magnitude of good in the world super cedes evil. If the existence of God is rejected simply because of evil on earth, how do we account for 'good' amount of 'good' in the world? There must be a brainy supreme good that created the world.

John Leslie Mackie called the existence of God and evil, "the paradox of Omnipotence." This is because rationally, God and evil cannot co- exist. He suggested denial of one of the characteristics of the theistic God. He opines that this will bring answers to the problem of evil. He argues:

If one is ready to declare that God is not perfectly good or not pretty Omnipotent, or that evil does not exist or that good is not divergent to the kind of evil that exists or there are restrictions to what a Supreme God can do, the problem of evil will not arise for you.¹²

He desires us to erase either the Omnipotent or Omni benevolence attribute of God. However, this is dangerous to theism; Christians and Yoruba religionists would never agree with this submission. Omnipotence and Omni benevolence as qualities of God are central to theism. God

must be Omnipotent and Omnibenevolent to deserve the worship of human.

Paul Draper posits that, gratis evils are reasonably mismatched with the God of theists.¹³ He argues that proof fancies that no God, as commonly assumed by theists, exists.¹⁴ It is on this premise that many atheists rest their arguments, one wonders why some form of gratuitous evil occur. Occurrence that appears to lack any substance of greater good, for instance, the fire disaster that destroyed the lives of all the family members; which greater good do we expect from this. But in spite of the obvious fruitless evil in the sphere theists insist that God is All-powerful and Omnibenevolent.

Michael Peterson claims that, the problem of evil is a kind of “moral protest” He queried the existence of such God advocated by the theists. He writes:

Something is awfully wrong with our world. A seismic activity kills hundred in Peru. A pancreatic cancer patient suffers prolonged severe pain and dies. A mine bull bouts a two – year old child irately tearing his flesh and killing him. Innumerable crowds suffer the depredations of war in Somalia. A wild cult leader shoves eighty-five people to death in Waco Texas. Millions famish and die in North Korea as food shortage damages the land. Horrific things of all kinds materialize in our world and that has been the story since the emergence of Civilization.¹⁵

Michael Peter asserted that the problem of evil is a moral protest. It is the problem of whether or not a decently impeccable God exists. He submitted that, the existence of evil in the world negates the actuality of a morally perfect God. This is because there is no ethical defense for evil in the world. A strong assertion made by him is enough to disbelieve the existence of a morally perfect God. It is true that there are countless pointless evil occurrences in the world. He cites a few examples of physical evil in the past and present. Nevertheless, we need to grasp that human

causes most of these evils; some are due to human carelessness or negligence.

In Christianity, the existence of evil is not denied, but evil occurrence is attributed to the devil in most cases, while the Yoruba admits that good and evil are dialectical and not entirely opposed to each other.

Theodicy

According to John Hick in his book, *Evil and the God of Love*, “The distress and toils of this life are part of the divine plan of soul making. “A realm full of suffering, examinations and lures has more helpful to the process of soul making than a world full of continuous desire and the complete absence of pain.¹⁶ Hick justified the presence of evil in the world. He sees it as a tool for soul making, that is, through suffering man becomes morally perfect. However, experience shows that, it is not always true, in most cases suffering does not lead to soul making.

Some notorious criminals became hardened after they were unconfined from prison where they suffered and were tortured. In addition, it has been debated that some evils are gratuitous or pointless e.g the suffering of innocent children, could suffering and pain lead to soul making in children? It is not defensible that suffering or evil in the world leads to soul making. It is factual that at times, suffering leads man / woman to Salvation, but in most cases, it leads to disbelief in God. The dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion are not exactly the same. In both Yoruba Religion and Christianity, evil or suffering is not taken as a tool for soul making, but at times, it comes as lashes for the offence committed.

Alvin Plantinga in his book *God, Freedom and Evil* defends the actuality of the omnipotent, good God. He argues that God permits evil in the ecosphere in expertise to achieve

the ultimate greater good of freewill. He seeks to explain evil by hypothesizing that the mere logical leeway of a mighty non- human spirit such as Satan is ample to explain the occurrence of natural evils in the world.¹⁷ This submission answers the question on moral evil, that is freewill is the ultimate good God achieved in the human world. He did not want man to be quasi-automata like robots, but to be free and have choices. However, the misapplication of freewill causes moral evil in the world. His opinion is in agreement with Christians' slant to the problem of evil. They believe that, at the beginning there was no evil in the biosphere, but man defied God and ate the prohibited fruit.

The implication is the abuse of freewill by man. Hence, evil multiplies in the world through the misuse of free will. Alvin Planting attributed the occurrence of natural evils to Satan. This is also in concord with Christian opinion on the cause of evil, Christians believe that Satan is God's enemy and he is always out to mount pressure on any good thing created by God. Whenever physical or natural evil happens, many Christians believe that Satan is the cause.

However, in Yoruba religion, Satan who is translated *Esu* (Satan) in Yoruba Bible is not God's opponent. He is a messenger of *Olodumare* 'God' and he cannot contest with God who is omnipotent and Omnibenevolent. Plantinga's approach questions God's Omnipotence and Omnibenevolent attributes. If God is Omnipotent, He must be competent to halt evil and if He is Omnibenevolent He should be willing to stop evil. His position on freewill may be accepted. But his argument that the existence of a mighty non – human Spirit such as Satan is sufficient to explain the incident of evil in the universe questions God's Omnipotence. If Satan is able to contest with God and thwarts his good intention then He is not all-powerful. This submission co – equals God with Satan. This is dangerous to theism and such God is not praiseworthy.

In his book titled *The Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, B. Davies presented the definition

of evil by St. Thomas Aquinas. He defines evil as neither an essence nor a nature nor a form nor an act of being evil. It is an absence of being. It is not a sheer disavowal but a deprivation of the good that should be in a thing.¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas plays on evil and presents it technically as an illusion just as Christian Science submitted. In Christianity and Yoruba religion, evil is not a delusion as both religions admit the unambiguous certainty of evil in the hominid world. Yoruba believe that *Tibitire lada Ile aye* (The world is created with both good and evil). Christians also affirm the basic genuineness of evil in the world. Evil cannot be taken as an illusion; what can we say about tsunami of Indonesia and Japan, Hurricanes, Tornadoes, Volcanic eruption that are caused by natural agent? Evil is real and it is not an illusion.

Godfried Leibniz contended that a world comprising moral and physical evil is healthier because it is metaphysically richer than the one containing good only and that God must have formed the finest of all imaginable worlds.¹⁹ His opinion has no touch with reality. He makes evil necessary in the world. This is not palatable to those who have experienced evil and those that are passing through it. He ignores the suffering of others. It will be difficult to convince the innocent victims of events that this is the top possible world.²⁰ His comment came from a selfish point of view. The world smiles at him; he was born by a professor of moral philosophy, he became a doctor at the age of twenty and offered a professorial degree at the age of twenty – one. Nothing could he have said, than this is the best possible world. His use of the word ‘Best’ for this world is grammatically wrong. Where are other worlds to compare with this one? The choice of this world by God is another point of controversy. If God is Omnipotent, He is not required to choose among many worlds. The implication of having a choice is that there is an advanced power that made the worlds for God to choose. This robs God of His attribute and renders Him impotent. Such God is not pedestrian of human worship. In addition, Leibniz says evil makes us

to look for Salvation.²¹ This is only partially true as there are many notorious sinners and criminals that failed to yield to the call to Salvation. So they are given to committing crimes to the extent that, any time they do good to them, it is a mistake and this set of people has been found to succeed in life. They do not even think of Salvation.²² If this is the superlative conceivable world we are not to look for another as predicted in the Holy Bible and other religious books, since there would not be considerable improvement in heaven.

Godfried Leibniz made evil necessary in the world. He posits that, it is better to have evil in the world than good only. A good number of Christians believe that at the beginning the world was good and must have been the unsurpassed possible world. But it was the defiance of Adam and Eve that corrupted the world and brought evil into it. Yoruba religionists also believe that the world was good at the beginning, but evil came into the world through human wickedness. Going by the submission of Christians and Yoruba religionists, the finest probable world was created by God, but humans corrupted it by their disobedience / wickedness.

Tenant confutes the argument that evil is an illusion. He says:

If evil is an illusion, then the Illusion itself neither evil nor it is non – existent or merely negative as St. Augustine taught. The fact of evil seems to conflict with faith in God's goodness and Omnipotence so a theodicy must be sought if the believer is not to have his teleological argument confounded.²³

Tenant's submission on the animation of evil is understandable. Evil can not be taken as an illusion. It is true that evil is real. To say that evil is trickery is not to consider those that are suffering. Evil exists on its own, it is not a parasite.

In addition, he is right to say that evil seems to conflict with faith in God's goodness. Evil shakes the faith of man and makes man lose his faith in the supremely good God. It is true that a

theodicy is needed to consolidate teleological argument. Argument from design presents an intelligent being behind the creation of this world of order. Although, orderliness is a fixed structure of the world, evil is an intimidation to the confidence in the reality of an intelligent being that is responsible for the formation of the world. Christianity and Yoruba religion obviously accept the gee of God in spite of the unadorned veracity of evil in the human world. The existence of evil is affirmed by both religions. While Yoruba religion gives considerable rejoinder to the problem of evil, Christianity creates unsolved puzzle. Yoruba believe that both good and evil were created by God but Christians attribute evil to Satan; they emphasize that God is all good despite evil in the world. The dilemma created by Christians is the backbone of the problem of evil. Yoruba response is more tenable it presents God as the architect of both good and evil, and it protects God's attribute. However, the actuality of evil in the world is not sufficient to disbelief the existence of God.

Kari Barth in his theodicy denotes evil as nothing less, he states that:

Evil is nothing less but nothing less is not anything. It is something, an entire sinister system or element. He advances evil as an alien factor, which cannot and must not be seen in the same content as objects of God's providence. He refers to evil as *das Nichtige*. He says nothingless has confronted Jesus, but this is the point at which his power was broken. Nothingless is opposed to God and is not part of God's positive will. It is definitely not part of God's creation.²⁴

Kari Barth is only playing on words by calling evil nothingless. He wants to explain away evil as if it is nothing to worry about whatever he calls evil, evil is evil. Those that are confronted with evil, know it is dynamic enough to worry about Barth explains that God did not will evil and is

not part of his creation. Then who wills evil? Is there another God in charge of creation? He argued that, it was not part of God's positive will and that it is opposed to God.

If this is true, God supposed to have eradicated evil in the world. As Omnipotent, he has the authority to stop evil, if He wishes. Also, by his Omni benevolence attribute he should be enthusiastic to stop evil, if it is not part of his positive will and since it opposes him. Does it mean that God is not omnipotent or not Omni benevolent? It is also thinkable that we are yet to understand the character of God.

Barth also says that Jesus has defeated nothing less (evil) this is nothing but the truth. It is central to Christian theology. Evil crosses the threshold through the sin of man, but was defeated through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Nothingness is part of God's creation in Yoruba religion, but in Christianity it opposes God. It came into the world system through the sin of mankind. However, it is confusing that God allowed evil in the world He created. Essentially, it is needed to study the causes and resolutions to the problem of evil in the anthropological world.

The Nature of Human Beings and Their Freewill

Irenaus believed that Adam's sin had weighty penalties for humanity; that it is the cradle of human sinful morality and addiction to sin, and that all human beings partake in his sin and share the guilt.²⁵ Irenaus's opinion is in harmony with the Christian tradition that Sin entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and evil, (the first man and woman on earth); their sin of disobedience brought evil to the world. He gives a clear picture of what many theists believe to be the major origin of evil in the world.

This emphasizes the fact that man was created with freewill; when evil happens, in most cases; the cause is the ill use of freewill by man. This submission exonerates God from the blame and holds man responsible for evil in the world. If this is true, the omnipotence of God is

unquestionable. The fault comes from man, but if God's omnipotence is not questioned what of his omnibenevolence? As omnibenevolent, He should not will evil for man, either by mistake from man or not. As all knowing, He must have known that man would disobey His order. In other words, why did He create the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden? It has been debated that, it is dangerous to put a Knife before a child whose ability cannot withstand the attraction of playing with it. Why did God create an opportunity for man to sin?

Augustine of Hippo concurs with Irenaus' submission on Adam's sin as the major source of evil in the world. He taught that Adam's sin is communicated by concupiscence, consequential in mankind becoming a *Massa damnata* (mass of perdition, condemned crowd).²⁶ With much enfeebled though not destroyed freedom of will Augustine assumed that the consequence of Adam's sin is hereditary; the sin and its consequences are transmitted from one cohort to another through sexual intercourse. He stressed that Adam and Eve through sexual intercourse recreated human nature. Man is condemned because of the sinful act, but he /she retains his /her freewill. The abuse of freewill is the major source of evil in the world.

Augustine's submission is plausible; it is not against Christian tradition. Most Christians believe that God's creation was perfect in the beginning, but sin pass in the world through the noncompliance of Adam and Eve. Sin corrupted the world; therefore, it was the ill use of freewill that brought evil into the world. Yoruba also affirm the misuse of freewill by man. They believe that sin is the core basis of evil in the world. They believe that evil may happen as lashes to the reprobates to serve as a warning to others.

John Bewaji opined that:

Olodumare has control over everything in this world. Although, He doesn't do evil, but He punishes offenders. One should not be astounded that good and

evil are all in the switch of *Olodumare*. Ultimately, each proper usage or indecorous bond of such power is subject to *Olodumare*'s final pronouncement of judgment. His ways are such that evil doers never seepage chastisement. Yoruba God is upright and He reinforces uprightness in all ramifications. He punishes offenders immediately an offence is committed; this He does to sustain morality in the world. Hence in the course of punishing the offender, it may be said that He allows evil.²⁷

Bewaji captures Yoruba Philosophy on evil. Yoruba believe that God does not do evil, but He punishes offenders. God in Yoruba context can be equated to Old Testament Yahweh, who enforces morality and uprightness through instantaneous reprimand of the delinquents to serve as restraining to others. It was this understanding that made the Jews affirm the origin of both good and evil to God, just as Yoruba do. It is the mismanagement of freewill that causes man to sin. When a man /woman sins he /she receives God's lashes in form of evil. When a community committed a sin, evil would be wrath on such community this kind of evil might not wane until there is expected correction and necessary sacrifice is offered. Yoruba in all ramifications, preach morality as a substance of duty not only to man but most importantly to God. Therefore, they support the notion that the misuse of freewill is the key root of evil in the world.

Mbiti shares the same opinion with Bewaji. He submits that:

In many Societies, it is believed that God punished individuals through illness adversity, sterility or death. The Yoruba cogitate God to be judge over all, and when disaster ensues a moral offender, people say, He is underneath the smashes of God.²⁸

The Yoruba see God as a judge. He does not tolerate corruption or immorality,

uprightness is his watchword. Mbiti is right in his appraisal of the Yoruba outset of God. Hence, when someone passes through these undesirable experiences Yoruba take it as God's judgment for the secret offence he /she committed. This is not evil to Yoruba, rather it is a ruling to spot-on gaffes and oblige as off-putting to others. It is pertinent to understand the fact that, the problem of evil is alien to Yoruba theology and cosmology. The dilemma of evil came from the imported religions. The elements of *Olodumare* (God) amplify the point that the problem of evil in the Judeo – Christian tradition is strange to Yoruba ancestors. A reappraisal of Yoruba tradition, theology and cosmology in relation to the problem of evil would permanently solve the problem.

C. S. Lewis in his book, *The Problem of Pain* conceives an ideal world, without freewill to cherry-pick between good and evil. He submits:

We can perhaps perceive of a world in which God amended the upshot of this mishandling of freewill by His beings at every instant so that, a wooden ray became soft as grass when it was used as an armament and air declined to obey me if I bade to set up in it the sound surfs that carry lies or insults. But such a world would be one in which, therefore, liberty of the will would be void, if the principle were conceded out to its logical assumption, evil feelings would be impossible for the brainy matter which we use in thinking would refuse its task when we attempted to casing them.²⁹

It is true that, a lucid mind would ponder a world without moral evil. It would have been better if human were created as quasi automata capable of doing good only. Moral choices are the root of moral evil. If man could think of good only the world would be better than this, certainly, the world would be better without, rape, robbery, murder, etc. If moral evil is absent in the world physical evil would be minimized. The Bible predicts a coming world without evil. It states that, Jesus is coming to take His followers to a prepared world where there would not be evil. But if

we admit the postulation that, freewill is necessary to make the world interesting as some theists like Augustine argued, this world would be better than the expected world by Christians. However, it is better to concur with Lewis's opinion that a world deprived of evil would be healthier than our world with undesirable evil.

Oladipo, Ezekiel Ajani submits that:

The Yoruba cosmos is thought to be saturated with wicked spirits, demons, witches, wizards, sorcerers and evil workers influence people to wile against others through heartless magicians and other such spiteful persons in the community. These malevolent spirits are believed among the Yoruba to be the origin or agents of evils.³⁰

Oladipo reveals the belief of Yoruba on one of the causes of evil in the mortal domain. Yoruba believe that the wicked people of the world cause many evils in the world. They are able to perpetrate evil through supernatural powers. They can inflict or afflict human through the supernatural power without physical contact. They possess spiritual ability to invoke wicked spirits to afflict their fellow man/woman. They are capable of causing accident, diseases, leprosy, etc. to afflict humanity. Most Christians also believe that the wicked people such as witches, wizards, demonic forces etc cause most evil in the world. It is believed by Yoruba religionists that God as omnipotent does whatever He likes, He gave part of his power to man. The misuse of the power is the origin of evil in the human world.

Kola Abimbola articulates Yoruba theology of good and evil, when he opines:

In fact, Yoruba theology suggests that there can

be no such thing as perfectly good word, lest we comprehend the implication of evil. So the “*ajogun*” and other evil forces that populate the Yoruba cosmos are necessary for understanding and appreciating the value of good.³¹

The suggestion of Kola Abimbola on the necessity to understand the forces that populate Yoruba cosmos is plausible.

Human Acts and Accountability

Raymond Olutoyin Ogunade disagrees with the people who believe that, whatever happens to man on earth is predestined. He writes:

The popular belief is that *ipin – ori* means that the Yoruba belief in predestination. And some people have interpreted this to mean that anything that happens to a person on earth or a person’s doing in the globe has been predestined ever before he/she appears in the world. We disagree with this view. This interpretation is capable of making absurdity of the Yoruba’s concept of predestination/destiny.³²

Ogunade establishes the fact that not all actions are predestined. Yoruba believe that fate dictates whatever happens to man on earth. Some even believe that all human actions are predestined, what will happen will happen no matter the prevention. This is what Yoruba calls (*ipin – ori*) *ipin ori* means predestination Ogunade’s comment on this notion shows that ‘*Ipin ori*’ does not include human actions. In other words, human actions are not predestined. Nobody is destined to be an armed robber, kidnapper, rapist, cultist, drunk, etc. It is simply the function of choice. Therefore, an individual is held responsible for his /her actions. Ogunade further

strengthened his argument with *Odu Ogbe Egunda*’ which says:

*Iwa nikan lo soro o Iwa nikan
lo soro Ori kan ki buru lo tun ife
Iwa nikan lo soro*

Meaning:

Eccentric is all that is requisite Character
is all that is requisite There is no destiny
to be called ill-fated in Ife city Character
is all that is requisite.³³

Human character is essential in the gratification of destiny. A good character is a catalyst to the fulfillment of a good destiny. A bad character is a destroyer of a good destiny. Yoruba emphasize the importance of *iwa rere* (good character) in the human living. Morality is a duty not only to man, but also unto God. Ogunade’s submissions suggest that man causes most moral evils and that human actions are not predestined. The Yoruba concept of destiny does not ridicule human actions and responsibility. This has cleared Yoruba concept of destiny from absurdity.

Idowu in an effort to stress the importance of *iwa* (character) in the serenity of destiny, asserted:

In this emphasis on character in relation to destiny, there sneaks in the paradox of human responsibility in a system apparently cast on predestination. We have the hint already in conception of destiny as a thing chosen by the person. With the element of character involved, a person is not allowed to expect an automatic fulfillment of good destiny. He must co –operate to make his destiny efficacious by procuring and practicing good character.³⁴

Idowu’s assertion further expounds the significance of *iwa* (character) in the fulfillment of human destiny. An individual is expected to behave well to actualize his/her good destiny. Hence a good character (*Iwa rere*) is a catalyst to the fulfillment of a good destiny. This shows that human actions are not predestined. Since good behaviour is expected from an individual to fulfill

a good destiny; fulfillment of good destiny is not automatic. We can deduce from an Idowu's submission that every man/Woman is responsible for his/her action.

Unchenna Izuogu observed that, Yoruba believe that an individual is a rational being who is capable of choice; he/ she could choose either good or bad. He opines that:

Yoruba would place your moral responsibility for the fact that you are a rationally conscious moral agent (an *olopolo pipe*) who could choose to act in one way or the other and could choose rationally among certain preferences.³⁵

Moral evil is affected by wrong or bad human action. This could only be corrected, minimized or discouraged by human responsibilities. There are laws guiding the society in the Yoruba land, violation of such laws attracts instant punishment, not only of man, but also from the invisible forces that are guiding the society. In addition, Christians emphasize good behaviour in the society, to one another and to the civil authority. An individual is detained blame for his behavior either good or bad. Christians do not teach that human actions are predestined. Their submission on *Iwa*(character) as a catalyst to human behaviour is not strange to the conviction of Yoruba religionists.

In another dimension Hugh Rice, a fatalist, advocate that all human actions are predetermined. He believes that, we are powerless to do whatsoever other than what we really do.³⁶ His opinion promotes the view that man/woman should not be blamed for his/her action. Human actions are controlled by the power beyond him/her. He /she is incapable or powerless to pick between good or bad, whatever the power beyond him dictates he /she must act. Concisely, Rice objects to moral responsibility. If this argument holds water, moral responsibility would be dashed. This is dangerous to the society because moral evil would be to increase; there would be a state of mobocracy. It is better to uphold moral responsibility and hold man responsible for any

action taken by him/her. Richard Taylor is in agreement with Hugh Rice. He opines that man has no power to influence the future or indeed, his own actions.³⁷ He is also a fatalist, he stressed that, man is incapable to influence his /her choices³⁸. Human actions are being controlled by the metaphysical power beyond his/her control. This implies that, an armed robber cannot do otherwise, a kidnapper, a rapist; hardened criminal etc. cannot do otherwise. A hired killer cannot do a better job because; he is not capable of choice. These notions clearly rule out moral responsibility. However, one would expect Richard and other fatalists, to consider how the world would look like without law and order. The presence of the decree and edict in the society indicates the truth and the prominence of moral responsibility. Certainly, a human society without moral responsibility is a place of war, pandemonium, unlawful killing, fighting, anarchy, etc. It would be difficult to maintain order in the world without moral responsibility. The world would become ungovernable and the human world would be inhabitable.

If human actions are predetermined as postulated by the fatalists, it is unfair to punish criminals since they could not do otherwise. In the real sense, this position cannot hold water; moral responsibility is the better option. Man is morally responsible and that is why wrong actions are denoted to as moral evil. It is true that we are being well ordered by metaphysical power to fulfill our destiny but we enjoy the circumstantial freedom to do what is right.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Theodicy

Theodicy came from two Greek words Theos (God) dik. (Just) meaning seeks to validate the ways to God of man display that God is in the right, and is magnificent, and commendable of admiration notwithstanding conflicting exteriors³⁹. Etymologically well-thought-out theodicy (Theo dike) indicates the reasoning of God⁴⁰. The term was hosted into Philosophy by Leibniz,

who in 1710 published a work entitled. “Essais de Theodicy sur la bonte de Dieu, la liberte de l’homme et l’origine du mal”. The tenacity of the essay was to express that the evil in the world does not skirmish with the goodness of God⁴¹. It treats the dilemma originated from the observation of Philosophers such as Epicurus, David Hume, etc. on the logical compatibility of evil and God. Epicurus has raised the observation that God and evil are plausibly incompatible. Theodicy proves that the being of God and his elements cannot be disregarded. It is a branch of Metaphysics that presents the optimistic proofs for the existence of God, features of God, and solves the disparate difficulties⁴². Theodicy, therefore, may be defined as the sciences with treats of God for the use of reason alone⁴³. It is a science because it methodically assembles the gratified of our knowledge about God and demonstrates, in the stern sense of the word, each of its schemes⁴⁴. It appeals to the nature as the only source of proof⁴⁵. Theodicy explains that God is good and just in the face of evil.

Evil

Evil refers to what is unpleasant to the total well being of humankind, or that, which works against the welfare of humankind⁴⁶. Evil is anything that brings pain to man. It is the reverse of good it can also be defined as anything that is harmful, aching, and spiteful and calamitous⁴⁷. Some have defined evil as the divergence of God⁴⁸. Evil is as physical as anthropoid existence. It happens everyday in the human Society. It manifests itself in the pain and suffering which human beings experience. It is a stable feature of the universe. Two types of evil are identified, that is moral evil and Physical evil.

The Problem of evil

The problem of Evil is how to resolve the Omnipotent and Omnibenevolent God with the unembellished realism of evil in the world. The presence of evil and anguish in our world seems

to stance a grim contrast to the confidence in the actuality of a flawless God ⁴⁹. It questions God's attributes such as an Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnibenevolent Epicurus of Samos was the first to observe the dilemma, and he put the dilemma thus:

Is God able to prevent evil in the world, but is unwilling to do so? Then He is malevolent. If He wills to prevent it, but is unable to do it? Then He is impotent. Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil ⁵⁰.

The existence of God and stark reality of evil are logically incompatible. The consideration of this dilemma has strengthened atheism. The unbeliever, usually asks the question "if God exists and that He is Omnipotent, Omnibenevolent and morally perfect why evil in the world? The unbeliever who made such inquiry is usually feeling umbrage in the direction of and revolt against God, not just deficient evidence for his existence ⁵¹. C. S. Lewis evokes that as an atheist, he "did not believe God existed". He said I was also very angry with him for not in effect. I was also angry with him for having created the world ⁵². The conflicts that exist between the conventional theism and the realities about evil and grief in our world is a logical one. This is a consistent problem of evil ⁵³. The evidential problem of evil pursues to display that the existence of evil, although cogently constant with the existence of God, reckonings in contrast to or sinks the probability of the truth of theism ⁵⁴.

The Supreme Being (*Olodumare*)

God (*Olodumare*) is stated as the Supreme Being by Yoruba. He is the most significant 'state of existence' ⁵⁵. He is stated as being all encompassing. He is all in all, the creator and the Sustainer of the universe. He is the principal agent of creation. During human creation, *Olodumare* gave "*emi*" (the breath of life) to humankind because of this He is the Supreme

being⁵⁶.

Yoruba Religion

Yoruba Religion is the native faith of the Yoruba, which conceded down from the dawn of their generation through oral conducts, art, crafts, liturgies, pithy sayings, proverbs, folklores, stories, songs and wise sayings to the contemporary modern age.⁵⁷ It has no initiator like Jesus in Christianity and Mohammed in Islam; no scriptures and does not possess a zeal for membership drive. It has a natural appeal and most of the advocates are born into it.⁵⁸ The Yoruba Religion comprising the traditional models and rehearses of the Yoruba people before the institution of Christianity and Islamic religion. Yoruba religious beliefs part of *Itan*, the multifaceted traditional thoughts which make up the Yoruba society.⁵⁹ Yoruba people are primarily found in south western Nigeria and the contiguous parts of Benin, commonly known as Yorubaland.⁶⁰ .Over the years, some non –Yoruba have taken to Yoruba Religion. For example we have a place in North Carolina, USA called Oyotunji devoted to Yoruba language and culture. Most of the white American dwellers,living there have accepted Yoruba names and culture.⁶¹.Yoruba Religion is ancestral to the American religious Santeria Umbanda,and Candomle.⁶². Ogunade, O.R. in his article titled “The Resilience and Challenges of Yoruba Religious Worship in Modern Context” in The African Conudrum. Rethinking the Trajectories of Historical, Cultural, Philosophical and Developmental Experiences of Africa created acronym for Yoruba Religion adherents, which is “Yorel”.These are the first two letters “Yo”from the word Yoruba and the first three letters” Rel”from religion. The combination of the two formsYorel.⁶³.He submits that, the adherents of Yoruba religion should be called Yorelians; just like we have Christians from Christianity, Muslims from Islam.⁶⁴. Yoruba Religion adherents over the years lack a collective name as worshippers. The creation of Yorelians by Ogunade if considered would solve the

problem. The Yorelians take adulation into their day to day life. Virtually all their daily deeds are done with the mindfulness of the ever-watching eyes of the undetectable presence of the ancestral spirits, divinities, and of course *Olodumare*. Worship to the Yorelians has become a way of life.⁶⁵

Christianity –

Christianity is an Abrahamic Monotheistic religion constructed on the life and instructions of Jesus Christ as presented in the New Testament. Christianity is the world's largest religion with over 2.4 billion adherents known as Christians ⁶⁶. Christians believe that Jesus suffered for the Sin of mankind.

He was crucified, died, was buried and was resurrected cleansing those who believe in Him from their sins. He would also grant his devotees eternal life in the hereafter. They also believe that after his resurrection, Jesus bodily ascended to heaven. The religion had its origin in the Asia of Minor it has spread to the almost every part of the world including the Yorubaland.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0 WHAT IS THEODICY?

2.1 General Concept of Theodicy

Theodicy came from two Greek words theos (God) and the root dik (just) seek to defend the ways of God to man showing that God is in the veracious and splendid, and worthy of praise despite antagonistic appearances¹. It was coined by Leibniz, Gottfried in 1710. He wrote his theodicy in answer to certain objections (to Leibniz's position) raised by Pierre Bayley (1647 – 1706) so that theodicy of Leibniz was partly a reply to Pierre Bayley's assertion². It is an answer to the evidential problem of evil and attempts to substantiate the existence of an omnipotent and Omni benevolent God in the light of the manifestation of evil in the world³.

Theodicy asks how can we believe God is both good and sovereign in the expression of the world's evil, bad people, bad deeds, defying God and injuring people, harmful (bad) circumstances, events, experiences and state of mind, which waste, thwart, or destroy value,

actual or potential in and for humankind, in short all facts, physical and moral that prompt the feeling, “that ought not to be”⁴.

2.1.1. Thomas Aquinas Theodicy

Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican priest of 13th Century. He structured the Augustinian conception of evil, appending it with his cogitations. Evil, according to Aquinas, is a privation or the deficiency of something which belongs accurately to the fauna of the creature⁵. There is consequently no positive source of evil, equivalent to the greater good, which is God; ⁶ evil being not real, but rational that is, it subsists not as an unprejudiced fact, but as a slanted conception. Things are not evil in themselves, but by cause of their relation to other things or persons. All actualities are in themselves good. They yield debauched consequences only incidentally; and accordingly the eventual cause of evil is profoundly good, as well as the substances in which evil is found⁷. Thomas Aquinas’s response to evil has its foundation in Saint Augustine’s theodicy. Augustine has claimed that evil is a parasite or lack or nonexistence of the good or corrupt act of evil. Thomas Aquinas built his argument on evil on this premise that evil is a privation. Thomas Aquinas presented his opponent’s position as such “everything created is something. But evil is something created as said in Isaiah 45:7. “I am the Lord making peace and creating evil. Therefore, evil is something⁸. His opponents such as Dionysius say, “Therefore evil, exactly as evil acts. But nothing acts if not it is something, therefore evil precisely is something”⁹. His opponent’s argument is that, evil is something created therefore, it is something, and that it cannot be a mere privation of good. Aquinas responded that it is factual that God created everything but evil is not a thing. Now of course Aquinas is not suggesting that evil is not real, rather he is arguing that it is not a substance. That is, it does not exist in-itself, but only as inhering in a good substance¹⁰.

Aquinas states the doctrine of privation in his compendium of theology thus:

As the term good implies perfect being, so the term evil connotes nothing else than a privation of perfect being, in its apposite receipt privation is predicated on that which is formfitting by its nature to be infatuated at a certain time and in a certain manner. Evidently, therefore a thing is termed evil if it does not have an aptness it must have. Thus, if a man is deficient in the sense of sight, this is an evil for him. But the equivalent lack is not an evil for a stone, for stone is not fortified by nature to have the aptitude of sight¹¹.

This conception of evil as privation needs some unloading for it is a metaphysical complex notion. Aquinas argued, that blindness is only evil to man, but not evil to stone since it lacks absolute perfection to sight. Blindness to human is a deprivation of sight; it has no existence of his own, but it parasites on the capacity of man to see¹². The summary of Aquinas's slant to the problem of evil is that evil is a privation; it does not exist on its own just as Augustine postulated. The submission of Aquinas on evil does not decipher the problem of evil. His position stands against Isaiah 45:7 which says "I am the Lord, making peace and creating evil". If we go by Isaiah's prophecy certainly God was the one who created evil. Empirically evil has its concrete existence. It cannot be said that, it is a parasite on good. Since the Bible testifies that God created evil, it would be unfair to pretend that evil has no concrete existence.

2.1.2 John Hick Theodicy

John Harwood Hick was born on 20th January 1922 in England. He was a philosopher of religion. He was also a Theologian. In philosophical theology, he made influences in the areas of theodicy, eschatology, and Christology, and in the philosophy of religion, he contributed to the areas of epistemology of religion and religious pluralism¹³. The major contribution of John Hick to the problem of evil is found in his book entitled "Evil and the God of Love". His contribution

is technically termed “Irenaean” or “Soul making” theodicy. Hick delineates two foremost mores of Christian theodicy. The first he traces back to Augustine and identified as the historically dominant tradition.¹⁴ Augustinian theodicy claim that God has preset humans (and possibly angels) freedom, they have tainted that freedom and thus brought evil on themselves and on creation and God will justly punish some but save others through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ¹⁵.

Hick objected to many of the themes that theodicists usually raise to defend the goodness of God in Augustinian tradition, including evil prevailing as a penance for original sin, a historical fall, and interminable hell as punishment for sin, and concludes that a diverse approach is needed¹⁶. John Hick assembled the philosophies of Irenaeus into a discrete Theodicy. He found “hints” for his argument in the Irenaean theodicy. Irenaeus regarded the fall not as a cataclysmic loss of an original state of perfection, but rather as “an understandable lapse due to (the) weakness and immaturity” of the original human beings¹⁷. Humans were created as “infants” in the “image” but not yet the “likeness” of God. The purpose of this life is the decent and psychic growth of humans into perfecting beings “capable of individual affiliation with (their) makers”¹⁸. Hick adopted Irenaeus’ thought to this day. He maintained that the world exists as a “vale of soul-making” and that distress and evil must consequently occur. He debated that human goodness is developed by the experience of evil and suffering¹⁹.

He believed that man was not created with ready-made character because for character to be valuable, it must be developed through experience. God’s intention is to create finite persons that would possess autonomy to choose to share in the life of their personal creator. God created man as morally and spiritually immature creatures with the ability to grow to maturity both morally and spiritually. It is not a surprise therefore that we should go wrong because, we existed

from creation in a “fallen” state and a suffering filled world. And such a world as we discovered ourselves in it, Hick insists, is unequivocally required for the perfection of our souls. A pain-free paradise with no difficulties, threats, and hardships would never allow us to learn and to develop, for moral and spiritual growth comes through the encrustation and overcoming of challenges²⁰. In a nutshell, Hick’s argument is basically in support of agony and distress in the Universe.

Evil is not inconsistent with the Omni benevolent and omnipotent God. He made man morally immature, and gives him freewill. The purpose is to make him develop character, so that character could be valuable. The main objective of travail in the world therefore is for character formation. Also, a world where man is looking for salvation is far better than the world where man is absolutely perfect.

A world where man is absolutely good and could not think of evil is metaphysically lesser than a world where man enjoys independence to choose amid good and evil. Hick also contended that human freedom, in the practical and not just strict sense, also entails that we sentient in a religiously abstruse universe. Were God to create us in his immediate presence, we could not be aware of him, then we would have no choice but to know him and worship him, and to obey his commands, and our choice to do so would not be free. So God has created us at an “epistemic distance” from him²¹. God created evil and good in the world and gave man freewill. With freewill man could choose between good and evil. Man is not coerced to serve God, but he possesses the freedom to worship Him. God maintained an epistemic distance with the world he created so that man could have enough freedom to prefer to worship him or not. This is because there is a place of reward in the hereafter. God would honor man’s choice by sending them to either hell or heaven. Hick’s argument makes it pure that for the drives of theodicy, God must if he is to be ascendant be ultimately responsible for evil and so must ultimately succeed in his

purpose of drawing all persons to himself²². It is necessary for us to accept Hick's fundamental premise that, God uses a world which contains evil, to bring people to himself, if we want to maintain that God is good and all powerful. The world is a field of 'soul-making' and pain and suffering is the tool God uses to make man perfect.

In a nutshell, Hick's argument is that, without freewill, all people would be nothing than a "domesticated subconscious" in a cage. People must possess the freewill by which they could participate in "soul-making." Hick at times suggests that, as Christians, our archetypal for a seamless human is Jesus Christ who is God incarnate²³. Hick's argument that evil occurs in the world created by the omnipotent and good God is for soul making, is not tenable enough. A number of different scholars have recoiled at the notion that the amount of vicious and horrendous evil in our world is indispensable for soul making²⁴. If we accept Hick's paradox, we should also presume God to create a better world than this for the purpose of soul making.

We have also noticed a number for nothing or inane evil in the planet earth, for instance fire disaster that claims the lives of a whole family, can that lead to soul making for the victims? Certainly not.

Rowe observed that:

It doesn't only seem apparent to us that evil occurs far in excess of what an omnipotent being would have to license for soul making. It also appears obvious to us that evil transpires far in excess of what an omnipotent being would have to permit for us to be sensible in believing that excess evil occurs²⁵.

Rowe accused Hick of engaging an "all-or- nothing argument" in which God cannot take away any evil without of his purpose being thwarted; but (Rowe insisted) in actuality, there must be some brink above which more evil is (all things considered) unnecessary and it is not evident

that our world is above any threshold²⁶. Linda Zagzebski responded that Rowe has not proved anything at all; for evil seeming to him to be in glut of what is needed for us to rationally believe that evil befalls man in excess of what is desirable for soul making is exactly what one would presume under the soul making hypothesis²⁷. Hick ricochets this, saying that, of course it should seem that the evil in the creation is higher than is required for soul making, “for it will look that way to us if it is in fact soul making”²⁸. The soul-making hypothesis is inconsistent with the Omni benevolent God. It is obvious, that evil in this ecosphere is in excess for soul making. The evil instead of having positive effects on man promotes lack of trust in God. If the purpose of evil in this human realm is for soul making then it has failed to achieve its aim. Most human beings leave this world morally imperfect. In fact, suffering leads to crime in most cases.

However, Hick offered a resolution to this problem by postulating an afterlife in which all human beings will, in the end, freely comes to God. Soul making is seldom accomplished in this life, but Hick believed that we may have faith that it will in the life, or lives, to come. If hell, then, has a place in the soul-making theodicy, it is not a place of timeless torment or parting from God, but as an advance place of soul-making, until one day all souls have been made perfect and we are all able to enter a heaven in which we perfectly love each other and our creator²⁹.

This submission is inconsistent with the dogma of eschatology on rewards for people in the world. The Bible clearly explains that, the day of the verdict is the day of reward when everyone shall be rewarded according to his performances in the world. Geivert denied that soul making is God’s vital purpose, and suggests, moreover, that such a purpose is dissenting with human freedom. He claimed that God’s purpose is to create free beings that can choose either to accept Him or reject Him, a choice which he will honour by sending them to either heaven or

hell³⁰. It is also a concern that freewill may lead people to hell. But is it not better if God did not give humanity freedom? Certainly, Man cannot be irrevocably good; God should have created man automatically good. And he is supposed to have given them the power to be saved since he wishes that everyone be saved. The Hick's argument makes God responsible for evil in the world. While it defends God's omnipotent attribute it fails in protecting God's Omni benevolent quality.

2.1.3 Leibniz, Gottfried Theodicy

Gottfried Leibniz was born on July 1, 1646 in Leipzig, Germany. His father Friedrich was a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Leipzig. He lost his father when he was six years old and he inherited his father's private library. Leibniz is more popular in philosophical circles with his theodicy. He wrote his theodicy as a tribute to Queen Sophia-Charlotte of Prussia. It really arose out of conversations with the queen on the problems of freedom and evil³¹. He also wrote in response to certain objections raised by one of his contemporaries Pierre Bayle (1641-1706). Bayle has argued that the reality of evil in the world completely contradicts and negates the existence of the omnipotent and Omni benevolent God. He put the dilemma of evil in the form of the following questions.

1. Why is it that the good God saves only a few of all the people he has created?
2. Even if a man commits sin freely, why does a good God keep sinners alive and spare them, when even an ordinary farmer, recognizes the disturbance of weeds in his farm and clears them to give his farm a clean environment.
3. Why did God form man in such a manner that he will ultimately fall into sin? ³² These questions formed the bedrock of Leibniz's theodicy.

He responded to the queries outstretched by Bayle thus: He argued that:

This is the paramount possible world. He tried to rationalize the specious inadequacies of the world by claiming that it is best among all possible worlds. It must be the preeminent possible and most poised world because it was created by an all-powerful and all-knowing God, who would not choose to create an imperfect world if a better world could be known to him or were possible to exist³³.

For Leibniz, a supplementary fundamental concern is the matter of reconciling human freedom with the determination innate in his own theory of the universe. Leibniz's solution casts God as a compassionate "optimizer" of the assortment of all original possibilities. Since He is good and omnipotent, and since He chose this world out of all odds, this world must be good. In fact, this world is the best of all conceivable worlds³⁴. Leibniz averred that the truths of theology (religion) and philosophy cannot controvert each other, since reason and faith are both "gifts of God" so that their clang would imply God competing against Himself. The theodicy is Leibniz's attempt to reconcile his personal philosophical system with his construal of the creeds of Christianity.³⁵

He argued that God was not compelled to create the world, He did so on his own volition. The world was created out of his overflowing goodness; we have no cause to doubt the existence of God, simply because of evil in the world. This world which is the superlative imaginable world would have the most good and the least evil. Valor is better than no courage. It might be observed, then, that without evil to challenge us, there can be no courage³⁶. Based on this premise evil brings out the best phases of mortality, evil is regarded as a necessity. God created some evil to make the greatest of all possible worlds. It is also significant to note that, the theory explicates evil not by repudiating it or even downsizing it, but simply by declaring it to be part of the optimal permutation of elements that encompass the best possible Godly choice.

Leibniz thus does not claim that the world is overall very good, but that's because of the necessary interconnections of goods and evils, God, though omnipotent, could not improve it in one way without making it worse in some other ways³⁷. He further argued that if we attempt to remove any evil from this world, we shall be left with a world which is less than the best.

Leibniz believes that God has put everything together in order to give us the best possible world. In addition, Leibniz blames man for evil in the world. He states that, reason and faith must be acquiescent, any principle of faith which could not be garrisoned by reason must be banned. Leibniz then approached one of the dominant criticisms of Christian theism³⁸. He reconciled the Omni benevolent attributes of God with the unambiguous actuality of evil in the world. He argued that while God is definitely unconstrained in wisdom and power, his human creations, as creations are limited both in their wisdom and in their will (power trait). This inclines humans to fabricate beliefs, erroneous decisions and futile actions in the exercise of their freewill³⁹. God does not capriciously inflict pain and suffering on humans, rather he badges both moral evil (sin) and physical evil (pain and suffering) as the crucial consequences of metaphysical evil (imperfection), as a means by which humans can recognize and correct their flawed decisions, and a divergence to true good⁴⁰. He defended the existence of evil with all enthusiasm. He claimed that in spite of the physical appearance of this world, there is still far better than evil.

It is just that we lay too much stress on the evil and ignore the good⁴¹. His view is that the evils in the world are comparatively few in relation to what is good, and resemble the discords that actually enhance the beauty of a complete piece of music⁴². There are weaknesses and strengths in Leibniz's Theodicy.

We could agree with Leibniz that God is good; this is evidenced by the good people do to

one another. Also, the good that human do to one another is a mirror image of the goodness of God in man. It is also accurate that, evil is inevitable in the world as Leibniz rightly argued. How would this world have been if there were no evil and only good in the world? Definitely, it would have been a monotonous world where people will always assume things and events. We also agree with Leibniz that, it is evil that makes man to look for God. In other words evil sometimes guides our attention to God for salvation and grace. It is also correct that there is more good than evil, and more happiness than sorrow in the universe. Despite all these plausible points, some lapses in Leibniz's argument are noted. Critics of Leibniz, such as Voltaire maintain that the world contains an amount of suffering too prodigious to justify sanguinity.

While Leibniz disputed that suffering is good because it rouses human will, critics argue that the degree of suffering is too unadorned to justify the belief that God has created the "best of all possible worlds". Several occurrences of earthquake moved Voltaire, in his *Candid* to pour contempt on the scheme of Leibniz that this is "the best possible world" and the recent international wars, the 1st and 2nd World wars, the Vietnam war, the Cambodian war, Boko Haram in insurgence in the north east of Nigeria and most recently the wars with their increase of horror and desolation have brought the dilemma of reconciling them with God's omnipotence and perfection more forcibly to the attention of all philosophers, while physical disasters present an even greater problem⁴³.

Leibniz also addressed this concern by considering what God wants to occur (his precursor will) and what God allows to occur (his resultant will) ⁴⁴. Alvin Plantinga criticized Leibniz's theodicy on the ground that, perhaps there is no such thing as the best possible world, since one can always image a better world, such as a world with one more morally righteous personality.⁴⁵ Bertrand Russell snide out that the theodicy is illogical. He argued that moral and

physical evil must upshot from metaphysical evil (imperfection). But imperfection is simply finitude or limitation: if the existence is good, as Leibniz maintains them, the mere existence of evil requires that evil also be good⁴⁶.

F.R. Tenant points out, that the “best possible world certainly does not mean the ‘happiest’ and such was not the connotation given to ‘best’ by Leibniz. According to him ‘the world’ that is worthiest of God and moral order is a theatre of moral life and love⁴⁷. And to those who would argue that the possible and impossible are alive to omnipotence, Tenant replies that “in that God is love; He is not the creator of a paradise of angels”. This and the belief that men are not puppets, but free agents may satisfy those who feel that theism, not only permits but actually requires finding a place and a meaning for moral evil. But what about the suffering for which man is in no way responsible? Wars and even a tragedy like Aberfan may be accounted for by human failings, but earthquakes, floods and cancer cannot. Why does God allow this? ⁴⁸ The point Tenant is making is that, while we could simply explain away moral evil, by saying that God allows it as a corrective measure for human’s immoral acts, how do we explain reasons for physical evil? We are bound to believe that, tsunami, earthquake, outbreaks of epidemics; undefined sicknesses, diseases, and death of infants are all pointless evils.

In addition, to say that this is the best possible world is to misuse words and to be totally out of touch with reality. The word “best” cannot be something of a superlative degree when compared with others. There is no other world with which we can compare this world⁴⁹. Also, if this is the unsurpassed thinkable world, there is no need for man to insist on any strict ethic and it simply does not make sense to do any good since no amount of good will improve the best possible world⁵⁰. It is obvious that, the theodicy of Leibniz does not solve the problem of evil.

2.14Augustinian Theodicy

St. Aurelius Augustine was born in 345 at Thagaste, in modern Algeria, of a pagan father and a strong Catholic Christian mother Monica. The impression one gets from St. Augustine's confessions⁵¹, is that although his father, Patricius was generous, he was hot tempered and a drunkard. His father remained a nominal pagan until almost at death-bed when he received baptism. His mother, Monica was a fervent believer, zealous, if not a fanatical Christian.⁵² In his book Confessions Augustine wrote extensively on his early life; he gives a glowing image of his early life. It is obvious that, there is a connection between the theodicy and his life. His life was overwhelmed by the problem of evil and the problem practically became an obsession for him. Augustine believed and affirmed the creed of creation in all his writings. He alluded to the perception of original sin in all his writings. He took the Genesis account of creation seriously, the omnipotence and Omni benevolence attributes of God were explicitly defended by him in his theodicy. He supported the opinion that God fashioned the world out of nil and it was created because He willed it.

It is relevant to stress that Augustinian theodicy was primarily theological and secondarily philosophical. His theodicy rests on four pillars:

1. The privative character of evil
2. Free-will argument-the origin of evil as a result of free-will
3. The principle of plenitude
4. The Aesthetic theme

2.1.4.1 The Privative Character of Evil

Augustine considered evil as a negative thing. It is a negation of what is good. Evil is simply non-being⁵³. He argued that whatever evil in the world did not come from God. All natural things are good; people think that some natural things are bad because they were not

perfectly created to be like God. However, they have the affinity to grow to good, but their growth could dwindle. He claimed that there is no evil in the world, but rather a comparative absence of good. There is no evil in God because God is absolutely good.

He argued that right from creation only God has been in a primary sense good; all other things are good in a secondary sense⁵⁴. It is glaring that all other things are finite because they were created out of nothing and therefore are capable of being corrupt. What we call evil has no concrete existence of its own. Evil is the corruption of what is naturally good⁵⁵. It follows that, evil has no concrete existence, therefore God cannot be held answerable for what is non-existent. Strictly speaking, Augustine did not rebuff the existence of evil in the universe. However, his emphasis is that God is good and no evil could emanate from Him. This is obvious from his submission that evil is a mere parasite on good.

Furthermore, Augustine postulated that everything God created is secondarily good while, only God is primarily good. This is so because they were created out of nothing. Evil has no concrete existence of its own. Thus, since evil has no concrete existence, God cannot be held apt for what is non-existent. However, it can be debated that since God created all He also created evil. As mentioned earlier, Augustine's emphasis is that, metaphysically, evil is a adversity or negation of good. This proposal does not solve the problem of evil, no matter the denial of evil, evil is real and concrete, and it is obvious around us every day. If God did not create evil at the beginning, how can it parasite on good? The fact remains that evil is concrete and has its own existence. There is no amount of renunciation of the existence of evil that will make it disappear⁵⁶. Metaphysically, we could agree with Augustine that evil is a deprivation or a negation of positive existence, but empirically evil has its own concrete existence. It seems that Augustine's emphasis is on moral evil. But it is difficult to pretend that, physical or natural evil

has no concrete existence. Earthquake, tsunami of Indonesia in 2007, and Japan in 2011, Ogunpa flood in Ibadan in 1980, flood in Lagos that destroyed lives and properties on July 10, 2011. These are concrete proofs of truth, of evil in the world. Augustine over- stressed moral evil more than physical evil which is more devastating to man and animals in the world. In simple language, his private character of evil does not solve the problem of evil.

2.1.4.2 The Freewill Argument

During Augustine's Manicheans period, he had been taught that evil is an original constituent of nature and so prevalent. It is also argued by Manicheans that there is nothing God himself can do about it. Augustine rejected the assertion by the whole of his heart. He also refuted neo-Platonic position, which has seen evil as being purely metaphysical in origin⁵⁷. His freewill argument rests solely on the Genesis account of the creation narrative. Freewill may be well defined as capacity for self-determination. It is the knack to choose between wrong and right. Both moral and physical evil occurs, Augustine said that, due to an evil use of freewill, which could be sketched from Adam and Eve's original sin⁵⁸. He believed that the evil will present in the human soul was a venality of the will given to humans by God, making suffering a impartial punishment for the sins of humans⁵⁹.

Augustine emphasizes on the Genesis story that chiefly decrees that God created the world and that it was good, evil is merely a product of the fall of man⁶⁰. Man fell into sin not because he was so constituted but because he misused his freewill e.g. Adam and Eve were not compelled to eat the outlawed fruit, they ate it of their own volition⁶¹. He contended that, the so copious evil in the world is due to over misuse of our freewill⁶². He believed that Adam and Eve's choice to sin affected our free choice, and that humans are left inept to repel sin⁶³. However, in spite of his belief that freewill can be twisted to evil, Augustine upheld that it is

bubbly for humans to have freewill, because they could not live well without it. He argued that evil could come from humans contain no evil, they are also not perfectly good and hence can be corrupted⁶⁴.

He also argued that, God gave some additional incentive not to sin. Concisely, the Augustinian theodicy supports the concept of original sin. All versions of the theodicy accept a literal analysis of the Genesis creation chronicle including the belief that God created man and woman without sin or suffering. Evil is held to be a fair retribution for the fall of man, which occurred when Adam and Eve first disobeyed God and were banished from the Garden of Eden⁶⁵. The freewill of humans is accessible by the Augustinian theodicy as the continued reason for moral evil; people commit immoral acts when their will is evil⁶⁶. The evil nature of the human will is credited to original sin. Augustinian theologians argue that the sin of Adam and Eve besmirched the will of human beings. This school of thought maintains that God cannot be impugned for evil in the world. He is good and not himself responsible for evil.

Also, the grace of Jesus Christ freed man from original sin.⁶⁷ This argument has been criticized by many thinkers. God must be held answerable for the abuse of freewill by man. Was God compelled to create man with freewill? It has been disputed that it is simply not right to put a dangerous weapon in the hands of a man whose ability cannot be trusted. If man was made supremely good and placed in the totally free world his freewill would have chosen what is right. In any case, if the man was good at creation, how comes he often chooses evil? ⁶⁸. He also contended that some people were given additional incentives to do good. If this is true can it not be said that God is partial? Frankly speaking, this argument is loaded with faults. Another fault could be deduced. Augustine overlooked the fact that God gave freewill to man.

Christian theology conceives God as omniscient and as all-knowing God must know that

man would misuse his freewill. If God had known this he ought not have given man the terrible gift of freewill. Also, some have postulated that God should have created man as quasi- automata capable of doing good only.

However, this could be refuted with the fact that, one cannot develop the kind of intimate relationship God intended with creatures like that. Unless the creature can reciprocate the love and affection, it is basically a one-sided relationship⁶⁹ without freewill, that is ability to choose between right and wrong God's intention about man cannot be achieved. Furthermore, it is highly debatable, if a man should be blamed for his misuse of free will. Man has limited freedom on earth. He finds himself in the world he was not asked to be born, he did not ask God to offer him freewill. In addition; he was not asked to take some quantity of freewill and took too much of it and then got into trouble. It is obvious that man has no say in the amount of freewill he possesses. Augustine said that, man is freed from original sin through the grace of Jesus Christ. This is central to Christian theology; it is also nothing but the truth. However, he completely ignored physical evil, which is highly devastating to man; certainly, the world would be better without earthquakes, tsunami, sickness, death, etc.

2.1.4.3 The Principle of Plenitude

The principle of plenitude avows that everything that can happen will happen eventually. The historian of ideas, Arthur Lovejoy, was the first to discuss this philosophical central principle overtly, outlining it back to Aristotle, who said that no possibilities which persist infinitely possible will go unrealized⁷⁰. Augustine of Hippo transported the cryptogram from Neo-Platonic thought in early Christian Theology. Plato had argued that variety is the very quintessence of life and God did not prefer a world of monotony⁷¹. He conferred that God created the world with a lot of varieties. No two things are unerringly the same. God acts in

terms of plenitude. Since God considers it better to produce all possible forms of beings, ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ ‘power’ in value for all contribute to the beauty and harmony in God’s sight than to produce only a society of blessed angels⁷².

God communicated more ample existences to some and to others limited existences and as such God arranges being in ranks⁷³. God created the world that not everybody is a blessed angel. The ‘richer’ and ‘poorer,’ “king” and “subjects,” “Higher” and “Lower” this is to give room to order in the world. This is to have variety in the world instead of a monotonous set up. According to Augustine, when we look at plants and animals we would notice without doubt, that variety has been a permanent structure of the world from creation. It is obvious that, all creatures are handicapped one way or the other. Man is handicapped e.g. in swimming because he is not so adapted to water. He further argued that, God knows why the world must consist of varieties. A world without human beings seeking redemption would be a world with a serious setback⁷⁴. However, this does not mean that one is good and the other is evil. What we call good is ‘higher good’ and what we call evil is ‘lower good’. Augustine saw the world from a positive angle throughout all his writings. Each created thing has its own degree of limitation and a height of its perfection.

There is no one that is perfectly good or absolutely evil. In addition, Augustine argued that evil is needed to make a man appreciate good. He contends that it is against the background of war that man appreciates peace and it is against the background of failure that man appreciates success. This argument has its own flaws. Augustine argued that the reason for evil in this world is to have variety. This view is presumptuous. How are we sure that, it was the intention of God to create the world of variety?. Varieties that exist in the world make some people to be suffering, therefore it is evil. Augustine called evil a lower good, this is difficult to defend

because whatever we call it, evil is evil. Augustine has succeeded in negating his own position.

Any scheme at all that justifies evil by referring to it as form of lower good is not going to be easy to defend. Also, why should man first experience evil in order to appreciate good? The fact that man sometimes gets good out of evil does not justify evil in the world. The fact remains that evil is evil. In most cases, some evils are pointless and no good could be brought out of them, e.g. the demise of an only child of a couple. Some theists would argue that, it is to avert greater evil, but this is mere presumption. No one is sure if the child could equally become the president of Nigeria, if he lives. It is glaring that Augustine had cleverly defended all sorts of evil in the world before we know it. He substitutes evil with lower good in his principle of plenitude.

However, it does not matter what we call evil, evil is evil. This argument is backward looking at explaining evil. It conceives God as being remotely removed from the world. Many thinkers argue that this is the origin of the notion of a withdrawn God. Deists might have drawn their philosophical idea from this concept. This argument makes evil a necessity in the world. Invariably it contradicts Christian doctrine. Christianity condemns evil and preaches against it, especially moral evil. Unknowingly Augustine negates his own position and therefore the principle of plenitude in explaining evil is a failed theodicy. Anything or argument that justifies evil in the universe cannot be helping the cause of Christendom.

2.1.4.4 The Aesthetics Theme

Augustine incorporated the first three themes in his aesthetic theme. That is the privative character of evil, the freewill argument, the principle of plenitude. Nevertheless, the aesthetic theme starts as a unique dimension in theological analysis of the problem of evil. The aesthetic theme sees evil on earth as part of the elements to beautify the world. It holds that the universe seen from the ultimate stance of the creator is wholly good and the 'evil' within it is made to

contribute to the complex perfection of the whole⁷⁵. This theme is closely related to the principle of plenitude. This implies that whatever we call evil in a particular circumstance when considered from its totality is good. Augustine saw the world from the aspect of its beauty. He argued that if one takes this world from its totality one would discern that the world is beautiful. He reasoned that considered in its entirety, we shall discover that the universe is completely good. He compared this world with painting in which dull and bright colours are synchronized in such a way as to heighten the total beauty of the painting. The bright colour stands for a positive existence (good) and dull color negative existence (evil). The mixture of the two is used to beautify the world. Also, in this world good is appreciated better when compared with evil.

It also follows that if we don't know good, we would not know evil and if we do not know evil we will not know good. We appreciate tall people against the background of short people. We appreciate fat people against the background of thin people. Thus we appreciate the good in this world because of the manifestation of evil in it.

He said if we took a global view of this problem, it would be seen that different people perform specific roles, which others cannot perform, e.g. the king cannot at the same time be the soldier, the steward and the laundry man yet without poor people a lot of dignity will be removed from the king himself⁷⁶. God did this in fiat to uphold order in the world. In addition, it enables man to explore the earth as God commanded. As plausible as this argument appears, it is only true to a point. Probably the weakest point of the argument is the very analogy on which it rests. His comparison of this world with painting is detached from what he is trying to defend. Certainly, it is wrong to compare this world with painting. In painting, the painter carefully selects colours to paint and beautify and the painting remains permanently. But evil is capable of multiplying itself.

Also, the effect of evil is devastating to man e.g. war, earthquake, hunger, famine, several catastrophes, etc. The implication of this argument is that evil is a permanent structure of the world. Therefore, it should be condoned. If this is taken, then we don't need to orate to sinners to repent because if evil should be totally eradicated as Christian Theology aims, the dull colour which beautifies the world would be removed. An omnipotent and Omni benevolent God is not supposed to bring evil to the world to make it interesting. In the first instance, evil is not supposed to emanate from the all-good God. An omnipotent God should be able to make the world interesting without adding evil. This theme destroyed all the attributes that could be added to God. Instead of defending God, it exposes the weakness of God. Invariably it strengthens atheism. It has been observed that evil always manifests itself on the same people, the same area created by the good God. This is purely unpleasant to the victims.

Evil should not be taken as simple as that. The argument makes evil necessary in the world. It implies that evil complements good and without evil, the world cannot be interesting. This, however, contradicts what the Bible predicts of heaven. According to the Bible, there would not be evil in heaven. All tears shall be smeared away; does it mean that heaven will not be more interesting than the world? In a nutshell, evil should not be taken simply as a necessity for world existence.

2.1.4.5 General Assessment of Augustinian Theodicy

Augustinian theodicy without doubt is plausible to theists. But as plausible as it appears, it fails to solve the problem of evil. His theodicy although rests mostly on the perception of original sin. However, the theodicy is loaded with faults and could not answer those questions emanating from the concept of original sin and the problem of evil. It is glaring from the theodicy that he paid extensive attention to moral evil. He neglected the physical evil throughout

his writings. Also, his theodicy fails to satisfy the quest of thinkers on the problem of evil. Augustine speaks of evil as something light. It is therefore aloof. The victims of evil can never share the same opinion with Saint Augustine. He pointed out that evil is necessary to complement good, then, we cannot continue to refer to it as evil. In contradiction to Augustine Aesthetic Theme in the real life, evil does not beautify good like dull colours help to enhance bright colours in the painting. Augustinian theodicy has no touch with reality and is therefore a failed argument. It is possible that he wrote the theodicy when he was comfortable. He did not consider those that are suffering and passing through pain.

2.1.5 Whiteheadian Theodicy

Alfred North Whitehead was born on 15 February, 1861. He was an English Mathematician and Philosopher. He is best known as the crucial figure of the Philosophical School known as process Philosophy. He died in December 1947 at Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States at the age of 86 years.⁷⁷ A. N. Whitehead reacted to the problem of evil, by conceiving God as a bi-potter. He is suffering and developing. He argued that, God is dipolar⁷⁸. He operates on two poles, physical and mental. His physical pole is material and that is the world which forms his body while his mental pole is divine or metaphysical.⁷⁹ His mental pole is not yet perfect but it is developing to perfection.⁸⁰ Evil is in the world because God's mental pole is imperfect. He is not the absolutely perfect being of classical belief. On the contrary, God is yet imperfect, but He is developing and moving towards His perfection. As he does so He is suffering, gradually progressing towards His goal of self-completeness, perfection and full consciousness.⁸¹ God is a fellow sufferer, a companion in suffering. The world is His material body, therefore, as the world suffers, he is also suffering.

Process Philosophers argue that, God cannot be censured for evil in the world. This is

because, He is not yet perfect but developing towards perfection, He is part of cosmic evolution.⁸² He is also reconnoitering with this world; evil shall be eradicated in the world when He becomes perfect. Process theology typically stresses God's relational nature. Rather than seeing God as impassible (unchanging). Process theologians view God as "the fellow sufferer who understands" and as the being who is supremely affected by temporal events.⁸³ Hartshorne points out that people would not applause a human ruler who was unaffected by either the joys or sorrows of his followers. So why would this be praise – worthy quality in God.⁸⁴ Instead, as the being who is most affected by the world, God is the being who can most appropriately respond to the world.⁸⁵ However, process theology has been formulated in a wide variety of ways. C.

Robber Mesle for instance, advocates "process naturalism" lays a process theology without God"⁸⁶ A. N. Whitehead did not object to the being of God. He believed in the existence of God, but he argued for the limitation of God in his goodness and omnipotence. He argued:

The limitation of God is His goodness. He gains his profundity of reality by His harmony of appraisal. It is not true that God is in all respects infinite. If He were he would be evil as well as good. Also, this indefinite synthesis of evil and good would mean mere nothingness. He is something decided and is thereby limited.⁸⁷

The God conceived by Whitehead, is opposed to the God of theists. To the theists God is absolutely perfect and powerful. Although merciful, He is above human standards and supremely powerful to deliver man from suffering. Although Christianity preaches that God would destroy this world at Parousia and that the next world is a place of reward and judgment. Whitehead admitted that God exists, but he reacted to the omnipotent and omnibenevolent attributes of God. While God exists, He is limited in power and goodness. As pointed out above this is not satisfactory to theists. God of classical belief is omnipotent, He is not narrow in power he is also

omnibenevolent; He is not inadequate in goodness. This is because He must be omnipotent and omnibenevolent to deserve human worship. Also, we cannot abide by the submission of some of his followers e.g Robert Mesle that advocates a process theology without God. We cannot deny the existence of God simply because of evil in the world.

If God's existence is denied because of evil, how do we account for the good amount of good in the world? It is clear that, good outweighs evil in the world. The existence of God is more resounding than His non – existence. The feature of the world and wonderful orderliness is enough to convince us that an intelligent supreme being created the world. In a nutshell whitehead's theodicy is failed. It does not solve the problem of evil, it rather created another one. He advocates for God's goodness, while His omnipotence is questioned, this is divergent to God conceived by theists.

2.1.6 Karl Barth Theodicy

Karl Barth was born on May 10, 1886, In Basel, Switzerland, to Johann Friedrich "Fritz" Barth, a theology Professor and Pastor who greatly influenced his son's life, and Anna Katharina Csatorious. Barth served as a reformed Pastor in 1911-1912 in the village of safenwill in the canton of Aargau. He later became a Professor of theology in Gottingen (1921-1925) Munster (1925-1930) and Born(1930-1935) He left Germany in 1935 after he snubbed to swear allegiance to Adolf Hitler and went back to Switzerland and became a Professor in Basel (1935 -1962)⁸⁸. He became an important voice in support of both Christian penitence and of reconciliation with Churches abroad.

In 1962, he visited the United States and lectured at Princeton Theological Seminary, the

University of Chicago, the Union Theological Seminary and the San Francisco Theological Seminary. He died on December, 10, 1968 at the age of 82 years ⁸⁹. Theodicy of Karl Barth was a response to the holocaust of Nazi regime in Germany between 1941 -1945 He wrote the theodicy as a response to people's question of why God allowed Adolf Hitler to massacre the Jews. Previously Barth had written and argued that Jews were covenanted people of God. They enjoy covenanted solidarity from God ⁹⁰. His political support for Jews was obviously revealed in his refusal to swear fidelity to Adolf Hitler to destroy the Jews. Moreover, his political support for Israel was founded on an unchangeable conviction that the Jewish people stand in covenanted unity with the church.

He sued that a Jewish voice was both a theological and ontological requisite in the newly formed world of Churches. If Jews enjoy extraordinary relationship with God, why did He allow Hitler to kill about six million of them?⁹¹ The response given by Barth formed his theodicy He wrote:

Evil is nothingness but nothingness is not nothing. It is something, an entire sinister system or element He states that evil as an alien factor which cannot and must not be seen in the same context as other object of God's providence. He refers to evil as das Nichtige. He says nothingness has confronted Jesus, but this the point at which his power was broken. Nothingness is opposed to God and is not part of God's positive will. It is definitely not part of God's creation.⁹²

Barth referred to evil as nothingness. His nothingness emerged as one of the embryonic state of Israel in 1948 and beyond ⁹³. He argued that God did not will evil. He suggested that evil is non-God's creature. It is also not comprehended by God's providence in the sense thus far described and which is not therefore preserved, complemented, nor ruled by the almighty action of God

like creaturely occurrence – there is amongst the objects of God’s providence an alien factor that can never be considered or mentioned together in the same contexts as other objects of God’s providence. The total canon of god’s providence must be investigated ⁹⁴. Barth’s theodicy is Christo –central. His theodicy takes a Christological approach. His emphasis is that, the nation of the omnipotence of God must always be tacit in the light of God’s self-revelation in Christ ⁹⁵. According to Barth evil confronted Jesus, but it was at that point it was defeated ⁹⁶. To Barth the cross is God’s riposte to the problem of evil. He referred to evil as *das Nichtige*, a type of vigor or ‘nothingness’ which God did not will during creation ⁹⁷. It is this ‘nothingness’ which works against God’s will. This force is not ‘nothing’ in itself, but a power which threatens God’s purpose in the world. Barth sees this force as not being something we should fear as it is overwhelmed by God’s grace ⁹⁸. Barth’s opinion cannot be understood in the light of God’s omnipotence.

If God is omnipotent, how an alien factor like an evil creep in into his creation would unknowingly. One wonders how ‘nothingness’ is found in God’s creation against his will. This logically questions God’s omnipotent ability. Also, Barth’s concept of the existence of a ‘nothingness’ has proved highly controversial and criticized by some as being based on whim and so something purely speculative⁹⁹. However, his Christological emphasis is central to Christian doctrine. Jesus answers the question on the problem of evil because he defeated evil on the cross. The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is how evil entered the world and how it was defeated by Jesus Christ through his death on the cross.

2.1.7 Jeremy Bentham Theodicy (Utilitarianism)

Jeremy Bentham, the proponent of utilitarianism, was born in Houndsditch, London on 15 February, 1748 and he died on 6 June, 1832 ¹⁰⁰. He was an English philosopher, jurist and

social reformer ¹⁰¹. He was regarded as the founder of utilitarianism ¹⁰². His followers included James Mill, John Stuart Mill, John Austin, and Robert Owen. John Stuart Mill was a great proponent of utilitarianism after Bentham. He was born in London in 1806 and died in 1873¹⁰³. Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that states that the best action is the one that maximizes utility¹⁰⁴. “Utility” is defined in various ways, usually in terms of the well being of individuals and other animals¹⁰⁵. Jeremy Bentham the founder of utilitarianism fashioned utility as the summation of all preference that results from an action, minus the suffering of anyone involved in the action¹⁰⁶. It is the principle that actions are right if they are valuable to, or for the assistance of, a majority. The doctrine that an act is right in so far it stimulates happiness, and that the maximum number should be the guiding principle of conduct¹⁰⁷.

It suggests the evolution of things that involve choices, e.g. actions, laws, policies, character traits and moral code. The rudimentary idea of utilitarianism rests on the greatest happiness principle: “Actions are right in quantity as they incline to indorse happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the inverse of happiness”¹⁰⁸. Happiness means pleasure, and the absence of pain, unhappiness means pain and the absence of pleasure. Happiness is the only thing that has inherent value. Pleasure and freedom from pain, are the only things, anticipated as ends. All wanted things are desirable either for the pleasure inbuilt in themselves, or as a means to the preferment of pleasure and the preclusion of pain¹⁰⁹. Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism; whether an action is decently right or wrong hinge entirely on its consequences.

An action is right if it brings about the best product of the choices available, else it is wrong. Good things are worth chasing and promoting. The rights are the moral rightness of actions and policies¹¹⁰. Consequentialists say that deeds are right when they make best use of the

good¹¹¹. Utilitarian define good as pleasure without pain¹¹². So to utilitarians our moral onus is to maximize pleasure and abate pain. The solution to the moral evil in the world is to seek the pleasure of others. The criterion of good and evil is balanced between individual's happiness and the glee of the community "each counting in an equal way"¹¹³. An action is judged on its consequence on other individuals of the community, if it brings happiness for other people the action is good, but if it makes other people sad it is evil. My personal freedom is weighed in respect of another individual's and the community. My freedom stops if it shrinks the freedom of other individuals or the pleasure of the largest number or the well being of the society. My search for happiness stops if it decreases the happiness of another individual or the society. Utilitarianism advocates seeking for the bliss of fellow men. Selfishness is frowned at by the utilitarians. This is consonant with the command of Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27. The principle of utilitarianism is the soul of humanity. If it is strictly followed, moral evil would be eradicated in our society. If the delight of others is considered, there would not be thieves or armed robbers, ritualists, kidnappers, assassins, rogues, fraudsters, adulterers and adulteresses, fornicators and rapists in the world. Political office holders would not embezzle public fund. Directors, managers, etc. would consider the happiness of their subordinates before any decision is taken. The husband would consider the happiness of the wife and vice versa. Corruption is pervasive in our society today because the gladness of others is not considered. Utilitarianism may run into problem, especially in the area of parenting-children relationship.

The father or mother may discipline a child for wrong doing and this may make the child unhappy, but it is necessary that a child must be disciplined to inculcate good habits. A doctor may need to impose pain on his patient at times before he could be healed. Pain may be necessary for a pregnant woman to be delivered of a baby. The world itself is a theatre or a stage

of risk bearing and this may involve pain at times. It has also been jagged out that, happiness is an emotion and it cannot be evaluated as suggested by the utilitarians. Also, it is obvious in the human sphere, that sentiment cannot be eradicated. Everyone seeks his/her happiness that of others. This is in line with the human nature, man is created to protect himself/herself first he could think of others.

A dying, being must save himself/herself first before he could save others. As plausible as the theory of utilitarianism appears its application to human existence is difficult if not impossible. Utilitarians paid attention to moral evil, but ignored physical evil. Certainly physical evil cannot be controlled or minimized by applying the principle of utilitarianism. Why a man would always think of his happiness and that of others, he can only achieve this morally, but his action has no touch with the causes and occurrence of physical evil. Physical evil is being controlled by forces beyond human ken and no degree of the consideration of utility or pleasure seeking could stop it. We are at the mercy of God when it comes to physical evil. However, if the principle of utilitarianism is given consideration it would curb moral evil in the human society. If the cheerfulness of others is considered before taking an action, the world would be more desirable to live in. There would be a happier and less pain human race.

2.2 Other Views on Theodicy

Another theologian and philosopher who attempted to solve the problem of evil is Irenaeus. He articulated ideas which expounded the being of evil as necessary for human amplification. Irenaeus argued that human creation was split into two parts: Humans were made first in the image, and the likeness of God¹¹⁴. The clone of God consists of having the latent to achieve moral perfection, whereas the resemblance of God is the attainment of that perfection. To achieve moral aptness, Irenaeus proposed that humans must have freewill; ¹¹⁵ to achieve such

freedom will, humans must experience suffering and God must be at an epidemic detachment (a distance of knowledge) from humanity¹¹⁶. Therefore, evil exists to allow humans to develop as moral agents and that belief in God remains a free choice. Irenaeus played away evil as if it is something palatable. Why should God create man imperfect and that he must experience pain and suffering to be good? Was God under compulsion to create man or to create him imperfect? Christian Science championed by Mary Baker Eddy argued that, evil is an illusion of the mortal mind which cannot be validated by human experiences. This submission does not crack the problem of evil. It is obvious that evil is real and it can be validated by human experience. This was truly observed by John Hick, when he explained that there can be no doubt, then, for biblical faith, evil is entirely real and in no sense an illusion¹¹⁷.

Deism is a sacred philosophy which holds that reasons and observation of the natural world, without the need for systematized religion, can regulate that the universe is the product or an all-powerful creator¹¹⁸. According to deists, the creator rarely, if ever, either interposes in human affairs or dangles the natural laws of the universe¹¹⁹. Deists typically castoff paranormal events such as prophecy and miracles, tending instead to assert that a god (the supreme architect) does not alter the universe by intervening in it. This idea is also known as clockwork universe theory, in which a god designs and builds the universe, but strides aside to let it run on its own¹²⁰. Deists over- stressed the transcendence of God, evil is in the all God's creatures because after creation God withdrew. He allows everybody to do whatever he/she likes, with the possibility of judgment and rewards in the future.

This submission makes God irresponsible and renders Christian worship useless. The implications of this notion are devastating to Christian teaching. It denies miracle and heavenly interference in human affairs. This does not solve the problem of evil; it rather attacks the

omnipresence or immanency of God in the universe.

Since solutions proffered by Western Philosophers are inadequate to solve the problem of evil, it is necessary to look into our culture and philosophy since Yoruba/Africa recognizes the existence of evil in the world. They not only give recognition to the problem of evil, but they also react to it. Further research into the problem of evil with special consideration of Yoruba philosophy is highly recommended.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0 THE CONCEPT OF EVIL: AN OVERVIEW

3.1 The Dilemma of Evil

It is not an exaggeration to mention that the most perplexing issue for theists is how to resolve the existence of God with the glaring authenticity of evil in the world. For instance, Christianity emphasizes that God is all-good, all-loving, all knowing and all-powerful¹. The prefix “all” infers that God has such traits without limit, far surpassing the range to which humans possess them. The problem of evil is the inquiry of how to settle the reality of evil with that of a Divinity who is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnibenevolent¹. An argument from evil was proposed to show that the co-existence of evil and such a deity is improbable or impossible².

The question raised by the philosophers is how we reconcile the existence of Deity who possesses all these attributes, with the blatant certainty of evil in the world. The argument in clear language is that, the existence of Almighty and evil are commonsensically incompatible. Epicurus is mostly credited with first expounding the problem of evil and it is occasionally called “the Epicurean paradox” or the riddle of Epicurus³. He put the dilemma thus:

Is God able to prevent evil in the world, but unwilling to do so? Then He is malevolent. Is He willing to prevent it, but is unable to do it? Then He is impotent. Is He both able and willing? Why then is evil? ⁴

Epicurus himself did not leave any engraved form of this argument. It can be found in Christian

theologian Lactantius's discourse on the anger of God, where Lactantius analyses the argument⁵. Epicurus's argument as presented by Lactantius actually argues that a god that is omnipotent and all-good does not exist and that the gods are aloof and uninvolved with man's concerns. The gods are neither our associates nor our enemies⁶. Lactantius may have wrongly attributed the formulation to Epicurus because from his Christian angle he believed that Epicurus was an atheist.

David Hume agreed with Epicurus's formulation. He thus put his own formulation in questions form; this is found in his "Dialogues concerning Natural religion". He put the poignant argument thus:

Is He willing to prevent evil, but not able?
Then he is feeble. Is he able, but not
willing? Then he is malign. Is he both able
and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is
he neither able nor willing? Then why call
him God⁷?

Hume's assertion queries God's attributes; he pointed out the obvious weakness in the theists' conviction that God is all-powerful and omnibenevolent. Certainly God cannot be almighty and omnibenevolent in the façade of evil. From the Christian point of view, God is potent and infinite, whatever He wills He executes. His wisdom is infinite: He has never chosen wrongly. It is therefore difficult to know why evil disturbs man on earth. The problem of evil is more acute for the monotheists than other religious believers,⁸ for instance, most African Traditional Religionists have lesser difficulty with the problem of evil. It is understood that any of the divinities may be in charge of evil in the world. One of the dangers of monotheism is that it always refers anything back to God, e.g. Christianity. The problem is about the trouble in the world and the indication that God is good⁹. The problem of evil is the dilemma of reconciling the goodness and power of God with the existence of evil in the world¹⁰.

John Hick also posed the dilemma thus:

If God is immaculately good, He must want to abolish all evils, if He is unlimitedly powerful, He must be able to obliterate evil, but evil exists; therefore, either God is not perfectly good, or, He is not unlimitedly powerful¹¹.

The argument is that if God is omnipotent as claimed by Theists, He must be competent to stop evil and, if He is omnibenevolent, He should be keen to stop evil. The puzzle arises from the fact that despite the claimed attributes of God by Christians evil exists in the world. The major reason for the rejection of Christian God by atheists is the plain truth of evil in the world. David Hume the great philosophical critic argued that, the fact that there is noticeable evil in the world is a strong argument in contradiction of the claim of a creator God who is also good¹².

J.S.Mills also rejected the existence of God simply because the awful measure of evil in the world is logically inconsistent with the existence of an omnipotent and all- good God. He observed that:

The problem of reconciling infinite benevolence and justice with finite power in the creator of such a world as this. The attempt to do so not only involves complete denial from a logical point of view, but unveils to excess the repellent scene of a Jesuitical defense of moral enormities¹³.

The actuality of evil in the human sphere, the experience of pain and suffering on the part of man always generate doubt on the existence of God who possesses all the attributes given to Him by Christians. How can a loving God who is powerful and all good allow His devotees to experience pain and woe in the world He created? The good and loving God always conceives anything good and does well all the time to those who believe Him¹⁴.What is intriguing and

confusing is why the great and loving God does nothing about the evil that ravages the world. The puzzle is so disturbing that it affects not only the atheists, but, also the believers. The problem of throbbing and woe in the world is a great challenge to theism. This has made Theologians and Christian philosophers to put forward a defense which is called theodicy.

3. 2 **Logical Problem of Evil**

It has been argued that, the formulation of the Epicurus' argument poignant denies the consequence. This is because it is unclear how the precursor of the first proposition of Epicurus's argument entails the consequent. In other words, it is ambiguous precisely how the presence of an almighty and perfectly good God, cannot guarantee the non-existence of evil, it is therefore, unclear, whether the first principle is true. Philosophers later offered refinements of the argument to show that the argument is plausible. The subsequent versions expand on the premise, such as these examples.

1. God exists.
2. God is omnipotent, all knowing, and flawlessly good.
3. An effortlessly good being would want to foil all evils.
4. An omniscient being knows all ways in which evils can come into existence.
5. An all-powerful being, who knows every manner in which an evil can come into existence, has the clout to prevent that evil from coming into existence.
6. An organism that knows every tactic in which an evil can come into existence, which is able to prevent that evil from coming into existence, and wants to do so, would prevent the existence of that evil.
7. If there exists an omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good being, then no evil exists
- . 8. Evil exists (logical contradiction) ¹⁵.

Versions such as these are regarded as the logical problem of evil. Going by this formulation, the assumed propositions cannot all be right because it leads to logical contradictions. Simply put, the omnipotent God who is also omniscient and Omni benevolent cannot coexist with evil.

The assertion, God is omnipotent, describes a being who has unlimited power, and who is able to put all things under control. It implies that He could abolish evil if He so desired. The theists also claim that God is good (Omni benevolent). This raises the query of how to resolve the all-good God with evil. If God is all-good as theists claim, He should be willing to abolish evil. The dilemma is further strengthened by the absoluteness of God's goodness claimed by theists. In the actual sense God's goodness is supposed to be paralleled with evil. Most philosophical debate has fixated on the proposals stating that God cannot exist with, or would want to avert, all evils, with many defenders of theism arguing that God could very well exist and sanction evil in order to achieve a greater good¹⁶.

Some theists such as Alvin Plantinga have been able to put forward some convincing arguments, that the existence of God is soundly compatible with the detail of evil in the world. The first part of this defense accounts for moral evil as the result of free human action. The second part of this defense argues for the logical probability of "a mighty non-human spirit"¹⁷ Such as Satan, who is accountable for the so called "natural evils" including earthquakes, tidal waves, and contagious diseases. Many philosophers admit that Plantinga efficaciously solves the logical problem of evil as he appears to have revealed that God and evil are reasonably compatible through others demur. He further argued that the possession of freewill makes man to propagate and multiply moral evil.¹⁸ However; God tolerates evil in the world in order to attain the ultimate greater good of freewill. Although, it is difficult to ascertain the necessity of freewill when its immoral consequence is considered.

3.3 Evidential Problem of Evil

The evidential form of the problem of evil (also stated that the probabilistic or inductive version) seeks to show that the being of evil, although logically unswerving with the actuality of God, counts contrary to or, lowers the probability of the verity of theism¹⁹. A critic of Plantinga's idea of "a mighty nonhuman spirit" causing natural evils may admit that the existence of such a being is not logically impossible but argue that due to lacking scientific evidence for its existence this is very unlikely and thus it is an unconvincing explanation for the existence of natural evils²⁰.

A sort by William L. Rowe states thus:

1. There exist cases of extreme suffering which an omnipotent, omniscient being could have prevented without thereby trailing some greater good or allowing some evil equally bad or worse.
2. An omniscient, wholly good being would prevent the occurrence of any intense pain it could, except it could not do so without thereby losing some greater good or permitting some evil similarly bad or worse.
3. (Therefore) there does not exist an omnipotent, omniscient, exclusively good being²¹.

Paul Draper puts his version thus:

- a. Gratuitous evils exist.
- b. The premise of indifference i.e. that if there are supernatural beings, they are unresponsive to

gratuitous evils is a better explanation for (1) than theism.

c. Therefore, confirmation prefers that no god, as universally understood by theists exists²².

These arguments are probability judgments since they rest on the claim that even after chary consideration, one can see no good reason for God's permission of evil²³. The corollary from this claim to the ruling that there exists gratuitous evil is inductive in nature and, it is this inductive rung that sets the evidential argument apart from the logical argument²⁴. Theists have endeavored to reconcile the logical compatibility of God's existence with the fact of evil in the ecosystem. If the logical problem of evil appears to be solved, some fundamental questions remain unanswered. This was raised by the evidential problem of evil in the world. One wonders why pointless evil, such as the death of an only child of a couple should be allowed.

William L. Rowe's famous example of natural evil:

In some aloof forest lightning
strikes a dead tree, resulting in a
forest fire In the fire a fawn
is ensnared, extremely scorched,
and lies in abysmal agony for
several days before death relieves
its suffering.²⁵

This is a pointless evil. It is grim to deduce that God wants to bring out a greater good from this event. There can be no greater good from this example. It is indecorous to maintain all the assertions taken for God's attributes with the reality of evil in the world. Unless we are ready to jettison one of the assertions, the problem cannot be solved J.L. Mackie called the existence of God and evil, "The paradox of omnipotence." This is because rationally, God and evil cannot co-exist.

J.L. Mackie suggested that the denial of one of the characteristics of the theistic God will bring about the resolution to the problem. He argues:

If one is ready to say that God is not perfectly good, or not pretty omnipotent, or that evil does not exist, or that good is not disparate to the kind of evil that exists, or there are limits to what an omnipotent God can do, the problem of evil will not arise for you²⁶.

It is apparent that after careful reflection, one can see no reason for God's acquiescence of evil.

The argument for a logical prospect of veiled or unknown reason for the existence of evil is not plausible. We are therefore left with the unsolved problem of evil.

3.4 Types of Evil

Evil is a reality that humanity has to grapple with since the emergence of consciousness²⁷. Evil refers to that which is unpleasant to the total well-being of humankind, or that which works against the welfare of human kind²⁸. It may also mean anything that is ruinous, aching, cruel or dreadful. It denotes something that is not good, that is, absence of good or the corruption of goodness²⁹. It manifests itself in human experience as suffering, pain, moral wickedness, and the wrong that human beings do to one another³⁰. It is obvious that, evil is on the increase every day as human beings are being attacked by poverty, sickness, diseases, corruption, accident and premature death. There are two types of evil. These are moral and physical or natural evil.

3.4.1 Moral Evil

Moral evil is mostly caused by human actions. These include major scourges such as poverty, oppression, suppression, persecution, war, genocide, or armed robbery. Murder, anarchy, tyranny, rebellion, greed, selfishness, injustice, indignity, inequity, rape, arson, looting, human rights abuses, fornication, nudity, pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, lying, corruption, embezzlement and all sorts of social vices. It is obvious that moral evil takes

place daily in human society. Moral evil arises from the inhumanity of humans to one another. Hick has noted that a great deal of soreness and misery are caused by human actions³¹. Paul Ricoeur corroborates this assertion. He states that, the primary cause of suffering lies in the violence that human beings exercise on one another. In fact, to do evil is always directly or indirectly to make someone suffer³². Today, the world is growing more evil than before.

We are not saying that it has not been happening in the past, but recent records show that moral decadence is at a high rate.³³ For instance, pornography is becoming a popular form of entertainment in the world. In Nigeria movie, industry is gradually embracing live sex on the screen.³⁴ conversely, some of the films are rated or censored as adult movies and viewers are advised before watching. Nevertheless, the rating is not sufficient to curb the adverse effects it has on the society. Most parents are not always around their children to determine what to watch, their works pose challenges. Invariably, children who are not mature are left to determine what to watch.

Some ladies in Nigeria are no longer covering their bosom, and they walk half naked on the street. This is a result of depleted social values and lack of respect for human dignity. If a culture of respect for others is embraced one would not be self-centered about freedom. Those pornographers urge for self-expression, but they are infringing on other people's freedom of sight. Many female undergraduates sell their body for money. They naked themselves before the camera for money. Indeed, most Nigerian institutions of higher learning have become bastions of sex as some female students offer their body for money. In fact, the sex trade among female undergraduates is booming³⁵. In an Ikotun area of Lagos there is a particular spot, where the ladies dance naked. Men are patronizing the place with only N200.00 as gate fee.³⁶. On the internet, young women are submitting themselves to be deflowered before the camera, while a

good number engage in marathon sex with men before the camera³⁷.

Domestic ferocity is becoming progressively high in the community. Recently, a discussion forum announced, “a woman is being raped each hour, while eight people around the world are exposed to domestic violence every second³⁸. Although these statistics is uncertain, however, it is a fact that domestic violence maintains the rapid increase in our days, and it brings suffering and death to people.

It is indubitable that moral evil is a challenge to every sensitive person in the world today and man/woman is the agent and instrument of moral evil. Most of these immoral acts are perpetrated by the young people because of the economy depression and political hopelessness of our country which bears the consequence of unemployment and poverty. Notwithstanding the fact that religious enterprise appears to be thriving very much in Nigeria moral decadence is spreading at a disquieting rate. The embarrassing contradiction between the ethical demands by the religions and obvious corruption in Nigeria is a great concern to the world. Recently, Nigeria was rated the second most corrupt nation in the world by Transparency International’s year 2002 corruption perception index.

Almost “all wrongs” has become “right” in Nigeria. Alongside religiosity corruption is booming in the country. The office clerk has to take a petty bribe, policemen are openly taking bribe, and huge project contracts are hurriedly awarded with special consideration of kickbacks. The qualifications and the experience of the contractors are not considered in most cases, fraud, thievery, roguery, kidnapping, ritual killings, etc are endemic in Nigeria society. The corruption in Nigeria has been described systemic. Public officers (politicians) embellish public funds without conscience.

The government appears to be fighting corruption. Economic and Financial Crime

Commission was set up by Obasanjo's administration in 1999. However, it is the only witch hunting the opponents. The feature the commission maintains till date. Corruption has ruined Nigeria society. This has promoted moral evil in Nigeria and its consequence has caused a great damage to Nigerians. The country is overwhelming by economy recession which promoted poverty, low standard of living, poor health condition, sudden death, etc. Nigeria today is characterized with uncountable evil, which are bore out of corruption and other social vices.

3.4.2 Physical or Natural Evil

Physical or Natural evil is evil that is natural states or processes of the physical world which commonly cause pain and suffering, together with the pain and suffering they cause³⁹. Physical evil describes natural catastrophes occurring within nature that affect human and other living creatures. It is caused by nature but it can be activated by human actions. Unlike moral evil, physical evil is not an everyday experience, but whenever it happens; its effects are always devastating to humanity. There is no doubt that these natural phenomena that bring physical evil and cause untold suffering to humankind are beyond human ken⁴⁰. As John Hick has noted, they seem to be built into the very structure of our world⁴¹. Occurrences such as earthquake, tsunami, flood, disease, ocean surge etc. are examples of physical evil.

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40. P. A. Dopamu, *Esu The Invisible Foe of Man*, 8.
41. John Hick quoted in P. A. Dopamu, *Esu The Invisible Foe of Man*, 45.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN CHRISTIANITY

4.1 God and Evil in Christianity

Evil according to a Christian world view is any action, thought or attitude that is different from the character of God¹. Any action contrary to the commandment of God is viewed as a form of evil by Christians. The commandments of God are shown in the Old and the New Testaments. Christians' Holy Scriptures (Bible) stresses strict obedience to the law of God. According to the Bible, evil is the consequence of deserting God. Evil is revealed by the natural desire to make one god of his/her life. The desire to control one's life without giving absolute recognition to God is regarded as a form of evil. Christian theology draws its theory of evil from the old and the new testaments. In the Old Testament, evil is understood to be hostility to God as well as something inappropriate or lesser such as the leader of the fallen angels "Satan"².

Evil in Christianity is profound immorality. It is also ungodly acts. In the New Testament, two Greek words are translated "evil" (poneros and kakos); poneros is used to designate unseemliness while "kakos" is used to refer to resistance to God in the human realm³. The New Testament emphasizes that evil is anything that is not in conformity with the will of

God. It is expedient to note that, the conception of evil in Christianity is not a discrepancy with the universal conception. C.S Lewis in his book, *The Abolition of man* maintains that there are certain acts that are universally considered evil, such as rape and murder⁴. These are also noticeable evil in Christian theology. Anything that brings suffering to man is evil to Christians.

Plato observed that there are comparatively few ways to do good, but there are innumerable ways to do evil, which can therefore have a much greater sway on our lives and the lives of other human beings capable of suffering⁵. Plato's submission is plausible; it is easy for a man to do evil than good. The Bible testifies that the heart of man is terribly wicked. It is full of deception. God regretted that He created man because of the human wickedness. Whatever man does to make others suffer is evil. The selfishness which is natural to man makes him to do evil to others. A French-American theologian Henri Blocher describes evil, viewing it as an "unjustifiable reality". In common jargon, evil is something that happens in experience that ought not to be⁶.

4.2Types of Evil in Christianity

Christians recognize two types of evil. These are physical evil and moral evil. However, moral evil is discussed exclusively to the neglect of physical evil. In the real sense of it, physical evil is more devastating than moral evil.

4.2.1 Moral Evil

Moral evil according to Plantinga is the evil which results from human choice and volition⁷.According to Christian doctrine, moral evil is instigated by human transgression and upheaval against God. This is mostly caused by ignoring the Ten Commandments written in Exodus 20:3-17. Most Christians believe that man enjoys the freewill given to him by God. Man is free to choose between good and evil (James 1:13-15). But it is unfortunate that a good

number of humans prefer evil to good⁸. God is good, but man is essentially blamable for evil; this is because he misused his freewill⁹. However, we need to note that Satan may push someone to do contrary to the spirit of God as he did to Adam and evil¹⁰. This is because he has the powers of temptation and deception¹¹. But this does not justify moral evil in human existence.

We have no excuse for perpetrating moral evil in the world. Everyone is responsible for his/her action either good or bad. Moral evil is on the increase because of human struggling to cover his/her sin.¹² For instance, a Pastor impregnated a girl in his Church, and to cover his shame he persuaded the girl to abort the pregnancy which resulted in her death¹³. He was punished with dismissal from the ministry¹⁴. When some people choose the path of evil, others may suffer as a result. Christians are warned to avoid participating in moral evil (Luke 17:1-2, Mark 9:43-47) The Bible teaches that, there is room for repentance for the sinners and eternal doom for finally impenitent. Man is blamed for evil in the human world this is attributed to the freewill ability he possesses¹⁵.

Man caused moral evil by eating the forbidden fruit¹⁶. Although, it is not possible to completely eliminate evil in the world, we must prepare to minimize it. Moral evil has caused a lot of damage in the human world; it is therefore essential to do our best to avoid it.¹⁷ The relevance of religion is accentuated in the immeasurable ways it curbs moral evil in the world. The preaching against moral evil in the Churches, Mosques and other religious gatherings has greatly reduced its occurrences. The creation would have been worse than this if there were no religions. In every religion moral uprightness is a duty to God and man.¹⁸

4.2.2 Physical Evil

Physical evil is extraneous to human will and action and it is entirely evoked by natural causes such as bacterial, earthquakes, storm, fire, lightning, El Nino, drought, blight and

famine¹⁹. Physical /natural evil has only victims, and is generally taken to be the result of natural processes. The “evil” thus identified is evil only from the viewpoint of those affected and who perceive it as an affliction. ²⁰ Examples include cancer, birth defects, tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis; hurricanes, and other phenomena which inflict suffering with apparently no accompanying mitigating good- such phenomena inflict “evil” on victims with no perpetrator to blame²¹.

In the Bible, God is portrayed as the ultimate perpetrator, for the “Sun, Moon and Stars” celestial activity, clouds; dew, frost, hail, lightning, rain, snow, thunder, and wind are all subject to God’s command. ²² Examples of physical/ natural evil ascribed to God are as follows:-

1. Floods – God brought a flood of waters on the earth” (Genesis 6:17)
2. Thunder, hail, lightning: God sent thunder and hail, and fire came down (Exodus 9:23)
3. Destructive wind: God sent a great wind that destroyed Job’s house and killed his family (Job 1:19)
4. Earthquake: By the Lord “the earth will be shaken (Isaiah 13:13)
5. Drought and famine: God will not shut off rains, so land, nor trees yield produce (Leviticus 26:19-20)
6. Forest Fire: God says, “I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree” (Ezekiel 20:47).

Concerning physical evil some Christians claim that it could be an instrument in the hand of God. God may allow evil to happen due to sin committed by human e.g Pharaoh and his house were visited with plagues because of their sin, God ruined Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. (Exodus 12:36). Isaiah believes that God formed both good and evil (RSV) Isaiah 45:9.

Amos's prophecies also favour the submission that God created both good and evil, e.g. he asked, "Does evil befall a city unless the Lord has done it? (Amos 3:6). It is obvious that all these inferences suggest that evil was part of the creation. This is conflicting to the opinion of some Christians that God is not in control of evil. He did not create evil. This opinion cannot hold water when confronted with the quoted biblical passages.

Howley reacts to this problem when he writes:

Prophets regarded God as the eventual cause of evil, as expressed in pain, suffering, or disaster. In his sovereignty He tolerates evil in the universe, though He overrules and uses it in His administration of the world. It is used to punish individual and national wickedness²³.

One is inclined to believe that physical evil at times is the reprimand meted out by God to the unbelievers. Isaiah also declared, "Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked. It shall be ill with him for what his hands have done shall be done to him (Isaiah 3:10-11). However, it is expedient to know that it is not all the occurrences of physical evil that are meant to punish sinners. Some occurred due to the negligence, carelessness or uncaring attitude by man e.g. there may be an epidemic because of dirty environment, the flood may occur due to lack of organized layout before building houses. Despite the support given by Isaiah in favour of the opinion that God created both good and evil some Christians insist that, God is good and there is no evil in Him. They emphasize the love of God in all situations. God is separated from all evil and He is in no way responsible for evil.

The declaration of Jeremiah affirms the goodness of God to humankind "for I know the

plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). However, the Bible from Genesis to Revelation explains physical evil, as the instrument of punishment for sin e.g. God afflicted Pharaoh and his household with great plagues because of Sarah (Genesis 12:10 -20). God destroyed Pharaoh and his armies by drowning in the sea because of the Israelites (Exodus 14:28). It is not doubtful that suffering is created with the world by God to punish the wicked one²⁴. Also at times the righteous suffer due to disobedience or temptation as in the case of Job 1:12. It is foolishness to believe that every evil that befall man is a punishment for the sin committed. It may be a trial for the righteous.²⁵ However, evil at times happened as a punishment for the sin committed. The Bible makes us to understand that God created both good and evil. Isaiah buttresses this submission. I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the Lord, who do all these things (Isaiah 45:7) humankind. For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). It is clear that suffering is created with the world by God to punish the wicked ones. Also at times the righteous suffer e.g. due to disobedience or temptation or trial from God or Satan through God’s permission. Most Christians believe that, God is loving and good despite contrary appearances. There have been several Christian reactions to the questions raised on the justification for suffering such as emotional, natural and moral evil. The emotional suffering includes loneliness, anxiety and grief. Natural suffering includes tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricane, tsunami and physical illnesses.

Some Christian philosophers have responded severally as mentioned earlier. Their response is called theodicy. Saint Augustine believes that freewill is the basis of evil in the human world. He argued that, both moral and physical evils occur, owing to the evil use of freewill, which originated from the iniquity of Adam and Eve²⁶. He maintained that man fell into

sin not because he was so constituted but because he misused his freewill e.g. Adam and Eve were not compelled to eat the prohibited fruit; they ate it of their own volition²⁷. He contended that the considerable evil in the world is due to over misuse of our freewill. He added that, Adam and Eve's choice to sin affected our free choice, and that humans are left inept to repel sin²⁸. He stressed that it was the sin of Adam and Eve that recreated man; since man fell in the orchard of Eden evil entered the good world.

Gottfried Leibniz also contended that God had created the top imaginable world. He conversed that there cannot be a better world than our universe. It is glaring that he was arguing for a perfect world that was created by a perfect God. However, Irenaeus postulated that, human creation was split into two parts. Humans were made first in the look of God, the likeness of God.²⁹ The spitting image of God consists of having the budding to achieve moral excellence, whereas the portrait of God is the feat of that perfection. To achieve moral perfection, Irenaeus advocated that humans must have freewill³⁰. In other words, man was created as human animals with the potential to develop into perfection to have the similarity of God. If man would achieve God's likeness he must experience anguish and God must be at an epidemic remoteness from humanity³¹ It follows that, evil exists to allow humans to mature as moral agents and have choices of either to believe in God or not. This idea was collated by John Hick in the twentieth century.

He said that the flora and fauna exist as a 'vale of soul making' and that grief and evil must therefore ensue. Human goodness is developed by the experience of evil and suffering³². These two philosophers disagreed with the notion that man was created perfectly. What we can infer from their submissions was that, God intentionally created man imperfect with the tendency

to develop to perfection, to be like God. This makes evil a necessity in the world. The emphasis is that God wants human beings to value character and without practical involvement in the character formation it would be difficult for man/woman to appreciate good virtues. Nevertheless, Christian's tradition maintains that, the world was created perfect at the beginning of the world, but the imperfection in man made him to disobey God which consequence is the animation of evil in human society. Some have argued that, God was not supposed to give man freewill since he knows he would misuse it.

He supposed to have created man as quasi-automata capable of doing good only. But without freewill, the kind of relationship God intends with man would not be achieved. Alvin Plantinga argued that God allows evil in the world in order to achieve the ultimate greater good of freewill³³. We can deduce from the arguments of these philosophers that God is perfect and there is no doubt that, he created a perfect world But man is essentially responsible for evil in the world. The freewill given to man by God was misused by him and that is what brought evil into the world. Also, moral evil which is the product of the misuse of freewill is on increase every day. According to Augustine Adam's sin is diffused by concupiscence, resulting into mankind becoming a *Massa damnata* (mass of the purgatory condemned crowd) with much sapped, though not destroyed freedom of will³⁴. Adam and Eve via sexual reproduction recreated human nature. Their descendants now live in sin³⁵.

It is glaring that with these arguments man should be held liable for evil in the world since he misused his freewill. But the bone of contention is that, why should God create man with freewill since he knows that man would misuse it? As omnipotent, he should be capable to create man as quasi-automata and still retain his freewill. Since the entire Bible promises that, man shall be supremely good in heaven and that heaven is better than this world.

4.3 Satan and Evil in Christianity

Satan in Hebrew term is a noun from a verb meaning primarily to obstruct or oppose as it is established in Numbers 22:22; I Samuel 29:4, Psalm 109:6a. Ha-Satan is traditionally translated as “the accuser” “The adversary”. Satan could also be interpreted as the one who opposes. Devil is synonymously used for Satan in the Bible. Another term used for Satan in the New Testament is Beelzebub meaning “Lord of flies” is the scornful name given in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament to a Philistine god whose creative name has been reconstructed as most probably “Baalzabul” meaning “Baal the prince”³⁶. Satan is traditionally identified as the serpent that convinced Eve to eat the proscribed fruit: thus Satan has often been depicted as a serpent³⁷. The book of Revelation two times made allusions to “the dragon, that ancient serpent who is titled the devil and Satan” (Rev. 12:9, 20:2). The Apocalyptic also denotes him as “the deceiver” from which is plagiarized the conjoint epithet “the great deceiver”³⁸. Satan is also mentioned as the mensch of this world by the scripture (John 12:31, 14:30); “the chief of the power of the air” also called Merriam and “the spirit that now works in the broods of disobedience”. In the epistle to the Ephesians 2:2 and “the god of this world” in II Corinthians 4:4. From the fourth century Lucifer is sometimes used in Christian theology to denote Satan as a result of pinpointing the fallen “son of the dawn” of Isaiah 14:12 with “the accuser” of other passages in the Old Testament³⁹.

Some Christians consider that Satan was an archangel before he rebelled against God. Satan, then called Lucifer, was a sinless and righteous being. The record speaks of the original integrity and uprightness of the great archangel with these words “thou were perfect in your way from the day that thou were created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezek.24: 15)⁴⁰. It is pertinent for us to realize that this wicked creature, now the archenemy of God and man, was at

one time a holy being and protector of the throne of God⁴¹. He was among the highest of all cherubs and “the brightest in the sky”. He became proud and would not obeisance to God as all other angels did. He sought to overthrow God and rule heaven himself. He was accused of insurrection and was sent out of heaven. The book of Revelation calls him dragon. What was it in the determination of God that had become distasteful to Lucifer? We are expressly told that Satan sought to “Exalt his cathedral beyond the stars of God” so as to be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14). But God in his eternal plan had reserved his exaltation not for Lucifer but for Jesus Christ⁴². It was given to Jesus Christ to sit down with the Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21). Lucifer though vice-regent, the chief archangel, and anointed cherub was to hold a lesser position than Jesus Christ. When it became evident to Lucifer that he was not to have the supreme position, he saw his ambition frustrated and thwarted⁴³. It was this, which resulted in his rebellion and subsequent defeat. It is believed that some angels joined him in his rebellion; consequently he was thrown down from heaven. The casting down of Satan to the realm of human is the cause of evil. Physical and moral evil are caused by the presence of Satan in the world. Corrupt, bad system of management, tribalism, disease, paganism, demons or evil spirits, accident and all unpleasant experiences are caused by Satan.

However, the widely held views that Satan was once a fulsome angel who finally rebelled against God are not depicted overtly in the Bible and are typically based on inference e.g. Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14:12, 17. In mainstream Christianity, he is called “the ruler of the demons” (Mathew 12:24), “the ruler of the world” and “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). He lured Adam and Eve to disobey God. He misled them to eat the prohibited fruit; his ultimate aim is to lead people away from God. He works hard to lead people to fallacies which God opposes. To Christians, Satan or the devil is evil. He is the grounds of all vices in the world.

There is nothing good in Satan. He does evil through and through.

Roman Catholic doctrine regards Satan not as the spring of all evil, but more specifically as the enemy of Christ's kingdom.⁴⁴ Satan is the dome of all the wicked. Unlike "Esau" in Yoruba cosmology who could equally do good and evil, who is also a minister of Olodumare; Satan has nothing good in him. Satan, who is translated 'Esu' in the Yoruba version of the Bible is not a minister of Olodumare. According to Ogunbiyi, "Satan translated Esu in the Bible is different from Esu, the Yoruba divinity⁴⁵. He is God's opposer and enemy. Although, Satan according to the book of Job has a replica of 'Esau' in Yoruba theology. In the book of Job ha-Satan is a participant of the celestial congress "the sons of God" who are submissive to God. Ha-Satan in this capacity in sundry times decoded as "the prosecutor" and is charged by God to entice humans and to report back to God all who go contrary to His decrees⁴⁶. At the opening of the book of Job, Job is a noble person "who dreaded God and bowed away from evil" (Job 1:1) and has therefore been compensated by God. During God and Satan conversation after the council meeting in heaven, God called Satan's attention to Job.

God informed him that Job was upright and blameless (Job1:9-10 and 2:4-5) Satan pointed out that; it was because God gave Job everything a man could want. This is what made Job to be loyal to God; if all Job has been given, even his health, were to be taken away from him; on the other hand, his faith would flop. God, therefore permitted ha-Satan to test Job because of this many have argued that, Satan is beneath God's regulator and cannot do anything without God's permission. This is also shown in the epilogue of Job, in which God is dialogue with Job, ha-Satan is absent from these discussions. For Job, for Job's friends and for the raconteur, it is eventually Yahweh Himself who is in control of Job's suffering, as Yahweh expressed to the "Satan" "you have prompted me to destroy him for no reason" (Job 2:3)⁴⁷. Devil

or Satan in Christianity has no iota of good in him. He opposes God and also wages war against His devotees.

He is the archenemy of the creator and his people. To Christians, Satan must be avoided at all cost. He is the fount of all troubles in human lives. He causes quarrels, misunderstanding, fighting, premature death, sickness, diseases, accidents, etc. He is the origin of man's misbehavior and immorality in the world. Both moral and physical evils are caused by him. Unlike Yoruba 'Esu' who makes sure that, sacrifices reach Olodumare(God) Satan always tries to obstruct the prayer of the saints Christians always wage war against him through fervent prayers. He sometimes possesses human beings and uses them as agents of destruction. Witches, wizards, diabolical people are all working for him.

4.4 The Effects of Evil in Christianity

4.4.1 Witchcraft

One of the effects of the problem of evil in Christianity is the conviction that witchcraft exists. Witchcraft is the term commonly used to express belief in the use of mystical way for harmful, evil ends. Since it is hard to merge the reality of the omnipotent and Omni benevolent God with the stark veracity of evil in the human existence, people believe that some wicked beings must have been liable for the evil in the world. The New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language defined witchcraft as sorcery practiced by a witch or witches, witch doctor, a medicine man among primitive people in Nigeria. Witchcraft or witchery has been given various terms among the ethnic groups ranging from "Amuosu," Igbo "Azen" (Edo), "Aje" Yoruba and so on. These are individuals believed to have or possess mysterious powers⁴⁸.The belief in "witchcraft" is a universal thing, though it has disappeared in many countries of the world, but it

still exists in some parts of Africa till date⁴⁹. The fear of witches in the Africa society is so far dominant that it has almost changed the life style of the traditional African⁵⁰. In Africa especially, every misfortune is attributed to witchcraft, in the African mindset every wrong or bad action in the society and most particularly various afflictions or unwanted experiences are caused by witches.

Whenever natural religious explanations do not satisfy people's curiosity as to the reason for evil, people would always attribute it to witchcraft. This phenomenon in the words of Evans pictures belief or notion of witchcraft among the Azande of Sudan as:

If blight eyes seizes the groundnut crop, it is witchery; if the scrubland is unproductively battered for game, it is witchcraft; if women strenuously bale water out of and are compensated by but a few small fish, it is necromancy; if termites do not rise when their swamped is due and a cold useless night is spent in waiting for their flight it is witchcraft; if a wife is morose and unfeeling to her husband it is enchantment; if a prince is taciturn and unsociable with his subjects it is witchcraft, if an enchanted rite fails to achieve its purpose, it is witchcraft. If in fact, any failure or misfortune falls upon anyone at any time and in relation to any of the manifold activities of his life it might be due to witchcraft⁵¹.

The belief of Azande of Sudan represents the true picture of all Africans as to the reason for misfortune in the universe. Most Africans always attribute evil to witchcraft; in most cases religion cannot give convincing response to the problem of evil. This made many people believe that evil is stimulated by witches. Through the despicable activities of witches, they inflict their victims with various types of sicknesses or diseases which doctors cannot diagnose or treat. Laboratory tests would prove that nothing is wrong with the patient physically, but the patient is dying. In most cases such patient is asked to seek the assistance of a traditional healer. They

would say (“*e lo fi ese ile to o*”) that is go and use traditional means to heal the patient. Witches are seen as embodiments of evil and inherently terrific people who work mischief against others. They are capable of nefarious deeds because they have mysterious powers unknown and unavailable to ordinary people⁵². Yoruba believe that witches are the main cause of evil in the world, premature death, illness, fatal accidents, is caused by them⁵³. Oluwadare F.O. Corroborates the submission when she comments that, all forms of evil are caused by witches, delays in promotion, unemployment, failure, disappointment are caused by them⁵⁴. Pastor S.A.Ajayi buttresses this when he maintained that troubles that disturb man are not caused by God, but by “*ika eniyan*” (wicked people) such as witches, they could cause miscarriages, still birth⁵⁵ etc. However, the Yoruba are convinced that not all witches are wicked the white witches, are using their power for good. They could help those in problem with their power. The black witches are the absolute wicked ones.

Parrinder describes the conception of the witch thus:

Generally, (but not exclusively female) she goes out at night and meets in an assembly with other witches. She leaves her body in her hut and flies to the assembly often as an owl, other peoples and procures a victim for consumption in the assembly. The blood of the prey is sucked or its member's eaten. This causes the wasting diseases in his physical body, and the victim lingers until the heart, liver or some other vital organ is eaten. Children are often thought to be taken as a sign to their evil machinations. Some individuals believe that the witch is possessed by a witch spirit, or has with her some witch substance⁵⁶.

Most evils in the physical realm are attributed to witchcraft, especially by Africans, infant mortality, suicide, plagues, insanity. Most Christians in Africa subscribe to this belief. It is stimulating to note that this belief has given birth to African Christianity, a special spiritual

agility and method to combat witchcraft. The church at one time authorized persecution against the witches. The most important Ecclesiastical directive being Pope Innocent VIII. He approved the use of torment to extract confessions provided that was taken to be convincing evidence of guilt and these confessions confirmed the superstitions of the ignorant⁵⁷. Today, especially in Nigeria many indigenous churches have cropped up and have devised means of combating reprehensible activities of the witches.

It is also no gainsaying that some witches do confess during fervent prayers. This step is necessitated by a strong desire to curb backsliding. In a few cases the disreputable activities of the witches have led to the backsliding of the faithful Christians. Some are afflicted by them either through sickness, accident, and death of wife, husband or child. This shakes their faith and thereby led them to backslide or apostasy. There are some cases in which some devoted Christians are initiated with witchcraft. This is possible through persistent threat from the witches. Threat of death, premature death; bitter experience of the innocent may force her to submit to the call for initiation.

Many devoted Christians and unbelievers have been forced to join this evil alliance.⁵⁸ To the empiricists and logical positivists, the reality of witches cannot be proved. Whatever cannot be proved with physical evidence is meaningless. Logical positivists have claimed that only statements that are supported by empirical fact have meaning or can be thought to be cognitively important. They therefore rest heavily on scientific statements as models for scientific intelligible discourse⁵⁹ since the being of witches is metaphysical its existence cannot be proved. However, experience has shown that the existence of witches is real. Many cases that defied medical attentions have been proved to have been caused by witches. Also, so many of the witches have confessed their secret evil deeds. A woman confessed that she afflicted her child with sickness

because her husband offended her. The child was made whole after her confession. This experience is an evidence to support the conviction that witchcraft is real.⁶⁰

4.4.2 Belief in Demons

Scrupulously related to the belief in witchery as one of the effects of the problem of evil, is the credence in demons. It is tough to resolve the existence of omnipotent, Omni benevolent God with the existence of malevolent events in the universe. This has led to the belief in demons. A demon or daemon from ancient Greek found (diamon) is a supernatural being from various religious occultism, literatures and folklores, that is described as something that is not human and in ordinary (almost universal) usage malevolent⁶¹.

The original neutral Greek originally understood by the application of the koine (Hellenistic and New Testament Greek) diamovion (daimonion)⁶². This was later ascribed to any cognate words sharing the root originally intended to denote a spirit or spiritual beings⁶³. In ancient Near Eastern religions as well as in the Abrahamic mores, including antique and feudal Christian demonology, a demon is measured an “unclean spirit” which may cause demonic possession to be addressed with an act of exorcism⁶⁴. In western occultism and Renaissance magic, Jewish demonology and Christian tradition, a demon is a spiritual entity that may be conjured and controlled⁶⁵. In Christian tradition demons are regarded as fallen angels.

Some denominations averring Christian faith also include, wholly or else, tumbled angels as de facto demons: this meaning also covers the “lads of God” described in Genesis who abandoned their posts in heaven to mate with human women on earth before the deluge⁶⁶. Also included are those who joined hands with Lucifer in heavenly coup to try to overthrow God. However, this teaching is not explicitly in the Christian scripture. Initially, the word demon had no evil connotation. The Greek term does not have any connotations of evil or malevolence⁶⁷. In

fact, & iuovin literally “good spiritedness” is a term for ‘happiness.’ The term first acquired its now-current evil connotations in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible,⁶⁸ informed by the mythology of the ancient Semitic religions. This connotation was inherited by the Koine text of the New Testament⁶⁹. The Greek idea of a demon markedly appears in the mechanisms of Plato, where it designates the divine creativeness of Socrates to segregate the classical Greek concept from its later Christian interpretation, it is usually anglicized as either daemon or daimon rather than demon.⁷⁰ Christians believe that all demons are evil.

In the case of insanity, Christians believe that it is an act of demon possession. Some denominations believe that, each sickness or disease has its demon. Adiele observes that:

This involves the belief that demons are responsible for every manner of sickness that attacks a child of God. Therefore, for a total solution, the demon of malaria, demon of cancer, demon of smallpox, and so on could cast out in the mighty name of Jesus⁷¹.

Adiele’s observation is true of some neo-pentecostal denominations that demons are the perpetrators of evil in the world. According to these denominations they are satanic agents that perpetrate evil in the universe. In the gospels, particularly the gospel of Mark, Jesus casts out many evil spirits, from those who were plagued with numerous ailments and they were perfectly healed. Jesus is superior to all demonic powers and He is able to set free all the fatalities by imperious and sending out the whizzes by binding them and commanding them not to return. Jesus also loans this authority to some of his partisans, who celebrate at their new found gift to cast out demons or evil spirit. The power is inherited by the successors of the disciples and it is active till today⁷². The demons are cast out by pronouncing the name of Jesus (Mathew 7:22).

The demons themselves recognize Jesus as the Lord or Messiah. They often confess it

wherever they see Jesus (Mathew 12:43). Jesus imparts that when they are obsessed from a human, they go through parched dwellings as ethereal spirits in search of rest, although at another time He sends them into a flock of pigs. It is evident from the Bible that, demons are the messengers of Satan. Luke 10:18 mentioned that a power fixed by Jesus to cast out demons made Satan to “plunge like lightning from heaven”. In contemporary Christianity demons are generally considered to be angels who fell from grace by rebelling against God.⁷³ However, some schools of thought in Christianity or Judaism developed a theory that evil spirits are consequence of the sexual connection between fallen angels and human women⁷⁴. They claim that demons are the offspring resulted from the sexual relationship.

Despite civilization and the degree of literacy some people still believe in demon today. Demonic supernatural powers are real in our world they have the knack to possess a man to achieve their aims. They can also possess animals to perpetrate evil. Their power, includes fabrication, psycho Kinesis, levitation, divination, possession, seduction, telepathy, witchcraft and curses, as well as binding, making contacts, superhuman strength, controlling the classical elements, animal control and provocation⁷⁵.

Demons can harass, confuse, demoralize, and mystify the casualty or the eager subject of demonic concern. They can hypnotize and coerce to misbehave. A possessed man can unconsciously hurt others and himself. Demons are believed to have the clout to physically or mentally hurt people. Often demons are said to create negative emotions, wreaking havoc, and ensuing chaos, causing afflictions, pushing people to do evil and disrupting the peace. Evil is a phenomenon that is grim to resolve with the trust in all-powerful and all good God. An effort to explicate the basis gives rise to belief in other supernatural beings. It is assumed that such supernatural beings are responsible for evil. Christians maintain that God is good, He cannot do

evil. Most Christians teach that demons should be held guilty of the problems human existence.

Moreover, Christians believe by Christians that God has power over demons. They cannot operate beyond the limit they are allowed by God. Also, Jesus has power over them and he gives same to his original disciples and the succeeding ones. Today Christian Clerics are directing attention to exorcism, believing that any negative experience has its own demon.

4.4.3 Syncretism

Syncretism means the mixing of different philosophies and ideas. It describes the unification of two or more religious traditions of belief into a fresh scheme or the incorporation of different religious practices or systems of belief.⁷⁶ Syncretism may involve the merger and analogizing of several originally discrete traditions especially in the theology and mythology of religion thus assenting an underlying unity and allowing for an incisive approach to other.⁷⁷ The Greek word occurs in Plutarch's (1st century AD) essay on "fraternal love" in his *Monelia* (24906). He quotes the example of the Cretans, who conceded and reconciled their variances and came together in treaty when tackled with outer hazards "And that is their so called syncretism"⁷⁸. Erasmus possibly invented the current usage of the Latin word in his ("Adagia") publication in the winter of 1517-1518 to label the lucidity of dissidents in spite of their differences in theological opinions⁷⁹.

In a letter to Melanchthon of April 22, 1519, Erasmus specially adduced the Cretans of plutareb as an example of his adage "concord is a mighty rampar"⁸⁰ Religious syncretism parades combination of two or more sacred belief structures into a new system or the fusion into religious

traditions of beliefs from unrelated traditions⁸¹. It often occurs where religious tradition exists in nearness and function vigorously in the culture. It is much common in a society where there are many religions.

Christianity is a religion of particularism. Peculiarities of Christianity object to syncretism, although, it synthesizes religion and culture. One can compare syncretism with contextualization or enculturation, the practice of making Christianity relevant to a culture. Contextualization does not address the doctrine, but affects a change in the styles or expression of worship⁸². Christianity is a universal religion. Catholicism is not a syncretic religion, but a synthetic one, always looking for a way to bring out something fresh as it acquires from its interfaces with every ethos and religion⁸³. Because it is catholic, it does not wish to overlook anything in other traditions which is good and touched by grace. It enters into cultures and seeks to preach the good news to all peoples through their own language and cultural forms⁸⁴.

Despite the fact that Christianity believes in the contextualization and enculturation, it maintains its particulars. It does not want its members to engage or associate with other religions. The New Testament clearly indicates that from the beginning the Church rejected the synthetic approach. The Epistle to the Colossians is the first indication of the church's early battle with syncretism⁸⁵. The writer warned the early Christians to beware of syncretism. He warned the saints never to be captivated by an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world and but according to Christ. (Col.2:8) Christian spirituality was drawn from the resurrected Christ and not from any other sources.

Amalgamation of practices and ideas is not tolerated by Christianity religion. As early as A.D. 70 the church was aware that it had a distinct identity that governed its relationships with other spiritual traditions⁸⁶. It was on this basis that it dealt with the Judaism from which emerged

the mystery religions which abounded at the time, and empower worship which anchored the Roman social and political order⁸⁷. However, today syncretism has become the feature of the church in Africa. In Yoruba land, African traditional religion still exists despite the popularity of Christianity and Islam. There are herbalists and Babalawos who could see the future and make charm for people to solve their problems. The problem of evil which promotes uncertainties and unbelief within Christian society makes people visit these diviners and herbalists.

Despite the fact that Christianity maintains its stand on syncretism and preaches that only God through Jesus could solve all problems, Christians still visit traditionalists. The attributes of God; all-powerful and all-good with the plain certainty of evil in human existence make people lose their confidence in the Christian God. Nothing shakes the faith of man more than the problem of evil. Some Christian Yoruba still visit the traditionalists because of the efficacy of their power.

The African believe in the conception of God and some malevolent spirits which manifested in witchcraft, magic and sorcery in their religious practices⁸⁸. However, the mission churches that were introduced to Nigeria in the 19th century paid lip powers. Some Yoruba people were converted by the mainline churches, such as Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, and Catholic Missions to Christianity⁸⁹. They welcomed Christianity with enthusiasm because of the promise that Jesus could solve all problems. Contrary to this assurance, evil still happens in the church. Despite the acclaimed devotion and a sense of commitment to Christian principles and practices, they still entertain the fear of witches and other malevolent forces⁹⁰. This fear of evil makes them to patronize the traditional healers during the week days and attend Sunday services in the churches on Sundays. In view of this, they are often accused of syncretism by their pastors⁹¹. At the time of ugly events such as mysterious death, inability to diagnose sickness, the

retrogression in business and jobs, barrenness, they visit these traditionalists for solution.

When evil happens Yoruba flashes his mind to pre-Christianity era and decides to go for protection against the subsequent occurrence especially during epidemic and unexplainable evil occurrences. The protective power is endemic in pre-colonial or pre-Christian era – protective powers such as *Ayeta* (Bullet proof”) *Madarikan* “Don’t hurt me” *Egbe* (ability to disappear when evil is about to happen).The Yoruba also believe that the unseen force can be influenced for good or evil through the prayers or the use of charms and incantations (*ofo or ayajo*)⁹². They believe that, with the aid of the malevolent spirits a man’s footprint, or his saliva through the chewing stick, can kill him. They are certain that the evil intentions of fellowmen can be thwarted through scarification marks or incision, on parts of the body (*gbere*”) ⁹³.

In the days of agricultural boom even in the villages till date, Yoruba fear nefarious activities of witches over their farm crops. These supernatural beings could thwart the promising bumper harvests of a farmer. Therefore, they use protective charms (*Aale*) for their farm crops from them and potential thieves. Evidence of this belief abounds in Lagos suburbs where underdeveloped plots of land used for farming are to be found⁹⁴. While protective charms are used on a continuous basis for specific purposes, the Yoruba acknowledge the fact that not all impending evil or misfortune can be known and prepared for in advance⁹⁵. This is partly why they resort to the diviner or oracle man.

Incidentally, the Yoruba affirm that any misfortune (serious illness, premature death) can be due to natural causes alone; consequently, the supernatural component of a serious illness must first be removed before curative medicine can be successfully applied⁹⁶.Despite strong belief by Christians that God is powerful, they still fear wicked people. When evil happens, some Yoruba Christians still affirm that wicked people are responsible.

The wicked people are fellowmen manipulating the unseen elements to cause evil to others. An occasion for divination may become mysterious ailment which has baffled both orthodox and traditional medicine, financial losses which cannot be explained on rational grounds, frequent accidents or successive losses of children through death⁹⁷. Depending on the problem discovered, relevant measures to neutralize it are prescribed by the diviner. These may be sacrificed to propitiate the relevant deity or charms or both, if any, of the spirits (Irunmole) are directly involved. If the problems are due to the evil machinations of fellow men, protective charms are prescribed⁹⁸. When *etutu or ebo* (sacrifice) is done to appease the spirit who caused the misfortune it is understood that the problem would be solved. The genuineness of the solution from Yoruba potent medicine cannot be denied. Hence, Yoruba Christians still visit these traditional healers secretly. However, Christianity does not accommodate such, but accused those who engage in it as syncretizers.

4.4.4 African Indigenous Church

Indigenous churches are churches that were established through the initiative of concerned Africans. These churches are otherwise called African independent churches or *Aladura* churches. It enables the African to express Christian principles and values through African perception and world view.“ This initiative was installed to erase sectionalism and composed African Christians with their African moods and passing towards spawning African contemplations in Christianity⁹⁹. This stratagem was needed to link the abyss shaped by the “foreign evangelists” who came to “pioneer” Christianity that was mismatched with the socio-cultural and political worldview of the continent¹⁰⁰. The existence of spirits and wicked people is not a mere metaphysical knowledge to Yoruba. The existence of spirit that can be invoked for good and evil is vivid to Yoruba man. The white Missionaries could not really address socio-

cultural problems of Yoruba with their religious principles. It becomes worrisome for Yoruba on how their existential problems like sickness, barrenness, spiritual afflictions, “accident” and sudden death could be solved. They used to consult herbalists and *Babalawo* for remedy to their problems before the advent of Christianity. Through divination, their dreams could be interpreted and the future could be known. *Babalawo* could prescribe materials to offer to appease the witches and the wizards. But when Christianity came, they were told that, the existing means of getting out of their problems are devilish. They were promised victory over all these evil spirits among Christians. However, Yoruba Christians who did not want to engross in syncretism decided to look for a way out of this problem. Their mainline denominations that opened the ground for Christianity in Yoruba land could not address their existential problems.

The traditional reading of prayer book and unnecessary silence in the church was strange to Africa. Hence, some concerned Yoruba Christians decided to form African churches that would address African problems in African ways. The emergence of African independent churches, also called *Aladura* churches, in the second span of the 20th century was seen as a big relief to the Yoruba people¹⁰¹. The introduction of Cherubim and Seraphim churches by Moses Orimolade Tunolase, Christ Apostolic Church under the leadership of Apostle Ayo Babalola, Church of the Lord (Aladura) led by Josiah Oshitelu and the Celestial Church of Christ under the leadership of Samuel Oshoffa recognized the malevolent forces in human lives¹⁰². These churches address Yoruba problems with their perception and cosmology. They introduced some forms of prayer to attack malevolent forces. This made them appealing to Yoruba people and thereby drifting them from the existing mainline denominations. In fact, the churches are called *Aladura* (praying people) because they believe that with God all things are possible through prayers¹⁰³. Many Yoruba people and some Nigerian Christians quickly accepted the new

churches because of the socioeconomic challenges in the society¹⁰⁴.

It is pertinent to stress that, the problem of evil made Yoruba Christians to move out of the mainline Church denominations where the foreigners who do not understand Yoruba problems were leading them. Some Yoruba Christians felt that, the lukewarm mood of prayers is too cold to combat fierce malevolent forces in Yoruba land. That is what made them to start churches that address Yoruba existential problems. The incidence of evil, therefore made Yoruba Christians think that, if there was vigorous prayer, their problems would be solved. The rate of evil among Christians may be because of the Luke warmness that characterized their liturgies.

4.4.5 Neo-Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is a phenomenon that appeared at the launch of the last century. It is a Christian experience in which the participants stress the gifts of the Spirit and personal encounter with the Holy Spirit. The worship services of Christians who lay claim to this experience are usually vigorous and informal. Pentecostalism is spreading at an astonishing rate and some would now call it the fourth great Christian tradition alongside the Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants, although in many respects it is a branch of the third¹⁰⁵. Pentecostalism is a religious ideology that gave birth to churches in the United State and Africa in the 20th century¹⁰⁶. It underscores that Christians should pursue a post transformation, religious involvement known as the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which exclusively rests on the Holy Spirit's descent on the apostles and the disciples that were certainly in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). On that day the expectant early Christians who received the Holy Spirit were one hundred and twenty in number¹⁰⁷. They spoke in other patois as the Spirit gave them expression. This marked the historical foundation of Pentecostalism in the world. The term Pentecostal is consequential from Pentecost, the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks. For Christians; this

event venerates the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon the cliques of Jesus Christ, as defined in the book of Acts chapter two.

Pentecostals incline to see their association as shimmering the same kind of mystical power and instructions that were instituted in the Apostolic age of the early church. For this reason some Pentecostals also use the term Apostolic or full gospel to describe their movement¹⁰⁸. Speaking in tongues which occurs as glossolalia (speech in an unknown language) or xenoglossy (speech in a semantic known to others but not to the speaker) and is considered one of the gifts described by St. Paul the Apostle in I Corinthians 12:1-13 is a common feature of Pentecostalism.

Some Pentecostal denominations teach that talking in tongues is immediate or initial physical evidence that one has received the experience¹⁰⁹. There has been a massive explosion of Pentecostalism globally within the last half century¹¹⁰. Modern Pentecostalism is traceable to the 19th century marginalization of the ordinary common people's expression of faith and spiritual manifestations in a serious sense. Denominations that were revived sloping became cowed and the church became slowly capitalistic in nature.

Protestant denominations became the churches of the upper middle class. People of limited resources were in no place at all and so the yearning to return to a "heat religion" that would identify and cater for the spiritual and emotional wishes of this class of imperiled and excluded people increased. Many of the populace decided for this "religion" that would purify and hallow their inner state and put them "right with God" in a society that is untiring to marginalize them. The yearning turned into an outburst just in the early part of the 20th century, 1901 and 1906 respectively¹¹¹ Pentecostalism was born in Nigeria from a step forward of *Aladura churches*, spiritual African independent churches that emerged in the second epoch of

the 20th century. The emergence of the Pentecostal churches after the ugly, harrowing and devastating civil war that ravaged the country between 1967-1970 further renewed a call for more spiritual upliftment, rejuvenation and satisfaction to allay the trauma experienced during the war.¹¹² It was during the period of spiritual need that some of the Pentecostal churches emerged in Nigeria.

Some of the churches are the Deeper Life Christian Church, Living Faith Church, Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Sword of the Spirit, etc. Neo-Pentecostalism is a reaction to social economic challenges that ravaged the countries especially in the 80's. The poor economic condition of Africa is spelt out by a number of factors which stand unfriendly for the economic development of Africa. Causes of poverty in Africa and in fact, in two-thirds of the world can be hinged on many factors which are both internal and external. The under-development status of Africa with her heavy dependence on external sources for funding her developmental projects is mainly responsible¹¹³. Poverty is an intimidation to Africa. It is also an ugly phenomenon that adversely affects the living standard of Africans.

Pentecostalism therefore emerged to prayerfully combat this unwanted syndrome. The battle is especially fierce against this inhuman agent by Neo-Pentecostal denominations. Due to the hopeless situation of the Nigeria economy prosperity gospel was employed by neo-Pentecostal churches. In the midst of an economic downturn that is hovering over Nigeria, the need to raise people's hope of a bright future and the fulfillment of the material possession of God had to come into scene¹¹⁴. According to Olukunle, a measure of anticipatory futuristic hope is better than hopelessness of our social, economic, and political situations¹¹⁵. In a nutshell, since poverty is a kind of physical evil, neo-Pentecostals are exploring the advantage to get money from people. Prosperity teaching rends the air and it has become endemic in neo-Pentecostal

denominations.

It should be stressed that, the aim of the prosperity teachers is not to make people rich and actually raise their hopes but to enrich themselves. This “give to get” theology is ultimately selling in Nigeria churches today. Disease or sickness is another evil phenomenon that challenges Africans especially Nigerians. Perhaps due to the lack of adequate food and health facilities, many Nigerians are attacked by diseases of many kinds. Many of the Neo-Pentecostal churches concentrate on prayer for healing, deliverance and miracle. Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries is a classic example of Neo-Pentecostal church in Nigeria. Rosaline Hackett believes that, the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries represent an archetypal example of a Neo-Pentecostal drive that has its epistemological thrust and doctrinal emphasis on deliverance, holiness, miracles and healing¹¹⁶. All these are attempts to supernaturally confront the ugly experiences of man.

It is not uncommon to see people giving testimony during revival and conventions organized by these Neo-Pentecostal churches. While we are not trying to debunk the effectiveness of prayer and the power of God to perform miracle, research has shown that most of the acclaimed miracles of healing are fake. Some are not permanent while most of the testimonies are the product of emotional and psychological relief. Neo-Pentecostal churches link every ill-luck to the activities of witches and wizards especially Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries. We agree with Omotoye who wrote that:

The work of Pentecostalism constitutes from the clutch of evil spirits, witches and the forces of darkness, enemies and bad luck, repeated failures, which are ever present and prevalent in the African world view. This experience and

recognition given to the actuality of the evil forces made the church to be the doyen of the Yoruba populace in particular and Nigerian Christians in general¹¹⁷.

The mammoth crowd that patronizes these Pentecostal preachers is evidence that, their activities attract Nigerians. Since it came out of the struggle to combat the evil which is held to have been caused by malevolent forces, the belief took its source from the African world view; therefore, it has good soil to thrive.

4.5 The Bible and Evil

The Bible defines evil as the condition of being repulsive (“not good”) of (Genesis 2:18). In this sense evil may be seen as that which goes against or is outside of society both in terms of values and actions. Huge segments of the Bible are dedicated to the problem of evil. In fact, one might say that the entire Bible is about the problem of evil. It is the story of how evil came into a good world, and how God gained the victory over it in Jesus Christ¹¹⁸. The Bible confirms the absolute goodness of the world at creation. However, evil entered the world through the naughtiness of man. The Bible is more explicit on the moral evil than the physical evil; less is said about the physical evil, such as tsunami, tornado, diseases, storm or whirlwind, volcanic eruption and all sorts of evils in the world. However, the Bible in some passages does not exonerate God from the ill experience of man.

The book of Isaiah says God created both good and evil. The one forming light and creating darkness, causing wellbeing and creating calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these (Isaiah 45:7). Isaiah 45:7 Darkness is the reverse light, evil is the opposite of peace. The Hebrew

word translated “peace” is Shalom, which has many implications, commonly related to the well being of individuals. Ra’ah, the Hebrew word rendered “evil” in the KJV often refers to adversity or calamity¹¹⁹. The book of Amos also speaks of God as causing good and evil. Likewise, Amos 3:6 uses the same word ra’ah referring to calamity or disaster, the context (a disaster happening in a city) does not speak of moral evil¹²⁰. The book of Lamentations is not in contrast with both Isaiah and Amos. It says, is it not from the mouth of the greatest being that good and evil come? (Lamentations 3:38). This verse suggests that God speaks of good and evil. It indicates that good and evil are from God. Natural disasters are God’s wrath. The Lord is an envious God, filled with reprisal and wrath.

He takes retaliation on all who oppose Him and irately abolishes His enemies. The Lord is unhurried to get fuming, but his power is unlimited, and He never lets the mortified go scot-free. He pageants his power in the swift and the storm. The billowing clouds are the dust beneath his feet. At his command, the oceans and rivers dry up, the lush pastures of Bashan, and Carmel fade, and the green forests of Lebanon wilt. In his presence the mountains quake, and the hills melt away; the earth trembles, and its people are destroyed. Who can stand before his fierce anger? Who can survive his burning fury? Its rage blazes forth like fire, and the mountains crumble to dust in his presence.

The Lord is good. When trouble comes, He is a strong refuge. And He knows everyone who trusts in Him. But He wipes away His enemies in an overwhelming flood. He pursues his foes into the darkness of night. (Nahum 1:2-8) Here Jeremiah was telling people that evil happens to them as a penalty for their sins. Here also ra’ah (evil) does not refer to moral evil, but calamities; likewise the Bible commentaries indicate that the verse refers to God’s judgment based upon people’s sin¹²¹. The Bible, especially the Old Testament stresses that, evil happens to

humans as a result of the sin they committed.

God is merciful, but similarly He is a God of judgment. He is not the author of evil. However, God does recompense and penalize on the basis of worthy and depraved behavior. Therefore, God does bring judgment and mishap (either directly or through human authorities) on those who dissident. God will eventually judge all people since insurgents will not be allowed in the new, perfect creation¹²². According to the Bible, God is in control of physical evil in the planet earth. He uses calamity to punish the sinners, while moral evil is primarily caused by man. However, the New Testament in Paul's writing gives more appealing riposte to the problem of evil. Paul's letter to the Romans is a summary of that biblical story.

It speaks to us about the turpitude of the human race counter to God, how nobody has kept God's law, and thus that we are all worthy of die. "The wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23¹²³. God wants to justify all his actions, He is merciful and just. For Him to forgive man of his sin, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ to die for the debauchery of mankind. Jesus lived a seamless life and then laid his life down as a sacrifice for our sins. His death sets us free from the dominion and penalty of sin (Romans 5:8). It empowers us to walk in the spirit. He also motivated us to live a pious life (Romans 6: 12-16). The prophets and authors of the Bible expend very little time in extenuating or elucidating the existence of evil¹²⁴.

To the authors of the Bible, the presence of evil was non-problematic. They all stared into its existence as ipso facto a reality. Thus catholic acceptance of evil within the Bible is a reflection of the lack of terminology discrepancy in Hebrew between moral evil and a natural calamity¹²⁵. Evil often appears simply as contrary to good, and it is therefore used to label both moral evil and natural blow.

In the Bible, evil is described as anything that is nasty, slanted or abhorrent (Gen. 41:3-

4)¹²⁶. The Bible affirms that the devil is also christened Lucifer, Leviathan or serpent in the Bible is believed to be responsible for evil. The Bible says he does evil through and through. He tempted Jesus in the wilderness. He often misleads people and makes them to rebel against God. The duality of devil seems in the Old Testament of the Bible where God permitted Satan to tempt Job. He appears as God's messenger only in this book. Apart from that, he is always in the opposite of God and therefore his enemy. Evil is described from Genesis to Revelation in scattered statements. All these statements accuse Satan as the origin of evil in each case. The Bible emphasizes that evil entered the world through the sin committed by Adam and Eve. Jesus Christ came to destroy the effects of the sin which is evil so that anyone who believes in Him would not experience evil in the perfect world to come.

4.6 The Nature of Evil and Man in Christianity

Evil may be defined as the violation of or intent to violate some moral code. Evil is usually seen as the dualistic opposite of the good¹²⁷. Definitions of evil differ, as does the scrutiny of its root foundations and causes. However, evil is commonly allied with sentient and wary wrong doing, tweak designed to harm others, mortification of people calculated to shrink their psychological well-being and self-esteem, ferocity, drives of causing pain or suffering for selfish or mean intentions, and acts of unnecessary or haphazard violence¹²⁸. Christian theology pulls its perception of evil from the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament evil is implicit to be hostility to God.

In the New Testament the Greek word *poneros* is used to indicate incongruity while *kakos* is used to refer to antagonism to God in the human realm¹²⁹. Officially, the Catholic Church excerpts its understanding of evil from the work of Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas, who in *Summa Theological* defines evil as the nonappearance or privation of good¹³⁰.

French American theologian Henri Blocher describes evil, when observed as a scriptural notion as an “unjustifiable reality”. In conjoint idiom, evil is “something” that occurs in experience that ought not to be¹³¹. Anything that is totally an impediment to the wishes and desires of the individual that empirically exist in the universe is evil. Evil affects every aspect of creation negatively. The nature of evil is in harmony with the submission of Spinoza. He states that, by evil, on the contrary, I understand that which we certainly know impedes us from retaining anything that is good¹³². Christianity recognizes two kinds of evil; physical or natural evil and moral evil. Christians pay rapt attention to moral evil. Moral evil is simply called sin in Christian theology.

Moral evil could be defined as the deviation of human volition from the prescriptions of the moral order and the action which results from that deviation¹³³. In Christianity, moral evil comes from abuse of freewill by man. God shaped the world perfectly, but man chose to disobey God. This perverted human nature and thus brought sin into the world. Any human action that opposes God’s will or Decalogue is moral evil. Stealing, murdering fornication, adultery, gossip, malice, etc. Under civil law gossiping or malice may not be a sin, but in Christianity it is a sin and therefore evil. Polygamy is a sin to some Christian sects, but in the civil law it is not. To Christian polygamy or sex outside marriage is moral evil.

The obligation to moral action in the natural order is, moreover, commonly believed to be contingent on the intentions supplied by religion’ and it is at least cynical whether it is probable for moral commitment to exist at all apart from a mystic sanction¹³⁴. Physical evil includes all that causes detriment to man, whether by corporeal hurt, by thwarting his natural desires. Physical evil includes storms, flood, sickness, accident, death. These occur whenever people sinned against God. Metaphysical evil is the restriction by one another of various cog parts of the

natural world; through this conjoint restraint natural objects are in the utmost part prevented from attaining to their full or ideal perfection¹³⁵. Christians also believe that, initiation into the power of darkness is evil. Witches, wizards, and other evil spirits can cause evil. Man is the agent or instrument devil uses to cause evil for the human race. The human soul is corrupt and evil originates in the human heart. Christianity believes that evil is the consequence of man forsaking God (Deuteronomy 28:20). Sin is inherent in man, every man was born with sin. Adam and Eve committed sin, but the consequences are passed to every human. At the beginning man was created in the image of God. Then God said; “Let us make man in our duplicate, after our likeness; and let them have power over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and all the earth, and every tiptoeing thing that crawls upon the earth. “So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27. Humans were created perfectly good. The concept of original goodness is grounded in part on humanity’s creation in the image of God¹³⁶. Because man is a bearer of God, he is proficient of sentient personal existence, self-awareness and moral self-determination.

He is also capable of receiving divine communication and of responding in obedience or disobedience. Man’s heart is desperately wicked. In most cases, he causes evil. Man could inflict pain on another man through supernatural means. Christianity believes that God is absolutely good, but evil is from man. Humans were created to have personal comradeship with God. Man’s original position on earth was to be God’s agent and to have dominion over His creation. The rebellion of Adam resulted in a break in that fellowship, only to be corrected by the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross¹³⁷.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN YORUBA RELIGION

5.1 Yoruba Religion and the People

Yoruba is one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa. The Yoruba constitute between 30 to 50 million individuals throughout West Africa, are found predominantly in Nigeria, and make up around 21% of its population¹. They are mostly found in the South-Western part of Nigeria. They are also found in some parts of the Republics of Benin and Togo ². Predominantly, the Yoruba people are found in Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Lagos and parts of Kwara and Kogi states³. They are numerous and popular as one of the advanced communities in Africa, especially in commerce, education, arts, governance, and warfare⁴. The Yoruba people speak the same Yoruba language with many dialectal variations, such as Egba, Ijebu, Ijesha, Ife, Ibadan, Oyo, Ekiti, Ilaje, Owo, Ikale, Kabba, Igbira, etc. Yoruba cities are many in the South-Western part of Nigeria; the chief Yoruba cities are Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Oyo, Ilesha, Akure, Abeokuta, Oton-Awori, Ilorin, Ile-Ife, Ofa, Kabba, Ikare, Iwo etc.⁵ In Nigeria, Yoruba share rims with Bongo (variously called 'Baruba' and Borgawa) in the North West; the Nupe (whom they often call "Tapa") and Ebira in the North and the Edo, the Esan, and the Afemai to the South East. The

Igala and other associated groups are found in the North East, and the Egun, Fon and others in the South West ⁶. Yoruba migrants now live in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Vestiges of Yoruba culture are found in Brazil and Cuba ⁷. The Yoruba are industrial and commercial valued people. They engage in different commercial activities, this makes them to spread all over the world.

There is hardly any city where a handful of Yoruba migrants would not be found especially across the federation of Nigeria. Yoruba communities are often designated as primary one or more of the main social groupings called “generations.” The “first cohort” includes towns and cities known as inventive capitals of launching Yoruba states and kingdoms, the second ‘generation’ consists of settlements created by conquest and the third “generation” consists of the villages and metropolises that materialized following the Yoruba wars ⁸. Before the introduction of Christianity and Islam, the Yoruba had religion. They believed in the reality of the Supreme Being called “*Olorun*” or “*Olodumare*” ‘*Olorun*’ (Lord of Heaven or owner of heaven) ‘*Olodumare*’ which Fadipe interprets as “the pre-destinator or controller of destinies who goes nowhere”⁹. In other words, He is ever present, but in addition, He is almighty and Omni benevolent.

Yoruba Religion is an embodiment of the creative, spiritual beliefs and performance of the Yoruba people earlier before the advent of Christianity and Islamic religions. The Yoruba are highly religious with the profound conception of the Supreme Being. God (*Olodumare*) is conceived as the peculiar being that is above everything and the creator. He is conceived as the keeper of the universe, the greatest being above the reach of any creature. His immanence and transcendence is recognized in Yoruba cosmology. The existence of God is taken for granted in Africa, the continent where Yoruba is located. The book of Psalms 53 says, “The mug declares

in his mind, there is no God.” There is no such fool in traditional Yoruba Society. It is strange to raise questions of the reality of God in Yoruba land because His existence is taken without question or logical analysis.

In Yoruba Religion *iwa rere* (good character) is emphasized. Also in Yoruba literary corpus the hunt to better one *iwa* (character) in human endeavours is extolled. In this way teachings transcend religious doctrine, advising as it does that a person must also better his civic, social and intellectual spheres of being; every stanza of the sacred *ifa* oracular poetry (*odu ifa*) has a quota casing the importance of *iwa* central to this is the theme of righteousness, both individual and collective.¹⁰ Yoruba belief in the existence of *orisa* (divinities). An *orisa* is an unit that owns the aptitude of shiny some of the exhibitions of *Olodumare*. Yoruba *orisas* (translated owners of head) are often termed as intermediaries between mankind and supernatural.¹¹

Yoruba Religion depends on oral tradition to transmit from one group to another. It is an aspect of African Traditional Religion, which Awolalu and Dopamu defined as a religion passed down from one generation to the other by the forbears of the present generation ¹². It is unfortunate that there are no scriptures, unlike Christianity and Islam, which can serve as basic scripture for the learning of the religion. This, is because Africans did not have the art of writing until quite recently when scholars like Idowu, Mbiti, Parrinder, Awolalu, Dopamu and others have become interested in the religion ¹³. Lack of documents or written scriptures or sacred books affected historical facts, legend and moral values in Yoruba religion. Its popularity is also affected and many scholars who attempted the study of Yoruba religion misconstrue its theology. Their Christian background, thus their contributions are greatly affected by their bias in Christianity. Although, Yoruba religion has no written scripture, the available sources are present for only those who can see. Thus Michael Nabofa outlined two sources, which are divided into

physical and non-physical ¹⁴.

The physical sources include; rituals, ceremonies, sacred places, religious personages and specialists or cultic functionaries, religious articles and objects, symbols and emblems, works of arts, music, dance, drums, liturgy and so on. The non-physical sources include: language, myth and legends, oral tradition, stories, and biographies, systematic recital, songs pithy-saying and proverbs, names of individual, places, objects and events Theophanous names of God, everyday speech and prayers ¹⁵.

It is not superfluous to say that Yoruba religion connects with God of heaven as claimed by other religions. If not for lack of written scripture, it might be recognized as a world religion. It is expedient to study the logic in the concept of *Olodumare* and divinities in Yoruba Religion. In other words, it is necessary to study the relationship between *Olodumare* (God) and *orisa* divinities. This would enable us to throw lighter to the status of *Olodumare* (God) among the Yoruba. It is obvious that some scholars are confused about the logic in the concept of *Olodumare* (God) and divinities in Yoruba Religion.

For instance, history has it that the European attitude to Africa in general in their erstwhile encounter was to brand her a “dark continent”. When the Portuguese came to Africa in the sixteenth century, they speculated that Africans did not have the capacity to conceive a Supreme Being ¹⁶. De Bosse, who became their protagonist maintained that Africans perpetually remain at the level of infancy where they worship natural objects believing that they have spiritual power ¹⁷. This is according to him an attitude congenial to children under the age of four. For W. C. Smith, Africans cannot conceive a Supreme Being because they are uneducated savages, lacking the learnedness that is required for a philosophical conception of God¹⁸. Yoruba and Africans generally were looked down upon religiously by their colonizers because of the

divinities (*orisa*) they were worshipping. The whites thought that, those emblems of worship were regarded as God. They thought Yoruba embraced them as their creator and Sustainer.

Unknowingly to the whites these *areas* (divinities) are not culminations in themselves, but means to an end. Europeans were well tutored in logic, when they arrived Yoruba land they did not wait to objectively study her religion before they applied logic on her. The simple logic in the concept of divinities and *Olodumare* (God) in the African theocratic world is patterned along the sociological order of the people. In many African societies, like the Yoruba, Edo, Fon and Ewe, life follows a cultural pattern ¹⁹. The King or paramount Chief is at the apex of the social pyramid. Below are the common people. God, therefore, as the head is thought to appoint the divinities as the executives and administrative heads of the earthly theocratic society.²⁰ Idowu articulates a sociological order in which Yoruba patterned their theology.

He explains, The Oba (King) is addressed '*Kabiyesi*', which is a clipped form of "*kaa Bi yin Kosi*" (there is no questioning of your authority or the one whose authority cannot be questioned). This underlines the form of the command of the *Oba* whom the people regard as the evocation of God on earth. Consequently, He is given a deep regard to the point that He is not approached directly but through His chiefs ²¹

He who understands this particular culture would not have a problem to understand the logic in the concept of divinity in Yoruba religion. Divinities do not have an entire existence; *Olodumare* (God) created them. Therefore, they do not have unconditional authority; their authority is derived from God. He also delegated power to them to function in various aspects of the management of the universe. The real power is in the hand of God. Every creature, including *the orisa* (divinities) depends on Him that is why the *orisas* (divinities) are regarded as mediators

between God and man. God is only using them to run the government of the universe. Fullest satisfaction cannot be obtained from them. There are errors in the submissions of some Yoruba religion scholars on the logic in the concept of *Olodumare* (God) and *orisas* (divinities). This came out of an attempt to propagate Christianity. It is also fashionable to identify with Christianity today, so some scholars who have a Christian background wrote with a biased mind in order to promote Christianity.

According to Susana Wenger:

The learned Africans, Nigerians were educated to disgust and spurn their own culture, whereas in Muslim way or Christian or traditional way, there is no dissimilarity for the real African, because religion and beliefs and acceptance of the fact of God is the same²².

This assertion enlightened us to the fact that there is no variance in God. God is one; only in semantics the difference is noticed. The attributes of the Christian God are not different from the Yoruba God. Hence, it is necessary to emphasize that, the God of the Yoruba is not inferior to the God of Christians. The concept of God in Yoruba Religion is akin to the idea of God in Palestine. The religious activities of Jews were recorded in the Christian Scripture (Bible). God of Yoruba could only be disrobed of His attributes and rendered inferior if Christians would agree that, God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament. It is imperative to stress that, this is impossible because Christianity is an offshoot of Judaism. New Testament cannot be alienated from the Old Testament.

5.2 *Olodumare* The Supreme Being Among Yoruba

Many scholars, both western and indigenous have written credible works on Yoruba religion. While some clearly display ignorance of the conception of God (*Olodumare*) in Yoruba religion, some wrote with a biased mind with the strong aim of propagating Christianity. Better still, some have written objectively and with clear indication that, they construe the concept of God in Yoruba Religion.

We cannot but pay attention to the perception of *Olodumare* (God) in Yoruba religion because of the fact that our concern in this work is to suggest solutions to the age-old problem of evil. This arduous task may be truncated without a good knowledge of the notion of God in Yoruba Religion and Christianity. The root of the problem of evil is the incapability to reconcile the omnipotence and the goodness of God with the unadorned reality of evil in the human race.

Therefore, the thought of God in both religions is one of our central concerns. Indigenous writers such as Lucas, Idowu, Awolalu, have shown that the Yoruba are not so impoverished as to be lacking in a sophisticated concept of the Supreme Being (God) who is recognized and given a foremost position of status in their religion and life. The impression of God, therefore is not foreign to the Yoruba tradition ²³. God is known as *Olodumare* or *Olorun*. This name, which strongly implies “Almightiness” “Omnipotence”, is an ancient, unique name with a theological connotation ²⁴. It is a difficult task to interpret *Olodumare* etymologically; Idowu postulated that, *Olodumare* could etymologically be seen this way:

Odu – There is no distinguish by the tone marks, whether the constituent as it stands in the full name of the Deity is *Odu* or *Odu*. The tone marks are not affected whichever of the two words it may convey. There is usually a way: the usage of the name without the prefix of ownership – is *Edumare*. The *Edu* – should help us to choose *Odu* and drop *Odu* as the first part

of *Olodumare*. It is cognate with Hebrew *hwd* (God) splendor, majesty, light and glory, which God wears as King ²⁵.

On the component He opines:

The mare / mare must be kept intact and not broken into two. To interpret it ‘mare’ may be taken from *Osumare* “rainbow” that is, the dazzling crescent (*osu/osu* “new moon” and the Mare “dazzling”) Mare indicates shining, the splendor, the same that is symbolized in Christian art as a halo over the head of Jesus Christ, Mare belongs to the same m-r root as Yoruba *meremere* “bright, brilliant”. *Igbo-miri* “water” Hausa *maromaro* “spring of water” *Edumare* is the most splendid, the glorious full and whole. *Olodumare* has the wholeness of splendor, the Lord clothed in glorious light ²⁶.

In other words *Olodumare* describes the Supreme Being as “one who is the Head and the overlord in heaven and on earth, indisputably, completely unique and beyond assessment in majesty and fullness of attributes²⁷. It indicates the Almighty who created the universe, the everlasting majesty, upon whom human beings depend ²⁸. Nobody, can achieve or do anything without God’s approval. He knows the finale from the inauguration, nothing happens without his knowledge (*Ewe kan ki BO Lara Igi ki Olorun Mamo Nipa re*) The name also means the unique king or chief who holds the insignia, who is permanent, unchanging and reliable ²⁹.

Idowu opines that:

In the Yoruba theology, *Olodumare* is above all and ultimately controls all issues. God is creator, the king and all knowing, all seeing, master in resplendence. The permanent canopy of heaven belongs to Him and manifests Him to the entire world. The works of *Olodumare* are mighty and

wondrous.³⁰

He also States:

Yoruba religious belief emphasizes the unique status of *olodumare*, who is approached, and acknowledged by man through the divinities. God, to whom all Yoruba divinities are emissaries, possesses all the authority and to Him, all allegiances are due. Thus, in worship, the Yoruba hold God ultimately, first and last. A superlative status is, therefore, given to God because of His inserts and remotus³¹.

Yoruba never worshipped God directly, because of Incertus and remotus, it is their religious conviction that once they offer worship to the divinities, the worship is transmitted to God. They have immediate touch with the divinities that in turn have immediate touch with *Olodumare*.

Idowu further stresses that:

The Yoruba picture of *Olodumare* as a personage, venerable and majestic, aged but not ageing with a greyness, which commands awe and reverence. God is the final disposer of all things and the fact of God's ever-livings as very dominant in the thought of Him, which the Yoruba express in myths, songs, and epigrams and by several other media. The Yoruba world has always thought of God as both ritually and ethically holy, essentially pure, righteous, transcend and the supreme controller of man's final destiny³².

Olodumare is no doubt the Supreme Being who owes human lives. Yoruba give Him reverence. His knowledge was part of the Yoruba cosmos before the entrance of Christianity and Islam religions. Therefore, it is erroneous to believe that Yoruba lacked the knowledge of God, prior to the introduction of Christianity and Islamic religions to Yorubaland.

Olabinrin also expounds the rudimentary fundamentals of the idea of God in the Yoruba

context. He emphasizes that, before the influx of the foreign religions, the Yoruba believed in one Supreme Being to whom numerous divinities were subject ³³. He further makes references to different attributes of God depicting God as He that is too great to be worshipped directly by the Yoruba³⁴. Therefore; it is obvious that the heartbeat of Yoruba worship is the propitiation of *Olodumare* through the lesser divinities.

Abioye asserts that:

The firm Yoruba belief in the benevolence of divinities such as *Sango* (god of thunder), *Obatala* or *orisa-nla* (arch-divinity), *Ogun* (god of iron) and that aficionados of Yoruba religion usually offer sacrifices not to these gods so as to appease them to atone for their sins but to the one and only supreme God (the creator) acknowledging Him for favors received

³⁵

Abioye's assertion reflects Yoruba understanding of God. They strongly believe that God *Olodumare* is too great to approach directly for that reason they approach Him through the lesser gods who are His ministers. This is the reason some scholars regard Yoruba Religion as a diffuse monotheistic. The gods are not culminations in themselves, but a means to an end. The modern generation cannot comprehend the original meaning of *Olodumare* because the influence of the foreign religions, Christianity and Islam is enormous on Yoruba religion. *Olodumare* to some modern Yoruba is a divinity. The best he could be called is the first among equals in the ranking of divinities.

However, *Olodumare* (God) in Yoruba understanding is the Supreme Being whose origin and greatness is far beyond human comprehension. To Yoruba, the name given to God unveiled their trust in the actuality of a Supreme Being who is higher than every other thing in the world.

O. B. Akinfenwa asserts:

That the names describe the nature and character of God and the divinities. God's attributes, His works, purposes, and relationship with human kind are known through the names. The people's expectations, faith and hope in God are also expressed in the names given to Him³⁶.

The names given to God in Yoruba language, such as *Olodumare*, *Olorun*, *Eleda*, etc are enough to understand the Yoruba position on God. He is too great beyond human comprehension. He is the maker and the Sustainers of the universe. They have unexplainable confidence in Him. In Yoruba cosmology the name *Olorun* (meaning the owner of heaven) depicts God as the creator of all things, detectable and invisible.³⁷ it is to be pointed out that in ejaculatory expressions; the Yoruba use *Olorun* and *Olodumare* together. The double expression means Supreme Being whose abode is in heaven and is Almighty and dependable³⁸. The two names are used together to express submission to God Almighty. It connotes emphasis and a profound sagacity of devotion. The names are always on the lips of the Yoruba in their prayers, in their conversation, in their decisions and sayings³⁹.

Although, the earliest writers of Yoruba Religion were merely European missionaries who were subjective and aimed at promoting the new faith. They decided to subjugate Yoruba religion in order to evangelize and propagate the gospel. Another reason for subjective submission on Yoruba religion is the unruly of racism. Some of the whites who wrote on Yoruba Religion wrote with a superiority complex. They did not care to investigate the true nature of Yoruba philosophy of religion. They derogated the religion and submitted that Yoruba or Africans were too primitive to conceive God. *They regarded Olodumare* as first among equals in ranking the divinities. This is untrue of Yoruba philosophy of religion. The noted problem is not

in the conception of God, Christianity and Yoruba Religion but only in semantic that the difference is noticed. In other words, it may be suggested that the idea of God in Christianity and Yoruba Religion are the same.

5.2.1. The Attributes of *Olodumare* (God)

To further affirm Yoruba belief in the greatness and super qualities of *Olodumare* (God), we need to scrutinize the Yoruba words or phrases imputing traits, chattels and qualities or selves to the supreme being ⁴⁰. Those words or phrases are called attributes; they describe what people think about God. They also describe the role and positions of God in relation to the physical world and the supersensible realm. ⁴¹ These attributes emphasize the unique status of *Olodumare* in Yoruba cosmology and theology. The attributes are:

5.2.2 *Eleda* (The Creator)

Yoruba believe that *Olodumare* is the originator of the universe. He created everything and nothing came into existence without his knowledge. It is true that, Yoruba has a myth in which *Obatala*; the arch divinity was delegated to create the world and mold man. This does not sound contrary to the fact that, He gives life. *Obatala* only molded man, but *Olodumare* breathed into man. Yoruba affirm that the creative act of *Olodumare* (God) illuminates our comprehension of the transcendent, immanent rapport that exists between God and His creatures in the world ⁴². The non-divine being is characterized by an ontological difference from the divine, in that a finite entity only has being and participates in Being; it is not itself being⁴³. This is in consonance with Thomas Aquinas's second way of the cosmological argument. He describes God as uncaused efficient caused. God in Yoruba thought is uncaused efficient caused. Akin to Leibniz's comment on the willingness of God to construct the world without anyone coercing Him, *Olodumare* is not moved to create the world by any being outside Himself but He

generated the world out of the will. In Yoruba cosmology, the existence of *Olodumare* (God) is necessary. It is impossible for Him not to exist.

He is absolute being; He is *apa nla to nso to so ile aye ro* (the great hand who holds the world); He must exist as a matter of necessity. This is in consonance with Saint Thomas Aquinas's third way of the cosmological argument. He emphasizes that, God is an indispensable Being. In addition, Saint Anselm, in his ontological dispute argued that A Being that cannot be illusory not to exist is greater than a being that can be imagined not existing. So then, if God is the ultimate possible being, then He is the being that cannot be fictional not to exist. This statement is what scholars refer to as Saint Anselm's definition of God's necessary existence⁴⁴. The existence of God is taken for granted in Yorubland, therefore, his existence is necessary, He is a necessary Being. The existence of God settles our mind and clears ambiguity on the origin of the world.

5.2.3 Alagbara Nla (Omnipotent)

Olodumare (God) is regarded as *Alagbara nla* (omnipotent) by Yoruba. His power is unlimited. He has very great power without limit. He is the greatest possible being who cannot be imagined not to exist. In Yoruba, philosophy *Olodumare* exists both in mind and outside the mind. This is a version of Saint Anselm's ontological argument. Contrary to Gaunilo criticism of the Saint Anselm ontological argument, Gaunilo has argued that Saint Anselm is guilty of unjustifiable transfer from the realm of concept to the demesne of reality without tangible existence⁴⁵.

Yoruba do not need any logical proof of God's concrete existence; to them, God exists as a personality and resides in "*orun*" (heaven). His place of abode is far beyond the reach of any man. He is described as *Oba-A-Se-kan-ma-ku* (The king whose works are done to perfection).

Nothing is impossible for Him. When the Supreme Being sanction something, it is easily done, but when He does not sanction an action, it becomes impossible ⁴⁶.

Idowu asserts that:

Olodumare the name indeed, strongly implies “almightiness” and “Omnipotence.” It is not just a descriptive title of God, it is the real Yoruba name for God in the Yoruba belief, an intellectual nature that, could apply only on the basis of an intellectual origin ⁴⁷.

Olodumare (God) is the greatest possible Being.

5.2.4 *Olumo Ohun Gbogbo* (Omniscient)

Olodumare (God) in Yoruba cosmology is ontological. He knows everything. He has ontological understanding of all things; his knowledge is not partial like that of man. He has answer to all rational questions; He knows what the future holds. In a simple language, He knows the end from the beginning. Nothing is hidden from Him. He is all knowing, all-wise, all seeing, all-hearing.

He is also describe as “*arinu rode Olu moran okan*” (the one who sees both the inside and the outside of a person, the discernor of the heart)⁴⁸. Hence in a difficult situation people say, “*ohun to pamo oju Olorun to* (that which is hidden to people is seen by the eyes of God.⁴⁹ When things that are beyond human comprehension happen Yoruba people would say “*ohun to pamo oju Olorun to*”.

5.2.5 *Oba Adakedajo* (The King who judges in silence)

“*Olodumare*” is called *Oba adake dajo*”. It is believed that, He sees everywhere and knows everything. Nothing is hidden from Him. This is evidenced in the saying: *bi oba aye ko ri o ti orun nwoo* (If the earthly king does not see you, the one above sees you) ⁵⁰. This makes

Olodumare an impartial and perfect judge. Yoruba believe that nobody can escape God's judgment and that good will follow right conducts while, evil will always follow wrong conducts. The judgment is at two levels, here on earth and in the hereafter.⁵¹

5.2.6 *Olojo Oni* (Owner of this day)

Yoruba believe that the owner of the days is God. He controls the day and human lives. God creates each day and each moment anew and beautifully. No *orisha* is given the authority to create or to control the day. Regardless of which *Orisha* or spirit or *egungun* exerts its influence in a given day, the true owner of the world is *Olodumare*⁵². All beings are mandated to bow and worship Him.

5.2.7. *Aterere kari Aye*(He who spreads all over the world)

Yoruba believe that *orun* (heaven) is the abode of God. He is the ultimate reality but does not live in the spatio temporal. God is high and far above everything in the world. He is not of the rank and file of the divinities; neither can He be described as simply a god or nature⁵³. He is far above all creatures. He is not just first among equals as some scholars have described Him. Although, very far but immanent. He works within the spatio-temporal. He is called *Ate-re-re-Kari aye* (He who spreads all over the world).

He is quite accessible, no priest is necessary, on many occasions no intermediary, no building set aside for Him. *Olodumare* is Omnipresent and makes people feel His presence. Therefore, He can be called upon at any time. Today all these attributes are being used in the churches, in indigenous, mainstream church denominations, Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal.

5.3 Divinities

Yoruba theology accommodates simultaneous existence of divinities, or ministers of

Olodumare, or lesser gods with *Olodumare*. The didacticism or theology of Yoruba sees God as most supreme although immanent but transcendent and too exalted for man to approach directly.

According to Johnson, *Olodumare* was too dignified to concern Himself directly with men and their matters, hence they declare the existence of several gods and intermediaries and these they term *orisa*. *Orisa* is a spirit or deity that reflects one of the indexes of *Olodumare* (God) in the Yoruba spiritual or religious system.⁵⁴ Ajanaku defined *orisa as Awon eni ti ori sa da yato si awon elegbe re iyoku* (he whom *Ori* (head) has created in a way distinct to that in which his contemporaries have been created)⁵⁵. *Ori* may mean “Lord”, the Yoruba God works together with other divinities to ensure the smooth running and good governance of the universe.⁵⁶ Thus, we can say that there is a sort of harmonious interaction between the African God and His minister⁵⁷. The belief in the existence of divinities is owing to the absolute transcendence of God that Africans worship Him through lesser beings that are also spiritual in nature and nearer to God. Bolaji Idowu perfectly explains this using the Yoruba cultural contextual as an example of how the Africans think. The *Oba* (king) is address as *kabiyesi*, which is a clipped form of *kaa bi yin ko si* (there is no questioning of your authority or the one whose authority cannot be questioned)⁵⁸. This underlines the nature of the authority of the *Oba* that the people regard as the evocative of God on earth. As a result, He is given a deep regard to the extent that He is not approached directly but, through His chiefs. He who understands this particular culture would not find it uneasy to see the logic in the concept of divinity in Africa⁵⁹. The ambiguity of the perception of divinity in Africa in relation to God is cleared with the brief explanation above; it should be reiterated that, the *orisas* or divinities are mere ministers of *Olodumare*. They are not ends in themselves, but means to an end.

Yoruba claim that, they have 401 deities; in truth, they are more than that, the density of

their cosmology has led western researchers to equal them to the ancient Greeks and their impressive pantheon⁶⁰. These *orisas* are majorly past heroes who affected people's lives one way or the other and each with a specific function. It is the belief of Yoruba that divinities are in charge of the administration and control of nature.

Some of these *orisas* (divinities) are:

5.3.1 *Orunmila*-

The Yoruba ostentatious priest and curator of the *Ifa* oracle, the source of knowledge that is believed to oversee the knowledge of the Human form, Divinity, the cures of illness and deformities. His subordinate priests or followers are the *Awos* ⁶¹. He is the protector and owner of the *Ifa* Divination system, a codification of “sacred secrets” inferred and administered by a *Babalawo*.

Yoruba believe that *Orunmila* is capable of reminding one of his destinies because he was at hand when the individual made his choice of *ori* (*ori* means destiny in Yoruba cosmology). Hence, *Orunmila* is known as *Elerii Ipin*⁶². As the god of divination, ‘*Orunmila*’ has the power not only to remind the individual of his or her *ori*, but also helps him or her to alter an unfavorable or wicked one that is a bad destiny. This is done by appeasing through sacrifice and propitiation, thereby ensuring that the force of evil does not prevail against good ⁶³. He is often times taken as custodian of wisdom among the deities. He accompanied *Obatala* in his work of creation as the special adviser.

5.3.2 *Obatala* – According to Yoruba belief, *Obatala* was the *orisa* to which *Olodumare* assigned the formation of the cosmos and human race. *Obatala* is considered a male energy. He is professed as the *Orisa* of whiteness. His adherents or worshippers wear white often most especially the priests and priestesses of *Obatala* must always be in white. He is the *Orisa* of

clarity ⁶⁴. *Obatala* is believed to be second in rank to the Great Being *Olodumare* ⁶⁵. He was the one that fashioned the world as a delegated minister of *Olodumare* and molded human forms while *Olodumare* the Great Being breathed into man.

He was given the prerogative to create man as he pleases. The deformed, the hunchback, albino, etc. are called *any arise* (votaries of *orisa*). Some stories say that those people were created by *Obatala* when he was drunk and that is why palm wine is a taboo to *Obatala* worshippers. Yoruba parishioners who left for Brazil refer to *Obatala* as *Elejigbo* because they left from the Yoruba town Ejigbo. In some parts of the Yoruba towns; *Obatala* is called *Ajaguna*, *Orisanla*, *Elejigbo*, *Orisa Ogiyan* and so on. But the first shrine of *Obatala* is in Ile-Ife at *Idita Mogun* ⁶⁶. Yoruba believe that every human race is the handiwork of *Obatala*, brown, yellow, white, etc. Ancient stories said that after the excessive flood from *Olokun*, the remaining people settled at Ile-Ife.

Some of the children of *Obatala* who were drifting too far away distances on the sea came back to Ile Ife with bleached skin. They were called *oyibo* by the people of Ife, they stayed for a while, but could no longer adjust to life, and one day they all packed up and headed to the sea through *Ijio Moore* Ile-Ife ⁶⁷ *Obatala* is an important divinity in Yoruba cosmology and theology; he is held as arch- divinity and the *Olodumare's* (God's) minister of labour and productivity.

5.3.3 Ogun – is another divinity in Yoruba land. He is the god of iron and of war ⁶⁸. He is a deified god. It is believed that, *Ogun* has once lived as a man on earth. Most myth identified him as a native of Ire in Osun State. Everyone who uses iron in his profession must worship *Ogun*. The Yoruba fear *Ogun*, he hates liars and he can kill anyone who swears falsely by *Ogun*. Oral tradition says that there are seven roads or aspects of *Ogun* ⁶⁹; *Ogun Alara agbaja*, *Ogun alara*

who is worshipped at Ilara, is the one who liked dogs. *Ogun Ajero a gba gbo*, *Ogun* who is worshipped in Ijero, likes ram, *Ogun onikola amuje enia* the *Ogun* who makes decorative facial makes takes human blood - *Ogun oni gbajamo Irun ni je*. The *Ogun* of the barber prefers human hair, *Ogun melemele a esun isu gba* The *Ogun melemele* takes the arid yam *Ogun Seriki ti dogun lehin odi*” the *Ogun* of *Seriki* has become the *Ogun* of the distant town. *Ogun ntoke bo*, *Ogun* was coming from the mountain. *Aso ina lo mubo’ra*. He covered himself with frock of fire. *Ewu eje lowo*; he wore the garment of blood⁷⁰. When there is an accident through iron *Ogun* must be appeased. This is because he might be angry for not being properly worshipped. Yoruba do offer sacrifices to him when they are going to war.

5.3.4 *Sango – Amadioha (Igbo) Sokogba (Nupeland)*

Sango is believed by Yoruba as the god of thunder lightning. He is associated with virility, maleness, fire, lightning, stone, warriors and magnetism valuable.⁷¹ In the Yoruba mythology, *Sango* manifested as the king of Oyo, and it was believed that when *Sango* speaks fire and smoke come out of his mouth and nose⁷² Yoruba fear *Sango* and they believe that if anyone swears or falsely takes an oath in *Sango*’s name the person may be struck by lightning. If there is a theft case *Sango* may be implored to expose the thief; he does it by striking the person by lightning. When such happens the priests or priestesses of *Sango* would look for *edun ara* thunderstone and *edun ara* is a material they would use to appease him. Despite the fact that, the worship of *Sango* is abated whenever there is a thunderstorm, Yoruba still, believe that, *Sango* is striking. The judgment by *Sango* through the thunderstorm has not seized even in the modern days. There are occasions of such when *Sango* struck and killed the evil doers and in case the evil doer is a thief after striking him, he puts on his chest what he had, stolen⁷³. Twin children are

considered the children of Sango. The thunderstorm is the most common representation of Sango. Some of the other items in *Sango's* shrine are *sere* (the shaker made of gold), *bata* (a drum), *ose Sango* (wood) *Igba Sango* (Wood) ⁷⁴.

5.3.5 Oya – *Oya* was one of the wives of the former *Oba* of Oyo called Sango (*Obakoso*) Yoruba believe that, she turned to the river Niger after the decease of her husband. She is often described as cyclone, guardian of the cemetery, winds of change, storms and advancement. Due to her personal power, she is usually portrayed as being in the company of her husband Sango, *orisa* of rebirth ⁷⁵. A myth says that she was *an Ogun's wife* before she later married Sango. As described by some of the priests and priestess of *Oya* in Oyo; they said *Oya* was a very fierce, energetic woman who was very vast in magic and she gave Sango a lot of power. She moves very fast, like the wind and fire. *Orisa Oya* may be found to be worshipped in towns and villages.

Oya was first worshipped at a compound in Ile-Ife called *Ogbon Oya* before Christianity was reestablished in Ife for the third time in 1899.⁷⁶ Some other *orisas* (divinities) of Yoruba are: ***Olokun*** – guardian of the deep ocean, the chasm, and signifies titanic wisdom. ***Osumare*** - rainbow idol is in charge of movement and motion, warden of children and allied with the umbilical cord. ***Aganju*** – father of *Sango*, he is said to be *Sango's* brother in other stories. *Aganju* is said to be the *orisa* of volcanoes, mountains and the desert. ***Oba*** is another *Sango's* wife. She is considered as the invidious wife, divinity of marriage and domesticity, daughter of *Yemoja*. ***Yemoja*** – Mother of waters, nurturer of water resources. According to *Olorishas*, she is the amniotic fluid in the womb of pregnant women, as well as the breasts, which nurture. She is considered the protective energy of the womanly force. She is the goddess of the ocean among the Yoruba ⁷⁷. Ologundudu explains that *Yemoja* is the mother of all children. She is the provider of life. Some verbalized mores said she was one of the wives of *Oranmiyan* and had three sons

for him by name; *Dada*, *Sanponna* and *Sango*. Some stories say that *Oduduwa* was married to *Obatala* and that *Yemoja* was their daughter. The story continues to say that from *Yemoja* came *Olokun*, *Olosa*, *Oya*, *Orisa Oko*, *Oba Oke Soponna*, *Oorun*, *Osupa* and *Osoosi* ⁷⁸. The priests and priestesses of *Yemoja* usually wear white and blue beads. Her favorite colour is light blue. *Yemoja* is very famous among the new world's practitioners because of their closeness to the ocean ⁷⁹. **Osanyin** – is the *orisa* of the forest, he owns the '*omi ero*' (a holy liquid consisting the custodian and sentinel of the herbs, and is a natural healer). He sometimes appears as a lovely wood spirit when in a female form. **Babaluaye** (*Sonponna*) divinity of diseases and illness (particularly smallpox, leprosy and now AIDS) also *orisa* of healing and the earth son of *Yemoja*, *Erinle Orisa* of medicine, healing and comfort, physician to the gods. *Orisa Oko*- *orisa* of agriculture and harvest. These are some of the Yoruba deities. However, it is germane to underscore the fact that, these deities are not by any means equivalent to God (*Olodumare*). They are ministers of *Olodumare* (God). This is because *Olodumare* is too lofty to be approached directly.

5.4 *Esu* and *Olodumare* in Yoruba Religion

This is another divinity in Yoruba theology; *Esu* works in close relationship with *Orunmila*. He is chiefly a special relations officer linking heaven and earth. *Esu* is the inspector general of police who is regularly checking to ensure that proper procedures are followed in matters of worship and sacrifices ⁸⁰. It is unlike in Christianity and Islam, which portrays *Esu* as Lucifer, who tricked humanity to commit sin against God by eating the forbidden fruit ⁸¹. The Yoruba perceived *Esu* as a minister of *Olodumare*. The '*Esu*' of the Yoruba is not equivalent to Biblical devil that does evil through and through, Yoruba '*Esu*' is an epitome good and evil. '*Esu*' works in harmony with *Olodumare*; he is not his rival or enemy, but he works

harmoniously with *Olodumare* to ensure peace and order in the universe. Some names in Yorubaland have the prefixed 'Esu' to identify with him e.g. *Esufunke*, *Esugbami*, and *Esubunmi* etc. They have no qualms identifying with him.

The attitude of the Yoruba to *Esu* is usually one of dread. People fear him because by virtue of his office, he holds the power of life and death, prosperity and woe over individual human beings⁸². J.O. Sodipo explains that it is the part of *Esu* to see that sacrifice made to *Olorun* reach him. He also ensures that supplicants have their prayers answered and reprimand meted out to offenders⁸³. Yoruba *Esu* may be likened to Satan of Biblical Job who moves around the universe and enforces law and order. He always retires to God for fellowship after inspecting the world.

5.5 The Yoruba Conception of Evil

The Yoruba conception of evil may be identical with other broad meaning, but the beginning, nature and cradle of evil to them are different. Yoruba word '*ibi*' 'evil' means anything that is deleterious, throbbing, spiteful or calamitous⁸⁴. Anything that is not good, what does not bring happiness, anything that brings sorrow e.g. accident, premature death, stillbirth, death of infants is evil (*ibi*). Yoruba strongly believe that evil is real. The existence of evil to them is a reality that cannot be denied. The legitimacy of evil in Yoruba cosmology is substantiated with the philosophical sayings *Tibi tire Ni ada ile aye* (The world was created with both good and evil). In addition, Yoruba admit that *inu ikoko dudu leko funfun ti jade* (out of the black pot comes the white maize pap). These two philosophical sayings imply that, good and evil are not diametrically opposed to each other. They both complement each other. They are not two distinct realities in isolation. Yoruba are convinced that good can come out of evil and evil can also come out of good. '*Ire*' and '*ibi*' constitute an intimate pair hence the saying *ire wa ninu*

ibi', *ibi wa ninu ire* (there is goodness in evil and there is evil in goodness).

To Yoruba the existence of evil (*ibi*) in the world is a reality or a fact that cannot be doubtful. Actually, the existence of evil is not a fancy in human mind because to them evil is as tangible as the existence of man in the universe ⁸⁵. It is informative to note that in Yoruba thought, no woman would be cheered for giving birth to a baby until the placenta that is rendered *ibi* or *ekeji* has come out⁸⁶. This shows that evil (*ibi*) is a reality in Yoruba cosmology. God and evil therefore are not distinct realities and have no status in isolation. They are always relative to each other ⁸⁷.

Fagunwa, observed that:

Evil is such an existential problem that is so deeply rooted in human life and makes itself manifest in the suffering and struggle that characterize existence ⁸⁸

To Yoruba evil and good are dialectical and not wholly opposed to each other. When evil happens Yoruba would identify with the victim or mourners. They would greet the person *Olorun a dawo ibi duro o* (God would put a stop to evil). In the Yoruba viewpoint of religion *Olodumare* is known as the Supreme Being, the creator of all things. The Yoruba myth of creation points conclusively to *Olodumare* (God) as the creator of all things. He wields absolute and immutable power. He created the universe through the instrumentality of *Orisanla* (also known as *Obatala*) the arch divinity of Yorubaland ⁸⁹. The fact that he created all things makes Yoruba to regard him as *eleda* (creator) or (the one who creates or owns the creation). Everything created by *Olodumare* (God) is called *eda*(the created).His many attributes show that

He is kind, merciful and good.

He is believed in by everybody as the almighty, all-knowing, all-powerful, transcendent and immanent ⁹⁰. Nothing is impossible for him to do. He is alive, He hears, He acts, He directs, He sees, He speaks, He is above all human beings and divinities are under Him. Considering the attributes accorded God by Yoruba, one would agree with Dopamu that, from all accounts, and in view of His absolute power and authority the world *Olodumare* created was good ⁹¹.

However, Yoruba attributes everything to God, but they refrain from attributing evil to Him as is evident in the following statement: *Olorun ko se ibi ire lo nse* (God does no evil. He does good always). Dopamu insists that *Olodumare* is good and that He is the fountain of all benefits ⁹². He is the creator and giver of all the good things that human beings can possess ⁹³. Human beings enjoy his love, care, concern. He gives them rain, food and all that they need. The goodness of God is clearly revealed in the following words:

From the beginning, the created order enjoyed what was good and there was harmony and uninterrupted relationship, communication and fellowship between man and the spirit world. Tradition has it that the sky.e g. Heaven was so close to earth that men could touch it. People were usually allowed to travel to heaven to ask for whatever they needed ⁹⁴.

The above assertion summarizes the goodness of God as conceived by the Yoruba. To Yoruba, *Olodumare* (God) is Omni benevolent. His goodness to man is unquantified. Furthermore; Dopamu does not hesitate to prove the omnipotence (attribute) of *Olodumare* (God). He insists that God is almighty who possesses absolute power over man and the divinities. He asserts that God is supreme and He is the utter ruler of the world ⁹⁵. Before Him there is none, after Him there will be none. He is the disposer, supreme to whom belongs the ultimate sanction of

anything proposed ⁹⁶.

Idowu's submission serves as inspiration in this regard. He says: The Yoruba believe that *Olodumare* is the most potent in heaven and on earth. He able to do all things. He is the enabler of all who achieve any ends. Things are possible only when and because they are ordered by Him, they are impossible when He does not allow them or give His aid. This is what we mean when we say *Adun-un-se bi ohun ti Olodumare se, a soro-ose bi ohun ti Olorun ko lowo si* (easy to do as that which *Olodumare* performs, difficult to do as that which *Olorun* enables not) ⁹⁷.

However, one wonders why *Olodumare* also gives bad people like fraudsters, armed robbers, ritualists, etc. the share of good things. It is obvious that this is contrary to the emphasis on *iwa rere* (good character) as a catalyst to the fulfillment of destiny. Yoruba believe that those bad people would be punished in due course. From all indications, we have seen that to Yoruba '*Olodumare*' (God) is good and almighty.

The dilemma is on the blimey of God who is also omnipotent and who also created a world which inevitably has evil in it. However, they maintain the goodness and omnipotent attributes of God. They attribute the happening of evil not to God, but the divinities and man. It is essential to maintain that *Olodumare* (God) works harmoniously with his divinities. In most cases, these divinities are responsible for evil. For instance *Obatala* the arch divinity is held responsible for the deformed. As said earlier, it is believed that '*Obatala*' was given the duty to create man. Therefore, the deformed, albino, and hunch back is known as '*Eni arise*' (votaries of *orisa*); they were created by *Obatala* either by mistake or voluntarily to punish them for certain reason. Yoruba regard the physically challenged as a form of physical evil, but they do not blame

God for it; rather they hold *Obatala* responsible.

Obatala's imperfection in the work of creation accounts for the cause of a form of evil in the human world. Moreover, *Sango* is looked upon as the god of thunder and lightning. It is his duty to uphold the moral aspect of man. He ensures strict allegiance to the moral order dictated by *Olodumare* (God). Whenever an individual violates moral order *Sango* would strike. The manifestation of his anger is staring as a form of evil among man. *Soponna* can also wreak man with small pox; this may be done to correct the misdeeds of an individual or community. This is viewed as a form of evil. From the above discussion, we can see that *Olodumare* is exonerated from the cause of evil in the human world.

Divinities are the major causes of evil in the human world. *Olodumare* permits them to wreak evil on the man as a form of punishment. It is essential to uphold law and order in the human world, without capital punishment criminals would not be cautioned. The manifestation of the rage of any of these gods serves as a deterrent to others. Another divinity who is believed to be an instrument of God's wrath and judgment is *Ogun* the god of iron. He could strike if an offender sworn by him to clear an allegation in disguise. Also, the ancestors are regarded as the spiritual overseers of family affairs; they have the power to influence the living for both good and evil.

In another dimension man can cause evil by misusing the freewill given to him by God. This is in accordance with the Saint Augustine's argument; he maintained that God created the world perfectly, but evil came into the world through the abuse of free will by man. The invisible source is attributable to mankind. Social evil, indiscipline, moral decadence and lawlessness can bring untold suffering in one form or another ⁹⁸. The menace of armed robbers, accidents through reckless driving, wars, terrorism, violence, murder, rebellion, tyranny, wickedness, religious

bigotry, domination, oppression and apathy, are some of the human factors that lead to evil. In this case, evil is brought about by *omo araye* (Children of the world) ⁹⁹. Yoruba also use the phrase '*Awon aye*' (wicked people) or *Aye* (world). It is figuratively used to mean wicked people; human beings that belong to the secret societies.

It is believed that, the concentrated power of evil resides in *Aye*, and the persons in whom the world is apparently vested are those called *Araye* or (*Omo Araye*) ¹⁰⁰. Yoruba believe that '*Awon aye*' can cause evil. They can inflict their parallel human beings with sickness, incurable diseases, accident and untimely death. The various expressions such as '*Omo araye buru*' (children of the world are wicked), *Ti eba raye esa faye* (If you see the world run away) that is feared the world/wicked people. *Aye lose ila ti ila fiko, aye lose igun to fi pa lori*' (It is the world that made okro string, it is the world that made vulture bald) '*araye mapa kadara mida*' (may the world not change my destiny). *Enu araye lebo* (the world's mouth is a problem). When evil happens or somebody is sick or involved in an accident Yoruba would say "*owo aye ni*" (It is the hand of the world). These wicked people of the world do engage some malevolent forces to achieve their aims.

Those spiritual agents have the functional attribute of causing evil through *iku* (death) *arun* (disease) *egba* (infirmity) *ofa* (loss) ¹⁰¹ and other afflictions. The concerned spirits have to be evoked before they could act. It is also germane among the Yoruba to mention *Elenini Union* (Bitter enemy of the people) as the progenitor of evil in the human world. Idowu translated the word as "The implacable, causeless sadistic forces that oppose people relentlessly and spoil the opportunity of their success"¹⁰². These *omo araye* and *Elenini* include, witches, wizards, *adahunse*, *ogbanje* etc.; they do not wish anybody well. Through diabolical means they hinder people's progress and make people poor.

It is obvious from our findings that, in Yoruba thought the invisible forces and mankind should be blamed for unpleasant experience and not *Olodumare* (God) However, one wonders, why *Olodumare* (God) is indifferent to the infamous activities of the malevolent forces and man. The act of *Olodumare* supports the submission of the Deists. According to them God created the world perfectly out of His overflowing goodness, but withdrew and left the world to continue without intervention. It is difficult to accept this submission wholly because it attacks theism. We can exonerate *Olodumare* by simply alluding to the cordial relationship between Him and his ministers (divinities); He gave them some levels of power to operate within their functional territories. When they misuse their power or act on behalf of *Olodumare* to correct anomalies in the human world, it is regarded as a form of evil (*ibi*) but *Olodumare* (God) should not be blamed.

Man is also allowed to use his freewill; he could also evoke some malevolent forces to cause evil in the world. However, he would be paid in the world beyond for all his deeds. Yoruba believe that wicked persons would not be allowed to join the ancestral cult in heaven. Only good people who are not wicked would join the cult of the ancestors. The ancestors are the spiritual superintendents of any family. They can influence any member of the family for good or evil. They visit their children at will and can even decide to come back to the world through any of their children. This is only possible for the good ones.

5.6. Types of Evil in Yoruba Cosmology

Yoruba recognize two types of evil; physical and moral evil.

5.6.1 Physical Evil

To Yoruba physical evil comprises of all the pain and discomforts arising from *arun*

(disease), *aisan* (sickness), *ijamba* (accidents), *iku aitojo* (premature death), *aini, osi, airije, airimu* (lack, poverty, hunger, thirst) and all other forms of physical evil. Physical evil involves all physical pain and physical disasters (*ajalu*) and calamities. Yoruba believe that physical evil may be caused by human wickedness. This is done through the nefarious acts perpetrated by *ika eniyan* (wicked people) or *onise ibi* (evil workers). These *ika eniyan* (wicked people) is capable of subjecting a man / woman to nastiness and all forms of pain.

It is also believed that physical evil can be perpetrated either physically or supernaturally. Yoruba believe that man can physically torture his fellow human being. It is also possible for man to wreak and vex his fellow human beings through the supernatural means without physical contraction. These *Ika eniyan* can make people blind, cripple, insane, can inflict a fellow human being with leprosy and all other forms of physical evil. The reason for inflicting or afflicting other fellow human beings may be because an individual wants to test the potency of his charm on those who doubt it. He may as well want to show that, versed than others. This would make others to fear him. Physical evil at times is attributed to the activities of some divinities like *Obatala*; this has been stated earlier, it is however, reiterated to emphasize its relativity to physical evil. *Obatala* is believed to be responsible for the creation of physically challenged people or the deformed e.g. the blind, lame, hunch back, albino was created by him; they are regarded as *any area* (votaries of *orisa*).

5.6.2 Moral Evil

In Yoruba cosmology, moral evil is taken to mean the chaos that occurs when one contravenes the norms of the society¹⁰³. Yoruba believe that, anything that is regarded as misconduct is evil. Any misconduct that can affect the suave running of the society or breaches the moral norms of society may result into disorderliness which is evil. Yoruba attach

importance to *ibale* (virginity) hence *agbere* (fornication) or premarital sex is frowned at. A bride must be met at home (*won gbodo banile*) she must be a virgin on the night of the wedding. If she has been deflowered she brings shame to her family. It is mandatory that it is the husband that must deflower his wife. A white cloth would be given to the husband, and he would use it to clean the blood on her genital organ after mating. This serves as the evidence of virginity. Although, this practice is gradually disappearing among the Yoruba today. ‘*Pansaga*’ (adultery) or infidelity is discouraged among the Yoruba.

Marital faithfulness is strongly encouraged. A married woman must not have sex with another man except her husband. If this happens, it is regarded as a form of moral evil. At times the husband of the infidel woman may inflict *magun* (thunder bolt) on her, if any man has sex with her he would die. If someone committed adultery within the extended family, he would be punished. The family takes a decision on the kind of chastisement that would be meted out to the offender. A child who is an artifact of extramarital affair or illicit sex is regarded as *ammo ale* (bastard) hence such child would not be regarded as legitimate and he has no right to the inheritance of the supposed father. Stealing is a form of moral evil to Yoruba. A thief is severely punished when arrested.

When something is stolen and the thief is not known Sango would be evoked to uncover the culprit. Sango strikes with thunder and lightning, killing the person and putting what he stole on his chest. This is considered as a form of evil. Also, if a member of the community deliberately kills a kinsman, it is held as a form of moral evil. He is punished by execution or life banishment from the community. If it is by mistake he would be exiled from the community for a period of time. In the Yoruba cosmology, it is believed that when someone infringes the moral norms of the society deliberately, the supernatural beings that are guarding the society would be

annoyed. The divinities, ancestors and other theocratic entities that are ensuring the smooth running and governance of both *aye* (world) and *orun* (heaven or the world beyond) mete out punishment and torture to such individual, which also results in moral evil ¹⁰⁴. On this note, the wrath of the ancestors, *ajogun* and other divinities and other theocratic entities that are incited by flouting of societal norms can also be regarded as a form of moral evil.

Usually, this kind of evil may not abate until one corrects his/her ways and renders due sacrifices and appeasement to mollify the necessary gods¹⁰⁵. In a nutshell, evil is as real as human existence to Yoruba. The problem of evil is not pronounced in Yoruba religion as in Christianity. Unlike Christianity, it does not suffer from the western influence. The problem of evil is not tense in Yoruba religion, not that, it does not arise at all but by their dualistic approach they not only answer the question on the problem of evil, but ameliorate it. Yoruba religion does not insult God; they recognize the hierarchy of a thing and pray to God through lesser gods. If their prayers are not answered they don't put blame on God. When evil happens, they don't blame God.

5.7 Yoruba Theodicy

To Yoruba *Olodumare* (God) is just and good. Just as Augustine, Leibniz, Karl Barth justified God in the face of evil; Yoruba believe and emphasize the goodness of God in the face of evil. To Yoruba evil is consistent with *Olodumare* (God) who is good and omnipotent. Evil does not jeopardize divine reality in Yoruba philosophy of religion. Evil is consistent with a God who is good and omnipotent; and that the existence of evil in the world cannot be accredited to God's responsibility but rather to man's irresponsibility¹⁰⁶. Yoruba solved and ameliorated the problem of evil in some ways.

5.7.1 Sin

In Yoruba, cosmology sin is one of the causes of evil in the world. Theologically, sin is interpreted as a human fault or being in a wrong relationship with God. It is a defective departure from the right and a good relationship with God ¹⁰⁷. Sin to philosophers is moral evil. To Yoruba, evil is considered in its kith and kin to human choice and bond. To be a person is to be a finite Centre of freedom, a free and self-directing agent responsible for his decision ¹⁰⁸. Yoruba accept the goodness of *Olodumare* (God). He does not do evil, that is why Yoruba would say *Olorun ko se bi* (God doesn't do evil). However, evil came to the world through the abuse of freewill by man. When evil happens, it may be as a result of the violation of societal norms or tradition by an individual, the norms are perpetuated in Yoruba land to maintain peace and order in the society.

It is believed that when one disobeys the tribal customs, traditions, norms, values or etiquettes then that person has offended the spirits or gods and this is likely to impair the harmonious relationship existing between the spirits or gods and the human beings ¹⁰⁹ *Olodumare* is absolutely good, he does no evil Whenever evil happens, it is caused by man either directly or through the use of invisible power or man's misdeeds. ¹¹⁰ In Yoruba context, religion and morality are interwoven. Morality cannot be unglued from religion. In fact, moral values are product of religion to a Yoruba man.

The argument of relativism in ethics is meaningless to a Yoruba, this is because what is right is right and what is wrong is wrong. When there is a defilement of norms by anyone, the gods would be angry with him and this may bring a form of evil. Yoruba believe and uphold moral values as a duty not only to man and society but also unto God. It behooves every man to keep the customs and moral values of the society. In fact, everyone must live it. *Olodumare* (God) in Yoruba understanding is a God of judgment who upholds morality, such that no offence

could go unpunished. Occurrence of evil may be the penalty meted out for an offence committed. The punishment is always commensurate with the offence committed. Akin to Israelites' experience whenever a sin is committed secretly, the whole community may suffer for it. It may be in form of an outbreak of an epidemic or mysterious death until the culprit is brought out and necessary sacrifice or propitiation is made to appease the gods. Yoruba would not call this evil, but punishment for an offence committed. Also, Yoruba believe that the turpitude of the father could be visited on the children. This is in consonance with the Jewish theology, that, the children could be reprimanded for the sin of the father from the first generation to the fourth. In Yoruba view, it is seen as *Egun Idile* (family curse). The penalty for the wickedness perpetrated by someone's forefathers may be the cause of evil, such as disappointment, failure, barrenness, accident, disease etc.

Instead of looking at evil as dilemma, Yoruba believe that, it could be a punishment for an offence committed secretly or openly. Many evils are caused by human actions and responsibilities. To Yoruba physical evil in most cases are caused by one of the divinities who were created by *Olodumare* to help Him in the smooth seriatim of the universe. When a thunderstorm kills somebody *Sango* is worshipped; when somebody drowned in the river the goddess of the river would be worshipped and in the cases of epidemic *sonponna* the god of diseases shall be worshipped. In each case of evil, *Olodumare* (God) is exonerated from the cause of evil.

5.7.2 The Concept of Destiny

Another way by which Yoruba solve the problem of evil is their belief in destiny. To Yoruba, destiny is a package of a life-course which should be unaltered, but which in certain life's

circumstances, and because of some factors in life can be altered.¹¹¹ Destiny is called *Ipin*, *Ayanmo*, *Kadara*, and *Ipin ori* or *Iponri*, depending on the situation or circumstances in which it plays out, among the Yoruba.¹¹² Sometimes the framework in which destiny manifests determines the name it is called; for instance, ordinarily, *ipin* means “lot” or “portion”; *Ayanmo* means “affixed to one” or “that which is conferred on one” while *Kadara* means “fate” and *ipin ori* or *iponri* means *ori*’s portion or lot”¹¹³. Destiny is the contents of the package of *ipin* (lot) which *ori* receives and which play out on planet earth/world when the individual person arrives in the world.¹¹⁴ The Yoruba metaphysical account of the nature of the human person is essentially a tripartite one.¹¹⁵ The personality consists of three elements: *ara* (body) *emi* (breathing spirit) *ore* (personified spirit) 116. *Ori*’s is an important element to Yoruba and this is because the success or failure of man depends on his *ori* (destiny). Premature death (*iku aitojo*) *ajalu* (calamities) *ijamba* (accident) are all dependent on one’s destiny.

To the Yoruba the end for which a person is created is extricable bound up with their destiny; *ori* is the determinant of one’s success or failure in life. When evil happens to someone, Yoruba would say *Ayanmo re ni* (that is, it is his destiny); they would also add *Ayanmo ko gbogun* (destiny has no medicine). In one of the several myths of creation of man *Ajala* is the storekeeper of *ori* (inner head of personality, spirit). The individual before birth would then go before *Olodumare* (God) to choose his or her *ori* (destiny). *Ori* in Yoruba thought is used in two related ways, first *ori* is the unconscious self which makes an unrestricted selection of one’s life path before *Olodumare*; *ori* also refers to that which I choose. It, therefore, refers to the individual destiny.

Kadara eniyan kose yipada (destiny cannot be changed) but good fortune can be

postponed. Destiny determines what man would be on the earth¹¹⁷. The belief in destiny by Yoruba cannot be de-emphasized. When someone's relation or beloved dies prematurely Yoruba would condole the person by saying *Ayanmo kogbogun* (Destiny has no medicine) *kadara ko le yipada* (Destiny cannot be changed). This goes a long way in condoling the mourners. The belief in destiny clearly shifts the blame from God to man.

It shows that the victim was responsible for his calamity and that, it was his choice. Therefore, *Olodumare* (God) must not be blamed. Also, Yoruba usually says *orilo nise* (it is *ori* who determines the success or failure of man). When somebody is successful they would say *O yan re* (His choice is good). That is, his destiny is good. If someone is unsuccessful, they would say *ko Yan re* (His destiny is bad). The Yoruba believe that, each individual has taken his/her destiny before *Olodumare* (God) in the supersensible world.

The individual kneels down before God and determines his destiny, which is done by his *ori*. It is the responsibility of an individual to say what he/she would like to become in the physical world, the only duty of *Olodumare* is to seal it. An individual will then proceed to the gate of heaven and repeat what he has said in the presence of *onibode* the owner of the gate between heaven and the human world.

This is required in order to doubly seal the choice of an individual. The individual on getting into the world forgets his destiny, but is quite aware of the fact that he has come to fulfill a particular destiny. That is why Yoruba would say *Akunleyan ni adayeba, adayeba ni akunleyan, akunle ayanpin, adele aye tan oju nroni* (what one kneels to choose before *Olodumare* is what he is coming to fulfill in the world, but on getting to the world he is regretting). Yoruba think that humans exist in the invincible world as free beings who are capable

of choice. Everybody made a choice before coming to this world, therefore man's activities on earth depend on his/her destiny.¹¹⁸ However, Yoruba believe that *orunmila* is capable of reminding one of one's destiny because he is at hand when the individual makes his choice of *ori*. Hence, *orunmila* is known as *Eleri ipin* not only that *Orunmila* can remind one of his destiny, he can also alter a bad destiny. As the god of divination, *orunmila* has the power not only to remind the individual of his or her *ori* but also helps him/her to alter an unfavorable or wicked one that is bad destiny. This is done by appeasing through sacrifice and propitiation, thereby ensuring that, the force of evil does not prevail against good.¹¹⁹ The concept of destiny is controversial. Some have said that the belief in destiny is fallacious. However, the Bible agrees with the concept of destiny. In Romans 8:29 the Bible says "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers, so that those he predestined he also called; those he called, he also justified, those he justified, he also glorified" Also the case of Jacob and Esau is a good example. God has predestined the elder to serve the younger. Despite the fact that Esau was industrious and bold, Jacob got the blessing without working for it.

In the Yoruba concept of destiny, the fulfillment of one's "*ayanmo*" (destiny) is not automatic. An individual has a part to play. The correlation between the choice of '*ori*' and its fulfillment in the corporeal world is the individual's responsibility. This is the reason an individual forgets his destiny when he/she gets to the physical world. Hard determinism is close to the concept of destiny. Hard determinists argue that our choices are determined. We lack metaphysical freedom (freewill) to act the way we wish. Whatever happens to us in the world is dogged by forces yonder our control. Clarence Darrow, a famous American Attorney in a speech to prisoners in the "Cook County Jail" gave further impetus to the position of the hard

determinists this:

I do not believe there is any sort of destination between the real moral conditions of the people in and out of jail. One is just as good as the other. The people here can no more help being here than the person's exterior can dodge being outside. I do not think that people are in penitentiary because they were licensed to be. They are in prison simply because they cannot avoid it on account of situations which are wholly beyond their control and for which they are in no way responsible¹²⁰.

It is obvious that there are various actions that are beyond human ability to control. Man is helpless in most cases. For instance, the choice of parents is not done by a child, the choice of the tribe, color, genotype; blood group even diseases are not in the hand of the individual. Darrow's submission that those in prison cannot avoid being outside the prison is not logical enough.

Criminality is a choice and this is the justification for laws guiding human society. It is challenging to conclude that there is no destiny. This is because, it would further demand a great task to solve many puzzles. It is also not easy to simply conclude that, there is a destiny. If destiny is upheld and the submission of hard determinists is favorably considered where do we place human actions and moral responsibility? In response to this question, the theory of compatibilism was developed. Compatibilism is the thesis that we are both determined and saddled with moral responsibility¹²¹. Thus the compatibilists accept that we are gritty but reject the view that we are unwavering and lack the freedom obligatory to be ethically responsible¹²². Instead, they accept that we have the freedom to be justly responsible. The compatibilists posit that an action is free as long as it is not the product of external compulsion¹²³.

If the instantaneous cause of your action is a psychological state, including your will,

your choices, then is a free or voluntary action for which you can be held responsible. In spite of this position, compatibilists insist that personality, motives and values are down right indomitable by previous causes ¹²⁴. The theory of compatibilism is the apotheosis of the concept of destiny. It is a middle ground between hard determinism and Libertarianism theories.

Although our success and failure in life are predetermined, our choices were decided by us in the supersensible world. The choices control our instinct and actions in the physical world. However, our actions or responsibilities are tools in the fulfillment of our choices. Also, we are responsible for our deeds unless we are coerced by the external factors. The belief in destiny does not deny our moral responsibility. It embraces the fact, that, we must be held responsible for our actions. We can either be impugned or applauded for our actions. While we are being controlled by metaphysical power to act and fulfill our destiny, we enjoy circumstantial freedom, to do what is right. In view of the belief in destiny, God is not to be held accountable for the evil in the world.

With the belief in destiny many questions on the problem of evil would be answered. When evil happens, it would be easy to conclude that, it is the destiny of that person. The belief in destiny would help us to clear the dilemma or puzzle of the problem of evil. The existence of evil could be reconciled with the omnipotent and Omni benevolent God. The belief in destiny is one of the ways by which the puzzle could be solved. It can be said that out of the will of God, He allowed an individual to make his choice. This shows that God is democratic. If a man chooses a bad destiny *Orunmila* could change it, once it is known through divination. The bad destiny could be altered by sacrifice and propitiation. This is to guarantee that the forces of evil do not prevail over good. Perhaps the reason *Olodumare* and *Orunmila* seem indifferent when a man is choosing his destiny is because both know certainly that, there is always a way out by

which an individual can modify or alter his/ her ori¹. Although, it has been said earlier that destiny cannot change or be changed, but several sayings, lyrics and songs attest to the fact human's destiny once sealed cannot be altered.¹²⁵ However, this unalterability of destiny is not rigid among the Yoruba. It is somehow modified. This is because the Yoruba think that given certain conditions man's destiny can be altered.¹²⁶ An individual negative or inordinate appetite, ambition or attitude can alter his/her destiny from good to bad. Therefore, individual character is very important in the fulfillment of destiny. *Ori* provides the Yoruba a means of resolving some of the puzzles of human existence including the problem of evil. The concept of *Ori* provides a better resolution to the problem of evil ¹²⁷. *Kadara Ko gbogun, ayanmo ko le yipada* (destiny cannot change, no charm can change destiny), it is the best explanation for every occurrence in the world.¹²⁸ Another solution proffered by Yoruba is that evil is not diametrically opposed to goodness in the world ¹²⁹.

Their dualistic slant to the problem of evil is one of the solutions we should consider. They are convinced that, both good and evil are inseparable. That is why they usually say that *Tibi tire ni ada ile aye* (The world is created with both good and evil). Yoruba recognize the reality of evil and they never think that it is an illusion. Also, they strongly believe that; good can come out of evil.

They do not make a watertight division between good and evil. Unlike in the West, where nothing good can come out of evil, the Yoruba hold a form of symmetry in nature, but do not attempt to condense everything to one sort or regard a natural feature as completely positive (good) or negative (evil).

They know that the world is full of characters and events, which can be either good or

evil, though not in the western absolute sense ¹³⁰. Rather than for Yoruba to admit that nothing good can come out of evil, they emphasize the dualism of events in the world. In other words, they believe that good can come out of evil. They are convinced that *inu ikoko dudu, leko funfun ti jade* (out of the black pot, white pap is produced). This implies that good can come out of evil. Yoruba also admit that, *Olodumare* is capable of doing both good and evil. His divinities are not absolutely good either. When evil happens, it may be a punishment from *Olodumare* or one of His divinities. This does not antagonize Biblical doctrine. The book of Isaiah chapter 45 explains that God created pleasant and unpleasant experience. In the book of I Samuel chapter 15 the Bible records that a malicious spirit from God came upon Saul to torment him for the sin of disobedience he committed. Glaringly, there is no much difference between the culture and religious belief of Jews which is recorded in the Old Testament of the Bible and Yoruba philosophy of religion. There is no opposing submission that, if these solutions are used to face the challenges of the puzzle of the problem, the dilemma would be resolved.

5.8 The Nature of Evil and Man in Yoruba Thought

Reiterating the definition of evil in Yoruba worldview, evil means anything that is harmful, aching, spiteful or dreadful. The Yoruba word for evil *ibi* denotes something that is not decent, that is, deficiency of good or the corruption of goodness ¹³¹. This explains why to the Yoruba, anything that obstructs the accomplishment of goal line, ideal, happiness or general wellbeing may be regarded as a form of *ibi* (evil) ¹³². It has been expounded earlier that Yoruba view of evil is dualistic that is *ibi* (evil) and *ire* (good) are not diametrically opposed to each other. In Yoruba cosmology *ibi*(evil) can be caused by man. They believe that it is possible for man to harm a fellow human being by the use of mystic power.

It is a common belief among Yoruba that someone can engage a supernatural power to

inflict another person with leprosy, blindness, sickness or diseases of any kind. He can also kill the fellow through the use of weird or spiritual arrow called *apeta*. In the mental and social attitudes of the Yoruba and Africans in general, there is no belief that is more deeply ingrained than that of the existence of witches. All strange diseases, accidents, premature death, inability to gain promotion in office, barrenness in women and a thousand other evils are attributed to witchcraft ¹³³. The fear of witchcraft is so sacrosanct that Christianity and Islam could not change it in Yoruba mind. Olukoya, the General Overseer of Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministries corroborates this, with his emphasis on the activities of witches. He believes that any catastrophe is caused by the witches. He wrote:

Recently, there was a terrible catastrophe in Jesse town Nigeria where almost one thousand souls were lost in a fire incident. Was it ordinary? It was a clear demonstration of the wickedness of witchcraft. This shows us that any city or community that is subjugated by witchcraft will be bloody in every concrete sense of the world ¹³⁴.

There is a clear clue that, belief in human wickedness to cause evil in Yoruba thought is vivid. In most cases, witches which are roughly translated *Aje* in Yoruba are women. They usually form an evil alliance which enables them to possess the craft that enables them to perform bizarre acts which are destructive. Those people who possess such power or craft are regarded as *ika eniyan* (wicked people). More often than not when evil happens Yoruba would attribute the cause to *Ika eniyan* (wicked people). Apart from the witches and wizards, (wizards are the male counterparts of witches), the magicians (*adahunse*) or *Ologun ika* (people with harmful charms) can hurt

human beings. Human wickedness is the reprehensible acts fated by man in order to subject his fellow man to agony and all forms of pains ¹³⁵. This is common in polygamous homes where co-wives get jealous of one another.

Pain may be inflicted on man to revenge or retaliate a bad behaviour or an embarrassing scenario. Yoruba are convinced that with the use of ghostly means it is possible for a man afflict man from afar with evil even without somatic contractions ¹³⁶. This type of spiritual cheekiness is more severe than the physical type of impishness in that it is not easy to trace the cause and often times, the sympathizer may even be the cause of the evil ¹³⁷. Also, Yoruba believe that, some invisible forces apart from divinities and man with supernatural power can cause evil.

According to Kola Abimbola, the Yoruba space is divided into two halves, the right hand and the left hand while about 400 primordial powers occupy the right; about 200 primordial powers occupy the left ¹³⁸. To Abimbola the powers on the right hand side are known as *orisa* while the powers on the left hand are known as *ajogun* (the anti-gods).¹³⁹ It is imperative to know that the powers (*orisas*) on the right hand are benevolent; they are also capable of doing evil in that they sometimes chastise humans who corrupt the society ¹⁴⁰ Also, the powers on the left side are irredeemably malevolent. Therefore, both the *Ajoguns* (the powers on the left side) and *orisas* (the powers on the right) are capable of causing evil in the universe ¹⁴¹. Yoruba strongly accept as true that there is no communication gap amid the divine realm and the physical. Man is capable of communicating with the spiritual beings to make people grief. The cause of some forms of sickness (*aisan*) in Yoruba thought is the *ika eniyan* or *onise ibi* (wicked people). When someone is terribly sick and does not recover on time Yoruba rather than go to the hospital for medical treatment would advise *e lo fi e se ile too* (go and use local means to treat the patient). In some cases medical doctors who are quite aware of African spiritual status

give similar advice when the sickness defies orthodox medical treatment.¹⁴²

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CHAPTER SIX

6.0 COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN CHRISTIANITY AND

YORUBA RELIGION

Christianity and Yoruba religion have many things in common. They also have many things that differ. Christianity and Yoruba religion agree on some theological doctrines. Some areas of the likenesses and dissimilarities are perused below.

6.1 Similarities and Differences in Theism in Christianity and Yoruba Religion

Theism is the belief in the existence of God and His authority over the created universe.¹ For the theists, God upholds both a personal and transpersonal association with the world He has created². God is always described with the superlative degree of everything which is good. God is the highest point of good in the universe³. In both Christianity and Yoruba religion, God is ontological. His existence is necessary in both settings. Although, Christians decimated Yoruba religion to mere paganism with a grouse of fetishism against it the hostility that Yoruba religion suffers from Christianity is severe. However, the theologies of both religions are not in contrast. In Christianity, God is the ontology of beings, God occupies the apex position.

He is the beginning and the end. No one can be compared with Him in power and majesty. God in Christianity conforms to Thomas Aquinas's God. Aquinas argues for the existence of God. He proved that, God is the unmoved mover. This had been used by Aristotle. He had stated that sense perception shows that the motion is a fact. By motion, Aristotle meant the reduction of potency to act and that can only be done by something which is already in the act. Saint Thomas Aquinas took this up and argues that nothing can be concurrently being the mover and the moved⁴. We find that certain things are in motion and others are statics. Something must have started the motion. But this itself must have been set in gesture by something else. We cannot go on ad infinitum or indefinitely⁵. In the series of moved movers this implies an 'unmoved mover', a mover that is not itself moved by anything else and thus, the

argument concludes must be God ⁶. In Christian theology, God is at the apex. Everything in the world is in motion, but only God is motionless. He is the one that is moving the world. By motion, Aquinas does not mean “walking” but he means changes in any form. The natal of a child, the growth of a child, the death of a man, seed planting, growth of the plant and harvest are all examples of motion. The earth alternates and revolves; these are also motion in a form. God is moving every creature either physically or not.

The same theistic idea is cultivated by Yoruba religion. Yoruba cannot de ontologise the existence of God. To them God is ontological. In the ontology of beings in Yoruba cosmology, God occupies the apex position, God is so high above man that He cannot be approached or worshipped directly. That is not to say that God is far such that it can be equated to Aristotle’s God who did not only create the world, but is far away from it and that he has nothing to do with it⁷. In the African cosmology, God created the world and sustains it⁸.

Christianity strongly emphasizes the existence of a supreme being who created the world. God is known as Jehovah, Elohim, Elshadai, Lord, and Yahweh in Judeo-Christian tradition. It is valid to stress that, God is a necessary being to Christians. This was argued by Saint Anslem in his ontological argument. He started by defining God as the “being than which no higher can be conceived” (that is imagined or thought of). He is the greatest conceivable being imaginable⁹. He argued that a being that exists lone in the cognizance and does not exist outer the mind is not as great as a being that exists both in the mind and outside the mind ¹⁰. In other words, for God to be the highest possible being He must exist both in the mind and outside the mind. “Greater” in Anslem’s vocabulary does not mean largeness or vastness but it is in terms of superlative and absolute qualities that are superior or more perfect. Indeed, the word that he used most frequently was mellor that is ‘better’ and when he used the word ‘conceive’ Saint Anslem meant thought or

imagined ¹¹. To Christians, God is the first mystery in the universe and that has caused the existence of other mysteries. The effects of the cause cannot establish their primacy ¹².

Christians believe in the existence of two worlds, visible and invisible, physical and supernatural simultaneously. Therefore, logical positivism or empiricism is irrelevant to Christian faith. There is the visible world as we can see and as exhibited by the physical law of nature. There is an invisible universe where only people who are in transition can be part of this world. We have evidence here on earth that the people in transition or death are in their highest stage of life for advanced life. God cannot therefore be found amidst the lower life. If the theory on the visibility of God is acceptable, it is therefore axiomatic to say that the almighty God who is the head, God of the universe is highly qualified to be God of the invisible universe ¹³.

Gottfried Leibniz the scientist, inventor, who invented the calculus, was fascinated by the theories of atheism when he was young. In practical and technical terms, he was an atheist, but he used calculus to discover the microscopic organism, which could not have been seen with unaided eyes ¹⁴. He was overwhelmed with great joy that he was able to conclusively produce an object, which could educate the world, that there were invisible organisms ¹⁵.

Secondly, this discovery enabled him to change his spiritual perception from the one imposed on him due to the inadequate knowledge, into the new spiritual reality. Seeing these organisms, he came to the conclusion that the invisible is really God. He willfully and convincingly departed from the circle of atheists¹⁶. The Yoruba have an impressive adept conviction of God's existence. The totality of the Yoruba culture and belief system rests on the peculiar understanding that God is above everything. His existence is obligatory. The existence of God is taken for granted by the Yoruba. It is therefore foreign to query the existence of God in Yoruba land. Yoruba call God *Olorun* (the owner of heaven or Lord of Heaven) *Olodumare*

(origin and ground of all). *Alaye* – the living one; *Elemi* – The owner of spirit and life, *Olojo oni* – the owner of today ¹⁷, God is an obligatory being to Yoruba. He exists both in mind and outside the mind. It is also relevant to point out that in both settings; God is recognized as the moder of the universe. To Christians He is the uncaused efficient cause of Saint Thomas Aquinas, in his second way of cosmological argument; he explains his idea of efficient causality.

In this world of sensible things, we find that there is an edict of effectual causes; he maintained that there is a hierarchy of efficient causes, a subordinate cause or being dependent on the cause overhead it in the hierarchy. We cannot go on indefinitely in our postulation of causes and therefore it is necessary to admit a first cause which itself is not caused by anything.

This first cause Saint Aquinas argued, is that which everyone calls God ¹⁸. The Bible explains that, God is the creator of heaven and the earth. In the garden of Eden He created Adam and Eve. The book of Genesis 1:26 says, Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;and let them have domain on the fish of the sea,and over the birds of the air,and over every sidling thing that sneaks upon the earth. The biblical creation story is a contrast to the theory of evolution. Modern man tells us, that man is the artifact of biological evolution. This theory teaches that many years ago through some unknown and unexplained process, an assortment of chemicals came together in just the right environment and “spontaneous generation” occurred. Those chemicals, perhaps warmed by the rays from the sun sprang into life ¹⁹.

At first, this life was simply a single celled life form. However, gradually through vast ages of time, these life forms became more and more complex ²⁰. They have evolved from one degree of complexity and order to a more complex degree. They slowly developed from creatures that stood upright all the way to modern man ²¹ However, the creation of Adam and

Eve was a historical fact. To Christians in Genesis 3:20 Moses explains God's process of selecting a helpmate for Adam. Eventually he was put to sleep, and the woman was taken from his side. She was called "Eve" because she was the mother of all the living" ²². Certain modern theologians teach that Adam was simply an imaginary creature, a mystical representation of the evolutionary process or at best the first of the creatures which evolved along the evolutionary chain to be a real man. This is not what the Bible teaches, however, Adam was a real man. He had a real beginning, he had real responsibilities, he had a real wife, he lived in a real place; he had a real relationship with God. It is not denied that there may be some poetic description in the creation story that would allow for a little more flexibility in interpreting the specific details. However, we believe that, the Genesis account of creation accurately reflects the truth of how the world and everything in it was created ²³.

Yoruba also believe that God (*Olodumare*) created the universe. That is why He is called *Eledaa*(creator). Fagunwa in his book *Igbo Olodumare* with all commitments expresses the certainty that God created the world, and that this creative act illuminates our thought of the transcendent, immanent correlation that exists between God and His creatures in the world. Fagunwa further adds that to, all other creatures, God made man superior ²⁴. Fagunwa in his presentation of a Yoruba philosophical explanation of God as a creator emphasizes that, *Olodumare or Olorun* is the author of everything other than Himself. Non divine being is characterized by an ontological difference from the divine, in that a finite entity only has being. It is not itself being. ²⁵

He is interested in the affairs of men and often intervenes to set things right, thus while He is transcendent, He is in this vein immanent ²⁶. It is evident from our discussion above that Christianity and Yoruba religion have many things in common in theistic ideology. It is therefore

important to note that all theists are serving the same God; it is only in philosophy and mode of worship, they differ. Obviously, there are some differences in the inkling of God conceived by Yoruba Religionists and Christians. The conception of God is germane in our discussion. Therefore, we shall also peruse differences in the theological conviction between Christianity and Yoruba Religion. To Christians, God is absolutely a perfect being. God is always described with the superlative degree of everything which is good. God is the highest point of worthy in the universe.²⁷ No mistake is found either in God or in his messengers. He does everything perfectly. This is far beyond oral analysis as the proof is found in reality.

Arguably, Christian theology consistently proves that God cannot do any wrong thing because, He is perfectly free. On the contrary, though Yoruba believes in the perfection of God, He however, delegates most of his duties to the divinities. These divinities are ministers of ‘*Olodumare*’ (God). Balogun, in this vein submits that the Yoruba never regard their God and divinities as perfect beings that they cannot do evil. truly, apart from the fact that they recognize that their gods can make mistakes, they are also responsible for evil in the universe ²⁸. If Balogun’s argument is sufficiently tenable then we could deduce that, Yoruba don’t conceive God as perfectly free as Christians do.

In addition, Yoruba do not absolutely exonerate God from evil. Their view of evil is fashioned on the fact that, the world is created with evil. Yoruba conceive both evil and good as arising from the activities of *Olodumare* (God). His ministers (divinities) and other theocratic entities ²⁹. The parallel view of Christians is obvious in their belief that God is wholly powerful, all-good, and absolutely perfect.

The God of Christians is conceived as a voluntary agent, and that which He cannot will He cannot say: the divine knowledge cannot therefore tend towards evil³⁰. In addition, God

cannot encourage actions which He believes to be evil. In a nutshell, God cannot allow His angels and other subordinates of His to do evil. This is antagonistic to Yoruba understanding of God. Although, He is good and omnipotent yet He rules with the assistance of the divinities.

The Yoruba God works together with other divinities to ensure good governance of the universe. Thus we can see that there is a sort of harmonious interaction between the African God and His ministers in being responsible for both good and bad S³¹. Christianity associates Satan with the source of evil. The creation story of the Bible presents God and his creation as perfectly good. But it was Satan who deceived Adam and Eve to eat the barred fruit which God forbade them; this caused the plummet of man and invariably brought evil to the world. The summation of Yoruba theology gives room to the worship of the divinities. Divinities came into being because Yoruba give absolute regard to *Olodumare* (God). In the ontology of being He occupies the apex position. He is great and awesome, far beyond human understanding. He is therefore not to be approached directly.

The divinities have touch with the man and they in turn have a touch with *Olodumare*. In a nutshell, they are arbitrators between God and man. The theology of Africa, which allows the worship of divinities with *Olodumare* makes it to be termed polytheism. Polytheism is the belief in the recognition and worship of many gods. The gods and goddesses have taken definite form. God is anything that is wonderful or beautiful³². This is very unlike the Christian theology which is monotheistic. Monotheism is the premier form of religion. It is the verdict and adoration of only one God who is generally regarded as “the God of the whole earth”³³. Christianity does not allow the worship of any beings apart from God.

Although, He is omnipotent, omnipresent and awesome, he could be approached directly by using the name of Jesus Christ. To Christians, God is the Father of all. The paternity of God is

given a prominent position in Christian doctrine. Based on this view man could approach God directly. Divinities are regarded as messengers of Satan by Christians. Those that believe in the divinities are regarded as '*keferi*', '*olorisa*' (pagan, heathen, idol worshippers) *ajebo* (eater of sacrifice, idolater) and *abogi-bope*; worshippers of images, idols, trees and palms). To Christians, it is a sin to carve images as symbols representing God. God should be approached directly.

6.2 Similarities and Differences in Philosophy of Religion in Christianity and Yoruba Religion

The knowledge of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion is identical. God is central in both settings. He necessarily exists, that is, He is one that He is, and acts solely by the necessity of His nature, that He is the free cause of all things³⁴. All things are in God, and so depend on Him so that without Him they could neither exist nor be conceived³⁵. All things are pre-determined by God, not through His freewill or absolute fiat, but from the very nature of God's or infinite power³⁶. God is the origin and sustenance of all things. Dopamu submits that, the situation is similar to what we have seen in Christianity and Islam³⁷. The submission of Dopamu is correct. This also does not exclude Yoruba religion. Yoruba religion teaches that the existence of God is necessary. It is non-negotiable that God is able to do whatever He likes; he owes the visible and invisible realms and sustains it.

Just as Christianity teaches, Yoruba religion emphasizes He can do all things because He is the God who lives, who hears, who sees, who controls, who speaks, who saves, who blesses, who commands, who rules, who judges and who has all the power to do all that He wants to do³⁸. In both Christianity and Yoruba religion, God is regarded as omnipotent, all-good, omnipresent, omniscient, transcendent and eminent. Both Christians and Yoruba religionists give

reference to God. All the attributes mentioned above are given to God in both settings. God is germane to human existence and He controls human affairs. The idea of intermediaries is common to both religions. God is enigmatic and therefore could not be approached directly. In Yoruba religion divinities are intermediaries. These are worshipped not as creators but as means to reach the creator God (*Olodumare*). Christians misconstrue Yoruba religion adherents, hence they are tagged idolaters. But in the real sense of it, their thought is not different from Christians. In Christianity, God is not approached directly either. In the Old Testament before the birth and death of Jesus Christ, the hand of God was heavy on Jews because they were approaching God directly.

Jesus Christ was born to serve as a link between the Jews and God. Although, he was precluded by his people, those that putative him are called Christians. Jesus therefore is the arbitrator between God and man. In a simple language Jesus is the intermediary between God and Christians. Since Jesus filled the gap between God and Christians, the grace of God abounds super abundantly. His hand is no longer heavy on His people.

The existence of Angels is another point of consideration in Christianity. Angels are regarded as God's messengers. The belief in Angel is common in African Indigenous churches such as the Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ, etc., although, mainstream church denominations and neo-Pentecostal churches seldom talk of angels, but at least, angels are mentioned by them. For instance, Cherubim and Seraphim churches regard angels, e.g. Raphael, etc. as intermediaries between them and God such that, the visional or a prophet in ecstasy talks of personifying the angels. Christianity and Yoruba religion are monotheistic religions. Monotheism is the recognition of only one God who is generally regarded as "the God of the whole earth"³⁹.

Despite the actual form of Trinity assumed by Christians, Christianity is seen as a monotheistic religion. Leonardo Boff says the interpretation of the trinity that three in one can serve as a source of inspiration, as a utopian goal that generates models of successively diminishing differences ⁴⁰. He also writes:

The trinity, as a mystery of communion of the three persons, has always given herself to creation as well as to the life of every single human being, and has revealed herself under the forms of sociability, mutual openness, love and self-giving, but also accusation and preach against the lack of such values to the communities of humanity., while humanity is the temple of the Trinity, independent of time, space and religion. All humans are sons and daughters in the son, all humans are under the energy of the Spirit and all humans are being drawn by the father ⁴¹.

It is obvious that, Boff's argument was that, the unity among the three holy persons is a mystery. They are not three entities in operation, but one. Invariably, he is emphasizing the monotheistic nature of Christianity, despite her belief in three divine beings. This same philosophy is applied to Yoruba religion.

Despite the existence of divinities in Yoruba religion; some scholars of African Traditional Religion have argued that Yoruba religion is monotheistic and not polytheistic as some have classified it. John Mbiti and Bolaji Idowu have argued that, "African concept of God rightly fits the model of Judeo-Christian monotheism ⁴². Bolaji Idowu: in *Olodumare* God in Yoruba belief articulates evidence that the concept of the Supreme Being is a monotheistic principle of the Yoruba religion ⁴³.

Idowu believes that, Yoruba religion is a "diffused monotheism" in that the many Yoruba divinities are "no more than articulation of elements of *Olodumare* the Yoruba supreme God ⁴⁴.

To Idowu, Yoruba conceive *Olodumare* as the potentate (*Oba*) and the minor gods can be said of as His ministers, parallel to the political grading of the tradition in which the Yoruba king rules through assistants of his ministers ⁴⁵. Philip John Niemark buttressed Idowu's submission.

He explained that the manner of *Orisha* which favors *Olodumare* as a supreme God of the Yoruba religion presents Yoruba God as monotheistic. He posters many *Orisha* or deities as "energy" forces to *Olodumare* who contract with human beings in their everyday activities or exasperates the fulfillment of destinies on earth ⁴⁶. Ray supports the argument that favours monotheistic nature of Yoruba God.

He writes:

Like a Yoruba monarch, or *Oba*, *Olodumare* sways supreme in the cold sky and rules the world through his intermediaries, the *orisa*. The sky- the abode of *Olodumare* is superior, all knowing, and all-powerful. Unlike the *orisa*, he has no shrines or priests, and no ransoms or donations are made to him because his will cannot be prejudiced or altered. Yet *Olodumare* may be invoked by anyone, anywhere, at any time and let him know their needs ⁴⁷.

Opoku supports Ray's position; he argues that it is specious to pronounce Yoruba religion as pantheism. He writes:

'Polytheism' is utterly derisory as a depiction of African Traditional Religion, for a religion cannot be said to be polytheistic simply because there exist many smaller gods. The key question in respect of polytheism rests on the attachment between the gods in the pantheism, and here, the religious beliefs of the Egyptians, Babylonians and Greeks which are samples of standard polytheism, can heave substantial light on appreciative of the term. In typical polytheism, the gods in the pantheon were all autonomous of one another. One of the gods

might be regarded as the chief, but he was never regarded as the creator of the other gods ⁴⁸.

In Yoruba religion, the understanding is different. God (*Olodumare*) the Supreme Being is outdoor of the pantheon of gods. He is the creator of the universe. He created the divinities to succor Him in the theocratic governance of the world. They depend on Him for existence. Without God, they would suffer extinction. This makes God *Olodumare* unique in Yoruba theology and cosmology. It is glaring that Yoruba religion and Christianity are monotheistic. It would also be contrary to conclude that the religions under consideration have no similarities. It is however, factual that both share many things in common. Philosophy of religion deals with the analysis and evaluation of religious experience, ⁴⁹ the philosophy of Christianity and Yoruba religion are distinct in the some respects. A clear understanding of the Christian religion is monotheism, although, Christian theology embraces trinity. Trinity is an integral part of Christianity.

In Christianity, God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are one. These are three distinct supernatural beings, but are one in essence and function. God the Father is the originator of the universe, Jesus is the son of God while the Holy Spirit is the power through whom God the father, the Son are demonstrated in reality. Yoruba religion does not preach trinity. Its doctrine is absolutely divorced from trinity, although, we have some stories of Yoruba gods that depicted them as sons of '*Olodumare*'. The teaching is not explicit in Yoruba religion. Ancestors are given prominent positions in Yoruba religion. They are regarded as custodians of morality. They believe that when a good person dies, he joins the cult of the ancestors. To the Yoruba the ancestors live in '*orun*' (heaven) with *Olodumare* (God).

This belief gave rise to *egungun* festival (masquerade). The *egungun* (masquerade) that

represents the ancestors is called *Ara-orun* ⁵⁰. This festival is observed throughout Yoruba land. They believe that the masquerade represents an ancestor who has come to visit his people on earth. It is glaring that Yoruba philosophy of religion accommodates the harmonious relationships between the deceased and the corporeal. They believe that there is always going in and coming out between the dead and the living. The interaction between the departed and the breathing is a clear-cut doctrine in Yoruba religion. In Christianity, this belief is completely satanic. Christians don't subscribe to the cult of ancestors. When somebody dies he could either go to paradise or hell depending on his character on earth.

Christianity forbade *egungun* festival and disapproves the belief that *ara orun*, a dead person can visit the world. This practice, which is seemingly embedded in Yoruba religion, is a taboo to Christians. It is equally necessary to take cognizance of differences in the understanding of the status of 'Satan' translated '*Esu*' in Yoruba theology. Christians believe that Satan (*Esu*) is the arch enemy of God. The name Satan is seen in the Old Testament and it has been translated variously. The Hebrew word for Satan means adversary ⁵¹. He is an oppose of God. He is consistently engaged in activities against the best interest of men ⁵². He is ⁵³understood as a tempter, deceiver, and liar, as the cause of immoral feelings and actions and as having the power of death and destruction over the bodies and souls of human beings. Whereas, *Esu* in Yoruba cosmogony is a minister of *Olodumare*, in the cosmological account of creation, *Esu* is known to be one of the three primordial divinities which had always coexisted with *Olodumare* as a minister in the theocratic governance of the universe. The other two divinities are *Ifa* and *Obatala* ⁵⁴ *Esu* is called the special relation's officer between heaven and earth.

He is being called the inspector general of police or universal police who reports regularly to *Olodumare* on the deeds of other divinities and men ⁵⁵. Satan of the bible does evil

through and through. There is no jot of good in him. He is directly or indirectly responsible for evil in the. However, *Esu* of Yoruba religion is a divinity. He works harmoniously with *Olodumare* to ensure good management of the universe. God is given absolute respect in Christianity. He is honored and worshipped as the King of kings, the creator of the universe. But He can be approached directly. The position of intermediaries is completely absent. However, Jesus is taken as the negotiator with whom God can be reached. It is apposite to construe that, Jesus's position is more than that of an intermediary between man and God. He is the son of God who is also God. The unity between Him and God remains a mystery. Yoruba religion embraces intermediaries. God is great and awesome. He is above all creatures. Therefore, He cannot be worshipped directly. Yoruba believe in the Almighty God who shaped and sustains them. *Olodumare* is being reached through the divinities that have direct contact with Him.

6.3 Similarities and Differences in the Dilemma of Evil in Christianity and Yoruba Religion.

In Christianity, the problem of evil is a dilemma of reconciling the goodness and power of God with the existence of evil in the world ⁵⁶. Christians believe that, God is decent, all powerful and loving. The dilemma arises from the fact that there are ugly experience in the human world The presence of evil in the world poses a puzzle on the absolute sovereignty of God. Invariably, the knowledge of a loving creator or an omnipotent God seems implausible, and the problem has often appeared as a dilemma ⁵⁷.

If God is impeccably tender God must hope to obliterate all evil; and if God is all powerful, God must be able to eradicate all evil. But evil exists; therefore, God cannot be both omnipotent and perfectly loving-since our world, in fact contains sources of pain, hardship, and danger of innumerable kinds,

the conclusion follows that this world cannot have been created by a perfectly benevolent and all powerful deity.⁵⁸

Despite the substantial expanse of evil in the world, Christians maintain that God is blameless and powerful. But to the atheists and critical mind, the presence of evil is a threat to Christian belief in God. On the contrary, the problem of evil is not a puzzle to Yoruba Religionists. Not because they don't recognize the glaring veracity of evil in the world. They are conscious of evil in the universe but with their dualistic approach they not only crack the problem of evil, they also ameliorate it.

Yoruba emphasize the blimey of God. They believe that the world was created with good and evil. This could be substantiated with the saying *Tibi tire lada ile aye* (The world is created with both good and evil). Yoruba believe that, when evil happens it may be a divinity or divinities that are annoyed. When a divinity is offended, evil may happen to a community:

It could also be inferred from the myth of creation that, right from the beginning, Yoruba believe that the world that was created good apparently had evil in it. Idowu states that from the first visit, the chameleon took back the shot that although the earth was undeniably wide copiously, it was not yet amply dry for any further operation, from the second visit, however, it returned with the cheering report that it was both 'wide enough' and sufficiently dry⁵⁹.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that, Yoruba do not have problem with evil in the world. Although, they recognize the presence of evil in the world they ameliorate it with their dualistic approach.

6.4 Similarities and Differences in Theodicy in Christianity and Yoruba Religion.

Evil is not an illusion to a Yoruba man. Likewise Christians recognize the fact evil is part of human existence. Two types of evil are recognized by the two religions; that is physical evil and moral evil. Physical evil comprises of all the pains and discomforts that arise from diseases, accidents or from duress upon the body like headaches, thirst, hunger and so on.⁶⁰ while moral evil is taken to mean the forms of disorderliness and chaos that occur when one contravenes the norms of the society⁶¹.

In addition, moral evil is the violation of moral standard or the compromise of the moral standard of a society. For the Yoruba, the existence of evil (*Ibi*) in the world is a reality or a fact that cannot be doubtful. Factually, the existence of evil is not an illusion in human mind because to them evil is as real as the existence of man in the universe. This explains why the Yoruba would say *tibi tire lada le aye* (The world is created with both good and evil)⁶². From all indications evil is a reality, and “to say that evil is a delusion of the mind is impossible within a religion based upon the stark realism of the Bible⁶³. It is clear that both religions affirm the existence of evil in the human world.

However, the meeting point of the two religions is that God is noble and powerful, despite contrary appearances. Both religions meet at a point of agreement that most pains in the world are caused by man; evil in most cases is inflicted on man by fellow human beings. The Yoruba consider evil to have two sources; visible and invisible. In most cases, the visible source of evil may be acting through the agency of the invisible source or, may be acting in consequence of the activity and influence of the invisible source⁶⁴. The visible source is attributable to mankind. Social evil, indiscipline, moral decadence and lawlessness can bring untold suffering in one form or another⁶⁵. The menace of armed robbery, accidents through

reckless driving, wars, terrorism, violence, murder, rebellion, tyranny, wickedness, religious bigotry, domination, oppression and apathy, are some of the human factors that lead to evil. In this case evil is brought about by *Omo araye* (Children of the world)⁶⁶. Christians also recognize the existence of the two worlds. In Christian understanding, the world is of two sides, visible and invisible with both existing simultaneously.

The invisible foe may influence the visible beings to cause havoc in the somatic world. Evil may occur through the rebellious act of man. Also, the wicked persons of the world may inflict pain on their colleague(s). The Yoruba use the phrase – name to describe the wicked folks of the sphere. The same meaning is found in *Awon Aye-* (Those of the world, wicked people)⁶⁷ or simply *Aye* (The world). It is believed that the concentrated power of evil resides in *Aye-* the persons whom the evil of the world are apparently vested are those called *Araye* or *Omo Araye*⁶⁸. Yoruba believe that, through the use of uncanny means man can inflict pain on another fellow. In Yoruba experience, evil in the world is mostly caused by *ika eniyan* (wicked people). The activities of invisible power are not neglected in Yoruba cosmology.

It is believed that *Elenini* (Bitter enemy of the people) is used as designated- for agents of evil in the world. Idowu translates the word as “The implacable causeless, sadistic forces that oppose people relentlessly and spoil every opportunity of their success⁶⁹ *Elenini* are always against the success of people and they are diabolic. *Elenini* and *omo-araye* are witches, wizards or sorcerers, *ogbanje (emere)* *Oloogun* or *adahunse* (The owner of evil charms) evil is the handiwork of man. Christians also believe in the existence of *Ika eniyan* (Wicked people) such as witches, wizards, *ogbanje*, evil medicine men, etc. It is believed that much of the evil in the world is caused by the devils’ machinations that use man as self-expression.

Evil people who represent the devil on earth are always ready to cause misfortune such as

sickness, premature death, sickness etc on innocent souls. This explains why Christian crusaders today direct most of their energy against the forces of evil. Christians believe that most evil are caused by invisible forces of evil. It is also true to both religions that, evil may happen as an upshot of the sin committed by an individual or community. When evil happens, Yoruba believe that, it must be a penalty for a sin committed. An individual may invite the wrath of gods, if he violates the norms of the society. Contraventions of societal norms may bring evil upon a community.

In like manner, Christians believe that physical evil is an instrument of punishment in the hand of God. God may allow evil to happen to an individual if he violates the commandment of God. A nation may be destroyed e.g. Amalekites, if her people are ungodly. Pestilence, famine, war etc come as effects of sin(s) committed by the citizens of a nation. The members of both religions believe that God is upright and all-powerful. He should not be blamed for evil in the world. In most cases man brings evil upon himself through the misuse of freewill. There are quite a number of differences that could be presumed from Theodicy in Yoruba religion and that of Christianity. Just as they have meeting points, they also have parallel lines.

It is glaring from our discussion so far that the dilemma of evil is not pronounced in the Yoruba religion as much as Christianity. This is because Yoruba approach the problem of evil dualistically. They believed that both fortune and misfortune were created by God. Christians on the other hand are adamant to agree that God is in charge of both good and evil.

According to Bewaji, the most popular attempt to pact with the problem of evil in Christianity is to say that, devil who was formerly God's deputy is the cause or the originator of all evils in the universe ⁷⁰. To Christians both moral and physical evils are caused by the devil. However, the Yoruba believe that, *Esu* (devil) is not absolutely evil. He is neither God's deputy

nor his arch enemy. But he is one of the divinities of *Olodumare* who is capable of doing both good and evil. The Yoruba also believe that divinities may be responsible for evil. If they are offended they may choose to punish a community for the sin committed by an individual. This is because of the communal responsibility as conceived by Yoruba. Christians don't subscribe to this notion.

God is the absolute creator of the universe, and He governs it alone. This is opposing to how the Yoruba think. To the Yoruba, God created the world with the aid of the divinities. They are also assisting Him in the smooth governance of the world. This is not adequately taken by Christianity. To Christians those divinities are the demons that are working for devil and thereby creating or causing evil in the human world. It is also necessary to mention that, Yoruba accept that God delegated the power of creation to *Obatala* and that is why we have deformed people or handicapped in the world. This attempt is to exonerate God from the menace of deformity that exists among men. It is simply an attempt to say that God should not be held responsible for human deformity. *Obatala* was responsible. In Christianity, God created everything single handedly. He was the one that molded man and breathed into him. Therefore, the deformed, hunchback, albinos were all created by God.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This study has discussed to a hefty extent one of the endemic philosophical problems. It is a fact that, the problem of evil is a recurrent issue in metaphysics and philosophy of religion. Some Western Theists have made several attempts to combat the challenge posed by the problem of evil. Responses have been advanced by Western Christians to defend God and make Him (to) retain His omnipotence and Omni benevolence attributes. These responses are called Theodicy. The responses were logically analyzed. However, it is discovered that, their solutions are not logically convincing. Therefore, the need to consider Yoruba solution to the aged problem of evil is envitable. The work epitomized Yoruba solution to the aged problem. It reveals that not that the problem does not arise at all in Yoruba cosmology, but by their dualistic approach they are able to solve the problem or at least ameliorate it.

7.2. Summary

This work contains seven chapters. Each chapter has sub-headings. Chapter one of the work is the introduction, an exposition of the Statement of Problem, Purpose of Study, Scope and Limitation of the Study, Research Methodology and the review of some related literature. Chapter two deals with Theodicy. Consideration was given to the various responses of theists to the questions raised on the problem of evil. Chapter three focuses on the Concept of Evil: An

Overview it looks at the two types of evil, moral and physical evils were briefly discussed. Also, the arguments of some philosophers were examined with an open mind, strength and flaws in each of their arguments were enumerated.

Chapter four made an analytical exposition on the concept of evil in Christianity. Special attention was paid to Christians thought of God and evil. That is, what Christians think about God and evil in the world. The correlation between God and Satan has been a common theme of discussion in Christianity. Satan is seen as God archenemy that does evil through and through. He is also God's opponent, who always thwarts God's good intention. This was examined and comments were made. It is problematic to simply assume that Satan, who was God archangel suddenly turned to his archenemy. This submission simply co-equals Satan to God. This is dangerous to theism. The effects of the problem of evil in Christianity were also perused. These include belief in witchcraft, belief in demons, syncretism, indigenous churches, neo-Pentecostalism etc. The submission of the Bible on evil was also studied. It was discovered that, the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation is on the problem of evil and solution to the problem. The Nature of evil and man in Christianity was also perused.

Chapter five articulated the concept of evil in Yoruba cosmology. It pays brief attention to the historical background of Yoruba. Yoruba religion was also studied analytically. The philosophy of Yoruba religion was appraised with special interest in their belief in God and divinities. God is at the apex in the ontology of being while the divinities are his ministers. Those divinities are not ends in themselves, but a mean to an end. The problem of evil in Yoruba theology was also analyzed. It was found that, Yoruba logic on the problem of evil is tenable than the western Christians thinking. Yoruba not only ameliorate the problem of evil, but also

solved it. The concept of *Esu* and *Olodumare* in Yoruba religion was also evaluated. *Esu* in Yoruba religion is not an enemy of *Olodumare*, he is God's minister and he works harmoniously with Him in the governance of the cosmos. He does not contend with God, neither does it have the power to thwart God's good intention. The nature of evil and man in Yoruba world view was considered. It was discovered that the man may inflict pain on another man through the use of ghostly power.

Chapter six made an analytical, comparative study of the problem of evil in the Yoruba religion and Christianity. It synthesized the similarities in the Yoruba religion and Christianity. It also epitomized the differences between Yoruba religion and Christianity. It is obvious that there are undeniable similarities and differences between the two religions. Chapter seven is the concluding part of the study. It gives the summary of the whole work, findings, contributions to knowledge and it periscopes the area for further research.

7.3 Findings

In the first instance, the conception of God in Christianity and Yoruba religion are the same and has not changed. This is obvious by the traits of God in both settings, e.g. God is omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omnipresent.

However, differences are noted in the relationship of God with the cosmos. While intermediaries exist in Yoruba religion, God is approached directly in Christianity. Yoruba believe in the concomitant existence of divinities with *Olodumare*. These divinities are God's ministers who assist Him in the governance of the universe. These can also cause evil, especially when someone erred. Violation of societal norms always attracts the wrath of god(s) in Yoruba theology.

When evil happens to man Yoruba would trace it to a god who is annoyed because

someone has violated the law and order of the society. God is ontological being, this is fundamental to the belief systems of both Christianity and Yoruba Religion. Both religions cannot deontologise the existence of God in the light of the attributes of God. God is taken as a necessary and perfect being in both settings.

In spite of evil in the world the existence of God cannot be denied or disputed. The advocates of both religions are encouraged through the teachings to cope with evil in the world. Also the work discovered that, Yoruba religion Synthesize the relationship between Satan and *Olodumare* they protect God's Omnipotence by perceiving Satan as God's messenger.

While Christianity tends to rob God of His Omnipotence by regarding Satan as God's arch enemy who is always mounting pressure on good things created by God. Satan, according to Christians, was God's lieutenant, the archangel before he rebelled against God. This consequently led to his fall and apparently became God's arch enemy. He always tries to thwart God's good intention.

The implication of this notion is that, God and Satan are two contending forces who are always fighting. This co-equals God with Satan. If God and Satan are equal as Christian submission suggests, then He is not commendable of our worship. However, the Yoruba position on *Olodumare* (God) and *Esu* (Satan) is quite different from Christian's postulation, to them Satan, which is translated *Esu* in Yoruba bible is not God's opponent. He is rather one of the ministers of *Olodumare* (God) who is capable of doing both good and evil.

In Yoruba theology *Olodumare* (God) is the Omnipotent, who controls the whole world, but delegated power to the divinities who are His ministers. Therefore, *Esu* (Satan) is under Him. He also works harmoniously with *Olodumare* (God). He takes permission before he does anything. This is consonant with *Esu* of the Bible, in the book of Job. Satan of the book of Job

was always attending meetings with God in heaven.

It was during one of the meetings that, God permitted him to tempt Job. To Yoruba religionists *Esu* (Satan) is not contending with God. He cannot contend with Him because he has no such power. Yoruba approach synthesizes the relationship between *Olodumare* (God) and *Esu* (Satan). It is also understandable from their approach that God is Omnipotent. Yoruba cosmology perfectly defends God's Omnipotence.

It is no doubt from Yoruba explanation that no power could contend with *Olodumare* (God). All beings were created by Him and thus are all under His power and control. Furthermore, the meeting point of Christianity and Yoruba religion is the willingness to accept the gee of God in spite of evil in the world He created and that man is essentially responsible for evil. The fanatics of both religions believe that God is good in spite of evil in the world.

They accept the goodness of God despite contrary appearances. Both Christians and the aficionados of Yoruba religion affirm that humans are essentially responsible for evil in the world. God gave man freewill so that he could live as a free being in the world. Freewill may be defined as the skill to choose between right and wrong, but man/woman always misuses his/her freewill. This is the foremost root of evil in the human world. Both religions teach that the world was evil free or the world was perfectly created by God at the beginning but evil crept into the world through the misuse of freewill by man/woman. Therefore, the existence of evil in the world cannot be attributed to God's responsibility but rather to man's irresponsibility.

In addition, Yoruba attribute evil to either visible or invisible forces. In most gears, the visible source of evil may be acting in consequence of the activity and influence of the invisible source.¹ The visible source is attributable to humankind; social evil, indiscipline, moral decadence and lawlessness which can bring untold suffering in one or another.² The Yoruba

have poly-demonic conception as against mono-demonic conception of evil in Christianity. Yoruba believe that evil can be initiated by divinities, *Ajogun*, *Aje* and even man. It is believed that, man can invoke evil spirits to cause evil. Man is capable of using supernatural means to inflict pain on a fellow human being without physical contact. *Ika enlyan* (wicked people) could inflict man through diabolical means. *Omo araye* (Children of the World) is often mentioned as the cause of evil in the world. It is believed that the concentrated power of evil resides in *Aye* and the people in whom the evil of the world are apparently vested are called. “*Araye*” or “*Omo Araye*”³ they are responsible for most evils in the world.

It is important to mention that, Yoruba recognize the fact that not all evils are caused by the invisible forces, but humans through carelessness or selfishness and inordinate ambition can bring evil upon themselves. Menace such as armed robbery, accidents, murder, religious oppression, domination, etc. are caused by man. Moreover, Yoruba in their quest to solve the problem of evil arrived at the notion of *Ori* or *Kadara* or *Ayanmo*. *Ori* is what an individual chose in the supersensible world before coming to the physical world. *Ori* is the determinant of one’s success or failure in life. Some have raised objection against the concept of *Ori*. They argued that if destiny is true and embraced where we do put human responsibility? If the perception of *Ori* is followed strictly man should not be held blamable for any misconduct. This argument could be refuted. Yoruba do not extend strict determinism of destiny to human responsibility.

While *Ori* determines human success in life the individual is expected to behave well in the society. In other words, no one chooses to be wicked or perpetually violate the norms of the society as destiny. Therefore, morality is an individual choice since man possesses free will. Hence *Iwa rere* (good character) is a catalyst to the fulfillment of a good destiny.

The inquiry on evil in Yoruba religion encourages a high level of morality; it helps to maintain orderliness and moral uprightness in the universe. Every Yoruba especially in traditional society knows that there is instant severe punishment for every crime committed. Yoruba show that *Ori* (personally souls) are basically good from heaven and that *afowofa* (something that happens to one due to one's fault) is the cause of many evils in the world.⁴

Yoruba affirm the concept of *Iwa rere* (good character) as the starting point of human success spiritually and physically;⁵ That is why idowu categorically stated that the Yoruba ethical principles are certainly the fruit of their custom and religion.⁶ One Yoruba Philosophical saying *Iwa rere lesu eniyan* (good character is the security of man) reveals the importance of morality in Yoruba culture. In fact, morality is an essential component of Yoruba culture. Yoruba always frown at any immoral acts. They have penalty for various offences. They also believe that divinities could punish anyone who contravenes the norms of the society. Yoruba recognize the possession of freewill; hence *Iwa rere* (good character) is a matter of choice. No power could coerce an individual to do evil.

Anyone who does evil should be held responsible and should not be linked with *Ori*. *Ori* is the determinant factors of man's life; man is the one that choose his lot in the supersensible world. Close to the believe in destiny by Yoruba religionists is the belief of Christians in predestination. Predestination is the confidence that everything that will occur has previously been decided or planned by God or fortune and cannot be altered. The dominion of God is unquestionable. He does whatever He likes; He exalts and humbles e.g. the case of Esau and Jacob. However, Christians do not refute human responsibility; in fact good behavior is reward able by God The work also unfolds how Yoruba religion down plays the problem of evil by their dualistic approach to it. Good and evil are not two distinct realities in isolation, they are related

to each other. They are dialectical.

Therefore, evil does not contradict divine reality. Christianity on the other hand, proposes a Christ Centered, God's spirit controlled life, as a way out of the dominance of evil experience. Yoruba religionists approach the problem of evil dualistically. They do not see evil as diametrically opposed to goodness. Yoruba affirm that both good and evil walk together. They admit that *inu ikoko dudu leko funfun ti jade* (out of the black pot comes the white maize pap). This implies that good can come out of evil. This explains the popular philosophic saying *Tibi tire lo jo nrin* (goodness and evil create an inspirable pair) and *ire wa ninu ibi* (there is goodness in evil) Yoruba also believe that "tibi tire lada ile aye" (the world was created with both good and evil).⁷

In Yoruba cosmology, a woman would not be congratulated for child birth until *ibi* (placenta) has come out, they affirm that *omo* (child) is *ire* (good) while the *ibi* (placenta) is evil. Therefore, life is about good and evil. Christianity on the other hand proposes a Christ centered, God's spirit controlled life as a way out of the dominance of evil experience. It teaches that the Bible is about how evil entered the good world and how he was defeated through Jesus Christ. It inspires people to believe in Jesus Christ who through his power could prevent and protect people from all evils. Both Christians and Yoruba religionists proffer solutions to the problem of evil, but Yoruba religionists have created a distinction. This is because, their approach to evil protects God's Omnipotence, evil does not controvert divine reality. In other words, evil is consistent with God who is good and omnipotent. They are able to solve the problem of evil by their dualistic tactic to the problem of evil-God created both good and evil so that good can come out of evil and evil can come out of good. We are convinced that, Yoruba tenacities to the problem of evil are logically convincing than the western Christian solutions.

Yoruba protects God's Omnipotence and Omni benevolence abilities. Evil happens in the world not because God is wicked but it may happen due to man's irresponsibility. Man's misdeeds may invite the wrath of divinities. While invisible powers may cause evil in the world. Man could also inflict fellow human being by the means of supernatural power.

The solutions proffered by Yoruba religionists have several advantages over the solutions proffered by Western Christian Philosophers. If the solutions preferred by Yoruba Religionists do not solve the problem absolutely, at least it ameliorates.

7.4 Contributions to Knowledge

The examination of the varieties that are involved in the dynamics of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion revealed that, the way Yoruba religionists approach the problem is unique and it has several advantages over that of Christians. They approach the problem of evil dualistically. To them good and evil are not entirely opposed to each other. They are not two distinct realities in isolation. On the other hand, Christians see evil as wholly opposed to good. The approach of Christians makes the puzzle or dilemma of the problem of evil tense. It strengthens the logical contradiction of the existence of God who is omnipotent and omnibenevolent with the stark reality of evil in the world.

Invariably, it strengthens atheism. However, the approach of Yoruba religionists ameliorates the problem of evil. Good and evil are inseparable pairs, they go *pari passu*. Therefore God created them together. This also protects the omnipotent and omnibenevolent attributes of God, evil is created to sustain good in the universe.

In line with the above, the purpose of pairing evil with good is to ensure moral uprightness /standards in the world. God created a world of orderliness and aimed at sustaining it. Peaceful co-existence is paramount to maintaining orderliness in the world; hence there must

be check and balance for the inhabitants of the world.

Evil in Yoruba cosmology in most cases is to serve as deterrent to the people when wicked ones are being punished. In traditional Yoruba society there is instant severe punishment for rapists, murderers, adulterers, thieves, liars, traitors etc. To Yoruba the divinities who are the ministers of *Olodumare* are always in the midst of people to ensure strict obedience to the commandments of *Olodumare* (God) and thereby ensuring peace and orderliness.

Whenever someone or community contravenes the norms of the society, evil would be on such person or the community until such act is put to a stop and necessary sacrifices are made. Moral evil if not checked may attract the rage of God which may manifest in form of physical evil. Christian theology on the relationship between Satan and God is illogical. Christians simply co-equal Satan with God ignorantly.

They present God and Satan as two contending forces in the world, when anything good happens, God is responsible but when evil happens, Satan is accused. If God and Satan are two contending forces, the implication is that they are equal in power and rank. This attacks, God's omnipotence. However, Yoruba theology regards Satan which is translated Esu (Satan) in the Yoruba Bible as one of the ministers of *Olodumare* (God); he cannot contend with God because he has no such power. No one on earth and in heaven could contend with God, because He is omnipotent.

Esu (Satan) instead of contending with God, he works harmoniously with Him. This submission perfectly protects the omnipotence attribute of God. It is therefore better than Christian solution which sees Satan and God always contending. Furthermore, the concept of Ori provides a means of solving the puzzle of the problem of evil. This concept exonerates God from blame on the existence of evil in the world. It also defends God's omnipotence and Omni

benevolence. It put the blame on man. Since man was responsible for his choice in the supersensible world, whatever happens to him on earth is the manifestation of his choice in the supersensible world. Therefore, God must not be blamed. God allows man to choose what he wants to become on earth.

He also has the power to alter any unfavourable one if necessary steps are taken. The model of lot makes us to understand why some died prematurely, while some live to become old, why some are poor despite hard work and why some are rich with little efforts. One of the considerable responses to this entire problem is *Ori*, the choice we made before coming to this world.

Christians in an effort to solve the problem of evil arrived at the belief in witchcraft, existence of demons and Satan. It is believed that these are authors or agents of evil in the human world. Attempts to combat these authors/agents of evil give rise to African indigenous churches, neo-Pentecostalism, and syncretism in Nigeria. This is because the properties of evil on people are enormous and confusing. They improvised a way of solving their problems in African way based on the biblical injunction. The comparative analysis of the problem of evil in Christianity and Yoruba religion shows that, there is a meeting point among the Christians and the devotees of Yoruba religion on this matter of evil. The meeting points are: The willingness to accept the goodness of God in spite of the evil in the world He created.

God is good but man/woman is essentially responsible for evil in the world through the misapplication of freewill given to him/her by God the adherents of Yoruba religion and Christians cannot deontologise the existence of God in spite of the evil that ravages the world. Yoruba way of solving the problem of evil is more appealing than, that of Western Christians. It

could be adopted in the philosophical circle.

In addition, philosophers who are Yoruba should consider Yoruba philosophy to solve the problem of evil. It is invalid to believe that, Yoruba lack philosophical ability, our thinking, custom and practices constitute our philosophy. Therefore, we can simply solve the puzzle in our land with our philosophical submission. Our thinking is more appealing than the Western thought.

7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The problem of evil is an age- old debate. It is a recurrent issue in philosophy of religion and metaphysics. It is no doubt that, solution should be found to the problem. We are suggesting that, further research should be done on Yoruba approach to the problem of evil. Some scholars believe that the problem of evil does not arise in Yoruba cosmology at all. However, it could also be seen in another way. The problem of evil is endemic in the humanoid domain. Every tribe and society is confronted with the problem of evil. Yoruba are not exception. What makes the difference is the way Yoruba approach the issue and ameliorate it. This concept is controversial. Therefore, we are suggesting that further research should be done on it, in order to establish the credibility of Yoruba view on the existence of evil.

The omnipotence ability of *Olodumare* (God) in Yoruba is misconceived by some scholars. Why some admitted that, Olodumare is the Almighty and is equivalent with God of Christians some believe that, He is a lesser god who does not wield the same power with the Christian God. It is appropriate to further research on this issue to clarify the status of Olodumare and God.

Philosophers, who are Yoruba, should concentrate on research to promote Yoruba philosophy. Many puzzles could be solved with Yoruba submissions and conviction. If thorough

research is done on Yoruba philosophy by eminent scholars who are Yoruba. Yoruba solutions would be accepted universally.

7.6 Conclusion

The problem of evil as it has been said earlier is one of the most deliberated philosophical problems in metaphysics and philosophy of religion. Obviously, the understanding of the problem of evil in Yoruba philosophy would no doubt reveal that such submission has several advantages over Western Christian conception. Western philosophers have flogged the aged problem of evil without logical solution to the problem. Yoruba however, have better convincing solutions to the problem of evil than Western thinking. Yoruba solution protects God's omnipotence and Omni benevolence.

Evil is sensibly consistent with the certainty of God, in Yoruba theology. Evil does not controvert divine reality. In addition, in traditional Yoruba society moral evil is reduced to the barest minimal since everybody is aware of instant punishment for perpetrating evil. Today moral evil is on increase and corruption has taken over every arena of our system because of the belief that God of Christians is merciful.

If Yoruba philosophy is applied to our cosmos it would curb corruption and indecency in our society. Although we cannot deny the fact that Yoruba solutions to the problem of evil has its own flaws. However, it has various advantages over the Western Christians solutions. It is also more appealing; therefore it should be adopted in the philosophical circle.

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Oral Sources

Name and Titled	Age	Place	Date Interviewed`
Ajayi S. A. Pastor	74	NO 22,Ilasamaja,Mushin, Lagos	2/3/2012
Fadeyi H. A. Mrs.	46	Oshodi,Lagos	3/7/2012
Oluwadare F. O. Mrs.	48	NO 50,Igando,Lagos	4/2/2012
Samson F. O. Mrs.	31	Off Ibala rd,Olorunredo,Ilesa	23/4/2013
Adefidipe J. S. Pastor	53	Ntabo,Ifo,Ogun State	18/3/2013
Onifade I. I. Retired Warrant Officer	70	No 22 Iktire,Mushin,Lagos.	14/8/2013

Omidiran A. G. Enginner	68	Otanille Osun State	29/8/2013
M. O. Gbadero	47	T. A. C. N. Alafia Ilasamaja Mushin,Lagos	22/2/ 2015
E. A. Adefokun	50	Isale General Ilesa	2/8/2015
S. S. Sonde	40	No 5,Ijegun Down -down,Lagos.	18/4/2014
J.O. Balogun	54	Osun-ankara,Ilesa	20/10/2015
I. O. Adegbami	65	Opete Village,Ogbomoso.	18/9/2015
C. A. Adeleye	58	Ikoyi,Ilesa	22/9/2015
I. A. Ademoroti	50	Oke-Iyanu,Ilesa	22/9/2015
T. Aluko	38	United Government School Efon – Alaye	2/10/2015
J. A. Agunbiade	84	TACN Kpata Rd,Patiji	2/2/2014
Fasan Kemi	29	Osun State College of Education,Ilesa	5/2/2014
M. A. Ajayi	47	TACN LAWNA Bible College Ilerin	3/12/2014

		Rd,Ilesa	
Men & Women	Group Discussion	T.A.C.N Ifelodun Lagos	22/2/2015
Church Elder	Group Discussion	TACN Oloruntedo Ilesa	3/3/2015
S.A Adesina	64	Oke-Ibode Ilesa	1/3/14
J. B. Sunday	43	No 4 Irojo Quarters Ilerin Road Ilesa	10/3/14
E. O. Akinwole	57	Chaplain SAU Ogwa	3/1/16
J. K. Ayedogbon	56	Agugu Ibadan	19/5/15
M. K. Obasi	63	T. A.C.N.Theological Seminary Ayegbaju Ilesa	21/12/15
I. O.Akanbi	56	Sabo Market Irojo Ilesa	21/12/15