

Ambiguities and Discrepancies when Considering Witchcraft, Sorcery and Magic as Sources of Evil in Society

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Abstract

The confusion caused by the combination of the triad of witchcraft, sorcery and magic makes it difficult to understand which of them operates when for instance they are used in daily conversation. Perturbed by this difficulty therefore, this paper embarked on a literary surgical analysis of the triad with the view to separating the joined triplets as it were. Starting from meticulous definition of the topic to the fathoming of its genders to the figuring out of its genres, the work dissected the whole amalgam to come out with different shades of the triad. Thus, in the final analysis it became clear that it is the only method necessary for the separation of the triad and to deeply understand witchcraft, sorcery and magic as distinct entities. Since witchcraft is the main object of our inquiry, we analyzed it and discovered that it shares in the binary concept of good and bad forces. Through this literary analysis, the research isolated the bad aspect of witchcraft known as sorcery and its notoriety as the harbinger of all evils tormenting people unceasingly and fomenting the seeming insurmountable fear in the psyche of persons within the area of its influence. We also located the other aspect of it which is known as witchdoctor because of its knack for haunting and destroying all the bad witches. The analysis also led us to understand that magic is the craft or knowledge with which the witch performs its duties both pleasant and nefarious. This understanding then assists us to tolerate the ambiguities and discrepancies of witchcraft, sorcery and magic.

1. Introduction

This essay will explore witchcraft, sorcery and magic with the aim of understanding them within the literary genre which Douglas (1970:

xiv) classified as “the sociology of knowledge”: that is, on how ambiguities and discrepancies in meanings could be tolerated as they always operate within specific practical circumstances affecting individuals in their lives. Since social processes feed off the moral imaginations of people, their search for explanations and order becomes necessary as we explore the solution through genre discovery. Relying on this method, therefore, we precisely discuss witchcraft within the genres of mystical talk, female witchcraft and folk talk genres. This will then lead to a deeper and better understanding of witchcraft, as it exposes its double meanings: one for good and another for bad. The good witch is the one that uses the craft or wisdom to hunt down the bad witches and destroy them. Good witches are also known as witchdoctors who collect herbs to cure the sick, thereby providing much needed healthcare facilities for the needy. 'Craft' is the wisdom with which the doctor magically performs his/her duty. Incidentally, this is the area Pentecostal pastors and evangelists fraudulently usurp to display their so-called power in the name of Jesus as they spuriously claim to hunt the witches, thereby manipulating and roping many ignoramuses into their phony web. The Sorcerer or bad witchdoctor is the one who gains notoriety for his/her hostility against humanity.

In this paper, these terms will be thoroughly defined; where the witchcraft works will also be properly identified. The gender and genres of witchcraft will be classified and reasons why witchcraft is a popular discussion among people will be examined. We will also discuss the power of witchcraft and the biblical reactions to witchcraft.

2. Definition

With the increasing scholarship in the Elements of African Religion, a clear definition of witchcraft calls for urgent attention. This is because from available religious literature, witchcraft, sorcery and magic are so lumped together that it causes a lot of conceptual headaches trying to sort them out. Metuh (1987:168), for instance, notes that the current popular literature on witchcraft, sorcery and magical practices use the terms interchangeably. This is not unconnected with deep similarities connecting the three mystical forces together with even the total gamut of the known evils afflicting humanity. It is along this line of thought that Danfulani (2012) citing his earlier works, holistically defined evil in the words of Kapferer, saying: “To broadly cover all

those practices, often described as magical, that are concerned to harness and manipulate those energies and forces which are centered in human beings and which extend from them to intervene - heal, harm, or protect - in the action and circumstances of other human beings."

Moreover, Metuh (1987:168), names the amalgam of the agents of evil, suggesting that they are under the numerous sources of evil afflicting humanity. According to him, witchcraft and sorcery are two closely related systems of beliefs found side by side in many human societies, in and outside Africa. Hence, Thurston (1912) before him recognized the broad notion of evil including witchcraft and sorcery. According to him global traditional beliefs have often contained beliefs in witches, wizards and sorceries. In his words,

In the traditional belief, not only of the dark ages, but of post-Reformation times, the witches or wizards addicted to such practices entered into a contract with Satan, adjured Christ and the Sacraments, observed "the witches' Sabbath" - performing infernal rites which often took the shape of a parody of the Mass or the offices of the Church - paid Divine honor to the Prince of Darkness, and in return received from him preternatural powers, such as those of riding through the air on a broomstick, assuming different shapes at will, and tormenting their chosen victims, while an imp or "familiar spirit" was placed at their disposal, able and willing to perform any service that might be needed to further their nefarious purposes.

Furthermore, Thurston (1912) maintains that the belief in witchcraft and its practices appears to exist in antiquity. He explained that the beliefs and practices were conspicuously noticed both in ancient Egypt and Babylonia as existing records purports to show. In the Code of Hammurabi (about 2000 B.C.) it was prescribed, "If a man has laid a charge of witchcraft and has not justified it, he upon whom the witchcraft is laid shall go to the holy river; he shall plunge into the holy river and if the holy river overcomes him, he who accused him shall take to himself his house. " Stemming from antiquity therefore and judging from its antique origin we quickly discover why we should not be surprised that today witchcraft forms popular and exciting cosmological discourses among the majority of African people, since our socio-religious interaction is inherited from our forebears (Chidili, 2012:2). Accordingly, witchcraft permeates the daily conversation

about anything that makes us human. Hence we have witchcraft discourse in politics and other areas of power pursuit. We have witchcraft conversation in religion, commerce, economics and other complexities of social interactions with the urban and rural life. Danfulani (2012) explained correctly that witchcraft discourse in Nigeria presently is no longer the preserve of what Oduyoye (1995) calls the 'folktalk;' rather it belongs to every level of human strata both in the rural areas and even much more to the city dwellers. He recollects the deep experience of rural folk discourse on witchcraft as follows:

From the village/country side scene comes traditional witchcraft (*maitanci/cin maita*), which some city people are very much afraid of and which keeps city people away from the village. If such persons must visit their villages, they come unannounced and leave unannounced, however, most of the times they stay away altogether. The fear of witchcraft makes some people travel abroad and either fail to return or be seldom in visiting home. Conversely, from the cities, urban centers and suburban city life comes secret society (*secri* or *kungiyar asiri*), which village and country folks are very much afraid of and which tends to keep villagers away from city life. The country folks believe that *secri* is as complex and sophisticated as city life itself.

3. Where Does Witchcraft Work?

When people hear about the discussion on witchcraft as disclosed by Danfulani above, people understand it as witchcraft story but also understand it as sorcery and magical maneuvers. This is why we must try to do our best to differentiate the concepts so as to know when each of them is operating. Before differentiating them we have to bear in mind that witchcraft, sorcery and magic operate on spiritual realms and as such may lack exact clear-cut definition. What is clear however is that they are a kind of socio-religious faith that operates only for those who believe in them. This is why Metuh (1987) thinks that they can only work within the mind of people with common worldview and this view must be based on people whose traditional beliefs share the opinion that certain members of the community have the supernatural power to illicitly harm others. Citing his earlier works, Danfulani (2012) echoes the same opinion when he writes that "magic, sorcery and witchcraft operate on any belief system or cosmology

centered on the idea that certain evil persons in community usually resort to bringing harm on fellow humans, to accomplish desired goals through the utilization and manipulation of nefarious supernatural agents. Since this belief is effective only for those who have that type of belief systemic orientation, it means then that those who have not got that kind of orientation have nothing to fear. This is why it flourishes in Africa and other parts of the world where the belief is prevalent.

4. Witchcraft: Gender and Genres

At this instance, in differentiating magic, witchcraft and sorcery, Danfulani (2012) suggests resorting to the categorization of them according to their genders, to give it more acute and sharp definition. When witchcraft is gendered it paves a way for its understanding along the lines of its literary genre. Thus he follows Rosanda (1991) closely to classify witchcraft with feminine gender. The citation also assists Danfulani to muse the idea of genre classification. Suhr (2002) identifies genre by its external factors such as the purpose and the function of a text. Since according to her, understanding it in this way makes it clear that genres are guided by changing conventions and accounts for their variability. Citing Taavitsainen and his numerous works: (1994:200; 1997:54; 2001:140-141) as one of the notable evidences in this regard, she averred that genres function as models of writing for authors, whereas readers and listeners place certain expectations on texts once they identify the text with a specific genre. This helps us tremendously as it assists the readers and listeners of this work to have clear linguistic lingo to which witchcraft and its allied evils belong. Danfulani goes further, asserting in the words of Rosanda, that magic, witchcraft, sorcery, the evil eye and other talks of evil belong to the genre of talk. Citing as an example evil talk in Morocco, he insists that, gossip, rhetorical legitimization and the like belong to female witchcraft genre. He further explained in the words of Rosanda that witchcraft discourses are mused in private and also taken into the public domain as follows: "Talk about representation of evil - sorcery, spirits, the evil eye and curses - is both public and private accusations...for example, [they] are first presented in very private, intimate conversations with the closest confidants. Yet...they have to be circulated in predetermined forms.

Hence, Ashforth (2001) presents witchcraft as the predetermined form

in which cases of premature death or untimely illness in Africa are frequently attributed to actions of invisible forces. In the South African context, for instance, one of the invisible forces is witchcraft which typically means the manipulation of evil powers inherent in malicious persons, spiritual entities, and substances to cause harm to others. Adibe (2008) in this regard interprets the mind of the Igbo people when he affirms witchcraft as a wicked practice by which the possessors cripple the good and progressive life of their perceived enemies. He goes ahead to characterize the sort of human being who likely emerge as witches, as a morose, unsocial, grumbling person, who eats alone but complains that his/her neighbors do not offer him/her food. The victims on the top list of the witches are correctly identified by Ashforth (2001) as the intimate relations - lovers, relatives, neighbors, schoolmates and workmates; people who should least be expected in this kind of attack. Their motive, says, Ashforth is typically "jealousy" which according to him encompasses envy here in ordinary usage. Adibe (2008), agreeing with him, calls the motive an aggravated envy and guilt which moves the witches to attack and destroy what they perceive as their imaginary and real rivals and enemies. Having said this, we now clarify the terms.

5. Classification of Terms

a. Magic

Following the grammatical classification strategy we have adopted to give this topic a clear understanding, we assert that magic belongs to the neuter gender, meaning that it is neither masculine nor feminine. It involves the knowledge and harnessing of mystical forces for the good of those who possess the secret knowledge to do so. Magic is a learned art and it often utilizes symbols that are thought to be intrinsically efficacious. Frazer (1854-1938) (as cited in Wikipedia, 2012) characterized the implementation of symbols into two primary categories, namely: the "principle of similarity" and the "principle of contagion." He further asserts that these concepts are "general or generic laws of thought, which were misapplied in magic." Danfulani (2012) closely followed Dhavarmony to further categorize magic into protective, destructive and productive magic which includes, in his words, the use of charms, amulets, crystal bowls, mirror gazing and the like. He further includes entertainment magic as a great money spinning machine performed in circuses, the art of masquerading, cooking on a thatched house, pounding mortar and pestle on the

stomach of a person, snake charmers, magical feats and entertainment channels. He concludes by saying the use of magic determines whether it is good or bad and for whom.

b. Sorcery

Sorcery is masculine in gender. Like magic, it is a learned art. Sorcery, however, consists of the malevolent and malignant side of magic or medicine and it is always harmful for the victim and beneficial for the operator. Sorcery negates the wholly beneficent purpose of medicine whose peaceful and tranquil quality is utilized towards the accomplishment of healing. To this extent, there is a sense in which sorcery could be referred to as the exploitation and abuse of the knowledge of medicine and magic. It is for this reason that it is often referred to as black magic or bad medicine. Technically speaking, sorcery involves the use of poisonous ingredients (both physical and spiritual), introduced into food or drink and given to an unsuspecting victim, or introduced into someone's body without his/her knowledge or consent. Sorcery is the use of poisons, in a magical, antisocial and secret fashion. It usually takes the form of spells, curses and poisoning of an unsuspecting victim with medicinal substances (Danfulani, 2012: 3).

c. Witchcraft

Witchcraft is feminine in gender and refers to spiritual cannibalism. Generally, witchcraft is used to describe all sorts of evil and the secret employment of spiritual forces, mystical powers, or life-forces to destroy other persons' life-forces (Danfulani, 2012:3). Thurston (1912) echoes the same opinion when he opines that the discourse on witchcraft always involves diabolical expression which includes an invocation of evil spirits. In such cases supernatural assistance is frequently summoned either to cause the death of some obnoxious person, or to arouse the passion of love in those who are the objects of desire, or to call up the dead, or to bring calamity or impotence upon enemies, rivals, and fancied oppressors. Stewart and Strathern (2004:2) insist that what is especially labeled witchcraft is frequently viewed as a consuming force which eats the life-power of the victim. Whereas Evans-Pritchard observes that the Azande people insist that men transmit witchcraft to their sons, Danfulani (2012) citing his earlier work together with other authors, sees the faith of Mupun people as incorporating both male and female members of the society, while still remaining feminine gender. This agrees with Igbo

philosophy but the male witch, also known as wizard or sorcerer in Igbo concept, is deadlier than the female witch. Hence we can say that witchcraft shares both male and female gender classification with heavy accent on male aggressive expression when it comes to operation.

In comparing magic, sorcery and witchcraft, says Danfulani (2012:4), it must be remarked that witches operate in guilds and covens, while magicians work as individual professional entertainers, sorcerers work as ATM practitioners, medical and health experts. While witchcraft becomes innate in the witch after initiation, both magic and sorcery need a time of apprenticeship and training. Furthermore, though magic and sorcery may possess a great deal of physical aspects, witchcraft is much more of ethereal reality. In principle, a distinction can be made between witchcraft as the expression of a harmful power in a person's body and sorcery as the use of a magical craft or knowledge to harm or benefit others. What is particularly labeled witchcraft is often seen as a consuming force which eats the life power of the victim (Stewart and Strathern, 2004:2).

6. Reasons why Witchcraft Discourses Thrive

Witchcraft discourses thrive within the literary genre of human woes and tragedies. Hence, Metuh (1987) names it among the chief harbingers of human evil. According to him, "among some African peoples, besides God, the deities, ancestors and evil spirits, misfortunes may be interpreted as the work of witches or sorcerers." He explains the concept of evil here as including any physical misfortune that befalls an individual or community. The understanding of evil here also includes moral evil which entails any voluntary antisocial behavior or any infringement of the decrees of God, the deities, or the ancestors. The term 'agents of evil' in the sense it is used here applies both to agents of physical evil as well as beings who motivate people to do moral evil. Within this concept one being can combine the two qualities, hence, African belief blames witchcraft for all possible human misfortunes both physical and moral. Hence, witchcraft discourses and debates are woven around the economic, political, social, ecological and religious environment of the people and it speaks viscerally and disturbingly about life, illness and general disease, death, wealth, power, misappropriation, domination - all possessing ultimate values (Danfulani, 2012:3).

Moreover, because the term 'evil' lives within the world of insecurity, uncertainty, anxiety, ambiguity and many other veiled dimensions of daily human interaction, humans unavoidably encounter them. This is why evil is in the center of discussion and witchcraft being the chief source of evil, dominates conversation in Africa as well as other lands of the globe. Evans-Pritchard (1976:1) points out the philosophy of Azande people which incidentally is shared by both Central and West Africans and by extension all Africans "that witchcraft is a substance in the bodies of witches." Hence, Africa, discusses witches unrestrictedly, talking about its nefarious activities on the human body. For instance, people speak relevantly on the areas of procreation, particularly barrenness and abortion/miscarriage that serve, in the words of Danfulani (2012), as "metonyms for social reproduction and its abuse; selfishness, greed, gluttony and (spiritual) cannibalism, all which signify unnatural consumption, hoarding and accumulation, while the commoditization of vital physical properties and functions denote the archetypical image in capitalist exploitation." Among the Igbo people of Nigeria, barrenness, miscarriage, and sterility are blamed on the activities of (*amosu*) witches. As a matter of fact the Igbo believe that barrenness is as a result of the witches tying the womb of the victim. No death happens to a young person or child that is said to be natural, no! Such deaths are said to be caused by witches. The only death taken as natural is that of old people and it is euphemistically referred to as 'going home' (Chidili, 1992:65). Incidentally, the Kongo people of Central Africa share the same belief. In the words of Danfulani (2012), among the Kongo people of Central Africa, sterility and/or miscarriage can result from the evil machinations of witchery (*ndoki*) attacks. He adds, as if he is repeating Igbo philosophy, that nine out of ten deaths and the death of domestic animals too are blamed on *dundu*, a special witchery gland believed to be located in the stomach. Furthermore, Danfulani reminisces the Kongo belief in the activities of witches as follows: "The Kongo believe that *kindu* witchery glands enables the *ndoki* to eat the vital essences, ethereal bodies, souls or powers of its victims, causing him/her to sicken and die. Witches supposedly kill by stealing the souls of the victims, which they either eat or imprison, leading the visible body to fall ill, and eventually die. Witchcraft can aggravate or intensify diseases caused by non-human factors and spoil the power of medicine."

6.1. More activities of witchcraft

More activities of witchcraft are seen in Danfulani (2012) when he states categorically that witchcraft accounts for almost all catastrophes, diseases, tragedies, deviant practices and deaths, in African society; serving paradoxically as mechanisms of social control, psychological manipulation and spiritual enslavement. Deviant behavior may attract the attention of a witch, whereas the same deviancy may make one a suspect and thus earn him/her the culturally stigmatizing label of “witch.” Witchcraft unsettles complacency and it disturbs the system of social control and order. The fear of sorcery is hinged on the truth that survives within the fabric of social intimacies in ordinary daily interactions and relations as well as being actively present in the form of influence or energy present in forces external to them. This way, ordinary folks do not live in constant fear of witchcraft, but rather, when suspicions of that nature arises, it provokes not only intense fear, but also anger, “because victims suspect that its agents [whether witchcraft or *secr*i] are close and intimately part of a person's life word (Kapferer 9, 40), (cited in Danfulani, 2012: 4).

7. Acquiring Witchcraft: How?

Iliamosu is actually the Igbo term for acquiring the wisdom or mystical power for witchery or acquiring the wisdom that makes one a witch doctor. Witch doctors are generally regarded as friends of the society because their main job is to hunt down the bad witches and exorcise them. But bad witch doctors, otherwise known as sorcerers, are regarded as enemies of the society because their operation does no one any good (Adibe, 2008:99). These are the people Hinnells (1995:560) says, use maleficent power innate in them to mysteriously harm others. He explains that at times a witch cannot help being one and may not know that he/she is one. Yoruba denote witchcraft as *aje* which is the inherent power kept by witches in their stomachs, passed through inheritance from mother to daughter or can be purchased (Olukunle, 1976:126, 172). According to the Azande, witchcraft is both a physical and inherited trait, which is transmitted through unilinear descent from parent to child, the sons of a male witch inheriting their father's witchcraft, while the daughters of a female witch inherit that of their mother (Evans-Pritchard, 1976:2). Igbo people corroborate this idea by naming the female witch as *Amosu* and the male counterpart as *Ajalaba*. Adibe (2008:101) says that Igbo popularly hold that *Amosu* is

an evil and wicked power gotten through ignorantly sharing charmed food with a member who is delegated to get new initiates. He asserts further that some wicked minded persons can voluntarily opt to obtain the power by demanding for initiation so as to deal with his/her perceived enemies at will. However, Metuh (1999:28) corroborates this philosophy of some Igbo people when he writes that some people uphold the fact that some witches are inherited. But the more popular tenet among the Igbo, says he, is that witchcraft is acquired by swallowing or eating a chemical substance that galvanizes them into a psychic state which makes it possible for the witches to leave their body and attack others spiritually. In this way Metuh leads the reader into the idea that whether a witch is born or initiated, s/he acquires the power to go into psychic state, thus, providing an idea that witches are mystical.

Although Adibe (2008:102) could not categorize witchcraft as religious mysticism, for the purpose of this work, witchcraft belongs to mystical genres, giving this work the value of its original purposes - to interpret witchcraft within its literary genres. Hence Adibe (2008:100) can comfortably now assert that witchcraft is a practice commonly used as a power in knowledge of things beyond ordinary human capability in traditional medicine. In this way he expresses the second view of the Igbo when it is said that someone is a witch or *lili amosu*. It is in this regard that Umeh (1999:74) opines that when *Obala naabo* [concoction] are poured into one's eyes and the liquid enters the mouth, the person would automatically and irreversibly become a witch, meaning the individual develops the 'second eye' with which s/he sees herbs for herbal medicine. So witchcraft practice, in Igbo philosophy, can be acquired for good or for bad. Incidentally it is known more for its malefaction than its good deeds. Hence, we can say that witchcraft can be gotten by initiation, inherited from parents or be transmitted by sharing of some edible items (Adibe, 2008:100).

Moreover, Danfulani (2012:4), in agreement with many other authors, unequivocally asserts various other methods of acquiring witchcraft as follows: It can be purchased by cash; hence people talk about money used to purchase the soul of a human being. The oldest method, however, is the initiate providing a human victim, usually from among his/her close kin. This method is commonly corroborated by witchcraft confessions. The incidental method of flesh debt, where a friend or relative is offered the gift of 'human flesh' is yet another

method. The receiver, whether s/he does so knowingly or unknowingly, becomes a member of the guild of such a giver, and must donate a human being when it is his/her turn to provide one. Another method is by purchase of the 'human flesh,' in which case the witch is not obliged to reciprocate by donating a victim in return since each time s/he needs it s/he buys it and continues to do so throughout life time. Children are initiated by being fed with human 'flesh and blood' to enable them to inherit the craft of their parents (Danfulani, 2012:4). Moreover, some children who confessed to be witches say that they got their witchery from their parents. According to Pierre de Lancre and Francesco Maria Guazzo (as cited in Wikipedia, 2012), "it was enough proof of a witch's guilt to have witch parents." According to them, "witch parents introduced the children to Satan, took the children to Sabbaths, married children to demons, inspired the children to have sex with Satan, or had sex with Satan with the child present." We also understand from this kind of literature that parents give their children witchcraft out of love for them. This creates a petrifying fear of child witch that cuts across all tiers of present society. This fear (as cited in *Stepping Stones Nigeria*) stems from the belief that a spiritual spell can be given to a child through food and drink. Then the soul of such a person who eats this spell will therefore leave the body to be initiated in a gathering of 'witches' and 'wizards'. The initiated person will then have the power to wreak havoc, such as causing diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, hepatitis, typhoid, cancer. In recent times, children have become the target for initiation by the elderly 'witches' as it is believed that they are more susceptible to their spells and are quicker in action.

8. The Power of Witchcraft

Citing Geschiere (1997), Danfulani (2012) maintains that the relationship between witchcraft and human action is fraught with paradoxes as the secrecy of the discourse serves to conceal the actors involved behind the veil of suspicion, gossip, rumors and mystery. He explains that since witchcraft and its innate tendencies are manipulative, exploitative and use acquired human means practiced in secret, it is difficult to identify its culprits, though it explicates events referring to human agency. He further informs that the discourses cover all sorts of personalized events such as calamities or chances, regarded as direct consequences of human actions or nature. He explained that their being shrouded in secrecy also provides the fertile

ground for the operation on a retinue of experts, religious professionals and functionaries, among them diviners, priests/shamans, spirits, mediums and prophets, who earn a livelihood through actively detecting and exorcising witches.

Furthermore, Metcalf (1976:30-70) insists that the “strength of the witchcraft naturally depends on the powers of the person using it, and how advanced they are in this respect.” She explained that the sorcerer or bad-witch, uses negative magic power tapped from natural and mysterious forces to cause havoc to his/her perceived enemies. They operate on the enemies through the power they generated on the astral plane. She distinguishes a witch doctor as a medium and a clairvoyant who possesses healing power of assisting victims of evil witches. Negative and positive magic used by sorcerers and witch doctors are scientific forces, which can injure one easily as they are dangerous and not properly handled. A witch doctor must learn more effective power and acquire the necessary ingredients for the ritual to control the witches, as little knowledge in mystical profession can be devastating. Advanced and knowledgeable witch-doctors and sorcerers acquire more effective material substances that endear them to their customers as they can attract more power for effectiveness. This knowledge is acquired through further researches, workshops and deep relevant discussions with more superior colleagues in the field.

9. Witchcraft in the Holy Scriptures

The immediate problem with anyone who wants to analyze witchcraft in the scriptures is the doubt as to whether such a thing can exist in the Bible. However, it does not take time for even a casual researcher to discover that witchcraft and witches are variously mentioned in the Bible. For example, the whole narrative of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28) implies the reality of the witch's evocation of the shade of Samuel. Its existence, however, is in no way palatable, for it faced a battery of condemnations. The Holy Scriptures severally and frequently condemned the practice of witchcraft in very strong terms as an abomination. In Deuteronomy 18:11-12, for instance, it is overtly pronounced that it is abominable to practice sorcery. Exodus 22:17, out rightly insists that sorcerers are not allowed to live. Furthermore, Leviticus 20:27, orders the execution by stoning of any man or woman who acts as a diviner or mediums, since they are guilty of possessing such an ignoble trait. Neither does the New Testament spare the

sorcerers at all. Prohibitions in strong terms trail them in Gal. 5:20, Rev. 21:8; 22:15 and Acts 8:9; 13:6. All of these force us to infer that the biblical outlook on witchcraft is prohibitions and outright killing of the possessors of witchcraft. In consonance with the work under review, we can consider biblical outlook on witchcraft as legal genre. Here God reveals his ill feelings about witchcraft, hence he ordered for the prohibitions and outright execution of anyone with a trace of sorcery, clairvoyance, or mediums.

10. Conclusion

From the foregoing, we can conveniently conclude that the literary analysis of witchcraft locates it within the literary genre of human woes and tragedies. Perhaps, that is why Metuh (1987) names witchcraft among the chief harbingers of human evil. The understanding of evil here also includes moral evil which entails any voluntary antisocial behavior or any infringement of the decrees of God, the deities, or the ancestors. Moreover, because the term 'evil' lives within the world of insecurity, uncertainty, anxiety, ambiguity and many other veiled dimensions of daily human interaction, humans unavoidably encounter them. This is why evil is in the center of discussion and witchcraft being the chief source of evil, dominates conversation in Africa as well as other lands of the globe. Hence, it instills palpable fear in the psyche of those who believe in them. Having said this, then we can robustly conclude that witchcraft, sorcery and magic are separate but tightly connected entities that frequently rely on each other to function effectively. Although, the scripture severally condemns witchcraft in all its ramification, yet it thrives unrestrictedly all over the world. This reality is the ambiguity and discrepancies the believers must put up with while routinely navigating their daily activities.

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