Evil in the Philosophy of Saint Augustine

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Abstract

This paper delves into the profound question of the origin of evil in the world through the optic of St. Augustine's philosophy. It further applies this philosophical framework to examine the pervasive issue of corruption as a manifestation of evil in the context of Nigeria. The thesis of this research seeks to unravel the intricate web of causality that led to the existence of evil and its persistence within society. St. Augustine, a prominent figure in the history of Christian philosophy, grappled with the concept of evil in his writings. His exploration of the existence of evil and its relationship to human free will provides a foundational framework for understanding its origins. By delving into his theological and philosophical works, we aim to shed light on the age-old question of how evil came into being. Nigeria, like many other nations, confronts the pernicious issue of corruption, which is often perceived as a malevolent force plaguing the nation's progress. This study employs St. Augustine's philosophical insights to examine the moral and ethical dimensions of corruption, ultimately classifying it as a form of evil. By scrutinizing the impunity surrounding corruption in Nigeria, we aim to uncover the roots of this social evil and explore potential avenues for its mitigation. Through a comprehensive analysis of St. Augustine's philosophical thought and an in-depth examination of corruption in Nigeria, this research endeavors to contribute to the broader discourse on the nature and origins of evil in the world. In within the scope of this paper is the discussion of what I refer to as understanding the Philosophy of Augustine. This is to be followed by an examination or analysis of Evil as Non – Being. My aim is to highlight the unchecked prevalence of corruption as a malevolent force in Nigeria as form of evil with various examples and illustrations and see how corruption as an evil as eaten deep and affected our social lives as a nation. The methodology is analytic and expository.

Key Words: Evil, God, Free will, Augustine, Philosophy

Introduction
Understanding of Philosophy of Augustine

Man cannot avoid evil in the world since evil is everywhere man is. We come in contact with evil. We cannot even avoid talking about evil. Man himself cannot explain the existence of evil in the world. Sometimes, man must have involved himself in evil act before realizing that he has committed an evil. The problem of evil in the world is not like the problem of the existence of God in the Universe. The existence of God is been denied by individuals and at the same time acceptable by some individuals. The existence of evil is not deniable in the world. The question is where does evil comes from? Is evil there, here, or anywhere? Can there be any explanation for the existence of evil in the world?

Can evil out rightly be removed from this world? Augustine says evil in the world has no other source beyond the freewill of man who makes an evil choice. Thus, the origin and the cause of moral evil is man's misuse of his freewill by making an evil choice. John Milton acknowledges that God gave man free will alongside reason, by which he describes "reason also is a choice". He explains further that it is our own choice whether we obey or disobey God because when he gave us reason, he gave us free will. For Milton and Augustine, the presence of evil is as a result of human's free will, not Satan or a predestined fate. No doubt,evil exist in our world not just today but since time immemorial. It is pertinent also to note and say categorically that man is the architect of his own evil and there are many examples scatter everywhere in the surface of the earth. Augustine's first claim was that evil is essentially Privational. Evil is ultimately a 'nothing', a nihilation, essentially nothing more than the privation of some fundamentally good reality. His second claim was that if evil is nothing, sinful people are still perverted toward wanting nothing.

Philosophy of the medieval period was closely connected to Christian thought, particularly theology. The Chief Philosophers of this period were Churchmen Philosophers who strayed from this close relation were chided by their superiors.Fredrick C. Copleston (SJ) outlines the development of Philosophical refection in Christian, Islamic and Jewish thought from the ancient world to the late medieval period[1].The great minds of this period included St. Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus and Williams of Ockham (to whom Ockham's razor is attributed).The first major medieval Philosopher and who also happens to be the father of medieval Philosophy was Augustine of Hippo (354AD – 430AD). Augustine main emphasis was how to attain knowledge through divine illumination and achieving moral goodness by loving God. From an atheistic view point, the problem of evil is solved in accordance with the principle of Occam's razor which states that, the existence of evil and suffering is reconciled with the assumption that an omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient God exists by assuming that no God exists.

Augustine's contribution to Philosophical and theological thought is broad and manifold, from the theory of knowledge and language to the conception of evil and freedom, from the doctrine of creation and time to the analysis of mind and its acts, from the most difficult questions concerning divine grace. Saint Augustine's on free choice of the will, he introduces a free will theodicy, which is one of the most influential theodicies and serves as a prominent foundation for Christianity today. He explains his theodicy as the following; free will, not evil, cause sin to happen. Saint Augustine, an influential Church father believed man caused most of evil. Relative to Saint Augustine's belief, in the dynamic poem Paradise Lost, is free will is a consistent lingering theme throughout the poem Through the teaching of Manichaeism, which taught that the body is evil but the soul is good and composed of light. For, St. Augustine, the battle ground for good and evil is the person[2]. The problem here is for instance, Christ could not have been deity because he had a body. The second problem is that there is no omnipotent good.

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[1] Fredrick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol.2, part 1, p.60
[2]*Ibid*, p.61

In the city of God, Augustine developed his theodicy as part of his attempt to trace human history and describe its conclusion. Augustine proposed that evil could not exist within God, nor be created by God, and is instead a by – product of God's creativity. Charles Mathewes in his article, Saint Augustine's views and the inevitability of Evil opined that,

> Punishment in this life is universal but obscurely distributed, and ultimately God's justice will be revealed in salvation. But until then, the relationship between the experience of the suffering human beings in this life, and the reason they have deserved it, is completely vague.[3]

Augustine proposed that evil could not exist within God, nor be created by God, and is instead a by – product of God's creativity. He rejected the notion that evil exists in itself, proposing instead that it is a privation of (falling away from) good, and a corruption of nature. Philosophy of Augustine[4] is classified or can be seen in his Epistemology, The existence of God, seminar reasons, Ethics, The problem of evil and the concept of Time. In his Epistemology, Augustine refuted the claim of the sophists. The Sophists had doubted the possibility of knowing anything for certain. For Augustine, anyone who doubts the possibility of knowing anything for certain knows at least one thing for certain, and that is, the fact that he doubts.

The Sophists Georgias wrote a book in which he tried to prove that nothing exists. Anybody who doubts the existence of all things, Augustine argued, is at least sure of his own existence and even his very doubt is a confirmation of his existence or rather proof of his own existence since he would not be able to doubt anything if he did not exist. In his proof of the existence of God, Augustine opined that if we reflect on beautiful things for instance, we can be led to the source of beauty, from good things; we can be led to the source of goodness and so on. By reflecting on truths, the eternal and immutable truths, we shall be led to the source of truths, and the ground of beings, namely, God. Augustine in his seminal reasons argued that when God created things, he included in them the germ, that is, the capacity or potential of further development in the course of time.

In his Ethics, Man according to Augustine, has a natural desire for happiness, the human heart is restless and will remain restless until it finds the happiness that it seeks. However, the happiness which the human heart is restlessly seeking is not transitory or imperfect but rather is perfect, eternal and immutable happiness. Augustine accepts the fact that man's will is free, it can choose to turn to God or to turn away from him, to do good or to do evil. Yet, God has impressed the moral law on the heart of every human being, so that nobody can be ignorant of the fundamental moral principles. Augustine dealing with the problem of evil in the worldwas convinced that since God is infinitely good, evil couldn't have come from him. He asked, what is origin of evil in the world? He was at first attracted to dualistic explanation of the Manicheans, but

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[3]Charles, M. *Saint Augustine's view and the inevitability of evil*, (University of Virginia, Unpublished work, 2021), p.3

[4] F. Copleston, *ibid*, p. 70

after reading the work of Plotinus he rejected the Manicheans explanation in favour of Plotinus' explanation, according to which evil is not a positive entity, not a being. "Evil the origin of which I was trying to find is not a substance, because if it were a substance it would be good"[5]. The concept of time according to St. Augustine is an elusive concept; if you try to grasp it, it eludes your grasp. What is time? For Augustine, time is a mental phenomenon; it exists only in the mind. We talk of the past, present and future, neither the past nor the future really exists, for the past is gone and the future is not yet. But even the present itself is only a passing moment. God is outside of time for he is eternal. For Him, there is no future, no past; everything is eternally present to him.

Augustine created a theology of the self in Confessions, and in the City of God, he initiates a theology of history. He uncovers a wide – ranging explanation of history that begins with creation itself, moves through the turmoil and upheaval of man – made states (the city of the world), and continues to the realization of the kingdom of God (the city of God). In effect, the city of God is a completion of the project he began in Confessions, where he traced the progress of the self toward completion in God. Likewise, human society finds completion in the realm of God. Along with a theology of history, Augustine seeks to put together a Christian philosophy of society. In other words, he gives the various areas of philosophical inquiry, such as ethics and politics, a unity in the universality of divine revelation. History completes itself in divine law. Augustine rigorously critiques this concept in the light of Christian doctrine. He states that the scripture alone can instruct human beings about the highest good and highest evil and that without this guidance, human endeavor has no purpose.

Augustine presents the four essential elements of his philosophy in the City of God as; the Church, the State, the City of heaven and the City of the world. The Church is divinely established and leads humankind to eternal goodness, which is God. The State adheres to the virtues of politics and of the mind, formulating a political community. Both of these societies are visible and seek to do good. Mirroring these are two invisible societies: the city of heaven, for those predestined for salvation, and the city of the world, for those given eternal damnation. This grand design allows Augustine to elaborate his theory of justice, which he says issues from the proper and just sharing of those things necessary for life, just as God freely distributes air, water, and light. Humankind must therefore pursue the city of heaven to maintain a proper sense of order, which in turns leads to true peace.

In effect, the city of God is a challenge to human society to choose which city it wishes to be a part of, and Augustine sees his task as clearly marking out the parameters of each choice. Augustine concludes that the purpose of history is to show the unfolding of God's plan, which involves fostering the city of heaven and filling it with worthy citizens. For this purpose, God initiated all of creation itself. In such a grand plan, the fall of Rome is insignificant. St. Augustine used an illustration of two cities in trying to explain the distinction between the Church and the world. Two loves have formed two cities, he claimed. The love of self has formed the earthly city; the love of God has formed the heavenly one.

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[5] St. Augustine, *confessions*, bk vii, chap. 3.5

Rome, Augustine argues, is quintessentially a city of man, it is ephemeral, earthly, and like other cities destined to eventually pass away. In 410 CE, a pivotal moment in western history, the vandals, under the command of their king, Alaric, captured the city of Rome. Rome that was known as the eternal city because the Romans thought that it would literally never fall, and the year 410 shook this belief to its foundations and ultimately led to the collapse of the Roman Empire. The world everyone sought answers about what to do and what to believe in. Those who adhered to the waning pagan faith were quick to blame the Christians, claiming that the gods had abandoned Rome because many Romans had forsaken them and taken the new faith. These Romans claimed that Christians were not patriotic enough because they asked people to serve God rather than the state, and they advocated forgiveness toward enemies. More important, they said the Christian God had failed to protect Rome, as he should have done, since Constantine had declared him to be the one true God. The angry wrangling between the two communities prompted Augustine to begin writing The City of God in 413.

The first ten books of The City of God, which make up the first part of the work, refute the pagans' charges that Christians brought about the fall of Rome. The first five books deal with the pagan belief that people must worship the old gods to achieve material advantages in this world, including the continuation of the Roman Empire and the supremacy of the city of Rome. Augustine devotes the next five books to refuting those who said people must worship the old gods to gain eternal life. Augustine uses pagan authors to destroy this notion by saying that the gods were never held in high regard and so all the old ways, old myths, and old laws are useless in ensuring eternal happiness.In the second part of the city of God, Augustine describes the doctrine of the two cities, one earthly and one heavenly. In the next three books, he details how these two cities came about, based on his reading of the Bible. The next four books explain the prehistory of the city of heaven, from Genesis to the age of Solomon, whose story is allegorized as Christ and the Church.

In Book XVIII, Augustine undertakes a similar process of portraying the prehistory of the city of the world, from Abraham to the Old Testament Prophets. Augustine focuses on how the two cities will end in Book XIX, and in the process, he outlines the nature of the supreme good. He emphasizes the ides that the peace and happiness found in the heavenly city can also be experienced here on earth. The final book, Book XXII, tells of the end of the city of God, after which the saved will be given eternal happiness and become immortal. The city of God, of course, is stable, eternal, and the source of ultimate consolation. The highest good than which there is no higher, is God, and consequently He is unchangeable good, hence truly eternal and truly immortal. All other good things are only from Him, not of Him. For what is of Him, is Himself. Consequently, if He alone is unchangeable, all things that He has made, because He has made them out of nothing, are unchangeable. For He is omnipotent, that even out of nothing, that is, out of what is absolutely non – existent, He is able to make good things both great and small, both celestial and terrestrial, both spiritual and corporeal. But because He is also just, He has not put those things that he has made out of nothing on equality with that which He begat out of Himself. Because, therefore, no good things whether great or small, through whatever gradations of things, can exist except from God.

But for the sake of those who, not being able to understand that all nature, that is, every spirit and everybody, is naturally good, and proved by the iniquity of spirit and the mortality of body, mortal body, which God did not make, we determine thus to bring to their understanding what we say can be brought . For they acknowledge that no good thing can exist save from the highest and true God, which also is true and suffices for correcting them, if they are willing to give heed.

Evil as Non – Being: An Analysis

St. Augustine's profound exploration of evil as non-being is a cornerstone of his theological and philosophical thought. In his seminal works, such as "Confessions" and "City of God," Augustine contends that evil is not an independent, substantial force but rather the absence or privation of good. He employs the analogy of darkness and light, emphasizing that darkness has no inherent existence; it is merely the absence of light. Likewise, evil lacks a self-sustaining nature, existing only insofar as it deviates from the divine goodness of God's creation.

Augustine's view of evil, which is based on a profound blend of Christian faith and Platonist Philosophy, resulted from his efforts to think his way out of Manichaeism. The Manicheans were deeply concerned with the question, "Where does evil comes from?" Since they were unwilling to say God created evil, they concluded, it must always have existed. So evil, on their view, is just as real and eternal as God and just as powerful. Their heresy, as Augustine later saw it, was a kind of dualism, because it made God and evil into two equal principles at the foundation of all existence.

Augustine's alternative is to see evil as a kind of non – being[6]. This may sound strange, but it follows from a fundamental conviction of the Christian faith, which is shared by Platonism: that all being is fundamentally good, for it comes from supreme good, which is God. The Christian way to put is, God created everything and everything he created is good.[7]So Augustine thinks the Manicheans were right to say that God couldn't have created evil, but he has a different explanation of why. God didn't create evil because evil is not a being at all, and therefore is not a being that can be created. Moreover, evil does not and cannot exist on its own since it is not a being but the privation of the integrity due to a being. "Therefore, good may exist on its own, but evil cannot"[8]. In his document on faith, hope and love called Enchiridion, Augustine stated that that, "the definition of evil is the privation of good"[9]. This means that evil does not exist in the same that good exists, but rather that evil is the absence of good. Evil does not have to exist in order for good to exist. Of course, this means Augustine must explain how evil can be real and present in our world if it has no being. Augustine started by saying that God created all things perfect, both humans and animals, but due to man's turning away from the highest good (God), he failed from the original righteousness. As a result, suffering and pain

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[6] St. Augustine, *The City of God*, bk. Xii, chap. 2
[7] Genesis 1:31
[8] St. Augustine, *ibid*, chap. 3
[9]*Ibid*, bk. Ii, chap. 3

came into the world. Therefore, according to Augustine, evil does not have its own existence but exists as a privation of good. Evil is something related to the badness of human actions. According to Augustine, evils are of three types, namely; physical, moral and metaphysical (this is not really evil in the realm of human and I will not discuss this).

Physical evil is also known as natural evil. It is a disorder of nature. Examples of physical evils are hurricanes, cyclones, famine, pests, earthquakes, falling of tress, death, etc. Death is a physical evil because it obstructs mental peace and harmony. When Augustine speaks of physical evil in the city of God he says: "I must now turn to those calamities which are the only thing our accusers have no wish to endure. Such are hunger, disease, natural disasters". All these evils listed by Augustine do not make people evil because they are unable to regulate them because they happen naturally. God created every human being out of his love and with free will. Thus moral evil is caused by the violation of free will. Moral evil is a direct violation of moral law. It is different from physical evil and intellectual error. Moral evil referred to as sin by theists, includes injustices committed by persons, such as lying, stealing, and killing. Augustine's main motive in Philosophy was the quest for the cause of moral evil in the globe because his adolescence and youthful age were swallowed up with lust and promiscuity. He decided to look for a fresh life paradigm and find out why there is so much evil in people's lives.

This concept has significant implications for Augustine's theodicy, as it grapples with the existence of evil in a world crafted by an all-powerful and benevolent God. Augustine argues that evil arises from the misuse of human free will, as individuals turn away from God's goodness and choose actions contrary to His divine plan. By framing evil as non-being, Augustine lays the groundwork for understanding moral and metaphysical dilemmas. His perspective highlights the fundamental goodness of creation and underscores the importance of human choices in perpetuating or mitigating evil's effects. Augustine's profound insights into evil as a void of goodness have left an enduring legacy in Christian theology and continue to stimulate philosophical discussions on the nature of evil and its place in the world.

The unchecked prevalence of corruption as a malevolent force in Nigeria

The unchecked prevalence of corruption as a malevolent force in Nigeria stands as a glaring manifestation of evil that has plagued the nation for decades. Corruption, the misuse of public office for personal gain, has permeated various facets of Nigerian society, from government institutions to everyday life, resulting in profound economic, social, and political repercussions. One of the most distressing aspects of this evil is the culture of impunity that has taken root. Many corrupt individuals, including politicians, civil servants, and business leaders, often escape accountability for their actions. This lack of consequences not only perpetuates corruption but also erodes trust in the government and institutions meant to uphold the rule of law.

In the present day Nigeria, there are lots of factors or conditions responsible for presence of evils in our world. Greed, ostentatious life – style, customs and

people's attitudes are believed to have led to corruption which is basically the root of evil in Nigeria.

Another significant root cause of evil is tribalism. What do I mean? Looking at the last general election in Nigeria conducted around February, 2023, a good number of Nigerian voted for tribe as against competence. There is this slogan made by the current Nigeria president, "Emi lo kan" literally means it is my turn whether I'm qualify or not. Nigerians found herself in this current situation simply because we refused to vote competence and conscience of mind, someone who would take us to promise land from the biblical land of Egypt. This is political, cultural and ethnic dimensions to evil. Religious dimension to evil is not left out. Lots of wickedness been carried out by religious leaders in the name of religion.

What of insecurity? Insecurity is basically due to unemployment which is due to the evil or better put the wickedness of our leaders. Our judicial system is weak which is due to corruption. Looking at present day Nigeria and even problematic concern, the impunity with which corruption is perpetrated unlike law and order in a civilize societies that have demonstrated the capacity to deal with the problem of this monster, Nigeria has firmly entrenched a culture of impunity that may require radical measures to uproot. The unwillingness of Nigeria as a nation to attend to this issue is suggested by a certain ambiguity inherent in her approach to the matter. For instance, apart from already existing law anti – graft agencies – Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) – have been charged with the investigation and prosecution of financial crimes. But this mandate is obscured by the facility of immunity that is granted political office holders, which shields them from criminal prosecution while their tenure lasts.

Experts and friends of Africa and particularly Nigeria are appropriately concerned about this disturbing development, especially at a time other countries like China and South Korea are making frantic efforts to curb this evil. It will not be out of place to examine the problem of corporate corruption and the associated problem of impunity with respect to Nigerian state against the Augustinian background. Augustine and Nigeria are similar and yet strikingly different. If Augustine is one, then, both he and Nigeria are Africans. Second, both had a turbulent youth. Nigeria's early struggles grew out of her colonial experience and, following the collapse of the imperial project, attempts to carve an indigenous identity. For his part, Augustine had to deal with the usual restlessness and "alluring pleasures of the youth"[10].

Thirdly, both are deeply religious. After his conversion, Augustine went on to become a bishop and doctor of the church, and founder of a religious order (Order of St. Augustine). Nigeria observers an undetermined number of religiously inspired holidays, has religious houses adorn corners of most of her streets, and had had her corporate existence challenged by religious fundamentalism since the early 1980s. Despite these similarities, Augustine and Nigeria have gone in different directions. Augustine has established himself as an intellectual and religious great, while Nigeria remains a failed state due to

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[10]Augustine of Hippo, *Confession,* 111. P.220

corruption and bad leadership. According to an online publication with the author not quoted, Nigeria though, can be debated remains most corrupt state on the face of the earth contended with this evil for few major reasons. The strong unitary system of government operational since independence has created a near one – party system situation in what is constitutionally a tripartite partnership of three co – equal branches of government comprising the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. Second, like most African states, Nigeria has operated a nationalized and a planned economy since independence. Third, the leadership has been apt to manipulate ethnic sentiments to polarize the polity, in the process preventing the citizenry from coming together to demand accountability.

Impunity thrives due to a combination of factors, including weak judicial systems, political interference, and a lack of transparency. High-profile corruption cases frequently drag on for years without resolution, or perpetrators receive lenient sentences, sending a message that corruption can go unpunished. The consequences of this impunity are dire. It undermines economic growth, diverts resources away from essential services, and exacerbates poverty and inequality. Furthermore, it fosters a sense of disillusionment among the populace, eroding the social fabric and leading to unrest and instability. Addressing the impunity of corruption in Nigeria requires a concerted effort involving legal reforms, strengthening of institutions, and a commitment to upholding the rule of law. Without these changes, the evil of corruption will continue to hinder Nigeria's progress and harm its people. These and many associated factors in my opinion must be looked into by Nigerians themselves since just like Augustine rightly opined that man out of his own free will chose evil against good. Until this is done, this particular problem of evil in Nigeria would continue if not escalate to another dimension or level that generations yet unborn may still be chewing.

Conclusion

Overall, this paper has shown that the problem of evil has always challenged the rational capacity of human beings. The queries like what is evil? What is there evil? What is the cause of evil? Is there any relation between good (God) and evil? Are some pertinent questions even in our contemporary society? Augustine's definition of evil as privation of the good enables him to explain manifestations of evil as the lack of created goodness. In addition, his conception of some apparent evil as a result of our limited human perspective accounts for some evil. But, moral evil is the privation of goodness in the human will. For Augustine, there must be bases to the problem of evil in the will as a solution to the problem of the source of evil. This solution guarantees that the one God is the creator of all good and that he is not responsible for evil. Evil in the world is a reality because it exists, but it does not have substantial existence.

Broadly stated, the problem of evil is the seeming contradiction between an all – powerful, all – loving, God and the human experience of suffering and evil in the world. Despite what some critics think, the so called "problem of evil" is not something the Bible leaves unaddressed. The holy Book of the Christians not only refers to the problem of evil, but it offers several solutions to it. By looking at the Bible's honest questioning of evil, God's response to evil and scriptural

solutions to evil, one can address God's word. Of course, this question ties into theology and philosophy as well. There are multiple ways of coming to possible solutions, and none is entirely complete all by itself. The Bible makes it clear that evil is something God neither intended nor created. Rather, moral evil is a necessary possibility. If we are truly free, then we are free to choose something other than God's will, that is, we can choose moral evil. Of course, there are consequences for defying the will of God, be it personal, communal, physical or spiritual. Taken together, physical evils – sickness, famine, war, and death are the result of moral evil. And moral evil is something human beings are all responsible for, either on a personal and a communal level. We suffer because of our sins at times. Other times, we suffer because of the sins of others. In some situations, we suffer from simple cause – and – effect. And we sometimes suffer for a special purpose, in order to bring hope or help or a warning to others. Taken as a whole, evil is something we may say God allowed, but never condoned, for the sake of our free will. As a result, all sin, evil, and suffering will someday be completely ended. Beyond the philosophical or theological aspects of this issue, the holy Books go a long way to neutralizing the power of the "problem of evil".

This study has undertaken a philosophical journey, guided by the profound insights of St. Augustine, to unravel the origins of evil in the world and its specific manifestation as corruption in Nigeria. St. Augustine's philosophy, rooted in the exploration of human free will and moral responsibility, has provided a compelling framework for understanding the existence of evil. The examination of corruption in Nigeria philosophically has revealed the dire consequences of this pervasive evil on a nation's social, economic, and political fabric. Corruption's grip on Nigerian society is deeply intertwined with impunity, exacerbating its detrimental effects. St. Augustine's philosophy, particularly his emphasis on the human capacity for moral choice, helps us grasp the ethical dimensions of corruption and the urgent need for accountability.

By connecting the philosophical underpinnings of evil with the real-world challenges posed by corruption in Nigeria, this research underscores the importance of addressing the root causes of this problem. It calls for a collective effort, encompassing both moral and structural reforms, to combat corruption and its corrosive impact on society. Ultimately, this study serves as a reminder that the quest to understand and combat evil is not merely an intellectual endeavor but a moral imperative. It is our hope that the insights derived from this research will inspire meaningful actions and policy changes, fostering a more just and virtuous society in Nigeria and, by extension, contributing to the broader discourse on the origins and mitigation of evil in the world.