

THE FALLACY IN YORUBA METAPHYSICAL NOTION  
OF NECROMANCY

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NECROMANCY**

**BY**

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MATRICULATION NUMBER: 090105004**

**BEING A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT  
OF PHILOSOPHY, FACULTY OF ARTS, ADEKUNLE AJASIN  
UNIVERSITY AKUNGBA AKOKO, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this essay was written by **AKINBO OJO OMONIYI** with Matriculation Number **090105004**, of the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State Nigeria, under my supervision

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Mr. S. Layi Oladipupo  
Supervisor

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Date

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Prof. Segun Ogungbemi  
H.O.D

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Date

## DEDICATION

This long essay is dedicated to Almighty God, the giver and withdrawer of life for His mercies, kindness, and protection over my life till this present moment. Also to my late mother Mrs. ADUNOLA AKINBO for her moral and financial support.



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## INTRODUCTION

Métaphysics was derived from two Greek words "Meta" which means "after", and "physika" which means "physics" or "nature."<sup>1</sup> This word metaphysics literally means "after physics", and it was first used by Andronicus of Rhodes.<sup>2</sup> This explain that metaphysics is the study of things that are beyond the physical or perceptible world. However, this meaning of metaphysics seems to be so abstract because it only deals with things that are beyond this physical world. Alfred Whitehead on the other hand defined metaphysics to mean the endeavor to frame a logical and necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted.<sup>3</sup> This view was further buttressed by Walsh when he conceived of metaphysics to be comprehensive in nature in the sense that it deals with reality from a holistic perspective, that is, the whole of reality and not any fragment of it in isolation of the other fragment.<sup>4</sup>

The implication of the two conceptions of metaphysics by whitehead and Walsh is that metaphysics deals with the study of reality as a whole, both the physical and the supersensible aspect of reality. This dualistic view of nature had paved way for things to be study in both the physical realm and the spiritual realm. This include person, God, perception, causation, existence etc., this is the reason while a conclusion cannot be reach when any of this issue is discussed.

It is mandatory to note that this search for the underling aspect of reality has been an activity that cut across all cultures, traditions, clans, and ethnic groups. If this assertion is taken to be true, then Yoruba must have their own ways of viewing reality. In Yoruba traditional worldview, metaphysical claims include the use of magic, sorcery etc., which is referred to as *idan*.<sup>5</sup> Both political, social, ethical, epistemological, existence,

meaningfulness or meaninglessness of life, etc., are conceived to be metaphysical. To this great point, they considered everything through religion means to be spiritual. That is why Yoruba do reverence *Olodumare* as the Supreme Being and they explain their existence base on the Supreme Being's instruction. Conception, birth, puberty, marriage, personality, death, immortality, after-life, reincarnation are viewed through metaphysical means in Yoruba society.

*Ifa* which is also known as Orunmila is the Yoruba god of knowledge and wisdom, though Idowu has revealed that the Yoruba oral traditions has shown that it was a special privilege for Orunmila to know about the beginning of most things. This is probably due to the myth that claimed him to be present when the destiny was allotted to man. On that note, they refer to him as *eleri ipin* meaning an advocacy of human destiny.<sup>6</sup> So, the priest that is involve in this oracle practice is called *Babalawo* father that knows the secret (diviner). In that sense, divination is a means of consulting the diviner to know about some hidden things. Divination is a veritable means of communication between the physical world and the supersensible world, *Ifa* divination is belief to be the mind of *Olodumare* that is why they always obey any instruction given to them by the diviner

Since divination involves communication with the supersensible beings like spirits, ancestors, etc., the Yoruba people therefore belief that spirits of the deceased can also be communicated with by consulting the diviners. In most cases when the diviners are consulted to summon the deceased, it is done purposely to inquire or find some things that are hidden from ordinary man. But this practice is viewed to be inconclusive because the belief is rested on an esoteric ground.



Fallacy on the other hand means any mistaking idea or false belief.<sup>7</sup> The knowledge that is subjective in this sense may not be agreed upon to be real. Mysterious power or knowledge are not verifiable so any attempt made to use such medium to foretell what is unknown will be amounted to committing fallacy of Argumentum ad ignorantium.<sup>8</sup>

The practice of necromancy is first regarded to be a metaphysical issue. Metaphysics itself is problematic because all the metaphysical claims are seen to be beyond human knowledge of this empirical world. Necromancy involves the use of spells or magic, sorcerer, conjurer, incantation, utters of spells and some other means that are considered to be knowledge that are known only to the diviner. In this sense, this knowledge is esoteric and solipsistic. That cannot be scientifically proof.

Furthermore, this belief laid claim to the fact that the spirit or apparition of the deceased can be seen. However the fact still remains that death separate the body from the spirit. So to say that the spirit may appear may not be said to be an authentic assertion, there is no clarity in the kind of body with which it will do so (if it is ever possible).It is also difficult as knowledge is concern for a person (deceased) to be in two world at a time without violating the law of identity. These, are, therefore, the major problems that this essay tends to unveil.

This essay therefore is purposed to reveal the metaphysical fallacy associated with the Yoruba belief in necromancy. This is to sustain the thesis of the essay that argued that necromantic practice cannot be proof to be real under any guise.

In order to achieve the purpose of this essay, the philosophical argumentation and conceptual clarification of philosophical inquiry is adopted. It is important to note that,

analysis in this essay shall be limited to the conception of necromancy as practice among the Yoruba people of western part of Nigeria. This is to foreclose any doubt as to what length the concept is analyzed.

In the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Walsh reveals that metaphysics is comprehensive in nature in the sense that it deals with reality from a holistic perspective, that is, the whole of reality and not any fragment of it in isolation of others.<sup>9</sup> This view was equally but stressed by Alfred Whitehead in his book title *Process and Reality*, when he argued that metaphysics is an endeavor to frame a logical, coherent and necessary system of general idea in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted.<sup>10</sup>

Bolaji Idowu in his book titled, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* revealed that everything is conceived in Yoruba society within religion orbit. That is the philosophy, theology and cosmology of the people are centered on their relationship with the Supreme Being and His functionaries.<sup>11</sup> However, Mbiti in his book title *African Philosophy and Religion*, maintained that African Philosophy is anthropocentric and ontological.<sup>12</sup> This gives credence to Awolalu's argument that "a summary of the belief Yoruba will not be complete without examining the peoples in what will can call mysterious powers. That these mystical preternatural and esoteric powers are virtually inexplicable by those who have access to them. He stress further that the Yoruba people extend their belief to the medical practitioners who is believed to have the power of divining to know the cause and probably solution to their predicaments."<sup>13</sup>

However, because *Olodumare* is believed to be the source of all that exist, any explanation offered to the event is always beyond this physical world. As a matter of fact, Sodipo in his article title *Note on the Conception of Cause and Chance in Yoruba*

*Traditional Thought* explains that Yoruba recall to a supreme being; *Olodumare, Ori* or *Esu* when it comes to analyzing the cause of any event.<sup>14</sup>

In his article, *Ogungbemi on Death*, Otakpor opines that the only person that knows what death is or means is the deceased. He stress further that just as we live our separate lives, so we die separately that like all other adventures, there is no going back, no opportunity to tell a story or to share a unique experience.<sup>15</sup>

Hence, following this Otakpor's view, we can deduce that the claim that the medium of necromancy as it was meaningfully conceived in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as "the supposed practice of communicating with the dead either by summoning their spirits as apparition or raising them bodily for the means to foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge."<sup>16</sup> Cannot be proof to be tenable, but base mainly on human imagination.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### AN OVERVIEW OF YORUBA METAPHYSICS

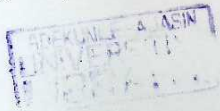
Many studies have been conducted on the world view of the indigenous Yoruba people by some traditional scholars like Bolaji Idowu, Bewaji, Bodurin, Awolalu, Makinde, Oke, Ade Ali, and Ogungbemi among others. These studies have covered their religion, culture, science and medicine, ethics, social art, sociology and political organizations, etc., however, the obvious fact remains that the in-depth study of this Yoruba worldview showed that they are rested on metaphysical seat. Therefore, in this chapter, we want to unravel this Yoruba Metaphysical view of the world.

The fact that definitions given to a particular world or concept has created a lot of controversies among various scholars cannot be overemphasized. The conceptions that different people have on a particular object or phenomenon have in no questioned way positioned the mind into giving different conclusive view on an object or phenomenon. That is the reason why such a concept like metaphysics is very difficult to define or meaningfully explained. However, despite the problematic and rigorosity involved in the conception of this concept, it is still to a considerable extent given some meaningful interpretations and perhaps definition.

Hence, metaphysics that was initially etymologically conceived by Andronicus of Rhodes to be "Meta-ta-physika," meaning the study of being that are beyond the physical world,<sup>1</sup> after due scrutiny has been refuted and reconstructed. By implication, it means that the conception and meaning cannot give credence to the real fact of what metaphysics means. However metaphysics was conceived by Alfred Whitehead as "the endeavour to frame a logical, coherent and necessary systems of general ideas in terms of

which every element of our experience can be interpreted."<sup>2</sup> In the same vein, it is conceived to mean "the philosophical studies whose object is to determine the real nature of things, to determine the meaning, structure and principles of whatever is insofar as it is."<sup>3</sup> It is pertinent to disclose that to a very considerable extent, these two meanings given to metaphysics have changed the initial orientation we have on what metaphysics depict. Base on this fact, we can however sum the meaning of metaphysics up with the conception given by Walsh as being "comprehensive in nature in the sense that it deals with reality from a holistic perspective that is, the whole of reality and not any fragment of its in isolation of the other fragment."<sup>4</sup> These positions have widen our horizons in other for us not to be limited to things that are in our observable world alone, but also to inquire to the world of the unknown.

Metaphysics in its broad sense quest for what we may claim to know in reality. It has paved the way to asking of some fundamental questions which perhaps cannot be answered dogmatically. These questions include; what is reality? Does free will exist? Is there such a process as cause and effect? Do abstract concepts like spirits, soul, mind, numbers which ordinarily cannot be quantified reality exist? Does body depend on mind for its existence? How can we explain the assertion God exist? Does mind, soul (if they ever exist) survive after death? Is there any means by which the deceased or their spirit can communicate or talk with the people on earth (physical planet)? And how can we explain most of the things that happened to us which ordinarily we cannot explain or known through the process of empirical observation and verification? These among many rigorous problems are what metaphysicians claim to unravel.





However, in order to limit or perhaps to suppress the obscurity involved in the activities and problems postulated by these metaphysicians, logical positivists like Wittgenstein, A.J. Ayer, Rudolf Carnap, etc., came to their rescue. The logical positivists maintained that any attempt to know what reality means will definitely mean to subject all metaphysical claims into empirical observation and verification, also that anything that cannot be explained empirically should not be referred to as reality. Contrarily, it was made clear that the foundation upon which the logical positivists built their verification and observation principles cannot be denied of metaphysics. By implication, we can deduce that there are more to reality than we can empirically observe.

It is however germane to note that this search for reality cut across all cultures, traditions and all ethnic groups in the world and it is also seen in different ways since these searches for reality which underline the existence of human being is virtually discussed in all cultures, traditions or ethnic groups, it therefore follows that the Yoruba people in their world view cannot be left out of this rift of metaphysical struggle for reality.

Metaphysics in Yoruba involves the use of magic, incantations, utterances of spells, etc., that is the reason why Alana refer to the practice as *Idán*.<sup>5</sup> This is due largely to some things that happened which are beyond human comprehension, such *idán* may be seen in the mystical power use by the magicians, witchcraft, sorcerer, diviners etc. In Africa and in fact in Yoruba society, everything is conceived within religion orbit. That is, the philosophy, theology and cosmology of the people are centered on their relationship with the Supreme Being and His functionaries. Then we can agree with Mbiti's assertion that, "African philosophy is anthropocentric and ontological."<sup>6</sup>

However, in Yoruba worldview, issues like the idea of God (*Olodumare*), spirits, soul, personal identity, human destiny, death, cause, immortality, reincarnation, after life divinity and the practices of necromancy, etc., are viewed from the metaphysical perspective. This is known to indigenous people as *idán*.

Taking from the above Yoruba metaphysical issues is the idea of God (*Olodumare*) upon which everything is believed to be conceived. This *Olodumare* is believed in Yoruba society to be the Supreme Being that bring into existence all there is.<sup>7</sup> Alana complement this when he maintains the fact that the Yoruba people conceived of this Supreme Being to the extent that it is generally found in their oral traditions, such as myth, liturgies, songs, pithy sayings, proverbs, adages, epigram, riddles and recitals which are especially connected with the cult of the oracle divinity *Ifa* and *Olunmila*.<sup>8</sup> Base on the facts obtained from the myth that present *Olodumare* as the Supreme Being, and because of the kind of Being He is, Yoruba people give to him different names such as; *Olorun*, (Owner of heaven), *Olofin-Orun* (the king of heaven),<sup>9</sup> *Adajo*, (Judge), *Oba a se kan-ma-ku* (Omnipotent, Transient and immortal),<sup>10</sup> *Oba ti ko leeri* (the king who is without blemish).<sup>11</sup> To sum it up, the Yoruba refer to God as *Oba Ayeraye* (the eternal king), this equally show him to be immortal. All these names that Yoruba people give to God have the same importance and significant as they did not only tell us what they (Yoruba people) belief, but also their concept of God.

However, there is in fact sufficient proof that traditionally, many if not all African in general and Yoruba traditional in particular hold a dualistic view on reality. In this sense, existence is partly seen as physical and partly seen as spiritual. Intrinsically they accept the reality and the inter relationship of both a sensible (perceptible and physical),

and a non-sensible (non perceptible and spiritual) aspect of reality. But the two worlds are to Yoruba not rigidly separated. Adebola buttressed this view when he writes that:

Traditional Africans generally do not attempt any rigid compartmentalization of the world rather they construe the two aspects as interlocking and having a continuous and reciprocal influence on each other.<sup>12</sup>

Hence, Yoruba people metaphysically explain the hierarchical order in nature. To this extent, they because of the belief in the mythological account, categorize *Olodumare* to be in the Apex. This implies that Yoruba people, rely on mythological account developed many ideas on the divinities to have been involved in the creation and control of the universe, this view is seen as multiplicity of gods or deities which includes; ancestors spirits. These divinities ranges in number in Yoruba societies between 201 and 1,700.<sup>13</sup> This fact is captured by Awolalu thus:

That in the timeless prehistory there was *Olodumare* the Supreme Deity and with Him in the sky heaven lived the numerous divinities. Among them were *Orisa nla* also called *Obatala*, the arch divinity and deputy of *Olodumare* in the ordering of things; *Orunmila* also called *Ifa* the deputy of *Olodumare* in matter of knowledge; *Esu* the inspector of rituals. While the existence of *Olodumare* is external, the divinities, other heavenly beings are believed to have been created. What is certain is that the divinities lived with *Olodumare* and serve as his ministers and were first introduced to us at the time of creation.<sup>14</sup>

The spirituality involves make some of these deities and gods to be invisible and fearful to ordinary human being. As a matter of fact, they believe that some spirits live in



the mist of human being. Also, they (spirits) are belief by the Yoruba people to be actively involved in the events that are taking place in the physical plane.

Furthermore, Yoruba emphasis largely on the spiritual aspect of nature, and this is due to the fact that some aspect are invisible to a layman and this remain as a veil to what they can know about reality. However, it is believe that if the Yoruba people so desire to have access or probably see a spirit at his will, (if any of them can be seen at all) this can be done by a diviner who had undergone certain rites. That is while Adebola reveals that, "Yoruba believe that it is possible to see Spirits if you smear your eyes with the mucus discharge from a dog's eyes."<sup>15</sup>

While to the ordinary or a layman as concerned, Yoruba belief that spirits are only known to exist indirectly through their effect on the material plane of existence or when they choose to manifest in a physical form. This implies that in Africa and in Yoruba in particular, spirits are as real as the pen use in writing, the content and the chair sitting on. In that case, if you ask a typical Yoruba man the reason why the pen he was using suddenly stops to function, he will answer you by saying that the spirits may be angry with the way you have used it. In summary, spirits reside in object, plants animals or man as Yoruba viewed.

Following from the trend that the Yoruba people metaphysically conceived of God (*Olodumare*) to be the ruler and maker of the universe, and also that He is at the apex in the category of the divinities which include *Obatala*, *Orunmila*, *Esu*, etc., it will therefore be necessary to know how Yoruba people conceived of a person. That is, how is person viewed in Yoruba society?



In the Yoruba myth, though different accounts have been produced and this is due to the inability of traditional Yoruba people to put down in white and black or because there is no original owner of such account. So oral source has led to the multiplication of views on how person is viewed. Account explains that *Olodumare* is the Supreme Being as Idowu views; *Olodumare* is believed to be the creator of the universe and the invisible world. How? Yoruba people believe that following the account that established *Olodumare* to have created the physical world with his ministers or divinities that *Olodumare* saddled some of the divinities (ministers) with the responsibility to create the physical world. *Obatala* called (*Orisa-nla*) for example was believed to have done the creation of man with clay. This moulding of human being with clay signified the physical creation of human being. This made *Obatala*, to be seen as a sculptor. However, one prerogative *Orisa nla* had in his office showed in kind of figure he created, form, black or white, perfect or imperfect. The physical deformities like the hunch back (*Abuke*), the cripple (*Aro*) and the Albino (*Afin*) all showed special marks of his prerogative.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, after the physical creation of man's *ara* (body) by *Obatala*, it was believed that the creature was lifeless as it needed to be animated with the life force called *èmi* this was later done by *Olodumare* who was believed to have put spirit *èmi* into the moulded man. This is known as invisible element, the vital force that gives energy to the body. Beyond this physical body (*ara*), that occupies space, has weight and also can be measured and the (*èmi*) vital force that animates the body, Hallen and Soldipo conceived person to be made of three important elements which are; *ara* (body), which is material and physical, *èmi* (life-giving force), and *orí* (spiritual head which is thought to be responsible for human destiny it is not spacio-temporal).<sup>17</sup> Why on the other hand,

Balogun maintain that (*ara*) body is the tangible element that makes a person both externality and internality; such as the brain, kidney, intestine heart etc., and not just the body frame which houses all other constituents of a person, he equally maintain that *emi* is the vital force that animate and gives energy to the body.<sup>18</sup> We can therefore deduce that Yoruba people believe that there is a force in man which its presences depict life and the absence signaled death (though it might be perceived to be physical death alone).

The third element with which person is belief to be made of in Yoruba society is *Ori* (inner head). *Ori* is belief to be the allotted portion which a person is to come and fulfill in this physical world. It is mostly refer to as human destiny. *Ori* is not only the bearer of destiny, but also the essence of human personality that rules, control and guide the life activities of a person. What this implies is that man cannot do anything except that which his *ori* has chosen for him. Beyond this tripartite conception of person in Yoruba metaphysics, Abimbola went further to postulate the fourth element known as leg *esè*.<sup>19</sup> According to him, if we have *ara* (body), *emi*, and *ori-inu* (a well designed *ori-inu*), it is not yet complete without *ese* (leg). He opined that, *esè* enables us to actualize our personality through strife, struggle and hard work. Here, the leg is viewed beyond its physical appearance but it is perceived metaphysically. Yoruba people emphasis on the metaphysical important of *ese*, this is even seen in their proverbial expression when they say *ibi ori n gbe ni lo, kese ma sinni lona*, meaning, that may one not be misled by his choice.<sup>20</sup>

More so, in Yoruba metaphysics the issue of existence is viewed to be paramount as it forms the fulcrum for their discussions. This have made them to be asking some questions like did life has any meaning at all? For the meaningfulness or

meaninglessness of person's life, the Yoruba people so much believed that when one has children and have lived a good social life, and then his life has read a good meaning. That is why however, emphasis is placed on the importance of children in the Yoruba society. As a matter of fact, anybody that comes to this physical world without a child (most importantly, a male child), is believed to have come for nothing sake. If existence is viewed to be meaningful through child bearing, then we may want to know what death renders man's life. Is it the good or the bad? Did death makes one realizes his or her place in this physical world? And if there is hope that death never brings end or render man's life useless, then what is the next thing or next meaning for person's life after death? Does any death should in any way call for celebration at all? And all the spirituality involved in man's existence, is there any means by which they can be revealed? Should Yoruba people allude to the metaphysical nature of reality and jettison the physical aspect before their life can be meaningful? All these metaphysical issues are conceived not to be difficult to the Yoruba people. This is because they attached great importance to cause of any event that take place in the universe which may be believed to be their *Ori, Olodumare, and Esu* <sup>21</sup>. This fact is however believed to be revealed by a diviner. As a matter of fact, an average Yoruba man is expected to consult a diviner once in five days so that he or she could be aware of the impending happenings. This fact was buttressed by Awolalu and Dopamu write that:

When something is lost, when a barren woman desires children, when there is an inexplicable, when one has strange dream, during crises of life, when a child is born, at the betrothal to fine the appropriate husband, at death to find cause of death, and during an undertaking.<sup>22</sup>

However, following from the facts that diviner are consulted, it is equally important to note that different forms of divination abound in the Yoruba society. We have water gazing, sound cutting and mirror gazing.<sup>23</sup> The most important divinatory system is that of *Ifá* which is associated with the cult of *Orunmila*. The system is based on sixteen basic and 256 derivative figures called *Odu*.<sup>24</sup>

Hence, this divination by *Babalawo* (diviner) in Yoruba society involves the diviner to divine for the inquire through his *Ifá* paraphernalia. In the cause of doing this, some past similar *Ifá* corpus are cited, revealing the cause of problem and solution to it. The problem is believed to be solved but if it persists. It is perhaps belief to be the result of disobedience.<sup>25</sup> This diviner are consulted in times of calamities that befall man which involves child bearing, to choose a wife or husband, meaning of one's existence and perhaps to know the cause of death, most importantly, the cause of death that are perceived to be unnatural and bad. When the diviner involves himself in inquiring for the cause of a particular death, in this sense, he is practicing necromancy. This belief and practice are metaphysical as most if not all their practice cannot be empirical verified.





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THE SACRED MYSTERY OF IFA IN YORUBA SOCIETY

The Ifa divination is the supreme method of communicating with the dead and the living. It is the only method of magic involving the supernatural, with the exception of the use of charms and amulets. It is the only method of magic which is not based on the use of charms and amulets. It is the only method of magic which is not based on the use of charms and amulets.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PRACTICE OF NECROMANCY IN YORUBA SOCIETY.

The term 'necromancy' is the suppose practice of communicating with the dead especially in other to predict the future, put succinctly, it is a form of magic involving communicating with the deceased either by summoning their spirit as apparition or raising them bodily for the means to foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Etymologically, the word necromancy is derived from the Latin word "*necromantia*" a compound word of ancient Greek (*nekros*) meaning "the dead body" and "*mantia*" meaning "prophecy or divination."<sup>2</sup> The oldest literally account of necromancy is found in Homer's *Odyssey* under the direction of Circe a powerful sorceress. Odysseus travelled to the underworld (*kata basis*) in other to gain insight about his impending voyage home by raising spirit of the dead through the use of spells which Circe thought him. He (*Odysseus*) wishes to invoke and question the seer's spirits without the assistance of others. *Odysseus*'s passage contained many descriptive references to necromantic rituals, rites must be performed around a pit with fire during nocturnal hours, and *Odysseus* has to follow a specific recipe, which include the blood of sacrificial animal to concoct a libation for the ghost to drink while he recite prayers to both ghost and gods of the underworld.<sup>3</sup>

However, to buttress the facts that necromancy was a real practice, the Old Testament of the *Holy Bible* alluded to it when Saul went to the woman at End-or to summon prophet Samuel's spirit after the body has been buried in Ramah. This run thus;

Then Saul said to his servant, seek out for me a woman who is a medium that I may go to her

and inquire of her. and his servant said to him, Behold there is a woman at Endor. So Saul disguises himself and put on other garment and went, he and two men with him. And he said, divine for me whomever I shall name to you. The woman said to him, surely you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the medium and the Necromancers from the land. While then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death? But Saul swore to her by Lord "as the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you this things." Them the woman said whom shall I bring up for you? He said bring up Samuel for me.<sup>4</sup>

The woman claimed to have seen the ghost of Samuel rising from the abode of the dead, also that the ghost complained of being disturbed, then berates Saul for disobeying God and predict Saul's downfall with his whole army in battle the next day, the ghost said that Saul and his sons will join him in the abode of the dead

The implication of the above view is to show that the medium necromancy has been in practice and not just a new idea. Then, how is this view in Yoruba society? And how is it practice (if at all the medium is real)? Do the Yoruba people hold any belief about this concept if it is practice in Yoruba to involve the medium of summoning the dead or deceased people or their spirit then what kind of death should lead to this practice?.

Necromancy means '*ibokulo*', '*alupayida*', or '*oso*.' While the people involved in the practice is called '*alahupayida*', '*oso*', '*abokulo*',<sup>5</sup> in Yoruba society. In Yoruba traditional world view, it is believed that the practice is as real as we can perceive of any tangible, visible object in this physical world. This is due largely to their dualistic view of nature. That is, the physical-spiritual conception of the universe. To this fact, the Yoruba

do belief that they can transcend from the physical world to the spiritual world. That is why Awolalu reveals the belief of the Yoruba thus:

A summary of the belief of the Yoruba will not be complete without examining the people's belief in what we can call mysterious powers. These mystical preternatural and esoteric powers are virtually inexplicable by those who have access to them.<sup>6</sup>

This belief of the Yoruba people in the mystical power that transcends the physical world is rested on the use of incantation or altering of words purporting to have magical power. This incantation is believed to sometimes go with some medicinal preparations which is carried in the form of ring, (*oruka*), amulet (*ifupa*), girdle (*igbadi*), small gourd (*ado*), or needle (*abere*). This may sometimes include mirror, white cloth, etc. the use of all this mystical power and incantation have been altered by those who know how to, and has been used to escaped death, to vanished the approach of imminent danger, to escape ghastly accident, to destroy an enemy or wild animal, to stupefy thieves, to shorten a long distance journey and such like that. The Yoruba use *kanako*, *egbe* (the carrier).<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, the Yoruba people extend their belief to the use of medicine. To them, as Awolalu exposed, "medicine is use for treating or preventing diseases or illness, "it involves medicament as well as prophylactic."<sup>8</sup> Hence, we can deduce that the professional skill of a medicine man includes curing, alleviating, and preventing diseases as well as restoring and preventing health. In many cases Awolalu stress further, that "the man is a diviner, a priest, as well as a manufacturer of charms, also has the means of ascertain the cause of ailment, misfortune and death."<sup>9</sup> That is while Makinde

refers to the traditional healer to be *Babalawo*, or *Onisegun*.<sup>10</sup> This is perhaps the reason why Yoruba people do consult them as a medium to divine for them through *Ifa* (divinity that shares the knowledge of *Oloдумare and Eleri ipin*).<sup>11</sup> We can at this point bring to effect the view of *Idowu* on some of the issues that Yoruba considered to have call for divination. These are:

When something is lost, when one desire for children, when there is an explicable disease, when one has strange dream, during crises of life, when a child is born, at betrothal to find the appropriate husband, at death to find cause of death, and undertaking.<sup>12</sup>

This medical practitioners involved themselves in mysterious activities. With this mysterious power, Yoruba believed that they can alter the cause of nature. But this claim may be refuted as the diviner could not even altered nature to differ totally death from occurring.

To the practice of necromancy, the medicine man do involved himself in the practice with the use of incantation to invoke the spirit, he is believed to have gone to the world of the spirit. To this, Awolalu revealed that;

The truth is that, the medicine man does not see his medical preparation in isolation. His medicine is in the realm of religion, perhaps with some elements of magic. In many cases, when he goes to collect leaves or barks or roots of trees for his medicinal preparation, he performs some rituals- He usually involved in the tree or herb, he break Kola-nuts and offered them to the spirit. Sometimes, He provides a small white calico he ties round a tree before he can take it barks or root for medicinal preparation. At other times, he has to altered incantations as he digs for roots or picks leaves. On some occasions, he does not speak until he has



taken back home his collections. In this way, the herbs or leaves or barks are treated as change from the ordinary thing into the 'sacred' and they carry some potency, some mysterious power.<sup>13</sup>

However, in other to compliment the fact that Yoruba people belief in necromancy, also to reveal that their belief is not a mere play, there is a town in Akoko Ondo state Nigeria, this town was initially called '*Oka Eleda*.' The name was derived from this necromantic practice. As it was then believed to be their primary occupation. But this community is presently called 'Isimerin'. However, people still go this town to make inquiry. My curiosity to know more about reality that lied behind this belief in necromancy made me to journey to the town on 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2014. There I met a traditional medical practitioner Chief Aworuwa Idowu from whom some questions were asked to enhance the quality of this essay. Some of the questions are whether it is ever possible to summon the deceased or his spirit into this physical world? Whether it is ever possible for everybody (the inquires) present at that scene to see the deceased and perhaps the buried corpse alive speaking with his full body or only their spirits alone? If there is anything that can be done to hold or handle such a person after he is summoned?

In return, he smiled and said my son you should note that there are lots of things that are happening which ordinary man did not know or explain. He also went further in answering my questions by saying that, it is very possible to call and communicate with the deceased or their spirits. How sir? I asked, he went further by giving some criteria that must be met in other for the practice to be successful and be possible which are; that it is only the death that occur within seven days that can be called. This is because the spirit of the deceased is believed to be present and roaming around the vicinity.

Perhaps he may want to reveal some hidden truth, punish some people that offended him. He equally said that the deceased mother's name must be known, that with the help of concoction made by the gathering of some things that have be invoked by some mysterious power, the people present in that scene will see the deceased either the spirit or the body. He said that, they must be courageous, they must not cry and if they do the spirit will go away. He said that, in most cases it is only the *Babalawo* that can see and communicate with the spirit when it appears and this information will be disseminated to the inquires. Chief Aworuwa stressed further that this practice is done either with the use of spiritual mirror, white cloth, and the use of a pot filled with water ( but concoct with many things). This is usually enhanced with incantation which ordinarily cannot be understood by a lay man.

To corroborate this view, Chief Olùmò in the same community maintained that to call the spirit of the deceased require some strategies that are unknown to a lay man. Indeed, he affirmed that death in some instances are seen to be mysterious while some are not. So in most cases he said, that mysterious death leads to disturbance and are feared. That is the reason why people do inquire to know the cause of such death.

One may want to buttress this Yoruba belief by asking the question what did death means in Yoruba land? Does it render man's life meaningless? Does it even write finish or finalized human existence? And if it is believed not to write finish or finalized man's existence, what then happen to the soul after death?

Death in the Yoruba world view is referred to as *Iki*.<sup>14</sup> Death is simply the cessation of life from human being and perhaps all living things.\* It is inevitable; in escapable, unavoidable for every human being that occupies this physical world. It is believed that



death has been something that human beings do not want to talk about, but in reality there is nothing in human existence that is as real as death. The most controversial issue is the fact that people could not specifically attribute the cause and source of death to a particular being other than God. Despite all the attempts made, virtually in most if not all traditions to know the origin of death, it still remain to the Yoruba people that death is from *Olodumare*, Bolaji writes that, "the commonest orthodox is that *Iku* is a creation of *Olodumare*: he was made for the specific purpose of calling any person whose time on earth is fulfilled. Hence he is known as *Ojise Orun*-"heaven's baliff."<sup>15</sup>

However when one dies in the Yoruba traditional society it is believed that the vital force that animate human being is withdrawn from the body. In this state, there will not be any movement, senses cease to function, the heart stop pumping, and the brain stop functioning. Yoruba never think of the senses that cease to function or the brain that stop functioning, but however believed that death does not ends man's existence. Why? The reason while Yoruba never count death as the final end of human existence is expressed by Awolalu thus:

Death is not the final end and does not write finish on the life of man, that death is only a transition from the physical world to the spiritual world, and that the deceased is only making a journey from the earth to another place, is seen in the funeral arrangements and burial. The corpse is thoroughly washed, it is laid in state in very good costly cloth in preparation for the journey, it is believed that the deceased is been made ready and fit for the next world.<sup>16</sup>

The view that death does not signify final was further buttressed by Socrates when he said that death does not even write finish to human existence. That the soul is

only freed from this world of material struggle, war, conflict, and from the body which stands as prison yard. His view was expressed thus:

The desire to free the soul is found chiefly, on rather only in true philosopher. In fact, the philosophers occupation consist precisely in the freeing and separation throughout his life to leave a state as close as possible to death, would it not be ridiculous for to be distressed when death comes to him?<sup>17</sup>

This traditional belief is stressed as to know the kind of relationship that exists between the soul and the body. This kind of relationship is however, envisage by Adebola when he writes that, the relationship that exist between the body and soul is liken to that which exist between a canoe and its steersman. Hence, when the steersman leaves the canoe, its movement ceased.<sup>18</sup> By implication when the spirit (*èmi*) that controls, energize, animate and activate the body departs, death of the physical part is the aftermath result.

Death is however to the Yoruba traditional society believed to be a necessary phenomenon and it is ubiquitous. It is experience by everyone regardless of creed, states, or tribes, so this debt following the account of ideas is what Ogungbemi view as "a debt which we all must pay irrespective of its differment."<sup>19</sup> Hence, death makes the decision to take anyone at his will, whether human being like it or not, rich and poor, young and old, sane or imbecile etc., that is why Yoruba will say "*gbogbo wa la dagbada iku*" meaning that we all have made the garment of death "but this Yoruba belief is prone to error as there is no any account that has shown when we chose or made such a garment.

Despite the fact that death is conceived as a necessary end, a journey of the soul to the invisible (ancestral) world, and as a debt which is mandatory to be paid, it is equally belief that all instances of its occurrence leads to pain, meaninglessness, absurdity, and

tragedy. All these could have touched Lewis's in his mind when he referred to death as; "one of the heart-rending conundrums, perceived as antithetical to meaningful human existence."<sup>20</sup> No matter the kind of meaningfulness, absurdity or tragedy death brought upon man, it is believe in the Yoruba society that all instances of its occurrence does not lead or call for mourning. Ogungbemi buttressed this fact when he gave two categories of death that are experienced in Yoruba traditional society which are; good or natural death, and bad or unnatural death.<sup>21</sup> Good death is also known as natural death as Yoruba people believed, in fact the kind of death that comes at an old age, or better state that which is believed to occur when man's life plans have been fulfilled. This facts is affirmed by Awolalu as he states the conditions that qualified one for good or natural death (if there is anything good at all in death or) thus, "...to become a welcome ancestor, a person has to leave well, and leave good children who will accord him proper funeral rites."<sup>22</sup> This position of good death was further expatiated by Awolalu and Dopamu when they state that:

The good death is that which comes when one leaves to a ripe old age. Although, death itself is always regarded as uncanny and disturbing the death of an aged person is an occasion of much rejoicing, and the ritual elaboration is heaviest at their funeral, since people see nothing Tragic about it. Also, there was occasions when the death of a young man or woman is not considered totally bad, such a person must have leaved an exemplary and good life and must have left behind children. People believed that he or she have a good place in the abode of the spirit. And all though they mourn the death, they still give a befitting burial.<sup>23</sup>

Deducing from the above assertion is that good death included the quality of an old age and social status. This may not be granted as people when they were born they were unable to establish vividly the fact that they are going to die at a specific age either 10years or 70years and above. Though they still say that the deceased has only gone home to rest, most especially, death of an elderly person whose sojourn in life has been adjudged worthwhile on earth does not attract sympathy, sense of tragedy or subsequently, absurdity.

What then does bad death connote, and who are the victims that are believed to be in this category? Bad death is the one that involves victims that cannot be accorded the kind of dignified burial rites as witness in the case of those who died a good death. This however was said by Awolalu to include; children and youth, who died a premature death, barren women, and all who die a bad 'death' e.g. by Ayelala, Sango, Sopona...<sup>24</sup>

Ogungbemi on the other hand asserted that unnatural death is because, those who died unnatural death are discriminated against instead of being given a dignified last respect.<sup>25</sup> However, in Yoruba society it is believed that the death of a young person is viewed to be tragic in nature, especially if the deceased has no child to do his funeral rites. Also since he/she is not old or qualified (due to the kind of death like ayelala, sonpono e.t.c.) he cannot join the world of ancestors.

Consequently, Yoruba believe that the soul of human being (young or old) depart from the body at death, the destination of the soul have been believed to be a place to be different from this physical world. Then to the destination or location of the next world of the soul, Awolalu writes that:

When we turn to the elders, we receive different answers. Some believe that the deceased have a

long journey to make to get to their abode-there is river to cross; there is a ferry-man to be paid; there are mountain to climb; there is a door-keeper to open the gate... others say that the abode of the dead is under the earth, and yet others maintain that the departed are in an invisible world which is separated from the living only by a very thin partition and that they are very close to the living.<sup>26</sup>

The belief of Yoruba people on the destination of the soul simply signifies that this physical world is a preparation for other world. Hence, the issue of where the spiritual world is, and its location remain a question that still await a meaningful answer, but the belief cannot be wiped off from the mind of the Yoruba people as they do say "*aye loja orun ni ile*". The effort to locate the afterlife (ancestral world) has led Mbiti to give the account as conceived by majority of people to be geographically 'here' being separated from this only world (physical world) by virtue of being invisible to human beings.<sup>27</sup> That is, both the dead people and the living are in this physical world. However, Makinde accounted for seven heavens which is believed to exist according to the Yoruba mythology. This seven heavens are; *Orun kere, Orun kere, Orun oluwonranjiwon, orun sedo, orun akaso, orun ilaja, and orun iseda* (the heavens of the designer).<sup>28</sup> In this seven heavens, each of the heavens serve as a stop (*ibuso*) and a transmitting station to the next.<sup>29</sup>

Hence, the traditional Yoruba setting have the belief that whatever the life in the hereafter would be is determined by the kind of life one lives and the kind of death one died. Also they believe that whatever happened to man, most especially if it causes him ill luck or untimely death it must be the result of some forces that are beyond their human capacity. They therefore divine to know the cause of such misfortune. Then when the

divination involves summoning and communicating with the deceased, the diviner is eventually involved in the practice known as necromancy.



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### CHAPTER THREE

#### A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE YORUBA PRACTICE OF NECROMANCY

The Dictionary of the Yoruba Language has meaningfully explain necromancy to mean '*Alupayida*', '*Oso*', '*Ibokulo*', translated to mean magician, sorcerer and conjurer respectively. These are peruse to be in the realm of '*idan*' (metaphysics).<sup>1</sup> By implication, the fact that the diviner (*Babalawo*) involves his practice in the use of magic, incantations, utters of spells depict that the practice involve a mysterious power, the practice is otherwise perceived to be beyond this physical world. But upon critical examination, the practice cannot be verified to be knowledge when all other means of knowing are applied. More importantly we could not analyze empirically this practices because it involves the diviner's subjective mind which make it to be esoteric and also a form of solipsistic knowledge.

The fact that Yoruba people base their conception of this world on the religion orbit cannot be disputed. In this sense, *Olodumare* (God) is viewed from the superior angle. They attributed to him (probably because of the way the universe appear to them) various names and attributes like, *Eleda* (The creator) *Oba-a-sekan-makukan* (Omnipotent), *Oga-Ogo* (The Unique), *Olofin Orun* (The king of the Heavens), *Adajo* (The judge) *Oba Ayeraye* (The eternal King) e.t.c. But under a critical examination of these attributes and names, we could deduce that *Olodumare* did not deserve what they presented him to be. To say that *Olodumare* is the *Eleda* means that he created everything in this universe both good and evil in the midst of things that exist in the universe. He created some people with hunchback (*abuke*), some imbecile (*dindinrin*), some, disable (*aro tabi afoju*), he created punishment, suffering, death, inequality, and chaos in this universe.



Also, to refer to the *Olodumare* Yoruba God as the Omnipotent Being implies that he was present when death befall man and he knew the tragedy, absurdity and conundrum death renders to human being's life, why did he not rescue man from all this calamities if he is a pure being?

Following from the Yoruba belief as Makinde envisaged, there exist seven heavens and the seventh heaven according to him is where *Olodumare* occupy, it was also specified that he control all these heavens with *ikos* (ambassadors) who gave him information on the previous life of people, is it not the case that the truth cannot be channeled to *Olodumare*, when the *ikos* have their own mind? How plausible is the belief that He rules all the heavens and earth when ordinarily, this king cannot even control this physical world as he allows evils to befall man? If *Olodumare* is *Adajo* (a judge) of this world who will judge him for the bias involve in his activities or should an autocrat continue to control the universe with unworthy decisions? All these however render the Yoruba conception of *Olodumare* meaningless when it comes to the explanation of creation and existential issues.

More importantly however is the fact that in Yoruba society, man is conceived to be made of three elements. That is, *Ara* (body) which is material, tangible and physical element, *emi* is the second element that is belief to be the energy that animate the body. It is believed to be invisible, non spacio-temporal and intangible. While the third element is *Ori* (not the physical head but the spiritual head that encapsulate man's destiny). If *Olodumare* as believed by the Yoruba to have saddled *Obatala* or *Orisa-nla* with the responsibility of creating human being in one hand, it implies that *Olodumare* did not create everything that exist as Yoruba attributed him to be the *Eleda* (Creator). Contrary

to the Yoruba view on *Obatala*, Alana presented *Obatala* to have been a being that possesses a subjective mind and he must have use his prerogative to create different human beings.<sup>2</sup> Consequently this may be because mirror was not used by *Obatala* when he was moulding man (if at all he ever create human being). That could have probably be the reason why some are tall, some short, some with big head, while some are with small head, among other areas of deformity in human being.. Which ordinarily *Olodumare* could have probably not ordered him to create. This is because *Olodumare* is viewed by the Yoruba to be a perfect Being that cannot create imperfect things or universe.

Since the creation was believed by the Yoruba people to have been done by many divinities, it thus means that *Olodumare* the supreme deity may be argue not to be the deity that animate man, he could have probably sent another divinity that manipulated the *emi* he gave man . Consequently, the fact that he gave *emi* to human being after *Obatala* had moulded man may not be tenable because we may want to know the number of *emi* *Olodumare* has. Is he having more than one *emi*? If perhaps he has more than one *emi* how can this be fathom? If he is so believed to have animated goat, sheep, snake, man, monkey etc., then is *Olodumare* a monkey, a sheep or a snake or other animal? Following the law of identity, a goat can only be a goat and cannot at the same time be a man, so *Olodumare* (though not known physically) can only be either a man or a bird but not the two at the same time. This still live us in the realm of the unknown nature of this Yoruba claimed knowledge of *Olodumare*.

In traditional Yoruba traditional society, the Supreme Being is always believed to have destined mans live on earth, in that case, whatever happen to man is believed to from *Olodumare*. Then any attempt to know what He had destined for man is believed to

be made known through the consultation of Ifa divination or *Orunmila* who is believed to know or represent the mind of *Olodumare*. Through *Ifa (Orunmila)*, it is believed that explanation can be given to what happened or impending happening that may befall man. This was expressed by Awolalu that "man seeks to get the best out life but he is obviously hindered in the attempt to penetrate the future with adequate planning but he wants to know what nature has in stock for him; hence, he resort divination."<sup>3</sup>

This is made manifested by the *Ifa* representative called *Babalawo* (diviner) if this is so according to the diviner, that is, if *Orunmila* or *Ifa* oracle is belief to be revealing the mind of *Olodumare* then *Olodumare* does not have his subjective supreme mind. consequently, the obvious fact still remain that, it is impossible to have access to other peoples mind let alone of knowledge of what goes on in such mind. Telepathy may be regarded at this moment as a mere assumption and if such has been working for some people, it may not be generalized or guarantee knowledge. So, to say that *Orunmila* (if he exist at all) reveals the mind or knowledge of *Olodumare* is just a mere assumption.

That a *Babalawo* or an *Ifa* priest can explain the cause of any event in this physical world and the spiritual world left a vacuum in our mind that needs to be filled by examining this belief base on two different reasons. First, it must be noted that the *Babalawo* or an *Ifa* priest (a diviner) is a human being, and human being by nature are prone to error in the sense that there is limit to what we can know. Human being including a *Babalawo* as believed can only use is human knowledge to explain what happens to man anything other than this is deception irrespective of the kind of knowledge such a person may be claiming, it still remain human so far he is living. On the other hand, Yoruba hold the belief that the diviner possesses a mysterious power, will

it not be right to ask what this mysterious power is and how man who is a material could penetrate into such unknown, unobservable realm of knowledge. Since man could not vividly explain how the material and immaterial forms with which he is made are controlled, it remain difficult to lay claim to know what a spiritual or mystical power is.

To the issue of death, it is believed in the Yoruba traditional society to be a necessary phenomenon it is also seen to be ubiquitous that is regarded by every creed, state or tribe. Also to be a debt which we all must pay irrespective of the effort we put in place to differ it. Despite of this obvious fact, death still remain as a creature of *Olodumare* who is perceived to be all good, pure and unique King. If *Olodumare* is so pure and so good, then what is the source of death that is considered to be evil and debt? Can an Omnipotent being said not to be involved in this exercise? Death is the cessation of the *emi* from the body, it occur to both foetus, imbecile, sane e.t.c. Because of the fact that death kills virtually every body, Yoruba people resort to their witty saying that *gbogbowa la dagbada iku* meaning that we all have made the garment of death. But if I may ask when did man decide to make such garment? It is quite sure that in the first instance, human being did not beg for his creation, he was not aware of his creation until *Olodumare* willingly created him, so in that sense to say that man (as Yoruba people would believe) has made a garment of death is erroneous. It may be otherwise be said that it is *Olodumare* who animated man that made such garment and not man himself.

Death according to Lewis is a heart-rending conundrum, a tragedy and absurdity.<sup>4</sup> But by contrary it is believe (to an extent) to be a good phenomenon to the Yoruba people. Though Awolalu maintained that good death is that which comes when one lives to an enviable old age,<sup>5</sup> also known as the death old people (*oku agbalagba*)<sup>6</sup>. If we take a

critically look at life of man that involves struggle, pain suffering etc., that death renders it meaningless may not be a reasonable fact. But we cannot at the same time say that death is good because of the position the family and are usually left in. The reason for this is that the family, friends, even the enemy of the deceased still mourn or have a heartfelt for the lost life. An examination of every instances of its occurrence to an adult or foetus, sane or imbecile etc., will show that death is not all good.

One thing that is very important in the Yoruba worldview is the two kinds of death they believe in which are good and bad death. In a good death, the deceased is not seen as a great lost, because such death is that which come when man's life plan is fulfilled. Awolalu equally regarded this as a qualification to be in the ancestral world. That "good death come when one has lived to a ripe old age,"<sup>7</sup> although death itself is always regarded as uncanny and disturbing. What age in this regard should be regarded as ripe old age when people still believe that the death of a 70 years old man that has children and a worthy social value is a great lost?

When people came to this physical world it was not written in their hand or forehead when exactly they are going to die, the kind of death that is going to kill them and the place death will take them; even a diviner cannot affirm such people's death. If perhaps when a man (as Yoruba people believed him to have chosen an *ori* which is a personal affair) chooses his own *ori* in privacy, then his death should be a private affair. Interestingly, however while we are in a position to talk about our individual lives, no one can intelligently discuss his or her own death. Otakpor said that the only person that knows what death means is the deceased. He explicated more on this thus:

Just as we live our separate lives, so we die separately....death is an ultimate adventure in

the sense that like all other adventures there is no going back, no opportunity to tell a story or to share a unique experience.<sup>8</sup>

To the fact that there is something called bad death, unjust, and unnatural death, one thing that remains unknown to human being is that we do not have access to judge other people's life since we do not have access to what their *ori* is or their subjective choice of life is. So to have concluded by saying that one death is bad or unjust is just equivalent to us revolving round fallacy of hasty generalization. To equally refer to death as unnatural as Ogungbemi argued, means that such death is not part of nature, as a matter of fact, there is no person that can give a vivid account of how nature operate.

Then to inquire from a *Babalawo* for the hidden truth about nature means that we are alluding to deception as knowledge. Because the fact still remains that the diviner is a human being. Man has a fallible mind when it comes to knowledge. So some *Babalawo* (diviner) may be operating under a subjective neurological problem and we can be misled by their state of health.

At death, it is believed that the life force which animate the body depart. The Yoruba will say *O ti lo* which means the consciousness or souls is gone. One may want to examine the destination of the soul, but where the soul goes (if it probably survive after death) has become a controversial debate among different tribes, cultures and traditions because of the uncertainty in the location of supersensible world and the direction which the departed soul journey to. Some said that if such a soul is the soul of an aged person, it is likely to go to the ancestral world. But where this ancestral world is located still remain unknown to any human being that lives in this physical world or planet. Though Mbiti refer to them as 'the living dead,'<sup>9</sup> which implies that they are perceived to co-exist with

human being in this physical world. But this is false because no state, country, local government has been name for the dead, in that sense, assertion about the ancestral world is just a mere imagination.

When the soul depart from the body at death, Yoruba people do believe that it has gone home to rest. But this belief did not depict rest when one consider what Awolalu said and perhaps virtually all traditional Yoruba people believe to be the destination of the soul when he asserts that:

Some believed that the déad have a long journey to make to get to their above there is a river to cross, there is a ferry-man to be paid; there are mountain to climb; there is a door keeper to open the gate.<sup>10</sup>

Here, if it is possible at all for the soul to survive after death, it is perceived otherwise not to be the case that it is resting, however the soul is only living a stressful life to a more stressful life. That the Yoruba people believe in the theory of seven heavens which each heaven serve as *Ibuso* has by implication shows that the journey of the soul is not directed to one heaven, this shows that it is not a peaceful journey. In the same sense, that assertion allude to the soul to be embarking on a journey, but the obvious fact remains that we prepare for a journey we know when to start and thence when to return. In death we are not so privilege: we never know when the journey is supposed to begin and whether there is an end to it. So what the soul probably does after the death of physical body may not be refer to as a journey.

Death ceases the entire functioning element in man. The soul (mind) that make man to become conscious depart. The soul or mind is noted for some functions which are denied of it at death. Mind is that which thinks and experiences, mindless creatures

neither think nor experience, minded human being is conscious, can sense, can reflect, can remember, and love e.t.c.<sup>11</sup> All this are actualized because of the memory. Memory according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology* is "the psychological function of preserving information involving the process of encoding, storage and retrieval"<sup>12</sup>. It is simply the ability to remember information and people. But it is only a conscious being that can remember as Rene Descartes asserted. Then consciousness according to Rosenthal is "the distinct but related phenomena that figure on the mental functioning of people."<sup>13</sup>

What can be deduced from the above views is that a living human being possesses mind, minded person possess memory and by implication, a minded human being is either (sub or un) consciousness of the phenomenon world around him. If death is believed to have separated the body and the soul (mind) it thus means that the dead is mindless? Can the deceased be conscious of this physical world? Any attempt made to say that the dead can be conscious of this physical world let alone of having a mind that can make it remember will lead to contradiction.

To say that it is possible to divine with magic or conjuration to summon the deceased is just a mere imagination because there is no substantial evidence that shows the dead to be the same person that appears. By identity a body that is already decaying cannot be the same person that appears. In the same vein, somebody cannot be in the grave and at the same time appear to be seen without violating the law of identity which says A is A.

More so, there is no any empirically verified and written document that has shown man to possess more than one body, hence, with which body will a spirit appear if it is

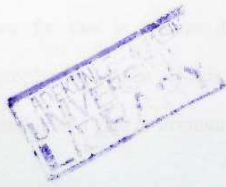


possible for it to do so. Because Idowu said, "... but they are no longer of the same fleshly order as those who are still actually living in the flesh on earth."<sup>14</sup>

Though many people have been claiming to have seen the deceased going elsewhere to settle down and start to live as human being does. Probably this is due to the belief that he has not lived up to a ripe old age. This is known as "*oku ti o nsimi*."<sup>15</sup> But the fact that this has not being proof to be true render such belief meaningless, because the moment such person is discovered by a person that knows about his death, it will disappear.<sup>16</sup> All what has been seen or written are inconclusive but mere imagination. You cannot be the same Mr. Ade that died last year and at the same time be existing elsewhere at that particular time elsewhere in this physical world. This is base on the fact that the law of non-contradictory under the three laws of thought states that "one cannot be here and there at the same time, it is either you are here or there."<sup>17</sup> This is more evident in the Biblical injunction that states "... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement."<sup>18</sup>

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6. M. Akin Makinde, *African Philosophy: The Demise of a controversy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Limited, 2009), 150.
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17. S. L. D. Itanrin, "Meaning, Nature and Purpose of Logic," in B.M. Akinnawonu (ed.) *Introduction to Philosophy and Logic*, (Ilorin: Manabi Publishers, 2000), 119.
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## CONCLUSION

Thus far, we have revealed in the chapter one of this work that in the traditional Yoruba society, everything is considered to be metaphysical. That is, all what their existence encompasses are founded upon metaphysical ground. This range from birth to, adulthood, marriage, personhood, death, and probably after life. Then, we have equally said that the Yoruba people belief in the Supreme Being who according to the myth is believed to have created all that exist in this physical world and the supersensible world. Also, that He moulded man's personal destiny (inner head *ori-inu*) that whatever happen to man must have been the result of the way *Olodumare* had created him.

To know then what he had created for man involves divination which is the only medium that reveals the knowledge and mind of *Olodumare*. This emphasis the fact that through the *Babalawo* the spiritual-physical representative of *Olodumare* and *Obatala*, the hidden aspect of man's existence can be known.

That the issue of death is feared just as we fear the unknown. Death is ubiquitous and polemical, the issue it raised cannot be given a monolithic interpretation, it appears that death is more than a natural phenomenon; it goes beyond ceasing to exist to going into non-existence. Any attempt we make to transcend death in our imagination will lead to the moral judgment: death is wrong. However, nature of death and with regard to the instances of it occurrence has always remain a living debate and will still remain since there are different grounds. The reason for this is perhaps due to their religion background, social status, and generally peoples world view. This is the reason why death to some will not even count as a pain or lost but as a gain or freedom, while some will see it as an irreplaceable lost.

The only person that knows what death means is the deceased, this is because the phenomenon 'death' is beyond our human knowledge, any knowledge claim of such is just a mere imagination. Therefore, seeking it's validation within the empirical world will be amounted to what Moore called naturalistic fallacy.

Hence, this necromantic practice is untenable as there is no empirical evidence to validate its reality. Though, it still remains a common practice that people dogmatically accepted as been true knowledge claim by the diviner. Because some of the diviners are trusted based on some objects they use. For example, in most cases they use a toy-like object (*Osanyin*) which is believed to have the ability of revealing secret knowledge of anything by speaking. But the fact remains that this believe is base on illusion because the diviner claim to be the only person that understands and can interpreted such information. While all this metaphysical claims remain obscure.

In conclusion, the practice of necromancy when it is logically and epistemologically examined, also, because the belief cannot be scientifically proof, one could easily come to term by saying that the practice is nothing other than human imagination and a subject of illusion. That is, applying the laws of thought to the practice will lead us to knowing that such belief could not work in practice, also the knowledge is esoteric. Death by its nature is not what a person can rise up one day and vividly account for how it operates because it is a subjective lot of a person. Then, any attempt made to use the knowledge of the unknown reality of death to explain the unknown world of the dead will lead to committing the fallacy of *argumentum ad ignorantium* (argument from ignorance).

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