

The Metaphysical Implications of the Parallels between Traditional Yorùbá Theology and Process Theology

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Abstract

Process theology, an emergent of process metaphysics was hitherto unknown to academics of theology until the intellectual intrepidity of Alfred Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne and other process scholars. The ignorance of this brand of theology is chiefly responsible for the ethnocentric warrant that the entirety of African traditional religion is paganism. In recent times, and owing to the overwhelming influence of Christianity and Islam in contemporary Yorùbá living, the Yorùbá has come to endorse a similar outlook too. What then is the implication of this ignorance for traditional Yorùbá religion? Is there any future for traditional Yorùbá theology if it remains paraded as paganism? In the face of these posers, this study argues for the contemporary relevance of this theology. This is precisely because mainstream process theology not only bears semblance with traditional Yorùbá theology but finds the full exemplification of its metaphysics therein. I therefore submit that process theology has implications not only for traditional Yorùbá theology but even for classical theology especially when gleaned from the nature of Olódùmarè which coincides with Jehovah's and Allah's persuasive natures that are subtly rendered in the bible and qur'an respectively, albeit depreciated.

Keywords: Africa, classical theology, process metaphysics, process theology, traditional Yorùbá theology

Introduction

In this disquisition, effort is directed towards showing that traditional Yorùbá theology is an ancient version of process theology. This implies that long before Alfred Whitehead tinkered on process theology, the traditional Yorùbá had already been interacting with the celestial from this theological spectrum. However, it is to the successful codification of process metaphysics and theology that Whitehead and Hartshorne will be continuously remembered for. Hence, the aim of the present inquiry is to uncover the contemporary relevance of traditional Yorùbá theology after showing how it passes muster as a radical version of process theology.

To attain its agenda, the method of analysis and interpretation will be explored. In the part that follows, the main thrust traditional Yorùbá theology is briefly considered. Later on, the main kernel of process theology will be

given attention as to show the parallels with traditional *Yorùbá* theology. The last part of this study chronicles the contemporaneous relevance and metaphysical implication of this theology for Africans and peoples of the world.

Traditional *Yorùbá* Theology: A Case of Distortion and Misrepresentation

In this section, attempt will be made to provide an aggregate canonical account of traditional *Yorùbá* theology. But before this, it is important to commence with the consequence(s) of the ethnographic comments that vitiates African traditional religion as paganism. Olusegun Oladipo (2004:355) is not incorrect when he validates that “there was a European discourse that denied that religion had any significant role to play in African culture. According to this discourse, exemplified by the reports of early European travelers and missionaries in Africa, Africans lacked those religious and moral beliefs and attitudes that define a genuine human civilization.” Whilst speaking in this regard, the missionary, Samuel Baker harps:

Without exception, they are without a belief in a Supreme Being, neither have they any form of worship or idolatry; nor is the darkness of their minds enlightened even by a ray of superstition. The mind is as stagnant as the morass which forms its puny world (Evans-Pritchard, 1965:16-7).

It needs to be stated that the foregoing assertion is not only exaggerated but incorrect. Okot p’Bitek reveals Samuel Baker arrived at the foregoing generalisations from his engagement with the people of the Nile Valley. Baker concluded after interrogating *just one* Lutoko chief called Commoro, that the people lacked any concept of the spiritual, or even of the superstitious, because the elder showed no comprehension of a future existence after death or even of the separation of the body and soul (p’Bitek, 1963:91-2).

What is to be stated however is that this charge of paganism birthed an intellectual cottage industry with the mission to correct the uncharitable misrepresentation of the African traditional religious cultures. Scholars such as Bolaji Idowu, Peter Dopamu, Leopold Senghor, J. B. Danquah, John Mbiti and many others have argued strongly against the misleading observation that traditional Africans lack the capacity to identify a divine agent or consider divine matters. Much as these scholars have recorded commendable outputs, it is also the case that they took matter as far as equating African traditional religion with the classical theologies of the Abrahamic monotheisms. This is the case with the late professor John Mbiti (1969:2) who had it that Africans are religious in everything. Mbiti seems to have done more

harm than good as he exaggerates the view that the African is in all things a religious entity and modeling the religious cultures of traditional Africans alongside Judeo-Christianity and Islam. Mbiti received critical rebuttals from Okot p'Bitek (1972:29) who dubs him "Africa's chief intellectual smuggler. He earned this title because he smuggled enough Greek metaphysical material to Hellenize three hundred African deities." Mbiti however, is not the only one since "Okot considers some African writers equally guilty of this kind of smuggling. K. A. Busia, L. S. Senghor, J. B. Danquah, J. S. Mbiti, B. Idowu, and Kenyatta are all led into sin by their methods of research and interpretation of African culture" (Imbo, 2004:370). It is this exaggeration that necessarily extends to serve one of the impasses to a deluge of an authentic African theology. Even when few efforts are made in this guise, originality is usually the first casualty.

More so, another consequence of this theological vitiation is the plummet in practice and application of African traditional religion in the 21st century. Frazer, Taylor, de Brosses and Baker are no longer the minds behind the barbaric and animistic dubbing of African traditional religion but Africans themselves. This is owing to the influence of Western scholarship as well as the overwhelming hypnotism of Christianity and Islam on the African mind. It is therefore important to rescue African traditional religion from extinction by arguing for its application and advancement, using traditional *Yorùbá* theology as a cue. By employing the inner kernel of traditional *Yorùbá* theology, this study had taken as axiomatic Okot's (1964:6) admonition that:

In Africa what you have is a wealth of traditional ideas, and it is this that forms the subject matter of study for the student of African philosophy. The most useful preparation for this kind of study is for the student to soak himself thoroughly in the everyday preoccupations of the people whose thought system he attempts to describe.

This essay is soaked thoroughly in the everyday occupation of the traditional *Yorùbá* culture and religion. Hence, it employs this as a paradigmatic orient for an indigenous African theology with positive implications for contemporary living and knowledge of the *modus operandi* of the universe.

While chronicling the beliefs aggregate of African traditional religion, Bolaji Idowu lists the following in the order of superiority: Belief in God, Belief in Divinities, Belief in Spirits, Belief in ancestors, and the practice of magic and medicine [see Idowu (1973)]. All of these are intertwined thereby giving a coherent and logical depiction of the universe and how the divine relates with it. How is this possible?

It will be helpful to commence with the admission that belief in the

Higher God, *Olódùmarè* among the *Yorùbá* is grounding. In his rendition Bewaji insists that the reality of *Olódùmarè* is not a matter for argument or debate as replete in the Western tradition. On the contrary, the belief in *Olódùmarè*'s existence is held to be foundational. He amplifies: "The starting point of wisdom among the Yoruba is the acceptance of the *de facto* existence of Deity" (Bewaji, 2007:369).

Furthermore, one must also note that belief in the existence of *Olódùmarè* stresses the *Yorùbá* belief in two planes of existence namely, *Oṣun* ('spiritual abode') and *Ayé* ('physical world'). *Ayé* is believed to have been created by *Olódùmarè* with the assistance of the *Òrìṣàs* (subordinate deities) who reside with him in *Oṣun* (Oyelakin, 2013:87). This belief also establishes the idea of a never-ending complimentary binary between *Ayé* and *Oṣun* [See (Onwuanibe, 1984:183-98); (Abimbola, 2006:88); (Mbiti, 1969:97)]. It is from a similar spectrum that Margaret Drewal (1992:14) approves that the inter-relation between *Ayé* and *Oṣun* from a "cosmic conception is visualized either as a spherical gourd [calabash], whose upper and lower hemispheres fit tightly together, or as a divination tray with a raised figured border enclosing a flat central surface."

It is therefore important to realize that *Olódùmarè* is not a *Deus remotus*, who is far off or like Aristotle's God who bears no relation or interaction with the world. *Olódùmarè* has been passed on as creator as well. Bolaji Idowu (1962:39) informs that *Olódùmarè* "...is known as *Eleda* – 'the Creator', 'the Maker.'" He is the Origin and Giver of Life, and in that capacity He is called *Elemi* – 'the Owner of Spirit', or 'Owner of Life.' In the words of John Bewaji (1998:8): "the evidence that *Olódùmarè* is the creator of everything is displayed in virtually all accounts of the relationship between *Olódùmarè* and the Universe. Where He did not directly cause or create, He instructed the divinities to create and He supervised. So, He both created the good and the bad, well-informed and the deformed, the rainy season and the drought..." There are at least two facts that must not be wished away at this juncture.

Firstly, no one directly witnessed the whole creation process. Hence, instead of saying *Olódùmarè* created, this study will admit that the Higher God plays the role of guaranteeing order in the universe. Secondly, what is to be gleaned is that *Olódùmarè* had never been alone. The Higher God has always been with the primordial divinities, who have duties and responsibilities affixed to them for the smooth running of the universe. These facts attest to the cardinal truth in Process-relational philosophy which is: "God is not before all creation, but with all creation" (Whitehead, 1978:521). Some of these divinities are: *Oṣúnmilà*, *Ọ̀bátálá*, *Àjàlá*, *Sàngó*, *Ògún Esu*. It needs little elaboration that "the divinities were the first creations of *Olodumare*; and

that they were created by Him in His capacity as *Eleda*, for the primary purpose of assisting Him in the management of the planetary system" (Akintola, 1999:52). In the words of Olarenwaju Shitta-Bey (2013:79) what this is suggestive of "...is that the divinities were created by *Olodumare* to assist...That they are to assist suggests that they are deputising *Olodumare*, which make them all the deputies of *Olodumare*." Worship and ritual is directed toward *Olódùmarè* through the divinities. This approach is similar to the Biblical injunction where Jesus the Messiah announced thus: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father excepted through me" (John 14:6). Apart from the divinities, there are also spirits with malevolent and benevolent capacities, depending on proper mollification.

What is to be gleaned is that in traditional *Yorùbá* theology there is no entity equivalent of the Devil/Satan. More so, *Olódùmarè* the Higher God is not perfectly adorned with superlatives of knowledge, love and power vis-à-vis the Abrahamic God and this is why the philosophical problem of evil does not infiltrate the thought system. This underscores the persistence of relational and persuasive power in traditional *Yorùbá* theology. This is true because for the *Yorùbá*, 'both ire (goodness) and ibi (evilness) are not separated as two distinct realities, but rather seen as one of two sides.' (Fayemi, 2012:324). It is more like a binary but not dialectical. Evil is a result of the visitation of the malevolent forces when an entity fails to conform to the ideal of order which is signified chiefly by *Olódùmarè*. More so, *Olódùmarè* as the Higher God has been documented in several *Ifá* traditions as an entity that even consults and reasons with his deputies, the divinities when matters are perplexing. With these points said, a terse exposition of process theology will be documented shortly.

On the Disagreements between Process Theology and Classical Theology

Process theology is a derivation of process metaphysics developed, chiefly by Whitehead, Hartshorne and other process intellectuals. Whitehead (2004:1) affirms that process, event, change are the basis for reality, contra substance metaphysics. This reflects that "process is fundamental...to be actual is to be a process." All things that exist, be it illusion or real, can be explained in terms of actual occasions. Actual occasions for Whitehead are the sources of meaning and why things are the way they are. In the case of God, is it the case that Whitehead is referring to a monotheistic God who rules the world in contention with Satan or Lucifer? No! God as construed in this sense by Whitehead is wholly immanent and not transcendent as is the case with God construed from substance metaphysics which filtered into Abrahamic mono-

theisms thanks to St. Aquinas and Averroes. William Lawhead (2002:495) makes a similar note when he chronicles that “strictly speaking, Whitehead’s view is not theism, for he denies that God is transcendent to the world.”

In process theology, there is the attempt at harmonizing theology with science. This goes against the position of classical theology with its torrent history with science. Whitehead (1948:181) informs that “In the seventeenth century the doctrine of the motion of the earth was condemned by a Catholic tribunal. A hundred years ago the extension of time demanded by geological science distressed religious people, Protestant and Catholic. And today the doctrine of evolution is an equal stumbling-block. These are only a few instances illustrating a general fact.” However, process theology admits these truths into its scheme. Process theology is a form of theology always ready to change and adjust its views in the face of discoveries in the sciences. Whitehead believes that just as science experiences gradual development, so does theology but even this fact have yet to be admitted by traditional theologians. For him:

Theology itself exhibits exactly the same character of gradual development, arising from an aspect of conflict between its own proper ideas. This fact is a commonplace to theologians, but is often obscured in the stress of controversy. I do not wish to overstate my case; so I will confine myself to Roman Catholic writers. In the seventeenth century a learned Jesuit, Father Petavius, showed that the theologians of the first three centuries of Christianity made use of phrases and statements which since the fifth century would be condemned as heretical (Whitehead, 1948:181).

It does not therefore strike one when Whitehead insists that the clash between theology and science is meant to show that “there are wider truths and finer perspectives within which a reconciliation of a deeper religion and a subtler science will be found” (Whitehead, 1948:184). For Whitehead, we fail to grab this truth simply because we emphasize one over the other and fail to see that “the conflict between science and religion is a slight matter which had been unduly emphasized” (Whitehead, 1948:184). In process theology, this undue emphasis is absent.

In process theology, God has two natures: primordial and consequent. In the former nature, God provides possibilities or eternal objects for all entities to tap into and use for their own becoming. Eternal objects are like frequencies of courses of actions that are open to an actual occasion to prehend for actualizing itself in the world. The consequent nature is the expression of the reaction of the world back to God. Inductively, it becomes very clear that God is a necessary part of the universe.

Hence, process theology does not admit that God does not need the world or is self-dependent, perfectly complete and blessed in eternity before creation, as is replete in the Abrahamic traditions and classical theology. Process theologians believe on the contrary, that God is intimately related to every creature – human and non-human, animate and inanimate. The endless interaction of God with all entities and the effects of these entities on God contribute to God being God in process theology. It therefore needs no expatiation that in process thinking, “God creates the world, as that the world creates God” (Whitehead, 1978:528). It is for this reason that process theology has become essential for a philosophy of nature and environmental concerns. If the universe and its entirety are so important to God, they should be important for us as well. Since God has a stake in the world’s well-being, we ought to take better care of the environment, process theology implores.

Process theology does not struggle with the dilemma of theodicy as it is in classical theism. The assumption in classical theism stems from the over exaggeration of God’s abilities. The idea of an all-powerful God does not make sense in process theology. These are some theological issues that have caused scholars undue controversy. Hartshorne (1984:1) shares this outlook too when he contends that:

...the ‘theological mistakes’ in question give the word *God* a meaning which is not true to its import in sacred writings or in concrete religious piety. This result came about partly because theologians in medieval Europe and the Near East were somewhat learned in Greek philosophy and largely ignorant of any other philosophy. This happened in both Christianity and Islam, to a somewhat lesser extent in Judaism. In all three religions there was a development of mysticism, which was different still and in some ways partially corrective of the all-too-Greek form taken by the official theologies.

Whitehead is convinced as well that the incoherent character of God in classical theology discloses a status quo where “The Church gave unto God, the attributes which belonged exclusively to Caesar” (Whitehead, 1978:343). The implication is that if God has all powers then humans and other creatures would have none at all.

In order to understand how theodicy does not appear in process theology, it is important to distinguish between persuasive and coercive powers. When the former involves the recognition of the freedom of an agency to either act or not act in a so and so way, the latter does not. For instance, if one explains to a child the benefits of staying away from a kerosene lantern this is persuasive power. Coercive power would simply involve dragging the erring child away from the possible source of pain – kerosene lantern. Process

theology proposes that God works persuasively and finds the idea of an all-powerful God untrue. Hence, since God uses persuasive power, he sets before all entities, human and non-human, animate and 'inanimate', the ideals of harmony, love and dignity, leaving us to either choose or not to act accordingly (Onwuegbusi, 2013). It is the frustration of this ideal that accounts for the presence of evil in the universe.

It needs to be hinted lastly that the nature of God depicted in process theology is present in the Bible and *Al-Qur'an* even when these attributes are usually de-emphasized. From stories such as parting the Red Sea and Jesus' resurrection, classical theology concludes that there are no limits to God's power. God's will is unstoppable and unchangeable. But these stories are exaggerated over instances where God seems to negotiate with Abraham about the destruction of Sodom (Powell, 2010:22). Abraham convinces God not to destroy the city if a few righteous citizens could be found. Similarly, in *Exodus* God seems willing to be convinced by Moses not to destroy the Israelites. The Bible also contains stories about God changing his mind, as when God decides not to destroy Nineveh once the people repented. Such passages suggest God's will is not necessarily set in concrete but is flexible. They suggest God takes notice of human actions and responds appropriately. Instead of seeing God as rigidly pursuing a predetermined course of action through sheer power, they suggest God is willing to act, observe, and act again in light of human response. God's overall goal may be fixed, but God is willing to change strategy in light of human obedience or stubbornness (Powell, 2010:22).

The consequence of the negotiating and 'change of heart' aspects of God for process theologians, reveal that humans and all entities have the freewill to either conform or not to the ideals put in place by the primordial nature of God. The evils or horrors and goodness or bliss happening in the world also revert back to God. It is for this reason that foremost process scholar Whitehead (1978:351) explains that "...God is the great companion – the fellow-sufferer who understands." It is now pertinent to draw parallels between these features of theology with traditional *Yorùbá* theology, the crux of this study.

Process Theology and Traditional *Yorùbá* Theology: Whither Today's Relevance?

In the preceding sections of this inquiry, efforts have been made to unveil the common denominator between each of traditional *Yorùbá* theology and process theology. In this section, two itineraries will be blazed. The first is to show instances where the attributes of *Olódùmarè* in traditional *Yorùbá* the-

ology intersect with the nature of God in mainstream process theology. The second involves the implications of traditional *Yorùbá* theology for contemporary African living.

One point to note in traditional *Yorùbá* theology and process theology is that the idea of God in both theologies needs no proof. God in both theologies is not a subject of debate in need of proof or grounds for existence. In essence, the debate whether or not God exists has no place in both theologies. God's existence like any other entity is a necessary reality in process thinking as well as in traditional *Yorùbá* thought system. Hence, this clearly validates the leaning that "if God did not exist man and woman could create Him" (Agada, 2015:xx).

Secondly, it is clear that *Olódùmarè* in traditional *Yorùbá* theology and God in process theology do not wield absolute power over all that exists. In the former theology, it may be observed that *Olódùmarè* and the *òrìsàs* (divinities and spirits), even though they exhibit metaphysical laws that functions for all actual entities in unique ways, they neither supersede nor are exempted from these metaphysical principles. This is in line with the process theology injunction that everything in existence "differ among themselves: God is an actual entity, and so is the trivial puff of existence in far-off empty space. But, though there are gradations of importance, and diversities of function, yet in the principles which actuality exemplifies, all are on the same level" (Whitehead, 1978:18).

It is because all entities are girded by the same metaphysical principle that the idea of an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God is otiose in process theology causing the dearth in theodicy. In the case of *Olódùmarè* in traditional *Yorùbá* theology, even when he knows many things, he does not know all. When important matters or disputes arise, *Ifá* tradition relays instances where *Olódùmarè* sometimes inquire state of affairs from other entities or realities other than Itself. This is particularly the case in one of the verses in *Odù Ọyèkú Méjì* which is rendered thus:

A child is not tall enough to stretch his hand to
reach the high shelf

An adult's hand cannot enter the mouth of a gourd

The work an adult begs a child to do

Let him not refuse to do.

We all have to work to do for each other's good

Ifá divination was performed for *Ọrúnmìlà*

About whom his devotee made a complaint to
 Olódùmarè
 Olódùmarè then sent for Oṛúnmilà
 To explain the reason why
 He did not support his devotee
 When Oṛúnmilà got to the presence of Olódùmarè
 He explained that he had done all in his power for
 his devotee
 But that the destiny chosen by the devotee made
 his efforts fruitless
 It was then that the matter
 Became quite clear to Olódùmarè
 And he was happy
 That he did not pronounce his judgment on the
 evidence of only one of the two parties.

According to Bolaji Idowu's (1962:44) commentary on *Odù Ọ̀yèkú Mèjì*: "...Olo-dumare Himself sought the means of immortality. In consequence, he was told to make some sacrifices to provide Himself with a large piece of white cloth. When the necessary rite had been performed, the white cloth was spread over Him so that He was completely covered. From that time, He became immortal." Regarding the abilities of *Olódùmarè*, and its stark departure from God in Abrahamic monotheisms, Idowu (1962:77) says: "...there is a story which has it that Olodumare Himself was once perplexed over a very important matter. All the other divinities tried but failed to tell Him the reason for His perplexity; only Orunmila succeeded in putting his finger on the source of the trouble..." The above showings clearly vivify the outlook that "...the deeper idolatry, of the fashioning of God in the image of the Egyptian, Persian and Roman imperial rulers..." (Whitehead, 1978:343) which is rampant in classical theology has no place both in traditional *Yorùbá* theology and process theology.

Furthermore, the ability to reason with humans and non-humans, change his mind and trust in the judgments of his subordinates is played out in the foregoing *Ifá* traditions. The same holds for *Yahweh* and *Allah* in classical theism. But one point has prevented the exaggeration of these aspects of the divine in classical theology. This is the uncritical tendency to depreciate what cannot be understood. Hartshorne (1984:1) validates this outlook

when he insists that "... in both Christianity and Islam, to a somewhat lesser extent in Judaism...there was a development of mysticism, which was different still and in some ways partially corrective of the all-too-Greek form taken by the official theologies." The mysticism implied in these Abrahamic monotheisms, could not, unfortunately, be admitted into the substance metaphysical framework imported from the Greek culture. For instance, it is difficult to explain snakes turning into sticks without invoking divine agency in the classical theology of the Abrahamic monotheisms. Classical theology and the substance metaphysical framework upon which it thrives has no place for vitalism and panpsychism (Agada, 2015), when the theology exhibits these features time to time. The persuasive character of God in these theologies has been thoroughly depreciated.

Just as Moses convinced *Yahweh* not to destroy the Israelites; as Abraham pleaded for God to spare Sodom, so too does *Olódùmarè* reason and negotiate with his subordinates with whom he governs the universe with in tandem. The illustrations find validation in Isaiah 1: 18 wherein the prophet was inspired to chronicle: "'Come now, let us reason together" says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.'" Instances and passages similar to these not only abound in the Bible but also reveal the panentheistic nature of God, with pantheism being "the view that God includes the world in his being (since he is affected by every event within it) and at the same that he is more than the events in the world (God has his own unique aims and actions)" (Lawhead, 2002:495).

With a panentheistic world-view, it is made obvious, the contemporaneous relevance of traditional *Yorùbá* theology. One of these stems from the fulfillment of the yearnings for the practice of process theology. When the mainstream and dominant philosophic-religion tradition in the West have been reluctant to accommodate some of the valid aspects of process theology into Orthodox doctrines, traditional *Yorùbá* theology seems not to be bothered as they have been using this kind of theology to explore reality before Whitehead's successful codification. Evidently, the metaphysical cum scientific implications in process metaphysics; the negotiating aspects of *Yahweh* and *Allah*; the mysticism which is depreciated in the Abrahamic monotheisms are entrenched and in full operation within traditional *Yorùbá* religion centuries before contact with foreign religions and their institutions.

In the spate of religious violence that is rocking almost all nations that admit the Abrahamic monotheisms, traditional *Yorùbá* theology offers a peaceful approach to the celestial wherein the worshipper of *Olódùmarè* through *Ọ̀bàtálá* understands and tolerates the one who adores *Sàngó*. In tra-

ditional *Yorùbá* communities, there is hardly any report on religious conflict where the worshippers of one deity are locked in endless conflict with the worshippers of another. But in the wake of the ceaseless activities of groups such as *Boko Haram*, *Al Shabaab*, *Al Qaeda*, that are partly motivated by religious ideologies, Africans may not just recoil to their indigenous beliefs but also fine-tune them to be line with current trends and practical utility. Definitely, the Abrahamic monotheisms have done more harm than good. They preach peace but evince the opposite of this in almost all spheres of life. Mala and Oseni (1984:3) share this perspective too. They warn: "We must not deceive ourselves; we cannot find this 'something' (they mean peace) in Christianity and Islam." They reiterate that:

These religions cannot bring peace and tranquility to our beloved country, to any country. The history of 'Christianity' in Europe, the Crusades, the obnoxious inquisition, the Jihads, the bloody Iranian Islamic Revolution, the Maitatsine religious conflict in Kano in 1981 are all pointers to this hard fact. These religions proclaim peace in churches and mosques but outside them, they are doing exactly the opposite of what they proclaim. They are only religions of words and precepts, not of deeds (Mala & Oseni, 1984:3).

Lastly, one point of contemporary relevance needs expatiation in the light of the above excerpt. Though it has been stated hitherto that Africans ought to embrace their theological tradition, the aspect of immortality/after life in the theologies of the Abrahamic monotheisms need to be jettisoned. The alien religions have developed the profound habit of killing for the divine with the reward of eternal celestial bliss. However, traditional *Yorùbá* communities have been 'communicating' with their dead ancestors yet no mention of Heaven or Hell where infinite bliss or infinite agony persist. The ability in African traditional religions to speak with the dead is on the wane given the influence of these religions. As hinted above, since these religions could not contain the mysticism implied in their theology, they have formed the habit of debunking and passing religious traditions with high spirituality as Satanism. However, a recent publication has not only taken the research of immortality/afterlife into a higher plane but has shied away from reporting the reality of Hell and Heaven. Incidentally, this study was not conducted in Africa or by Africans.

Gary Schwartz¹ has done some scientific research to increase hope and

¹ For a detailed engagement of this research, see his work: Gary Schwartz. (2002). *The Afterlife Experiments: Breakthrough Scientific Evidence of Life After Death*. New York: Pocket Books.

belief of the possibility of life after physical death. His mediums who communicate with deceased individuals never in the course of research alluded to the reality of Heaven or Hell but to other planes of existence. Hence it is not a surprise that “this in itself is another blow for monotheistic traditions whose theology needs serious revision as Whitehead recommends. There is no need to posit God as the landlord of Heaven and as though God does not need us.” (Ofuasia, 2015:88).

Conclusion

African traditional religion has been on the defensive for too long. The alien religions that could not follow their theologies to the logical conclusion have distorted the flourish and application of African traditional religion for the spiritual, material, political, economic, social, and environmental enhancement of the man of colour and other peoples of the world who care to admit this for mutual and peaceful cohesion. Similarly, process theology which is an alternative and reformed theology has only penetrated vegetatively into the Western intellectual hemisphere. The concern here has been to show the connection between traditional *Yorùbá* theology and process theology as a distinct and more encompassing alternative vis-à-vis the orthodox but inadequate theologies rampant among the Abrahamic religions. With the metaphysical and scientific implications latent in process metaphysics and theology on the one hand, and the parallel between traditional *Yorùbá* theology and process theology as shown herein, on the other hand, it is the case that traditional *Yorùbá* theology will play corpulent roles in contemporary African living if given due attention and deference. Religious and armed conflicts, promotion of indigenous scientific ideas, and a better understanding of the place of the divine in the cosmos will be the consequence of this embrace. Hence any literature that had hitherto argued that the primitive African had no idea of the divine contains in Humean terms nothing but sophistry and illusion.

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