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Epistemology in African Philosophy: A Critique of African Concepts of Knowledge

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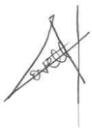
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Ovett Kodilinye Nwosimiri

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Signature

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(Supervisor)

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my dad and brother

Chief Felix O Nwosimiri

(Ogbuefi Omeokachie)

And

Victor Nwosimiri

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Abstract

The question of the existence of African epistemology cannot be addressed without the acknowledgement and acceptance of African philosophy. This is of paramount importance as African epistemology originates from the discourse of African philosophy. Didier N. Khaphagawani and Jeanette G. Malherbe explain that to affirm the existence of an African philosophy suggest the existence of an African epistemology. To them, African epistemology can be regarded as a subset of African philosophy. African epistemology, like African philosophy, deals with issues about Africa. African epistemology engages with the nature and concept of knowledge, and the limit of human knowledge. African epistemology includes the African conception of the nature of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge could be gained, the ways in which one can justify an epistemic claim or validate a knowledge claim, and the role that knowledge plays in human existence. The protagonists of African epistemology, like Placide Tempels, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher Anyanwu and others based their argument for a distinctive or unique African epistemology on the premise or proposition all races is gifted with a unique nature and ways of knowing things. Based on the above, one of the conclusions that can be drawn is that the protagonists of African epistemology believe that things like knowledge, language, religion, emotions, perception, and some other ideas make African epistemology distinct and unique. Given the above, it will be of interest to inquire if African epistemology is entirely distinct and unique.

Thus, this dissertation is a critique of African epistemology. My aim in this dissertation is to argue that given our 'common humanity' (the ideas we share) and our interaction (languages) with each other irrespective of where we come from, African epistemology is not as distinct or unique as the protagonists of African epistemology claim.

Keywords: Epistemology, African Epistemology, Unique African Epistemology, Knowledge and Justification, Common humanity, Divination, Internalism and Externalism.

Table of Content

Introduction

The question of the existence of African epistemology cannot be addressed without the acknowledgement and acceptance of African philosophy. This is significant since African epistemology originates from the discourse of African philosophy. Didier N. Khaphagawani and Jeanette G. Malherbe explain that to affirm the existence of an African philosophy, is to suggest the existence of an African epistemology. In their view, African epistemology can be regarded as a subset of African philosophy. African epistemology, like African philosophy, deals with issues peculiar to Africa. African epistemology engages with the nature, the concept of knowledge, and the limits of human knowledge. African epistemology includes the African conception of the nature of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge could be gained, one's ability to justify an epistemic claim or validate a knowledge claim, and the role that knowledge plays in human existence. The protagonists of African epistemology, like Placide Tempels, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher Anyanwu and others argue for a distinctive or unique African epistemology on the premise or proposition that every race is gifted with a unique nature and ways of knowing things. Consequently, one of the conclusions that could be drawn, is that the protagonists of African epistemology believe such things as knowledge, language, religion, emotions, perception, and some other ideas, make African epistemology distinct and unique. Therefore, it would be of interest to inquire if African epistemology is entirely distinct and unique.

Thus, this dissertation is a critique of African epistemology. The aim of this dissertation is to critically examine the claims of the protagonists of African epistemology, the idea of African epistemology, to show that given our 'common humanity'[1] (the ideas we share) and our interaction (languages) with each other irrespective of where we come from, African epistemology is not as distinct or unique as the protagonists of African epistemology claim.

Before I proceed, I will like to explain the idea of our 'common humanity'. In his book *Tradition and Modernity* (1997), Kwame Gyekye explains that there is some interesting implication for our understanding of the nature of culture and of humankind itself with regards to the phenomena of cultural borrowing or appropriation. What he did in some part of his work was to use to idea of

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[1] This concept is from Kwame Gyekye's books: *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (1997). Oxford: Oxford University Press; *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity (Ghanain Philosophical Studies (III)* (2004a). Washington: The Council for Research in Value and Philosophy.

cultural borrowing and appreciation to explain the idea of our common humanity. He elucidate that "… the fact that people of a different cultural tradition can appreciate the worth of another cultural tradition and would desire to appropriate at least some elements of it, it seems to follow that there are certain cultural values that human beings, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, can be said to share in common; for example, technology" (Gyekye 1997: 225). In this case, our common humanity are the values we share as human. In other words, what we have in common, the universal, is our common humanity. Here, the idea of the universal provides for human a common humanity.

The idea of our common humanity presupposes that certain values, experience and characteristic features are common to all human beings. Our common humanity "disposes us towards sharing some values or basic needs, entertaining common desires, hopes and aspirations that we would regard as fundamentally human, as making for our human fulfillment" (Gyekye 2004a:). Our common humanity refers to the idea of unity in diversity and the identification of human nature and essence that is common and foundational to all cultures. Our common humanity is grounded in our human nature. Our common humanity is fundamentally essential in inter-cultural understanding or communication.

According to Gyekye, "part of the African view of humanity is to recognize all persons, irrespective of their racial or ethnic background, as brothers. This is the reason why in African cultures the word "brother" is used to cover various and complex family relationships linked by blood ties. But the word is also used, significantly, by persons between whom there are no blood ties at all" (1997: 291). The above refers to the recognition of humanity as one. Elsewhere, Gyekye explains that, our common humanity "grounds (or should ground) the culture-neutrality or at least some degree of universality of values that can appropriately be characterized as human values, to which people who make critical judgments about another culture would wittingly be appealing" (2004a). This simply refers to the idea of our universal values. Thus, our common humanity "opens a window through which we can appreciate a defensible conception of universal values" (*ibid*) and it should be the grounds of our actions.

In the first chapter, I attempt to offer an explanation on the nature of African epistemology. Since my thesis seeks to critically examine the general claim of the protagonists of African epistemology on the uniqueness of African epistemology, I believe it is important to begin with an overview of epistemology and Western epistemology, before explaining and discussing the nature of African epistemology. This is important because it provides a breakdown of what

epistemology is, and its connection with African epistemology. I consider these two because of the histories of their contact through colonialism. The importance of this discussion is to shed some light on the whole concept of African epistemology and the basis on which we describe traditional African thought and indigenous knowledge as knowledge.

In the second chapter, I will discuss some of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology. Some African philosophers and scholars, as well as protagonists of African epistemology, like Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher Anyanwu, Ejikemeuwa J. O. Ndubisi, Elijah Okon John and Andrew F. Uduigwomen and many others proposed that there is a way of knowing that is uniquely African. They hold that every people or culture has its own way of conceptualizing, interpreting and apprehending reality based on its peculiar experience. Thus, their argument is based on the idea that Africans conceptualize, interpret and apprehend knowledge differently from the Westerns. This chapter attempts to identify and explain some forms of knowledge in African epistemology, according to some African philosophers and scholars. What these forms of knowledge in African epistemology assert, is the idea that some forms of knowledge that are uniquely and specifically African. One possible explanation is that in epistemology, forms of knowledge are culturally relative. The chapter also aims at contesting the idea that these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African; culturally relative. This will be achieved by showing that the prefix 'African' added to the idea of epistemology does not really make any difference, and that some forms of knowledge in African epistemology are the same or similar to those of Western epistemology, which defeats the idea of specific and unique forms of knowledge in Africa. In other words, the presence of these forms of knowledge in Western epistemology defeats the idea of the forms of knowledge being cultural relative. It is important to note that this relationship between the forms of knowledge in African and Western epistemology alerts us to the idea of our "common humanity" (Gyekye 1997); the universality of epistemology.

The third chapter aim to illustrate that (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition. According to Barbara Tedlock, the English word "divination" comes from the Latin noun *divinatio-onis f. (divino),* meaning "the gift of prophesy, divination". This was formed from the past participle of the verb *divinare,* "to foretell, prophesy, forebode, divine the future" (2001: 190). She further eludes that the Latin noun *divinatio-onis f. (divino)* "is closely related to the adjective *divinus-a-um,* "belonging or relating to a deity, divine" (*ibid*). Given that divination is a

Western concept (with a different method of divination), it also shows that in the Western epistemology it is recognized as an example of mystical knowledge, and it is often associated as paranormal cognition or activities.

In the fourth chapter, my aim is to show that African epistemology is not as unique as the protagonists' claims, because of the idea of our "common humanity" (Gyekye 1997). This will be achieved by; firstly, outlining the arguments of some of the protagonists of African epistemology and in the course of the discussion of the above protagonists of African epistemology, I will attempt to critique their ideas. Secondly, I will evaluate the concept of African epistemology in light of some of the views of the protagonists of African epistemology.

The fifth chapter will be based on the premise that is the main argument of the protagonists of African epistemology. The premise is that there is a distinctive or unique way Africans perceive, apprehend, interpret and conceptualize reality. Drawing on the insights from the history of African philosophy as a 'counter-colonial practice' as well as the fact that to affirm the existence of an African philosophy suggest the existence of an African epistemology, my aim in this chapter is to show that the protagonists' aim of advocating for a distinctive and unique African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive, which this chapter identifies as a struggle of African identity. Of course, the above is not the only motive for their project. One other motive is to show that Africa has her own epistemology. But that is not my aim in this chapter. Importantly, as mentioned already, my aim is to show that the project of African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive, which is a struggle of African identity.

The final chapter, chapter six, aim to show that both the internalist and externalist basis of justification is needed in African epistemology in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.[2] For the protagonists of African epistemology, the justification is *entirely* an external matter, one that has to do with their environment—things we can see. Perhaps the worry is that by clearly and actively recognizing internalism their idea of holism in African tradition will be distorted, because they believe that justification is entirely external. In this case, what they fail to realise is the fact that if they clearly recognize, acknowledge and accept the internalist perspective, and combine it with that of the externalist, they will still achieve their aim which is to show that the African way of knowing is holistic. When we consider the internalism and externalism debate in contemporary epistemology in relation to

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[2] See Ogungbure, 2014.

discussions on African epistemology, we will notice that most of the protagonists of African epistemology's ways of justifying their beliefs, knowledge claims and knowledge of reality are based on the view and perspective of the externalist. In the protagonists' pursuit of understanding reality from an externalist perspective, they failed to clearly recognize the internalist perspective. As such, I will argue that internalism was passively recognized or acknowledged in African epistemology, and there is a need for them in African epistemology.

It is important to underscore that this disertation is philosophical based and existing published materials like books and articles in academic journals on epistemology, African philosophy, and African epistemology will be used as opposed to empirical findings. Thus, the method used is therefore a comprehensive study of the existing literature on the issues relating to epistemology, African philosophy, African epistemology, and other scholarly works.

Chapter One

1. The Nature of African Epistemology[3]

1.1.   Introduction

Epistemology or theory of knowledge is one of the most important aspects of philosophy. Jan Wolenski explains that the "terms which now denote this field, namely 'epistemology' and 'theory of knowledge', appeared not very long ago, later than terms indicating metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics or even ontology" (2004: 3). He further elucidates that there existed no single word referring to epistemology as late as the 17th century. During the 17th century as well as in the 18th century, epistemological problems were considered in different books (*ibid*). Some of the books that epistemological problems were considered are: "*Rules for the Direction of Mind* (Rene Descartes), *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (John Locke), *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (George Berkeley), *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (David Hume), *New Essays on Human Understanding* (Gottfried Leibniz) or *Critique of Pure Reason* (Immanuel Kant)" (*ibid*) and others. Some other contributors to the discourse are Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Francis Bacon, Augustus Comte, Baruch Spinoza and others many others… Many of these important philosophers' works were written in Greek, French, Latin and German, but have been translated into English.

In the first section of this chapter I will discuss the meaning of epistemology. This is important as it highlights what epistemology is, as well as its connection with African epistemology. In subsequent section, Western epistemology (Ancient philosophy, modern philosophy and contemporary epistemology) is discussed. However, I restrict myself to the views of Plato, Aristotle, Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Roderick M. Chishohm, Alfred Jules Ayer, Jonathan Dancy and Matthias Steup's input on the discussion *Justified True Belief* (*JTB*),

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[3] I do acknowledge that there are many languages and traditional beliefs in Africa and that some of the existing languages, traditional beliefs and ways of knowing are different. I do not intend within the pages of this thesis to present the different traditional beliefs and ways of knowing from different parts of Africa and to illustrate and analyse these differences. Rather, my intention is to explore and dwell on what I consider the most crucial ideas and definitions of African epistemology by Udefi by those he deemed as the protagonists of African epistemology. And I think that Africans can identify with this. Also, this idea is not because I wish to pretend that the whole of Africa has one homogenous way of knowing or to say that their ways of knowing are all the same. I am aware that there are many countries in African and within each country there exist variety languages, traditional cultures and their ways of knowing differ in some respect. Nevertheless, with regards to definition of African epistemology, it shows that there are deep underlying affinities running through these cultures (or the cultures of the protagonist of African epistemology) which justify speaking the generalization.

Edmund Gettier Theory, Jonathan Dancy and Linda Zagzebski's contributions to the Gettier problems, and the idea of the two analysis of knowledge (internalism and externalism) from the view Alvin Goldman, Laurence Bonjour, Matthias Steup and John Greco.

I am aware that my development and discussion of epistemology would be incomplete without fully engaging with several topics and prominent philosophers, however, my intension here is not to give a complete development of epistemology, as I am also aware that new discussions and "arguments are constantly brought to bear on old views, new variants are marshalled to revive ancient stands, new concepts and distinctions increase the sophistication of epistemological theories" (Niiniluoto, Sintonen and Wolenski 2004: viii), hence I restrict myself to the above-mentioned philosophers and topics for three reasons. Firstly, Plato's discussion on epistemology marks the beginning of Western epistemology. Secondly, I consider Descartes, Locke and Hume as pioneers of rationalism and empiricism respectively. Their discussions on epistemology puts into perspective, both the 'rationalists and empiricists' views of knowledge. And the third reason is that, Roderick M. Chishohm, Alfred Jules Ayer, Jonathan Dancy and Linda Zagzebski's gave a good input on the discussion *Justified True Belief* (*JTB*) and Edmund Gettier Theory; and Alvin Goldman, Laurence Bonjour, Matthias Steup and John Greco properly engaged the debate of internalism and externalism which are essential parts of this dissertation. Given that my focus in this study is on African epistemology, I do not intend proffering a detailed explanation and discussion of Western epistemology.

In the section that follows, I will briefly define and explain African epistemology and subsequently discuss the nature of African epistemology in light of the ideas of the protagonists of African epistemology (Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher Anyanwu, Anselm Kole Jimoh, Amaechi Udefi[4]). And in next section, I will specify some of the differences between Western and African epistemology. The subsequent sections will lead me to the aim of the thesis, in section 1.5, the problem of African epistemology.

It is important to underscore here that this chapter attempts to explain the nature of African epistemology. Since my thesis seeks to critically examine the general claim of the protagonists of

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[4] I will like to note that I included Anselm Kole Jimoh to this list because he talks about African epistemology and he argued also that there is a unique African epistemology. Thus, I believe that because of this, he can be considered an advocate of African epistemology. Morover, I included Udefi Amaechi to this group because he appears to be a propagator and a critique of the ideas of the protagonists of African epistemology.

African epistemology of the uniqueness of African epistemology (African mode of knowing that is social, wholistic and situated within Africa), I think it is important that I start with an explanation of the nature of African epistemology.

1.2. Epistemology

The term "epistemology" derives from two Greek words "episteme", meaning "knowledge", and "logos", roughly meaning "study, or science of" (Truncellito 2007 § 1). Hence the traditional meaning of epistemology; the study of knowledge. Within the discipline of philosophy, epistemology, or the study of knowledge, addresses philosophical questions about knowledge and rationality.[5] Joseph I. Omoregbe relates that epistemology is a major branch of philosophy that deals with:

> The study of human knowledge, the study of the nature of human knowledge, its origin, its scope, its limits, its justification, its reliability or otherwise, its certainty or otherwise. It is like knowledge taking a critical look at itself to justify itself (1998: VI).

Epistemology is also concerned with justification, evidence, truth, doubt, and scepticism, etc. The traditional Western account of knowledge presents the idea that knowledge consists in the mind's ability to accurately represent reality (Jimoh 2017: 121). Epistemology or the theory of knowledge is about the way we get to understand reality. In other words, it consists of how we acquire and justify our knowledge claim about reality. According to Godfrey O. Ozumba, "knowledge is the act of being aware of the existence of a fact" (2001: 15). The study of knowledge is one of the fundamental aspects of philosophical inquiry, therefore, any claim on/to knowledge is always evaluated to determine whether it indeed constitutes knowledge. Such an evaluation essentially requires an understanding of what knowledge is and how knowledge is possible (Truncellito 2007 § 4). Epistemology can also be defined as "an account of a mental activity, which operates necessarily in relation to what is known" (Gill 2006: 72). The general meaning and characterization of epistemology can be made more detailed by further explanation, for example:

> [Epistemology] [...] The theory of knowledge. Its central questions include the origin of knowledge, the place of experience in generating knowledge, and the place of reason in doing so; the relationship between knowledge and certainty, and between knowledge and the

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[5] In the history of philosophy, the origin of an epistemology is a controversial issue, according to Nasseem (2003: 260). "European philosophy epistemology is said to have stated from the rationalist Descartes' postulate, cogito ergo sum – 'I think, therefore I am'. Later European epistemologists took up their arguments from this dictum, either by affirmations (in the case of rationalist) or by denial (in the case of empiricists)" (Nasseem 2003: 261).

impossibility of error; the possibility of universal [...] scepticism; and the changing forms of knowledge that arise from new conceptualizations of the world. All of these issues link with other central concerns of philosophy, such as the nature of truth and the nature of experience and meaning. It is possible to see epistemology as dominated by two rival metaphors. One is that of building or pyramid, built on foundations. In this conception it is the job of the philosopher to describe especially secure foundations, and to identify secure modes of construction, so that the resulting edifice can be shown as to be sound. This metaphor favours some idea of the 'given' as a basis of knowledge, and of a traditionally defensible theory of confirmation and inference as a method of construction [...] The other metaphor is that of a boat or fuselage, that has no foundations but owes its strength to the stability given by its interlocking parts. This rejects the idea of a basis in the 'given', favours ideas of coherence and [...] holism, but finds it harder to ward off [...] scepticism[6] (Wolenski 2004: 4).

"All men, by nature desire to know", states Aristotle (Metaphysics 1924). This is to say that the idea of knowledge and the desire to know, arguably, is innate in every human being. Each day, we make claims of knowledge and try to defend them. We ask ourselves various questions about knowledge, the trustworthiness or the justification of what we are trying to defend. And in the process, we ask ourselves such questions as: How sure that what I think I know is correct? What is the foundation of the knowledge I claim to have? Is knowledge absolute, relative or objective? This shows that it is not enough for one to merely claim to know something. One needs to show that what one knows or claims to know is the case. We know quite a lot of things and very often people claim to know many things and they attribute knowledge to the things they know in a variety of cases (Feldman 2003: 2). Those things we know come from different sources. For example, we know things through perception, sensation, memory, testimony, introspection, rational insight, reasoning, inference, observation, and so on, and we can gain knowledge from these sources. According to many philosophers, rational and justified belief is an important condition of knowledge. "To know something requires something along the lines of having a good reason to believe it, or coming to believe it in the right sort of way, or something like that" (Feldman 2003: 5). Thus, our sources of knowledge will lead us to such questions as: under what conditions is what we know, or our belief justified? How do these sources or faculties enable us to satisfy the conditions of knowledge? How could they yield epistemic justification? Such questions will enable us to know if we are really justified in believing what we say we know.

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[6] S. Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994, p. 123.

1.3. Western Epistemology

As explained in the introduction, in this section, I will discuss Western epistemology (Ancient philosophy, modern philosophy and contemporary epistemology). I will restrict myself to the views of Plato, Aristotle, Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, the discussion of Justified True Belief, Edmund Gettier Theory and Jonathan Dancy response to the Gettier problem, and the idea of the two analysis of knowledge (internalism and externalism) from the views of Alvin Goldman, Laurence Bonjour, Matthias Steup and John Greco.

1.3.1. Ancient Philosophy

Knowledge has a long history, beginning with the ancient Greeks and continuing to the present. Plato stands as the second of the great trio of ancient Greek philosophers – Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. His system of philosophy still remains very influential in Western Philosophy. One of Plato's works is his theory of knowledge in which he explicates the nature, conditions and values of knowledge as he understood them. Plato's epistemology is not located in a single book but scattered among his many dialogues. The traditional standard analysis of knowledge was first introduced by Plato in the *Theaetetus,* In Plato's *Theaetetus* "Socrates articulates the need for something like a justification condition…, when he points out that 'true opinion' is in general insufficient for knowledge" (Ichikawa and Steup 2014 § 1). Plato's discussion on knowledge can also be found among his various dialogues like *Republic, Sophist, Statesman, Parmenides* and *Meno*. In the *Theaetetus* Plato argues that belief is to be distinguished from knowledge on account of justification. The *Theaetetus* like some of the other dialogues is an enquiry into the nature of knowledge. But it was in the *Theaetetus* that Socrates proposes that knowledge is justified true belief (Lewis 1981; see also Cooper 2015).

Plato's epistemology centres on the theory of forms[7], which he uses to validate the possibility of values and knowledge. Socrates' thought affirmed this through the dialogues of Plato. To establish an epistemology, inherent in Socrates' thought, Plato had to establish the certainty of what is known and the possibility of knowing it. Plato used the myth or allegory of the cave, which appeared in Book VII of the *Republic*, to illustrate the difference between genuine

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[7] The *Forms* or *Ideas* are the changeless and nonmaterial essences of which the actual visible objects we see are only poor copies (Stumpf 1966:58). He holds that the Forms are the true reality; a view that is quite contrary to that of the pre-Socratic philosophers who held that reality is made up of material substance. See also Stumpf 1975 and 1993.

knowledge and opinion. He also used his discussion of the image of the divided line in the *Republic,* Book VI*,* to explicate the different types and levels of knowledge. According to Plato, the supreme level of knowledge is the intelligence (*noes*is). And this is the pure reasoning which leads the seeker to the revelation of ultimate truth. True knowledge, is therefore, attained through abstraction from the intelligible objects. In so doing, understanding the relation of everything to everything else would lead to the achievement of supreme knowledge (Stumpf 1966: 57). Plato stresses that if what is attained at this level of knowledge is held unto, we will be enabled to make conclusions without making use of sensual perception, but rather, contemplating reality by processing Forms using reason to attain their knowledge, which are Forms (*Republic* 511c). For him, every individual object in the phenomenal world is a correspondent Idea or Form.

Out of the many theories of Plato, one of his most prominent works is his theory of Forms. This doctrine epitomizes a serious attempt by Plato to explain the nature of existence in his quest to bring enlightenment and order to his society. Hence, he suggested a metaphysical dichotomy, that there is the world of Forms – *eidos* – and the world of shadows – *eidolon.* The *Forms* or *Ideas* are the changeless and nonmaterial essences of which the actual visible objects we see are only poor copies (Stumpf 1966: 58). He holds that the Forms are the true reality, grasped only by our thoughts, is eternal, immutable, and infallible; whereas world of shadows is the world which we experience every day, and that it is continuously changing (William 1968: 53). His view on Forms is quite contrary to that of the pre-Socratic philosophers who held that reality is made up of material substance.

In contrast to Plato, none of the major works of Aristotle had as its essential topic the nature of knowledge. He sought not to argue that knowledge is possible but assumed its possibility (Taylor 1990: 116; see also Gill 2006: 77). In his view there are two constituents of human life which makes it supremely worth living, and they are excellence of character and intellectual excellence (*ibid*: 117; *ibid*). In Aristotle's terminology, what is known (or knowable) is what can be taught and learned. The truth that is considered necessary can be learned in precisely two ways, either by deduction or by induction. In whichever case, one learns by making use of something which is already known. According to Aristotle, "teaching is from things previously known" (*ibid*: 117; Gill 2006: 77 – 78).

1.3.2. Modern Philosophy

In the history of modern Western philosophy, some philosophers like René Descartes, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, Gottfried Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, Francis Bacon, Augustus Comte, Baruch Spinoza and others, cut loose from the cords of traditional idealism. Below I briefly discuss René Descartes, John Locke and David Hume's ideas on knowledge.

Descartes proposed a rejection of the legacy of Plato. Like other major thinkers of his age, Descartes was amply influenced by the scientific method of explanation which held sway in his time: mechanistic (Gk. *mechane*—machine) explanation. The whole material world was thought of as one vast mechanical system which could be understood in terms of efficient causes. The same principles were to be employed in the explanation of inanimate bodies. Now there are two elements of scientific method, namely the "observational and inductive side" and the "deductive and mathematical side" (Copleston 1994: 289). But it was the latter element which most influenced the continental rationalist philosophy of the post-Renaissance period. One of the champions of the modern scientific world-view was Galileo Galilei[8] (1564-1642). Galileo claimed that Nature is mathematical in structure. In a well-known passage of his work, *l saggiatore* (6), he declares that philosophy is written by God in the book of the universe but that it cannot be read until we have learnt the language and understood the characters in which it is written. "It is written in mathematical language, and its characters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without which it is impossible to understand a single word" (Copleston 1994: 287).

As a rationalist, Descartes directs his epistemology at reason. The rationalists claim that experience, however complex, does not amount to knowledge. They believe that knowledge involves the use of reason. The rationalists claim that knowledge "involves the insight and understanding, and – as a rule – some kind of inference or proof, in some sort achievement of reason" (Gill 2006: 79). The empiricists reject this view. For them to know something is just to have observed it and to remember it in the appropriate way as to have the right kind of experience of it. Some empiricists maintain that the kind of experience which constitutes knowledge, can be completely attained without referring to reason (*ibid*).

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[8] An Italian astronomer, physicist and mathematician. He was an advocate of the Copernican theory that the earth rotates around the sun. He saw nature as lending itself to geometrical analysis (Mautner 2005: 241).

Method is a *sine qua non* in Descartes' philosophy. The search for truth has to be systematic and orderly, since it is very clear that "unregulated inquiries and confused reflections... only confound the natural light and blind our mental powers" (D.M. 2; AT VI 13-14).[9] Descartes asserts that "by method I understand (a set of) certain and easy rules that anyone who observes them exactly will never take anything false to be true and, without any waste of mental effort but by increasing his [*sic*] knowledge step by step, will arrive at a true understanding of all those things which do not surpass his capacity" (R.D. 4; AT X 371-2). According to Descartes, the use of the right method could make metaphysical philosophy, and even ethics, a science in the fullest sense of the word, instead of a field for verbal wrangling, unclear ideas, faulty reasoning, and mutually incompatible conclusions (Copleston 1994: 18). Mathematics is for Descartes a model of clear and certain knowledge, which advances step by step from one indisputable conclusion to another (Hampshire 1956: 60). The first step therefore is to introduce into the chaos of philosophy the clear and uniform deductive method of mathematics. Now the method of mathematics consists of two fundamental operations of the mind, *viz.* intuition and deduction. By *intuition* Descartes means a purely intellectual seeing or vision, which is so clear that it leaves no room for doubt (R.D. 3; AT X 368). For example, 'a straight line is the shortest distance between two points'. Such statements are self-evident in that they prove themselves to reason. By *deduction,* Descartes means "all necessary inference from other facts which are known with certainty" (R.D. 3; AT X 369).

Descartes takes the route of doubt – even *hyperbolical* doubt – in search of an indubitable first principle, a solid foundation for the philosophical edifice he hopes to construct. He finds it in the incontrovertible truth that he himself exists: *cogito, ergo sum*— "I think, therefore I am." Descartes argues that his very existence is made manifest in his exercise of doubt. "For if I doubt, I think, and if I think, then I am". In other words, the presence of thoughts presupposes the presence of a thinker.[10] And hence, the attempt to doubt one's own existence turns out self-stultifying. In his Second Meditation, Descartes reasons:

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[9] In the references to the works of Descartes the following abbreviations have been used. D.M. stands for the *Discourse on Method*; R.D. stands for the *Rules for the Direction of Mind*, M. for the *Meditations,* P.P. for the *Principles of Philosophy*, O. and R.O. for *Objections* and *Replies to Objections*. The letters A.T. refer to the standard edition of the works of Descartes by Charles Adam and Paul Tannery; Paris, 13 vols. 1897-1913.

[10] A similar point had been made by St. Augustine twelve centuries ago in his dialog against the sceptics (*Contra Academicos*). Let us accept your belief, says Augustine that I am universally deceived, and yet there remains one ineluctable truth: 'fallor, ergo sum'—'I am deceived, therefore I exist.' (*De Trinitate,* Bk X, ch. 10).

> But I have convinced myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, and no bodies. Does it not follow that I too do not exist? No: if I convince myself of something then I certainly existed. But there is a deceiver of supreme power and cunning who is deliberately and constantly deceiving me; and let him deceive me as much as he can, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I think that I am something (AT VII 25).

The *cogito* is the "first and most certain of all which occur to one who philosophises in an orderly way" (PP I, 7; AT VIII 7). And since this truth, *cogito, ergo sum*, was so solid and secure that the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics could not overthrow it, "I concluded that I might without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search" (D.M. 4; AT VI 32). Clearly, the *cogito* occupies a privileged position in Descartes' philosophy, since it is a necessary condition of all thought, doubt, and deception. According to Etienne Gilson (1955: 133), Descartes' philosophy was nothing more than "a recklessly conducted experiment to see what becomes of human knowledge when moulded into conformity with the pattern of mathematical evidence". Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) also objects to and questions Descartes' analysis of *cogito, ergo sum,* because it did not prove the independent character of mind. For Hobbes, the statement 'I am thinking' did not exclude that the thinking subject was corporeal (Wolenski 2004: 18).

John Locke published his treatise *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690. He is "known for this epistemological masterpiece" (Woolhouse 1992: 258). In Book 1 (One) Locke tells us that his purpose "to enquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge; together, with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent" (1. 1. 2.) Through Book 1 of his treatise, the focus is on innate ideas. Book 2 (Two) alludes that we should "suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any *ideas*" (2.1.2)*.* What this means is that the mind at birth is like a 'white paper' (2.1.2; see also Woolhouse 1992: 258). Roger Woolhouse explains that "in Book 2 Locke substantiates the claim that all our ideas, all the materials of knowledge, come from experience – in either of its two forms, of sensory perception of the material world and of reflection on the operations of our own minds" (1992: 259).

In Book 4, Lock defines knowledge as "*the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas*" (4.1.2). Elsewhere Woolhouse explains that "the basic thought of this is that some ideas are connected with others, and various truths reflect these connections" (1994: 153). John Locke directed his epistemology against Descartes. "Locke's empiricism or the theory that all knowledge begins with sense experience is a direct

attack on the dogmatism of the rationalistic thinkers" (Gill 2006: 93; see also Aaron 1955: 90). Empiricism is an epistemological movement according to which, nothing around us can be known to be real unless its existence is revealed in or inferable from information, we gain directly in sense experience or introspection of our subjective state (Dancy 1992: 120). Empiricists maintain that, "we observe things; we remember what we observe; what we remember guides us in what we do, what we pay attention to, what we observe and thus memory, rather than reason, is supposed to produce the kind of complex experience which constitutes technical knowledge" (Frede 1990: 226). In his treatise developed his genetic empiricism. Genetic empiricism is the theory which claims that the mind is a tabula rasa (a pure blackboard) (Wolenski 2004: 18). For Locke, experience was the only source of knowledge, and there were two kinds of it: sensation and reflection. Jan Wolenski explains the "former was 'outer', but the latter 'inner' and provided access to mental contents" (*ibid*). Sensation provides knowledge about particular individual objects while reflection is a conscious awareness of our mental activities and their results.

David Hume's epistemology has its roots in empiricism. As a result, he has an exaggerated belief in sensation as the source of human knowledge. Like Locke, the originator of *his* type of reasoning, Hume's analysis of knowledge takes on a *historical plain* method; thus, he first looks at the origin of knowledge and builds on to more complex forms. Unlike his continental counterparts, Hume employs common sense in his analysis. He has little or no regard for 'scholastic disputations' but wishes to make his work known to all people, especially the commoners. This way, Locke bears great influence on Hume (Stewart & Blocker 1992: 220).

According to Hume, the mind's content is perception which consists *impressions* and *ideas*. Each is distinct and distinguishable from the other. The difference is a matter of the degree of liveliness or forcefulness with which the mind perceives them. The former impinges with great force on the mind unlike the latter. He came to this conclusion upon observing the acts of the mind. In the *Inquiry,* Hume states that "everyone will readily allow that there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind when a man feels the pain of excessive heat or the pleasure of moderate sensation or anticipates it by his imagination" (1955: 26). The degree with which the mind perceives pain immediately from excessive heat is considerably greater than when it only recalls or anticipates the experience. Similarly, one who feels love, anger or hatred would have more understanding of such feelings compared to a person who merely thinks of such emotions. In other words, encounter with real things gives more vivid and forcible

perception than conception of such encounter. This led Hume to judge that "the most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation" (*ibid:* 27). For Hume, the lively perceptions are called *impressions* and the dullest ones, *ideas*. He takes *impressions* to mean all lively perceptions that accompany seeing, feeling, loving, hating, desiring or willing. In contrast, *ideas* stand for less lively perceptions that arise when the mind reflects on the above sentiments (*ibid*).

Arguing that *impressions* precede *ideas*, Hume asserts that analysis of ideas always indicate corresponding impression. Even a sublime idea of God as infinitely intelligent would give rise to an augmentation of impressions such as wisdom and goodness (*Inquiry* p. 28). Meanwhile, perceptions in general can be simple or complex. A simple idea corresponds to a simple impression, and vice versa. However, a complex idea does not necessarily correspond to a complex impression as a complex impression would do to ideas. When I perceive a yellow orange, I have a simple impression; and the thought of this yellow orange matches a simple idea. However, when I think of a complex idea such as 'golden city', it does not match any complex impression even though the idea can be broken into simple ideas. Furthermore, Hume divides impressions into impressions of sensation and impressions of reflection. The former's source is unknown. In contrast, the latter is derived from ideas.

To appreciate Hume's position, it is worth considering an example he gave in the *Inquiry* (*ibid:* 28). It is difficult for anyone who never has an organ of sight to conceive an idea of colour. Likewise, somebody with deficient of an ear cannot form an idea of sound. But upon having such organs in addition to encountering the proper object of such senses, a person would be able to form an idea that is characteristic of the sensation. Granted that this is true then, impression comes first before ideas. However, Hume hints that they are instances (very rare) in which idea is not derived from impression. Curiously, he left this vague but went on to give his intelligible proposition which in his intention would displace the jargon of metaphysical reasoning (*ibid:* 30). Accordingly, Hume affirms that all ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure and that the mind has but a slender hold of them. Here, Hume is suggesting that we be suspicious of our ideas. He went on to invite us to subject our ideas to test in order to ascertain their clarity. This test consists the empirical question: "from what impression is that supposed idea derived?" (*ibid*). If its source is indeterminate, Hume calls that we consider it bogus. Hence, to discover the causes and effects of our perception, we ought to consult experience, and not reason. We realise this view about the discovery of cause and effect when we notice the constant link between particular objects with one another. We tend to overlook this because most ordinary

causal judgments are so familiar to us. Hence, our judgment of them seems immediate due to the multiplicity of our experience of them. Reasoning concerns either *relations of ideas* or *matters of fact* (Hume 1888: 261).

1.3.3.   Contemporary Epistemology

In the subsequent sections I will briefly discuss Roderick M. Chishohm, Alfred Jules Ayer, Jonathan Dancy and Matthias Steup's input on the discussion *Justified True Belief* (*JTB*), Edmund Gettier Theory and Jonathan Dancy and Linda Zagzebski's contributions to the Gettier problems, and the idea of the two analysis of knowledge (internalism and externalism) from the view Alvin Goldman, Laurence Bonjour, Matthias Steup and John Greco.

1.3.3.1.   The Justified True Belief and Gettier Problems

Inanna Hamati-Ataya explains that "epistemologists have traditionally been concerned with *propositional* knowledge (knowledge *about* things, or knowledge *that*) rather than knowledge by *acquaintance* (knowledge *of* things), *self*-knowledge, or knowledge *how*" (2014: 1116). This focus on propositional knowledge, according to her, rests on the assumption that the proposition is both "the principal form in which reality becomes understandable to the human mind" and "the form in which knowledge is communicated" to others (*ibid*; see also Zagzebski 1999: 92). It follows that the primary concern of Epistemology is in knowledge as a state of being that connects the subject to reality through a true proposition (*ibid*).

According to Nicholas Rescher, many epistemologists have sought to characterize knowledge as *justified true belief* (2003: 3). Justified true belief is often abbreviated as "JTB" analysis (Ichikawa & Steup 2014 § 1). Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa & Matthias Steup assert that *justified true belief* (JTB) is "traditional ("tripartite") analysis of knowledge" (2014 § 1). The traditional account and analysis of knowledge, (otherwise known as the tripartite account) have three components to it and according to this analysis *justified true belief* (JTB) is necessary and sufficient for knowledge. According to Matthias Steup, "the objective of the analysis of knowledge is to state the conditions that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for propositional knowledge: knowledge that such-and-such is the case" (2012). The following is the analysis (tripartite analysis) of knowledge as *justified true belief* (JTB):

The JTB Analysis of Knowledge[11]

S knows that *p* iff

    i.   *p* is true;

    ii.   *S* believes that *p*;

    iii.   *S* is justified in believing that *p* (Steup 2012 § 1).

In the above argument, conditions one and two mean that knowledge should be true while condition three demands that a necessary condition of knowledge is that belief be justified by good reasons. Regardless of the sense in which the term knowledge is used, for it to qualify as knowledge, a claim has to satisfy the following conditions: (1) truth condition, (2) certainty condition, (3) justification condition. A claim would qualify to be a "knowledge claim" if and only if whatever is claimed to be known is true (Gill 2006: 74; Lehrer 1978: 2).

Simply Jonathan Dancy explains that "the standard account of knowledge, around which all recent work has been done, defines knowledge as justified true belief" (Dancy 1985: 23). To this he explains that, just like the above, the account "holds that *a* knows that *p* if and only if" (*ibid*).

    1.   *P*,

    2.   *a* believes that *p*,

    3.   *a*'s belief that *p* justified (*ibid*).

Dancy further explains that "because there are three parts to this definition it is called the tripartite definition or the tripartite account; it defines propositional knowledge, knowledge that *p*; it does not define knowledge by acquaintance as in '*a* knows James' or knowledge-how, e.g. knowledge of how to ride a bicycle, unless these can be shown to reduce to knowledge-that" (*ibid*). In this case, one cannot claim to know "unless one is completely sure of it" (Ayer 1956: 56), and whatever one claims to know one must be able to justify it (Gill 2006: 74). Slightly different from the analysis of justified true belief is that of Roderick M. Chisholm (1957: 16) and Alfred Jules Ayer's (1956: 38). According to Chisholm the following gives the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge:

S knows that P iff (that is, if and only if)

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[11] This is from Matthias Steup (2012) work titled "The Analysis of Knowledge".

i. S accepts P

ii. S has adequate evidence for P, and

iii. P is true[12]

Ayer's version of the schema of the traditional analysis where he states that the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge as follows:

S knows that P iff (that is, if and only if)

iv. P is true

v. S is sure that P is true, and

vi. S has the right to be sure that P is true[13]

What can be noticed in Ayer's version is the substitution of justification "in condition (iii) in K above for "the right to be sure that p" which seems to strengthen the traditional conception because according to him, the people attributing knowledge to S, are thereby expressing a sort of attitude of approval towards S's belief? (Huemer 2002: 432).

Despite the distinguishing heritage of *justified true belief* (JTB) the traditional account and analysis of knowledge came under attack in the 1960s. In 1963, Edmund Gettier challenged the traditional definition of *justified true belief* (JTB) in his famous short article "Is justified true belief knowledge?" Gettier argues that the traditional idea of justified true belief "is false in that the conditions stated therein do not constitute a sufficient condition for the truth of the proposition that S knows that P" (Gettier 1963: 121). He also asserts that the same argument will show that Chisholm and Ayer's views "fail if "has adequate evidence for" or "has the right to be sure that" substituted for "is justified in believing that" throughout" (Gettier 1963: 121) Here, Gettier employs two effective counterexamples or cases to show that knowledge is more than justified true belief. He argues that JTB is a necessary but insufficient condition for knowledge, because our justification for a true proposition could turn out to be false whilst our knowledge about the proposition is true. Gettier begins by noting two points:

> First, in that sense of "justified" in which S's being justified in believing P is a necessary
> condition of S's knowing that P, it is possible for a person to be justified in believing a

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[12] Chisholm (1957: 16).

[13] Ayer (1956: 38).

proposition that is in fact false.[14] Secondly, for any proposition P, if S is justified in believing P, and P entails Q, and S deduces Q from P and accepts Q as a result of this deduction, then S is justified in believing Q (Gettier 1963: 121).

He knows that these two points should be kept in mind as he presents his counter examples or cases. In his first case he urges us to "suppose that Smith and Jones have applied for a certain job. Smith has strong evidence for the following conjunctive proposition" (Gettier 1963: 122):

(d) "Jones is the man who will get the job, and Jones has ten coins in his pocket" (*ibid*).

Smith's evidence for (d) is based on the information by the president of the company while he was waiting. Proposition (d) entails:

(e) "The man who will get the job has ten coins in his pocket" (*ibid*).

Gettier went on to say that "let us suppose that Smith sees the entailment from (d) to (e), and accepts (e) on the grounds of (d), for which he has strong evidence. In this case, Smith is clearly justified in believing that (e) is true" (*ibid*). In other words, Smith's justification of his believe that proposition (e) is true is based on his deduction from proposition (d), "which in turn he is justified in based on the two evidences" (Jose & Mabaquiao 2018: 144). But the Gettier further ask us to imagine that:

> Unknown to Smith, he himself, not Jones, will get the job. And, also, unknow to Smith, he himself has ten coins in his pocket. Proposition (e) is then true, though proposition (d), from which Smith inferred proposition (e) is false. In our example, then, all of the following are true: (i) (e) is true, (ii) Smith believes that (e) is true, and (iii) Smith is justified in believing that (e) is true. But it is equally clear that Smith does not *know* that (e) is true; for (e) is true in virtue of the number of coins in Smith's pocket, while Smith does not know how many coins are in Smith's pocket, and bases his belief in (e) on a count of the coins in Jones's pocket, whom he falsely believes to be the man who will get the job (1963: 122).

The second of these counterexamples or case goes as follows:

He says, "let us suppose that Smith has strong evidence for the following proposition" (Gettier 1963: 122).

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[14] Noah Lemos in his book *An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (2007) gave some explanatory examples: "Suppose, for example, you are justified in believing that it is noon. You are justified because you have just looked at your watch around midday and it says that it is noon. But suppose that, unbeknownst to you, your watch stopped working at noon and it is now 12:30. Given your evidence, your belief is justified but false. Again, I might be justified in believing that the person I see going into the library is Lisa. I am justified because the person I see looks, dresses, and behaves just like Lisa. But suppose that, unbeknownst to me, Lisa has an identical twin and the person I see is not Lisa, but her twin. My belief that the person I saw was Lisa is false, but justified" (2007: 14).

(f) "Jones owns a Ford."[15]

To this he explains that:

> Smith's evidence might be that Jones has at all times in the past within Smith's memory owned a car, and always a Ford, and that Jones has just offered Smith a tide while driving a Ford. Let us imagine, now, that Smith has another friend, Brown, of whose whereabouts he is totally ignorant. Smith selects three place names quite at random and constructs the following three propositions (Gettier 1963: 122):
>
> (g) Either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Boston.
> (h) Either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Barcelona.
> (i) Either Jones owns a Ford, or Brown is in Brest-Litovsk.[16]

To the above Gettier asserts that the propositions above are entailed by (f). To this he says

> Imagine that Smith realizes the entailment of each of these propositions he has constructed by (0, and proceeds to accept (g), (h), and (i) on the basis of (f). Smith has correctly inferred (g), (h), and (i) from a proposition for which he has strong evidence. Smith is therefore completely justified in believing each of these three propositions. Smith, of course, has no idea where Brown is (Gettier 1963: 122).

He further remarks:

> But imagine now that two further conditions hold. First, Jones does not own a Ford, but is at present driving a rented car. And secondly, by the sheerest coincidence, and entirely unknow to Smith, the place mentioned in proposition (h) happens really to be the place where Brown is. If these two conditions hold, then Smith does not KNOW that (h) is true, even though (i) (h) is true, (ii) Smith does believe that (h) is true, and (iii) Smith is justified in believing that (h) is true (Gettier 1963: 123).

After his analysis of *justified true belief* (JTB) using two cases, he concludes that these two examples show that *justified true belief* "does not state a sufficient condition for someone's knowing a given proposition. The same cases, with appropriate changes, will suffice to show that neither" Neither Chisholm's definition nor Ayer's definition do so (1963: 123). His argument against *justified true belief* (JTB) was later known as "the Gettier Problem."

After Gettier formulated his two counter examples or cases, epistemologists have made several attempts to respond to the Gettier problems. Allan Hazlett provided a summary of some of the philosophers that to responded to the problem. He explicit that:

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[15] Gettier (1963: 122).

[16] *Ibid.*

Some (Clark 1963) argued that knowledge cannot be derived from a false premise; others (Lehrer and Paxson 1969) argued that knowledge requires indefeasible justification; others (Goldman 1967) argued that knowledge must be caused by the truth of the proposition known; others (Stine 1967; Goldman 1976; Dretske 1981, Chapter 4) argued that knowledge requires the elimination of relevant alternatives; others (Nozick 1981, Chap. 3; Sosa 1999; Williamson 2000) argued that knowledge requires sensitivity (that you would not believe that p, were it not true that p) or safety (that you would not easily believe falsely that p). Externalist theories of knowledge flourished during this period—where these are (roughly) those that allow necessary conditions on knowledge (apart from the truth condition) the obtaining of which may be (in some sense) inaccessible to the knower (Hazlett 2015: 2; see also Jose and Mabaquiao 2018: 115).

The foregoing empistemologists attempt to resolve the Gettier problem, "all made use of the strategy whereby the conditions of knowledge are modified in order to accommodate the Gettier cases" (Jose and Mabaquiao 2018: 115). Joseph Martin M. Jose and Napoleon M. Mabaquiao, Jr. explain that there are strategies "whereby Gettier's assumptions are put into question. They include approaches that reject the Principles of Deductive Closure and the assumption that we can be justified in believing a false proposition" (2018: 115).

According to Dancy, Gettier only exposed the defect in the tripartite analysis. To explicate and respond to Gettier's counter-examples Dancy explains that Gettier "is not quarrelling with any of the three clauses. He allows that they are individually necessary, and argues only that they need supplementing" (1985: 25). And in this case "once we know what is missing, it should be quite a simple matter to add it" (*ibid*: 27). In his explanation of the "The Presence of Relevant Falsehood", Dancy explains that:

> The most obvious diagnosis is simply that the initial belief that *p*, from which the true justified belief that *q* is inferred, is false. So we might add to the tripartite analysis the fourth condition that nothing can be known which is inferred from a false belief, or from nothing can be known which is inferred from a false belief, or from a group of beliefs of which one is false (1985: 27).

He further elucidates that:

> This simple suggestion has two defects. First, variants on the Gettier them can be written in which, though there is falsehood, there is no inference. Suppose that I believe that there is a sheep in the next field because of what I see. I am not inferring from what I see that there is a sheep in the field; I take myself simply to see that there is one. The animal I see in a large furry dog, but my belief is not false, because there is a sheep there too, unknow to me, hidden by the hedge. Here we might admit that my belief is true and justified but refuse to grant that I know there to be a sheep in the field (Dancy 1985: 27).

Dancy went further to talk about different approaches like defeasibility, reliability and the causal theory to diagnose the Gettier counter-examples. Similarly, Linda Zagzebski argues that "given

the common and reasonable assumption that the relation between justification and truth is close but no inviolable, it is not possible for either move to avoid Gettier counter-examples" (1994: 65). After series of examples to justify her position and to show that Gettier problems "can be avoided if there is no degree of independence at all between truth and justification", in the end she asserts that "Gettier cases will never go away" (Zagzebski 1994: 72–73). This is evident in the title of her article and the introduction where she specified that "Gettier problems are inescapable for virtually every analysis of knowledge which at least maintains that knowledge is true belief plus something else" (Zagzebski 1994: 65).

Therefore, it is because of the Gettier problems that epistemologists decided to reconsider and evaluate the tradition definition of knowledge. A result of this reconsideration and evaluation is the internalism and externalism (I-E) debate. This is one among the many burning issues in contemporary epistemology.

1.3.3.2. Two Analysis of Knowledge[17]

For years, the internalism-externalism (I-E) debates in contemporary epistemology have captured the attention of many epistemologists. Internalists hold that for a belief to be justified, the subject must have direct cognitive access to the belief. While externalists hold that things outside the subject's mind can affect the justificatory status of the subject's belief. Many internalists are driven by the demand of reasons, while many externalists are driven by the demand of truth. Several epistemologists have attempted to rectify and reconcile issues in the debates, but despite these attempts disagreements still remain between the internalists and externalists as to whether grounds of justifying beliefs are internal or external. Michael Bergmann argues that "there is no clear and accurate statement of the fundamental disagreements" at the heart of the debate (1997: 399) as the terms 'internalism' and 'externalism' have been used loosely and in many ways within epistemology. Nevertheless, both internalists and externalists share one thing in common; the concern with the nature and grounds of evaluative epistemic properties, especially justification (Turri 2009: 147).

The debate between 'internalism and externalism' in contemporary epistemology is complex and I do not intend to go into the details. It is worth noting that in contemporary epistemology more than one debate goes by the label 'internalism vs externalism', but all are concerned with the

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[17] This is from Matthias Steup (2012) work titled "The Analysis of Knowledge".

nature and grounds of evaluative epistemic properties, especially justification. Epistemologists generally agree that epistemic justification and truth are important and that there is a constitutive relation between the two. Laurence Bonjour states that "if finding epistemically justified beliefs did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth" (1985: 8). This is to say the epistemic justification of a belief essentially aims at truth.

Internalism is the epistemological position concerned not only with the idea that one knows something, but with the idea that one is aware of that thing on the basis of which one knows. In this case, the epistemic subject needs to be aware of the reasonable grounds for his/her knowledge claim. Steup offers the following account of what internalism is:

> What makes an account of justification internalist is that it imposes a certain condition on those factors that determine whether a belief is justified…. The condition requires [such factors] to be *internal to the subject's mind or, to* put it differently, *accessible on reflection* (1996: 84).

From the forgoing quote, it is observable that internalism can be characterized as "accessibilist" internalism or "access internalism", the view that justification is determined by considerations that the subjects have reflective access to. In other words, access internalism, in this sense, is that the justificatory factors must be reflectively accessible to the person. Reflective access, in this sense, means that one is always in a position to know something by reflection in order to justify a particular thing. One knows some proposition *p* only if one can become aware by reflection of one's knowledge basis for *p*.

Externalism is the negation of internalism. In other words, externalism is defined simply as the denial of internalism. According to Greco, "Externalism in epistemology holds that *some* factors that are relevant to epistemic status are not internal to the believer's perspective" (2005: 258). Externalists hold that justification for one's belief is not a matter of how things stand with one psychologically, but rather, a matter of how one's belief is related and determined by at least factors that are external to the person. A popular externalist view is *reliabilism*—here justification is basically an issue of the reliability of the process that led to the belief. In other words, reliabilism is "the view that a belief is epistemically justified if it results from a cognitive process that is (sufficiently) reliable in producing true beliefs" (Bonjour 2010: 34; Goldman 1980). If we look at this view, we can see that one guiding insight is that justification relates one's belief to the external world in a way that guarantees that the beliefs are possibly true.

Below are the analysis of internal justification and external justification:

"**External Knowledge (EK)**:
S knows that *p* iff

    i. *p* is true;
    ii. *S* believes that *p*;
    iii. *S* is externally justified in believing that *p* (in a way that degettierizes *S's* belief)" (Steup 2012 § 7).

"**Internal Knowledge (IK)**:
S knows that *p* iff

    i. *p* is true;
    ii. *S* believes that *p*;
    iii. *S* is internally justified in believing that *p*;
    iv. *S's* belief that *p* is degettiered" (Steup 2012 § 7).

According to Steup External knowledge and Internal knowledge agree and differ in the following respects:

    a. According to both EK and IK, knowledge requires true belief. The question each of these analyses is intended to answer is: what do we need to add to true belief to get knowledge?
    b. According to both, whether or not one knows is an external matter. K-internalists acknowledge the externality of knowledge for two reasons. The first is that knowledge requires truth; the second is that knowledge requires degettierization. Let us consider each of these reasons in turn (Steup 2012 § 7).

The problem of what knowledge is, what constitutes knowledge, and how to acquire knowledge constitutes one of the most problematic discussion among different epistemologists. Nevertheless, this quest as to what knowledge is, what it constitutes and how to acquire it has effectively apportioned epistemologist into different schools of thoughts to combat this problem. In Western epistemological thought, these schools include rationalism, empiricism, foundationalism, scepticism, coherentism, internalism, externalism, conherentism, contextualism and others. It also goes to say that there are forms of knowledge in Western epistemology. Examples of these are: rational knowledge, empirical knowledge, intuitive knowledge, perceptual knowledge, inferential knowledge, analytical knowledge, common sense knowledge, mystical knowledge, and many other forms of knowledge. It should be noted that there is more to Western epistemology than I have discussed above. My intention is not to go into details, but to highlight what epistemology is and its origin. Hence here ends my discussion of Western

epistemology. I will present a more detailed argument of internalism and externalism more in chapter six.

1.4. African Epistemology

Like Western epistemology, African epistemology engages with the nature and concept of knowledge, and the limit of human knowledge. African epistemology includes the African conception of the nature of knowledge, the ways in which knowledge can be gained, the ways in which one can justify an epistemic claim or validate a knowledge claim, and the role that knowledge plays in human existence. According to Anselm Kole Jimoh and John Thomas, "African epistemology deals with what the African means and understands when he makes a knowledge claim. This consists of how the African sees or talks about reality" (2015: 55). African epistemology is essentially rooted in African ontology. African ontology has to do with African traditional thoughts, African experience and cultural view of reality. Godfrey O. Ozumba in his book, *A Concise Introduction to Epistemology,* defines African Epistemology as "Africa's way of carrying out its inquiries into the nature, scope and limits of knowledge" (2001: 171). And according to Egbeke Aja, African epistemology is concerned mostly with the possibility of ascertaining whether or not what is claimed as knowledge is actually knowledge rather than mistaken opinion on the one hand, and the means of or sources of acquiring knowledge, on the other hand (1993: 75). In line with this John defined African epistemology "as the unique and peculiar way employed by the African in his investigation of the origin, nature, scope and limits or knowledge" (2009: 163).

1.4.1. The Nature of African Epistemology

Subairi Nasseem argues that starting-point of African epistemology, "traditionally speaking should be the premise, 'we are, therefore I am'. The African philosophy is a collective mind and for the African, 'I' pre-supposes a 'We', in fact 'I' is contingent upon 'We'" (2003: 261). According to Khaphagawani and Malherbe, "to assert the existence of African philosophy is to also imply the existence of an African epistemology, to the extent that an African epistemology is a subset of African philosophy" (2003: 219). They reason that since African philosophy encompasses other forms or types of philosophizing, it is reasonable to talk of an African epistemology, just as it is reasonable to talk of African ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Using ethnophilosophical approach to explain African epistemology, they argue that ethnophilosophers

observe features of a culture like language and religious ceremonies, for signs to its philosophical structures, and so also its epistemology. They further argue that although epistemology as the study of knowledge is universal, the ways of attaining knowledge vary based on the socio-cultural contexts within which knowledge claims are formulated and articulated. It is from this view that one can answer the question of what does it mean to regard epistemology as African? In other words, it would be reasonable to speak of an African articulation and formulation of knowledge by considering the socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, there exists a unique African epistemology, and it "does not deny that there are significant variations among the many cultures in African" (*ibid*). Using the example of the socio-cultural contexts, Khaphagawani and Malherbe further argue that the method of justifying epistemic claims is based on one's socio-cultural interaction with others.

According to Molefe K. Asante, "there are several elements in the mind of Africa that govern how humans behave with regard to reality: the practicality of wholism, the prevalence of poly-consciousness, the idea of inclusiveness, the unity of worlds, and the value of personal relationships" (2000: 2). Knowing that African epistemology is rooted in African ontology, it is important to underscore that epistemological view of traditional Africa is in harmony with her metaphysics. It is within this context that we become aware that knowledge in African epistemology is the understanding of the nature of forces and their interaction with the cosmic. As Tempels explained, knowledge "lies in ontological knowledge; it is the intelligence of forces, of their hierarchy, their cohesion and their interaction" (1969: 73). Anyanwu clearly explains this when he writes:

> We must know the basic assumptions, concepts, theories and worldview in terms of which the owners of the culture interpret the facts of experience. Without the knowledge of the African mind process and the worldview into which the facts of experience are to be fitted both the African and European researchers would merely impute emotive appeals to cultural forms and behaviour suggested by some unknown mind (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 77).

The protagonists of African epistemology, like Placide Tempels, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher Anyanwu, Anselm Kole Jimoh, Amaechi Udefi based their arguments for a distinctive or unique African epistemology on the premise or proposition "that each race is endowed with a distinctive nature and embodies in its civilization a particular spirit" (Udefi 2014: 112; see also Irele 1981: 70). Moreover, their idea of African epistemology is based on "their (its protagonists) acceptance that such concepts as knowledge, truth, rationality can be interpreted using African categories and concepts as provided by the cultural experience

without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual framework" (Udefi 2014: 108). According to Anyanwu, the idea of African epistemology is a way the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience (1983: 60). The African concept of knowledge is embedded in African ontology, culture, tradition and religion. It is said that we cannot separate the culture, tradition and religion of a community and their experiences, because they are part of their existence. The African concept of knowledge or epistemology "deals with what the African means and understands when he makes a knowledge claim. This consists of how the African sees or talks about reality" (Jimoh and Thomas 2015: 55). When considering reality from the perspective of African culture, it comprises both the physical and the metaphysical or spiritual. For instance, within the Yoruba dialect, "*Olodumare* is the origin and ground of all that is" (Idowu 1962: 17). In other words, the Yoruba people conceive reality as that which emanates from *Olodumare*. *Olodumare* is said to be the arch-divinity. He is thought to exist eternally, and he is the one who determines the essence of a being.

In line with the foregoing, Barry Hallen and J. O. Sodipo attempt to explicate the difference between knowledge and belief. They argue that the Yorubas make a distinction between knowledge and belief. According to them, on the one hand, *imo* is gotten through first-hand information, observation and sense-experience. *Imo* can be subjected to verification, confirmation and falsification. *Igbagbo* on the other hand is obtained through second-hand information, but could later become *imo* after some empirical testing. Similarly, in some cases, Jimoh argues that "the traditional African would rather ask for the testimony [information or verification] of a third party to settle the difference" (2017: 129). Knowledge in Yoruba is based on sensory perception, mainly visual perception (i.e *irirn*) of the external world. In other words, what someone sees, when conjoined with cognitive activities or mind (i.e *eriokon*) like understand, comprehension, consciousness, judgment, and proposition pertaining such experience are regarded as true (i.e *ooto*) (Hallen 1998a: 832; see also Udefi 2014: 111). This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

African concept of knowledge is built on African ontology that treats the divide between the object and subject as two aspects of the same reality. This means that Africans do not detach themselves from the object to be known, but rather fuse themselves with the object in a co-operative relationship. By this fusion, the knowing subject and the known object become one. Anyanwu and Ruch express this point lucidly when they say that:

The African maintains that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches himself from it. Bear in mind that the African, a life-force, is not a passive spectator of the universe but an active participator of the life-events. So, he operates with the logic of aesthetics which holds that the whole the real. Knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time. Only through this method does he claim to have the knowledge of the other. So, the method through which the African arrives at the trust-worthy knowledge of reality (God, man, spirit, society, social facts etc…) is intuitive and personal experience (1981: 94).

Udefi further supports this point when he states that there is a kind of interdependence and interpenetration of the self (man) and the external world. This means that what happens to the one happens to the other (2014: 112). Similarly, Martin Ajei explains that "due to the belief in the existence of a universal active force that derives from *Onyame,* the Akan thinker can legitimately be held to conceive of being or nature as one" (2009: 30). Like all categories of being, human beings in this ontology, by virtue of the species of *sunsum* in them, of the being of *Onyame*. Thus, we cannot plausibly separate being (as matter) from being (as consciousness). Being, in this case, is understood as being wholeness (*ibid*).

According to Udefi, the Tempelsian notion of vital force is echoed in the epistemology implicit in Léopold Sédar Senghor's negritude[18] – a term coined by Aimé Césaire. Both Senghor and Césaire regarded negritude "as representing in a functional sense, the effort of the Negro-African to recover for himself and for Africans in Diaspora, a self-pride and confidence shattered for centuries by the adventure of the colonizer and the resulting political and cultural devaluation" (Udefi 2014: 109). Senghor (2001), in his work "*Negritude and Modernity or Negritude as a Humanism for the Twentieth Century*" explains Negritude as a "philosophy that postulates a cultural action adapted to the spiritual and sociological conditions of the black man" (quoted in Wolfers 1979: 144)[19]. He is not too consistent in his definition of the concept. In one instance, it is regarded as "a metaphysics of a black identity, an African personality and a black soul," in

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[18] "Central to the concept of negritude is the idea of suffering through servitude, either directly through slavery or indirectly through colonization" (Wolfers 1979: 27). Césaire and Senghor both experienced the sufferings of racial segregation as young students. Hence, for them, there was a need for awakening the black person as a process of converting the victims into consciousness of reshaping their destiny. Aimé Césaire's idea of negritude was basically originated in history, and it was one of bitterness and discomfort. Thus, Negritude for Césaire is "the sum of the cultural values of the black world as expressed in the life, the institutions, and the works of black men; the sum of the values of the civilization of the black world" (Wolfers 1979: 44).

[19] Senghor further explains that Negritude has a double meaning: "subjective and objective, particular and universal, topical and eternal" (Senghor 2001: 144). "Objectively, as a civilization, Negritude is the totality of values; not only those of the peoples of black African, but also of the black minorities of America, or even of Asia or the South Sea Islands…Subjectively, Negritude is a will to take on the values of the black world, to live them oneself, after having impregnated and actualized them, but also to make them live in and through others" (Senghor 2001: 144).

another instance, it designates "a kind of epistemological anthropology and political philosophy" (Udefi 2014: 109; see also Wiredu 1998a: 98).

Senghor renounces the metaphysical dualism that grounds modern Cartesian epistemology. Modern epistemology separates the knowing subject from the object or knowledge. This means that; the knowing subject, that is not connected to the object, the thing known, is like a bystander of sorts, bearing no affective closeness or relation to the object of knowledge. In African epistemology "man and nature are not two separate independent and opposing realities but the one inseparable continuum of a hierarchical order"[20] (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 87). In other words, man (subject) and nature (object), in traditional African epistemology are seen as [one] an inseparable continuum. This means that there is a close existing relationship between man and nature. Man and nature are united, and in their unity, both co-operate and partake in the same locus without being opposites (Jimoh & Thomas: 2015: 56). This is why Anyanwu claims there is knowledge in this co-operation. According to him:

> Knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time. Only through this method does he claim to have the knowledge of the other. So, the method through which the African arrives at trustworthy knowledge of reality…is intuitive and personal experience (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 94).

There cannot be knowledge of reality if the subject detaches itself from the object. The subject is continuously involved. In this knowing process, the subject is not only seeing and thinking, but also experiencing and discovering the object. There can be no knowledge of the object without the subject entering into experience with the object. Nasseem captures this better when he explains that "the cognitive process is not complete without the experiential. The self of the subject and the objective world outside of the self are really one" (2003: 265). The former (subject) 'vivifies or animates' the latter (object), as Nasseem puts it.

Anyanwu talks about African epistemology in terms of culture, belief and experience. He asserts that "the beliefs in God, divinities, spirit, ancestor, livingdead, etc…. are beliefs of some people about certain things. If these beliefs have any meaning, value and justification, they must have

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[20] As a result of this inseparable continuum in African epistemology, Nasseem asserts that ontologically, the idea of dualism could not be postulated on the African philosophic tradition. He explains the "the African seeks for the ego a centrality in the cosmic scheme in order to avoid the embarrassment of dualism and monism – be it idealist or materialist" (2003: 264). Therefore, the notions of subjectivism or objectivism do not constitute any problem in African epistemology, according to Nasseem. "The possibility of their emergence is subsumed under the unity of existence" (*ibid*).

arisen from human experience and must be products of culture" (Anyanwu 1981: 82). To further clarify his point, he explains what he means by culture. According to him, culture is a human response to experience, beliefs and ideas which enables human beings to live meaningful lives (*ibid*). Reality for him refers to objects of experience and thought. These objects could be natural objects, events, religious beliefs, thought itself, myths, language, social institutions and artistic products. He further explains that thought refers "to a conscious activity which handles the objects of thought or reality" (*ibid*). He sees thought as something that modifies, synthesizes, analyses and organises language, religious beliefs, events etc. He, therefore, asserts that African beliefs and knowledge about reality are the products of human experience, and the theories of such beliefs and knowledge must be the product of logical reflection (*ibid*: 83).

According to Aja, "the problem of knowledge in traditional African thought is that of ascertaining whether or not what is claimed as knowledge is actually knowledge rather than mistaken opinion on the one hand, and the means or source of acquiring the knowledge on the other" (1993: 75). In his opinion, it means there is confusion between knowledge and the source of knowledge in African epistemology. Ruch and Anyanwu lucidly clarify the confusion between knowledge and the source of knowledge when they assert that, "knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (1984: 94). This means the cooperation of both knowledge and the source of knowledge in the process of knowing. In this knowing process, the subject is not only seeing and thinking, but also experiencing and discovering the object.

Having discussed both Western and African epistemology, it is evident that there are some differences in both epistemologies. According to Elijah Okon John, "African epistemology has everything in common with what is ascribed to Western epistemology except its Africanness" (2009: 163). Tempels and Senghor also subscribe to this view. One very important aspect of the Africanness, which the protagonists of African epistemology firmly hold, is the ascription of knowledge to collective subjects – such as community and family lineage – while the Western epistemologists ascribe knowledge to the individual. As I have revealed in the discussion of Western epistemology, regarding knowledge, the philosophy of the individual is all that matters. And apparently, it is different from that of the African epistemologist, because according to them the collective is all that matters. This is evident in Kwame Gyekye's view that knowledge is determined by the socio-cultural milieu, environmental background, the specific period of time and space in which people live in (Ani 2013: 301; Gyekye 1987a). Thus, in African

epistemology "the philosophy of the individual thinker cannot be divorced from the idea current among the people" (*ibid*; Gyekye 1987a: 25). Ajei supports this claim when he explains that in African epistemology, an individual is insufficient to attain knowledge alone without doing so in a social context (2007: 191). In line with the idea of the individual of Western epistemologists and the idea of the collective of African epistemologists, the idea of subjectivism and objectivism constitute a major problem in Western epistemology while in African epistemology it does not constitute a problem.

Western epistemologists consider knowledge as scientifically-based (science is seen as having utmost authority as observed from Descartes discussion), while African epistemologists tend to consider knowledge as more of a culture-based epistemology. Stephen Theron (1995: 16) in his work titled *African, Philosophy and the Western Tradition,* interestingly contends that rationality is common to humans, but Westerners developed this first. In his view, Western rationality views and judgement are supreme and universal as seen in Descartes' method of doubt. Against this idea, Gyekye notes that rationality is essentially a cultural phenomenon that reflects the cultural experience and background of people (1987a: 25; Ani 2013: 301). This simply shows that rationality is many-sided (Foucault 1970; Gyekye 1987a; Nel 2005; Langdon 2009). And according to Philip Nel, "rationality and truth are related to local conditions and are culture-bound, and it is a myth that truth claimed by the Western world is free from preconditions, historical locality, and non-political" (2005: 8).

It is also worth noting that, given that the term African epistemology is often understood as the way in which "the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience" (Udefi 2014: 108; see also Anyanwu 1983: 60). The idea here is that philosophical concepts can be interpreted using African categories and concepts "provided by the African cultural experience without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual framework" (Udefi 2014: 108). Some African philosophers and scholars, as well as the protagonists of African epistemology, like Léopold Sédar Senghor (1956, 1959, 1964a, 1964b, 1965), Innocent C. Onyewuenyi (1976, 1980, 1991, 1993), Christopher Anyanwu (1981, 1983), Ejikemeuwa J. O. Ndubisi (2014), Elijah Okon John (2009) and Andrew F. Uduigwomen (2009) and many others proposed that there is a way of knowing that is uniquely African. They believe that every people or culture has its own way of conceptualizing, interpreting and apprehending reality based on its own experience. Hence, they believe that Africans have their own forms of knowledge. Examples of the forms of knowledge specified by these scholars, the likes of

Anyanwu, John, Ndubisi, Uduigwomen and others not previously mentioned, are: rational knowledge, empirical knowledge, inferential knowledge, intuitive knowledge, oral tradition, old age knowledge, perceptual knowledge, common sense knowledge, mystical knowledge, wholistic/holistic knowledge, and many other forms of knowledge. I will discuss in detail some of these forms of knowledge in the next chapter.

Thus, from the above discussion on African epistemology, it is undeniable that though epistemology is about the study of knowledge, the means by which people acquire knowledge vary from one environment or society to another, as specified by the protagonists of African epistemology. All the above claims will be further discussed as I proceed with my discussion in the thesis.

1.5. The Problem of African Epistemology

The discussion on African epistemology in this chapter has clearly shown that the protagonists of African epistemologists believe that there is a unique African epistemology (African mode of knowing that is social, wholistic and situated within Africa), and that their method of justifying their epistemic claims is based on their knowledge of the external. They argue that there is an interdependence of the self (human) and the external world. It follows that knowledge and justification of claims come from the external world. The protagonists of African epistemology aim to show there is a unique African epistemology, but fail to acknowledge that their arguments and grounds of epistemic justification are both internal and external. Although some do acknowledge that knowledge comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences, as man sees, feels, imagines, reasons, or thinks and intuits all at the same time, but they fail to clearly argue how both the internalist and externalist notion of epistemic justification is crucial to the task of epistemic justification in African epistemology. To advance the argument in support of my position I will consider the works of Placide Tempels, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher K. Anyanwu, Amaechi Udefi, Anselm Kole Jimoh, Godfrey Ozumba and Jonathan O. Chimakonam.

Drawing from the arguments of the protagonists of African epistemology (Placide Tempels, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher K. Anyanwu and Anselm Kole Jimoh), I think that within African epistemology there is a knowledge-gap on the justification of belief and epistemic claims. The knowledge-gap here is that the advocates of African epistemology neglect some essentials issues when it comes to epistemic justification. They want

to neglect the idea that both the internal and external idea of justification is needed in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification. This is because externalism complements internalism.[21] Hence, both the internal and external notions of epistemic justification are crucial to the task of epistemic justification in African epistemology.

Simply put; there are two problems with the idea of African epistemology from the foregoing. The first problem lies in the emphases on a unique African epistemology (African mode of knowing that is social, wholistic and situated within Africa). This claim is problematic since all human beings share some certain basic values and perceptions irrespective of one's origin, and these actually foster some forms of interaction between people of different nationalities. And Africans like people from other continents share certain common values, perceptions, and interaction with the rest of the world. These basic values, perceptions and interaction that Africans share with the rest of the word prompted them to attempt to "modernize" their societies or develop some forms of their tradition in harmony with the ethos of the contemporary world. Jimoh rightly notes that "there have been changes in contemporary times in the epistemological tradition of African thought. These changes have basically been in two modes": the first is "those due to the internal dynamics of the thoughts system and only accentuated by elements of acculturation" and the second is "changes brought about the introduction of paradigm alien to the ontological base of the African worldview" (2017: 127–128).

It is true that human knowledge must be social, situated or generated from within a culture, but the underlining truth is no cultural tradition has historically been devoid of knowledge of other cultural traditions. Some works by Africans were assimilated by the Westerners. Edward Shils explains that "the laying open of Africa to explorers and colonizers was followed by the bringing back to Europe of works of African art which were assimilated into and changed greatly the tradition of European painting and sculpture" (1981: 260). Similarly, the protagonists of African epistemology had also borrowed some concepts and ideas from the Westerners to enhance their concepts and expand their knowledge. And this brings about the idea of change, which includes intellectual transition from the traditional past to the present. To this, Wiredu writes:

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[21] This can be simply explained as follows: "what one perceives (through the senses) is later processed and perhaps retained by the mind, thereby making it possible for the person to recollect what was previously presented to him or her, and this seems to guarantee the continued existence of physical objects even when they are not being perceived" (Ogungbure 2014: 51).

> Contemporary Africa is in the middle of the transition from a **traditional** to a **modern** society. This process of modernisation entails changes not only in the physical environment but also in the mental outlook of our peoples, manifested both in their explicit beliefs and in their customs and their ordinary daily habits and pursuits. Since the fundamental rationale behind any changes in a world outlook is principally a philosophical matter, it is plain that the philosophical evaluation of our traditional thought is of very consideration relevance to the process of modernisation on our continent (1980: x)

Wiredu's argument above refers to the idea of change in Africa, from traditional to modern. This is a process of modernisation. Based on the above ideas, it would be interesting to investigate if such (African) epistemology still remains unique.

The second problem lies in the fact that the advocates of African epistemology neglect some essentials when it comes to epistemic justification. For years, the internalism-externalism (I-E) debates in contemporary epistemology have captured the attention of many epistemologists.[22] Roughly speaking, internalists hold that for a belief to be justified the subject must have direct cognitive access to the belief. While externalists hold that things outside the subject's mind can affect the justificatory status of the subject's belief. We can infer from this, that many internalists are driven by the demand of reasons, while many externalists are driven by the demand of truth. Many epistemologists have attempted to rectify and reconcile issues in the debates, but despite these attempts the disagreements between the internalists and externalists as to whether grounds of justifying beliefs are internal or external still remain.[23] Michael Bergmann argues that "there is no clear and accurate statement of the fundamental disagreements" at the heart of the debate (1997: 399), as the terms 'internalism' and 'externalism' have been used loosely and in many ways within epistemology. But both internalists and externalists share one thing in common; a concern with the nature and grounds of evaluative epistemic properties, especially justification (Turri 2009: 147).

The internalism and externalism debate in contemporary epistemology, when considered in relation to discussions on African epistemology, we can observe that most of the protagonists of African epistemology's[24] ways of justifying their beliefs, knowledge claims and knowledge of reality are based on the view and perspective of the externalist. In the protagonists' pursuit of understanding reality from an externalist perspective, they fail to clearly recognize the internalist

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[22] Contemporary debate on these dates roughly from Goldman (1979, 1980) and Bonjour (1980).

[23] See Sosa 1991; Kim 1993; Bergmann 1997; Marvan 2006.

perspective. I suggest that the failure to clearly recognize the internalist view and perspective is due to the the claim by advocates of African epistemology to hold a holistic form of knowledge. I think that they do have an idea about the internalist perspective, but because they want to show that their justification of knowledge is externally based and a holistic notion of epistemic justification they choose not to actively recognize or acknowledge internalism. Thus, it will be right to say that internalism was passively recognized or acknowledge. We can say that at a particular point the advocates of African epistemology were driven by the demand of reasons, the idea that they know something and are aware of that thing on the basis of which they know, but their immense emphasis on the environment, and justification of their knowledge claims that based on the external prompted them to side-lining the internal. In this case the epistemic subject needs to be aware of the reasonable grounds for his or her knowledge claim.

For the protagonists of African epistemology, the justification is *entirely* an external matter, one that has to do with their environment—things we can see. Perhaps the worry is that by clearly and actively recognizing internalism their idea of holism in African tradition would be distorted, since they believe that justification is entirely external. In this case, what they failed to realise is the fact that if they clearly recognize, acknowledge and accept the internalist perspective, and combine it with that of the externalist, they will still achieve their aim which is to illustrate that the African way of knowing is holistic. My reason for this claim is: I reason both the internalist and externalist basis of justification is needed in African epistemology in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.[25]

The forgoing problems led me to two conclusions: firstly, hiding under the shell of a unique African epistemology and the emphasis by the protagonists of African epistemology on the uniqueness of African epistemology, the idea of a unique African epistemology has actually restricted them from embracing the broader perspectives of epistemology. The broader perspectives are the importance of knowledge and the justification of knowledge. Secondly, since it is evident that the protagonists' method of justifying their epistemic claims is based on their knowledge of the external, I am inclined to think that both the internal and external notion of justification is needed in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.

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[25] See Ogungbure, 2014.

It is evident from the above, that the African concept or theory of knowledge postulates a cultural, social, wholistic, situated notion of knowledge and grounds for justifying beliefs or epistemic claims is external. Thus, this thesis is approached in the light of the idea that there is a way of knowing that is uniquely African. Since all human beings share some certain basic values and perceptions irrespective of their origin(s), I set out to investigate if such an African epistemology or ways of knowing is still unique to African. In the next chapter I will discuss the forms of knowledge in African epistemology.

1.6.   Conclusion

As explained in the introduction, the aim of this chapter is to explain the nature and the basis of African epistemology. This was achieved by discussing various literatures of Western and African epistemology or theory of knowledge. In section 1.2, I discussed what epistemology is. In section 1.3, I discussed Western epistemology, and I restricted my discussion to the views of Plato, Rene Descartes, John Locke and David Hume. In 1.3.1., I discussed ancient philosophy. In sub-secton 1.3.2. I discussed modern philosophy. Here I focus on the works of Descartes, Locke and Hume. In subsection 1.3.3, I discussed comtemporay philosophy. More specifically, I focused on justified true belief and Gettier problems, and the two analysis of knowledge (internalism and externalism). In section 1.4, I briefly defined and explained African epistemology. In the susequent, section 1.4.1, I discussed the nature of African epistemology in light with the ideas of the Protagonists of African epistemology. And in that section, I specified some of the differences between Western and African epistemology. This section led me to the conclusion in section 1.5, which was the main aim of the thesis, the problem of African epistemology.

Chapter Two

2. Source of knowledge

2.1.   Introduction

The term African epistemology is generally understood as the way in which "the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience" (Udefi 2014: 108; see also Anyanwu 1983: 60). The idea here is that philosophical concepts can be interpreted using African categories and concepts "provided by the African cultural experience without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual framework" (Udefi 2014: 108). Some African philosophers and scholars, as well as protagonists of African epistemology, like Léopold Sédar Senghor (1956, 1959, 1964a, 1964b, 1965), Innocent C. Onyewuenyi (1976, 1980, 1991, 1993), Christopher Anyanwu (1981, 1983), Ejikemeuwa J. O. Ndubisi (2014), Elijah Okon John (2009) and Andrew F. Uduigwomen (2009) and many others proposed a way of knowing that is uniquely African. They believe that every people or culture has its own way of conceptualizing, interpreting and apprehending reality based on its own experience. Thus, their argument is based on the idea that Africans conceptualize, interpret and apprehend knowledge differently from the Western.

In the first section of this chapter, I attempt to identify and explain some forms of knowledge in African epistemology, according to certain African philosophers and scholars. What these forms of knowledge in African epistemology attest to, is the idea that there exist certain forms of knowledge that are uniquely and specifically African. My second aim in this chapter is to contest the idea that these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African. This I will achieve by demostrating that the prefix 'African' added to the idea of epistemology does not really make any difference, and that some forms of knowledge in African epistemology are the same or similar to those in Western epistemology, which defeats the idea of specific and unique forms of knowledge in Africa. In other words, the existense of these forms of knowledge in Western epistemology defeats the idea of the forms of knowledge being culturally relative. It is important to note that this relationship between the forms of knowledge in African and Western epistemologies alerts us to the idea of our common humanity; the universality of epistemology.

2.2.   Forms of Knowledge in African Epistemology: Introduction

As specified in the introduction, in this section I attempt to explain the forms of knowledge in African epistemology. According to Ejikemeuwa J. O. Ndubisi (2014), Elijah Okon John (2009) and Andrew F. Uduigwomen (2009) there are different forms of knowledge in African epistemology. These forms of knowledge, according to Francis Etim, can also be called types or sources of knowledge (2013: 128). It is noteworthy that in chapter one, section 1.4.1, I highlighted eleven forms of knowledge in African epistemology, but I will limit myself to five forms of knowledge. My reasons for this are, firstly, they are connected to the other forms of knowledge in African epistemology. The five forms of knowledge in African epistemology I shall discuss are: old age knowledge, perceptual knowledge, common sense knowledge, mystical knowledge, and wholistic/holistic knowledge. Secondly, the above scholars consider these forms of knowing as highly significant and unique to Africans. The above are the sources or forms of knowledge acquisition in African traditional epistemology that I will discuss. Below I will present a succinct discussion of these forms of knowledge to help us understand how knowledge is acquired in African epistemology entails.

2.2.1.   Old Age Knowledge

This form of knowledge can be called the wisdom of age, as is associated with old age. Here, it is believed that the older a person gets, the more knowledgeable the person becomes. Thus, it is the type of knowledge gained through wealth of experience. In this case ancestors and elders are deemed repositories of knowledge. It is in this light that E. A. Ruch maintains that philosophizing is the interest of few people (elders) with intuitive sights and rational stamina to probe deeper into challenging problems (1984: 27). As illustrated by Tempels (1959: 48), wisdom for Africans is a practical and experiential one that gives consideration to age. And in a special way, Africans accord proper knowledge, which is holistic in nature, to elders (Ani 2013: 307). It a form of knowledge gained through wealth and series of experience as one grows old. Ifeanyi A. Menkiti corroborated the above when he explains the "incremental growth of wisdom as one ages" (1984: 173). He explains that one undergoes fundamental changes at the very core of one's being as one becomes older and is well along in society. He further illustrates this with an Igbo proverb that says, "What an old man sees sitting down, a young man cannot see standing up" (*ibid*). What it means according to him is that there is some sort of ontological progression and additional features, like wisdom, as one grows old. If the elders have lived long, then it

follows they must have acquired a great amount of knowledge in the course of their existence. Such consideration serves as the basis of analysis for scholars of philosophic sagacity.

Philosophic sagacity is a trend in African philosophy that scrutinizes the insights of those considered wise in a community. Henry Odera Oruka coined the term 'philosophic sagacity' (1983, 1991). According to Oruka, "philosophic sagacity is a reflection of a person who is: (1) a sage and (2) a thinker. As a sage the person is versed in the wisdoms and traditions of his people, and very often he is recognized by the people themselves as having a gift" (1991: 51). According to Peter. O. Bodunrin, philosophic sagacity "implicitly rejects the holistic approach to African philosophy" that characterizes ethnophilosophy. Philosophic sagacity does not encourage looking at the general worldviews and beliefs of the people. Instead, it is "that philosophy that is derived from the thinking or the thought of wise persons" (Oruka 1997: 181; see also Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru 2013: 44) reputed for "exceptional wisdom" (Azenabor 2009: 73). Godwin Azenabor defines sage philosophy as "a reflective evaluation of thought by an individual African elder who is a repository of wisdom, knowledge and rigorous critical thinking" (*ibid*). Often sages are usually old people, because with age comeswisdom and wisdom also has to do with one's experience of the community. Oruka identified intelligent and adventurous-minded ages that do not only disseminate critical traditional ideas but also proffer recommendations for their improvement. The knowledge of the elders guides and directs the affairs of the community (1983; see also Ani 2013: 308).

Traditional Africans believe in the idea that the older a person is or gets the wiser or more knowledgeable that person becomes. The above idea is based on the belief that an old person must have had series of experiences in life which now becomes the basis for most of his decisions (Ejikemeuwa 2014: 34). Ejikemeuwa explains that "in the African hierarchy of beings, there is the belief that the old people are closer to the gods who are the sources of all wisdom. So, the ontological states of old people within the African world presuppose knowledgeability" (*ibid*). Onyewuenyi explains this idea further when he says, "a person is said to know or have wisdom in as much as he approaches divine wisdom. One approaches divine knowledge when one's flesh becomes less fleshy… i.e., the older a person gets, the more wisdom he has" (1980: 312). In other words, the older a person gets, the more well-informed or knowledgeable that person becomes. Ndubuisi Christian Ani elucidates that "it will be a misconception to think that all elders are wise given that there are some elders who are not seen as custodians of knowledge

and they are not consulted. But on a general basis, elders have gone through different stages of life and they have experienced life at a broader scale than the young" (2013: 307).

In his work "*Themes in a Chewa epistemology*", Khaphagawani (1998) opposed the idea of old age knowledge. This he did by explaining that wisdom has two elements: reflection and judgement. According to him, "Reflection is the tendency to analyse or examine events in terms of their grounds and implications, and after all these have been apprehended and considered, a judgement is passed" (1998: 243). He alludes that an interesting thing about wisdom is that it is always accompanied by authority, and often a wise person's judgement is always considered more accurate than anyone else's judgement. He avers that "since age is credited with wisdom, and wisdom with authority and respect, then it follows that age is credited with authority and respect" (*ibid*).

Kaphagawani further argues that in the Chewa culture there is a distinction between knowledge and wisdom, "despite a claim to the contrary which the analysis of *kudziwa* ("to know") and *nzeru* ("wisdom") has suggested" (*ibid*). Knowledge, according to him is cumulative experience awhile wisdom is a product of experience, this in turn makes the acquisition of wisdom a second-order activity, and knowledge a first-order one. His reason for this distinction is to show that not all older people are wise or have wisdom no matter their experience. He argues that "we could say that the elders in the Chewa culture have most knowledge because they have more experience than anybody else; but not all are wise. Not all can be considered as sage. Only some are" (*ibid*). He further argues that "the elders have an aura of respect and authority mainly because of their knowledge, not their wisdom; for if the latter were the determinant for respect, some elders would not be respected – yet all elders are indeed respected" (*ibid*).

2.2.2. Perceptual Knowledge

This form of knowledge is generally regarded first-hand knowledge, according to Ejikemeuwa (2014: 34). As the name implies, this form of knowledge is gained through sense perception and experience. According to Elijah Okon John, perceptual knowledge "comes to man through the various sense of the body. But before a man's observation passes for knowledge, it must be tested through experiments" (2009: 166). He further asserts that when knowledge is being understood from this point of view it means that to know in African setting involves witnessing something as it happened (*ibid*). This is because, according to John, this form of knowledge offers an eye-witness or first-hand account of knowledge. This form of knowledge in Africa is

treated as a certain form of knowledge (*ibid*). Supporting this idea is Uduigwomen assertion that, "what one sees, touches, feels, hears and tastes, is taken to be first-hand or eye-witness account and hence it is treated as certain knowledge" (2009: 171).

According to Ejikemeuwa:

> …The African person holds that knowledge is gained through what we see, hear, touch, taste or smell. This is embedded on the idea of 'afu n'anya e kwere' (to see is to believe). The idea that 'Mr. John is in the class' or that 'Snow is falling now' is within the domain of perceptual knowledge. The African finds it very difficult to doubt what he has witnessed with the empirical senses (2014: 34).

In the above case, the question of whether one is deceived by his senses is not that important, because there are instances where one needs to justify a knowledge claim, and the only way to do that is to call for an eye-witness. A third party as one might call it. The opinion of the eye-witness (the third party) is most of the time considered to be the truth. "But should the testimony of the eye-witness be doubted, oath-taking becomes the final reference point" (Ejikemeuwa 2014: 34). Francis Etim, on perception, says that in this type of knowledge, to know means that you have witnessed something and can comfortably communicate or relate it to others (2013: 128). A good example of this is in Barry's works (1998a and 2004) and in the book that Hallen co-authored with Sodipo (1986) titled "*Knowledge, Belief, and Witchcraft: Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*".

According to Hallen, "persons are said to mo (to ''know'') or to have imo (''knowledge'') only of something they have witnessed in a firsthand or personal manner... *Imo* is said to apply to sensory perception generally, even if what may be experienced directly by touch is more limited than is the case with perception (2004: 298). While *Igbagbo* "encompasses what one is not able ''to see'' for oneself or to experience in a direct, firsthand manner. For the most part, this involves things we are told about or informed of – this is the most conventional sense of ''information'' – by others" (*ibid*).

Hallen and Sodipo argue that the Yorubas make a distinction between knowledge and belief. According to them, *imo* is gotten through first-hand information, observation and sense-experience. *Imo* can be subjected to verification, confirmation and falsification. *Igbagbo* is obtained through second-hand information however it could later become *imo* after some empirical testing. Similarly, in some cases, Jimoh argues that "the traditional African would rather ask for the testimony [information or verification] of a third party to settle the difference" (2017: 129). Knowledge in Yoruba view is based on sensory perception, mainly visual

perception (i.e *irirn*) of the external world. In other words, what someone sees, when conjoined with cognitive activities or mind (i.e *eriokon*) like understanding, comprehension, consciousness, judgment, and proposition pertaining to such experience are regarded as true (i.e *ooto*) (Hallen 1998a: 832; see also Udefi 2014: 111).

The African finds it very difficult to doubt what he/she has witnessed with the empirical senses. The question of whether one is deceived by his/her senses is out of place here. In some cases, where there are problems of ascertaining the veracity of claim to knowledge, the African would request for the eye-witness. The Africans believe any witness, especially if done over an oath, is true or the truth. The practice or ritual of swearing on holy books, like the Bible or Koran, in the law court before presentation of a case or acting as a witness seems to vindicate this African belief (Etim 2013: 129). To the above views of Hallen and Sodipo, Moses Oke (1995) object by saying that the Yorubas are not as naïve as Hallen and Sodipo described. This is because information received based on sense experience are sometimes doubted by the Yoruba people, as opposed to what Hallen and Sodipo described. Oke is of the view that:

> Yoruba thought permits that the past is a reliable, though not an infallible, guide to the present, and perhaps to the future. In which case, if the past as held in the mind contradicts the present sense experience, Yoruba thoughts expects that the epistemic belief based on the present sense experience should be doubted, if not outrightly declared false and rejected. (1995: 211–212).

The above quote to an extent contradicts the image that Hallen and Sodipo depicted about the formation of Yoruba cultural standpoint of knowledge. I am inclined to think that this is why Oke further assert that "in effect, background knowledge appears to be given greater evidential weight than occurrent experiences, such that epistemic justification in Yoruba thought normally requires that the present, in order to be known or even knowable, cohere with the past" (1995: 212). I subscribe to Oke's objection.

2.2.3.   Common-sense knowledge

According to John, "in African epistemology everyone is born with this knowledge, which is synonymous with the Western concept of innate knowledge" (2009: 167). Etim corroborated this idea when he says that this type of knowledge is inborn and is synonymous with the innate knowledge of the rationalist (2013: 131). It is believed that every human being has this form of knowledge, since it is gained without one's effort. In other words, it is a form of knowledge that is gained effortlessly. John explains that common sense is "very interesting and conducive, as it

does not involve the tedious task of reflection as in rationalism" (*ibid*). This form of knowledge helps one distinguish between what is good or bad, or morally good or morally bad. Sometimes it might appear as if some people's common-sense knowledge is greater than others', but what is important in this case is that one can say what they think is good or bad to some extent. Based on the aforementioned, some people's common-sense knowledge may be greater than others, but what matters is the sense of distinguishing between what is good and bad to some extent and that is what common-sense knowledge is all about. This is why "the Igbo people would always say that 'Isi na isi ha bu n'onu' (That all heads are equal is just a matter of words of mouth)" (Ejikemeuwa 2014: 34). The implication of this saying is that no matter the judgement placed (some people's common-sense knowledge may be higher than others) on the view of common-sense knowledge all heads are still the same given the fact that it can help one distinguish between what is good or bad and morally good or bad.

According to Menkiti, common sense is a "sense that is held in common regarding the things that are in the world" (2004: 107). In line with this definition, he alludes that metaphysicians reject the idea of common-sense knowledge. He explains that their reason is the claim of common sense is not metaphysics; hence it "stands in need of correction". "… just as appearance does not always reflect reality (for example, a straight stick in water looking bent or a mirage in the desert indicating a body of water where none exists), likewise, we cannot count on the unmediated perceptions of common sense to deliver the goods of knowledge" (2004: 108). Here is a problem between common sense knowledge and metaphysical knowledge. To better explain these two forms of knowledge, Menkiti made reference to Okot p'Bitek's book, *African Religions in Western Scholarship*. Menkiti explicates that p'Bitek observes, in his book that:

> When students of African religions describe African deities as eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, etc., they intimate that African deities have identical attributes with those of the Christian God. In other words, they suggest that Africans Hellenized their deities, but before coming into contact with Greek metaphysical thinking (1970: 80).

Base on the above, Menkiti explains that in p'Bitek's view, "Africans "do not think metaphysically" —a conclusion that he sees as being borne out by a straightforward look at African languages" (2004: 109). p'Bitek writes, "The Luo language bears testimony to the fact that the Nilotes, like the early Jews, do not think metaphysically. The concept of Logos does not exist in Nilotes thinking; so the word *Word* was translated into *Lok*, as in the greeting 'Lok ango?', 'What is the news?'" (1970: 85). Menkiti writes, from the passage, it is evident that p'Bitek casts himself directly in lines with those who look at metaphysic in an askance way,

"believing that metaphysics, in refusing to play by the rules set by the deliverance of common sense, should not expect ordinary people to take seriously what it says" (2004: 109). Countering p'Bitek, Menkiti explains that the point is not that Africans do not think metaphysically, but that Africans do not engage in Western metaphysics; some certain forms of metaphysics may be found alien in an African setting" (*ibid*: 110). The point here is in some given situation or context, some people mostly employ common sense knowledge because it is a natural endowment. And when it comes to distinguishing between what is morally good or morally bad common-sense knowledge is a better solution as opposed to the metaphysical knowledge.

2.2.4.   Mystical Knowledge

According to Levy Jaki (200: 19), the "human knowledge comes from two realms, quantities and no-quantities, and these two realms are irreducible to one another". In Africa and in African epistemology there is always that urge to know more by observing the intrinsic connection between the quantities (material) and non-quantities (spiritual, gods). Regarding the spiritual and gods, Tempels notes that God, whom he considers as wisdom and knowledge, bequeaths human beings with the power to know. Here, divined beings are actively engaged in the epistemic experience of humans as they directly or indirectly reveal things to human beings in their experiences (dreams and life experiences) (1959: 48; see also Ani 2013: 309). Similarly, Mbiti explains that diviners and specialists "tell that the mystical power which they tap and use, comes ultimately from God; and as we have seen, part of their profession involves praying to God, directly or through the intermediary of the living-dead and spirits, to solicit His help" (1990: 194). Wiredu also notes "the ubiquity of references to gods and all sorts of spirits in traditional African explanations of things" perplexes Western epistemological thinkers (1980: 38; Ani 2013: 309).

According to Mbiti, "every African who has grown up in the traditional environment will, no doubt, know something about this mystical power which often is experienced, or manifests itself, in form of magic, divination, witchcraft and mysterious phenomena that seem to defy even immediate scientific explanations…." (1990: 189). Mystical[26] knowledge[27] expresses deep issues

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[26] To his knowledge, Mbiti asserts "there is no African society which does not hold belief in mystical power of one type or another. It shows itself, or it is experienced, in many ways" (1990: 192). He further explain that "there is mystical power which causes people to walk on fire, to lie on thorns or nails, to send curses or harm, including death, from a distance, to change into animals (lycanthropy), to spit on snakes and cause them to split open and die; power to stupefy thieves so that they can be caught red-handed; power to make inanimate objects turn into biologically living creatures; power that enables experts to see into secrets, hidden information of the future, or to detect thieves and other culprits" (*ibid*).

beyond the comprehension of human minds (Gyekye 1987a: 15). As much as the mystical knowledge is beyond the comprehension of the human minds, for it to come into manifestation there should be that co-operation between the material (quantities) and non-quantities (spiritual and gods). By this I mean there should be someone to whom the knowledge can be transmitted to satisfy the physical and spiritual desires of humans and their desire to know. Mbiti clarifies this when he said "access to this mystical power is hierarchical in the sense that God has the most and absolute control over it; the spirits and the living-dead have portions of it; and some human beings..." (1990: 197).

According to Uduigwomen (2009) and Ejikemeuwa (2014) mystical knowledge is known as extra-sensory knowledge. Ejikemeuwa asserts that mystical knowledge is "acquired through extra-ordinary means. It is beyond the ordinary sense perception. It is the type of knowledge gained through the help of the gods and other spiritual beings" (2014: 34). It is a form of knowledge exclusively preserved for some individuals. These individuals serve as intermediaries between gods and human. In Africa, these individuals who are fortunate to possess this form of knowledge are the diviners, native-doctors, priests, etc. These sets of people are believed to possess some certain "innate abilities" that enable them to manipulate the spirit world in favour of the natural world (Uduigwomen 2002: 38). Sometimes they employ the spirit world to obtain some truth or information needed at that point or for future purposes. In line with the aforementioned, Ekarika asserts that this form of knowledge has to do with obtaining information or truth about the past and the future things (1984). Umontong notes that among the Annang people of Nigeria, mystical knowledge is the major determinant of truth that is beyond ordinary man's comprehension (2002: 34). Besides, attaining truth for mystical knowledge, one could also employ it for healing. Denise Martin (2008: 221) notes that Yoruba "diagnosis of illness (*arun*), would include divination to inquire whether any potential spiritual causes are responsible for the ailment" so that they can be addressed, and a solution provided (the treatment and healing processes). It is important to underscore that, according to Ejikemeuwa, this form of knowledge is "Africans own way of gaining knowledge of realities that are ordinarily hidden" (2014: 34).

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[27] According to Ani, mystical knowledge lies beyond the science. Mystical knowledge gives humans the reason for hoping when it seems that all hope is lost based on rational or scientific judgement (Ani 2013: 312; see also Jaki 2000: 19).

Philip M. Peek (1991a, 1991b), Winde Abimbola (1983), William Bascom (1969) Olufemi Taiwo (2004) and Etim (2013) and many more regard this form of knowledge (mystical knowledge) divination. Regarding divination, John notes that the African concept of divination is similar to the Western concept of supernaturalism (2009: 168). According to Peek, "a divination system is a standardized process deriving from a learned discipline based on an extensive body of knowledge. This knowledge may or may not be literally expressed during the interpretation of the oracular message" (1998: 171). Divination system can also be seen as a practice or a traditional knowledge system that helps one obtain knowledge (information), truth and solution to different problems and inquiries that appear to be beyond everyday observation and perception. Divination systems are dynamic systems of knowledge that some contemporary Africans continue to rely on. Divination systems are not merely founded on religious beliefs but on (dynamic) systems of knowledge that the correct association of social actions are based on. In many African cultures, divination systems are given a pivotal role within society and thus, according to Peek, divination "must assume a central position in our attempts to better under African peoples…" (1991a: 2). While I am aware that there are different divination systems in Africa, such as those of the Luba in Central Africa, the Lobi of Burkina Faso, the Nankani interpretation of divination in the Upper East Region of Ghana, Zande divination of the Northern Democratic Republic of Congo, Mediumistic divination among the Northern Yaka of Zaire, and Azande divination, I will focus on *Ifá* divination in the next chapter, chapter three.

Bodunrin's objection against extra-sensory perception in his work "*Magic, Witchcraft, and ESP: A Defence of Scientific and Philosophical Skepticism*" can be applied here. He believes that for such things as magic, witchcraft and extra-sensory perception to be true it must have the ability to convince us there is a method of testing to prove their existence (1995). And according to him they must meet some scientific (scientifically organized experiments) and logical requirements. In response to this, Uduigwomen (2009) explains that it obviously follows that Bodunrin is following the tradition of the logical positivists who maintained that any meaningful statement must be subjected to verification. Also, to counter Bodunrin's objection, Sophie Oluwole argues that the existence of witchcraft can be scientifically proved.[28] She provided three methods to establish the existence of witches. The first method is: "we may give an explanation of the *modus operandi* of witchcraft power". The second is: "we may *experimentally establish* a causal relationship between the postulated occult power and the mysterious even he (the African) cites

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[28] One cannot claim that because "something cannot be seen; it therefore does not exist" (Ellis & ter Haar 2007: 387).

to prove its practical efficacy". And the third one is: "we may show a practical manipulation of witchcraft power" (Oluwole 1995; Bodunrin 1995: 376). Oluwole calls the first method scientific method. Despite her intense discussion on these methods, Bodunrin maintains that witchcraft still awaits further scientific and philosophical explanation. To this, Uduigwomen says that "in African traditional setting, experimentation is not resorted to if a disagreement arises between two parties regarding what one claims to observe. Rather, the testimony of a third party is sought to settle the difference" (2009: 172).

Though I am in sympathy with the above debates I would like to state that even if magic, witchcraft and extra-sensory perception cannot be proved scientifically, it does not necessarily mean it is not true. I would also like to say that as long as magic, witchcraft and extra-sensory perception appear to have defied scientific methods and principles of logic, they should not be deemed irrational, since some of their explanations are *simply* rational and reasonable, like *Ifá* divination. Therefore, their systems should not be subjected to scientific methods and principles of logic.

2.2.5.   Wholistic or Holistic Knowledge

In his work "*Wholistic or Holistic? Does It Matter?*" Rei Towet Kesis elucidates that the word holistic appears to be rapidly substituting the word wholistic, both in the dictionaries and in its usage (2012). According to Kesis, there is a need to "inquire if the word wholistic exists? If it does, where did the word holistic come from? Do these words, holistic and wholistic mean the same thing? If they mean the same thing, does it matter which one is used?" (2012: 63). I do not intend to provide all the answers that he gave, but to briefly show that both words can be used interchangeably because of their meaning.

The tradition of Western epistemology is best known for being technical and analytical in such a way that the outlook of the world is subjected to systematic scrutiny through a rigorous rational analytic method (Wiredu 1991: 87; Ani 2013: 305). Corroborating this view, Elvis Imafidon asserts that the West are more focused on calculation, instrumental rationality and science oriented (2017: 256).[29] Based on the works of Descartes, Ani argued that westerners mostly abstracts and fragment mind and body, spirit and material etc. to acquire 'indubitable' knowledge. The aforementioned simply brings to mind the idea of dualism in Western

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[29] As opposed to the West, Imafidon asserts that the Indigenous African communities are more holistic and use a norm-guided approach to reason (2017: 256).

epistemology (*ibid*). Dualism as we know is the idea that the mind and body, subject and object, spirit and material are two entirely different things. In such dichotomized epistemological system, in the pursuit of knowledge human beings are separated from nature. This also created the distinction between rationalism and empiricism, objectivism and subjectivism, as Ajei argued (2007: 190). As opposed to Western epistemological dualism, such distinction hardly exists in African epistemology.

African epistemology is wholistic/holistic in nature. In reflection of its wholistic/holistic nature, Ani argued that, "there is not such division as rationalism and empiricism, subjectivism and objectivism, secular and the supernatural among many other western-driven dichotomies"[30] (2013: 306; see also Ajei 2007: 190). But this is not all. From an African point of view, the wholistic/holistic nature of its epistemology ensures that "man and nature are not two separate independent and opposing realities but one inseparable continuum of a hierarchical order"[31] (Anyanwu 1981: 87). African epistemology is non-Cartesian, therefore, to them, spiritual and material components of reality could not be viewed in mutual isolation. Africans "recognises the fundamental unity of all things…" and "there is unity between the mind and the body, the subject and the object, the individual and the community, and even the material and the spiritual" (Osimiri 2016: 39).

And according to Kingsley Okoro, "in holism, Africans maintain a unitary vision of reality, underline the common source of all lives and uphold the interdependent of all within the planetary system" (2015). In African the subject and object stand in close relationship with each other. In other words, there is an interdependent relationship between the subject and the object. There exists in Africa the interconnectedness of being as opposed to the idea of separate being. Consequently, Tempels argued that the concept of separate being in which individuals find

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[30] Osimiri notes that, "African traditional medicine operates on the assumption that the mind, the body and the spirit are intimately connected. Thus, traditional African medicine tends to be holistic in its approach. Hence, it does not only seek to treat the physical, but also pays attention to the underlying emotional and spiritual, causes of illness" (2016: 44). Godwin S. Sogolo explains that, "the firm assumption has always been that African cultures hold a *holistic* conception of disease or illness—people are considered ill if they display a state of unusual feeling, suffering pain or incapacitation, or being in danger of death or mutilation. Once day-to-day life activities (e.g. the ability to work or to perform other social duties) are affected by this general feeling, such a person is said to be ill, whether or not the causes are traceable to specific structural changes in the cells of the body. This holistic conception of health and illness—which may be considered unorthodox in modern medical practice—is firmly held among the Yoruba community of Nigeria" (2003: 195–196). He further explains that according to Ademuwagun (1978: 89), the Yoruba word *alafia,* which translates as 'health' "embraces the totality of an individual's physical, social, psychological and spiritual wellbeing in his total environmental setting".

[31] For more of knowledge in connection to the hierarchy of being, see Tempels (1959) *Bantu Philosophy*.

themselves independent of one another is foreign to the Bantu thought system (1959; Osimiri 2016: 39; Akbar 2003). Tempels further assert that being in Bantu ontology is understood holistically, and as a network of a hierarchy of vital forces interconnecting and interacting in system of mutual interdependence (1959; Odhiambo 2010; Osimiri 2016: 39). Ikuenobe corroborates Tempels's idea when he says traditional Africans reality as "a composite, unity and harmony of natural forces" (2014: 2).

Tempels argues that the principle of causality for Africans has to do largely with the fact that beings or forces are intertwined. He maintains that Africans consider every being in the world to be involved in an intimate ontological bond and relationship with each other (Tempels 1959: 40). The African view of the world as that which comprises forces is like 'a spider's web of which no single thread can be caused to vibrate without shaking the whole network' (*ibid*: 60). Like a spider's web, beings necessarily influence each other in such a way that a being or force can either strengthen or diminish another (*ibid*: 39).

According to Uduigwomen, "the wholistic view of knowledge is the view that in perception, we are neither given an object nor a sense-datum, but a unity of experience in which the subject and object cannot be discriminated" (2009: 172). A good support to this idea is view on wholism. According to him:

> Knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time. Only through this method does he claim to have the knowledge of the other. So, the method through which the African arrives at trustworthy knowledge of reality…is intuitive and personal experience (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 94).[32]

The above shows that both Ruch and Anyanwu hold a wholistic/holistic view of knowledge which presupposes a unity of experience that as also acclimatize with African culture. As a rationale that he holds a wholistic/holistic view of knowledge Anyanwu asserts that, "reality depends on personal experience and the world has meaning, order and unity by virtue of the living experience of the ego" (1983: 60). This form of knowledge has to do with the unification of the subject and the object. In this case given reality must involve the subject and object. In other words, the knower and the known. "It is the belief of the African person that knowledge of

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[32] Uduigwomen alludes that, although Anyanwu's idea of wholism is accompany with some philosophical problems, it nevertheless answers the problem of duality inherent in Western epistemology (2009: 172).

reality cannot be gained if the individual person detaches himself from it" (Ejikemeuwa 2014: 35).

Anyanwu and Ruch explain the above idea when they assert that "the African maintained that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches himself from it" (1981: 94). In this knowing process, the subject is not only seeing and thinking, but also experiencing and discovering the object. There can be no knowledge of the object without the subject entering into experience with the object. The subject is continuously involved in this process of knowing. Nasseem captures this better when he explains "the cognitive process is not complete without the experiential. The self of the subject and the objective world outside of the self are really one" (2003: 265). The former (subject) 'vivifies or animates' the latter (object), as Nasseem puts it. Therefore, there is a connection between the individual and reality or the object. African does not claim to know anything in isolation but in connection with reality. This in African epistemology is what is known as wholistic or holistic knowledge, or as the Western calls it, 'monism'.

In African epistemology "man and nature are not two separate independent and opposing realities but the one inseparable continuum of a hierarchical order"[33] (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 87). In other words, man (subject) and nature (object) in traditional African epistemology are seen as (one) an inseparable continuum. This means there is a close existing relationship between man and nature. Man and nature are united, and in their unity, they both co-operate and partake in the same locus without being opposites (Jimoh & Thomas: 2015: 56). The idea of subjectivism and objectivism does not constitute a problem in African epistemology, because they are both incorporated in the unity of existence. In this unity of existence, the subject gets to know the object, such that the epistemic subject experiences the epistemic object in an intuitive, emotive, perceptive, abstractive understanding, rather than through abstraction. Thus, in African epistemology, both the subject and the object, nevertheless remain interwoven by custom and tradition. For this reason, Anyanwu asserts that "the African culture makes no sharp distinction between the ego and the world, subject and object. In the conflict between the self and the world. African culture makes the self the center of the world" (1984: 86–87). It is important to underscore that, "the urge for continuous assessment and re-assessment of the known – or that to

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[33] It is because of this inseparable continuum in African epistemology that Nasseem asserts that ontologically, the idea of dualism could not be postulated on the African philosophic tradition. He explains the "the African seeks for the ego a centrality in the cosmic scheme in order to avoid the embarrassment of dualism and monism – be it idealist or materialist" (2003: 264). Therefore, the notions of subjectivism or objectivism do not constitute any problem in African epistemology, according to Nasseem. "The possibility of their emergence is subsumed under the unity of existence" (*ibid*).

be known – called for the participation of the subject. The subject was hardly in contradistinction to the object" (Nasseem 2003: 264). Thus, Africans acquire and transmit knowledge through the subject and object relationship.

Considering the idea of wholislic/holistic knowledge, Udefi states that this "might create the impression that the African cannot draw a line between himself and other objects in the external world" (2009a: 83). But on the contrary, he states that this is not the case as "the African knows that there is a distinction between him and other objects like trees, mountains, stones and wood" (*ibid*). To explain this, he quotes Anyanwu's assertion. According to Anyanwu:

> Because everything is a vital force or shares in the force, the African feels and things that all things are similar, share the same qualities and nature. (But) it does not mean that the African does not know the distinction between a tree and a goat, a bird and a man (Ruch and Anyanwu 1981: 90).

Udefi further explains that some professional African philosophers like Wiredu (1980: 132), Hountondji (1983a; 1983b: 72, 1997), Bodunrin (1981a: 173; 1981b: 178) who hold a Universalist conception of philosophy and rationality seem to propose some different ways of understanding African ways of knowledge. According to him, those "who seems to hold a universalist conception of philosophy and rationalist argue for the adoption and deployment of the critical edge of science and technology to the understanding of African proverbs, folktales, oral tradition with a view to sifting out the philosophical contents in them" (*ibid*). In response to the above, he said that professional African philosophers are mistaken in their idea of universal rationality and that it would be an illusion to think rationality has a universal criterion. The cultural relativists will sure corroborate this position. Thus, in this case one's understandings of rationality and philosophy should vary from culture to culture. I would like to state here that philosophy and rationality "universalistic, particularistic and relative at the same time" (Ozumba 2015: 158). In view of African epistemology or concept of knowledge, I will argue in support of my point in subsection 4.8.2 of chapter four.

2.3.   The Challenge of a Unique Forms of Knowledge: My Contention

Given the idea that there are forms of knowledge in African epistemology, and based on the discussion of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology in the above section, one can conclude as certain scholars, philosophers and the protagonists of African epistemology did, there are some forms of knowledge that are uniquely and specifically African. What this means is that in African epistemology forms of knowledge are unique to Africans. Based on this, my

aim in this section is to contest the idea that some of these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African. This will be achieved by showing that some of the so called forms of knowledge deemed as forms of knowledge in African epistemology are also present in Western epistemology, and are defined and explained in the same way, both in Western and African epistemology. Also, in comparison, I will give some examples to show that the forms of knowledge in Western and African epistemology are the same. It is worth noting that I will employ some of Oritsegbubemi Anthony Oyowe (2014)'s ideas and arguments in his article titled "*An African Conception Human Rights? Comments on the challenges of Relativism*" as part of my argument.

In epistemology there are two main sources of knowledge from which all other forms of knowledge can identify with, that is the senses and reason, and these sources are represented by the schools of philosophy called rationalism and empiricism.[34] This means that knowledge comes from what we experience and reason. All other forms of knowledge whether intuitive knowledge, common sense knowledge, perceptual knowledge and others, are incorporated under either of these main sources. Immanuel Kant suggests that both rationalism and empiricism play a role in the construction of knowledge. In Kant's view, we experience the world in the same way and in this case the mind makes the world. In other words, Kant asserts that, reality/object/things conform to the (laws on the) mind contrary to the traditional epistemological notion that mind conforms to the thing known (Jones 1975: 19). Lewis Vaughn explains this view properly when he said, "the idea is not that our minds literally create the world, but that our minds organize our experience, so we perceive it as recognizable objects" (2012). Kant puts the mind in a different relation to reality than any of his predecessors. His predecessors had regarded the mind as a passive observer as opposed to the mind being an active observer of reality. Thus, the fusion between reason and experience can be considered the backbone of all forms of knowledge.

One of the reasons some African scholars argue that some forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African is because, in their discussion or comparison of African and Western discourse of knowledge they focused on western scientific knowledge. Through my readings I observed that various African scholars, Like Robin Horton (1967, 1993, 1995), Bodunrin (1995), Ajei (2007) Ani (2013) and others, as well as the protagonists of African epistemology, who

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[34] I discussed these (rationalism and empiricism) at length in chapter one.

proposed Western epistemology focused on scientific knowledge as though it were the only form of knowledge. They neglected the fact that besides scientific knowledge and Western philosophers also discussed other forms of knowledge, like intuitive knowledge, inferential knowledge, common sense knowledge, perceptual knowledge, mystical knowledge and others. These African scholars place greater emphasis on scientific knowledge while putting aside other forms of knowledge. And in talking about the other forms of knowledge, they make it appear as if it is not present in Western epistemology. As such they make it seem as if these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African. Note, I am not discarding the fact that scientific knowledge was at some point in Western philosophy and epistemology placed at a higher pedestal to other forms of knowledge. This is because Western philosophers, like Kant, observe that we err when we expect philosophy – and other fields of knowledge – to give the kind of results that science gives (Copleston 1963: 86). Successes in other fields of knowledge are measured differently from the way the successes in science are measured. Thus, science knowledge then "remains only one of many [legitimate] forms of knowledge" (Okere 2005: 20) in western epistemology.

According to Hountondji, "Words," he notes, "do indeed change their meanings miraculously as soon as they pass from the Western to the African context…" (1983a: 60). This writing from Hountondji was done at a time when there was a heated debate over the true meaning of *African* philosophy. Oyowe explains that, it seems, what bothered Hountondji "was how the mere addition of the prefix 'African' could so radically alter the meaning of a concept" (2014: 330). But he was not alone. Henry Odera Oruka had observed rather humorously that:

> What may be a superstition is paraded as 'African religion', and the white world is expected to endorse that it is indeed a religion but an African religion. What in all cases is a mythology is paraded as 'African philosophy', and again the white culture is expected to endorse that it is indeed a philosophy but an African philosophy. What is in all cases a dictatorship is paraded as 'African democracy', and the white culture is again expected to endorse that it is so. And what is clearly a de-development or pseudo-development is described as 'development', and again the white world is expected to endorse that it is development – but of course 'African development' (Oruka 1972: 23).

I suspect this is the same with African epistemology and the forms of knowledge specified by Ndubisi, John and Uduigwomen. The forms of knowledge in African epistemology which I consider similar to, or the same as Western epistemology often pass for forms of knowledge simply because the prefix 'African' was added to the epistemology. This is done with the hope that it will make a difference. This misconception has often gone unnoticed. Notwithstanding

Hountondji and Oruka, some scholars and the protagonist of African epistemology think that when the idea is employed in the context of African, the forms of knowledge evoke unique and cultural relative meaning. More specifically, the idea here is that the forms of knowledge are culturally relative and that African culture shapes and informs a unique meaning of the different forms of knowledge. But I doubt that that is the case. Based on the discussed forms of knowledge in African epistemology the prefix 'African' makes no different. These scholars are just simply reiteration what the West has already said. The prefix 'African' added to epistemology will not make it unique or specifically different from that of the west. This is why I think whether the prefix 'African or Western' epistemology still remains the same, a theory of knowledge that is universal to all, because humans dare to know. Thus, I think that the major problem here is the term *African*. The term is potentially problematic. My suspicion about the idea of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology is that it revolves mainly around the so-called Western forms of knowledge. Take for instance the idea of perceptual knowledge and common-sense knowledge in Western epistemology is the same in African epistemology. The same applies to the other forms of knowledge. I will briefly compare some of the forms of knowledge below.

According to John, perceptual knowledge "comes to man through the various sense of the body. But before a man's observation passes for knowledge, it must be tested through experiments" (2009: 166). Matthias Steup (2018 § 4.1) says that "our perceptual faculties are our five senses: sight, touch, hearing, smelling, and tasting". He further asserts that perceptual knowledge is knowledge of sense data and external object (*ibid*). Thus, definition of perceptual knowledge from both philosophers are similar, because both ideas on perceptual knowledge refers to the use of sensation as a medium of knowing. And as the name implies, it is a form of knowledge that is gained through sense perception and experience.

For John, when we talk about common sense knowledge, the reference is to a form of knowledge that "everyone is born with this knowledge, which is synonymous with the Western concept of innate[35] knowledge" (2009: 167). It is believed that every human being has this form of

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[35] Descartes is the one, among many other philosophers, that argues that the mind has innate ideas. According to Anthony Kenny, "Descartes's argument for the innateness of all ideas is based on the premise that no idea is like the sensory stimulus which brings it to mind. He seems to envisage only two possibilities: that ideas are innate" (Kenny 1968: 234). By this he means that these ideas are not given to the mind under the auspices of the senses. In other words, the mind can gain all it has, like knowledge, in isolation, without the aid of material substances (Descartes 1968: 110). At this point, Descartes posits that all clear, distinct and axiomatic ideas are inherent in human beings. By our very nature, we are imbued with ideas right at the time of our birth by God (Kenny 1968:103).

knowledge because it is gained without one's effort. It is a form of knowledge that is gained effortlessly. John further explains that common sense is "very interesting and conducive, as it does not involve the tedious task of reflection as in rationalism" (*ibid*). According to Pavel Gregoric, common sense[36] knowledge is "a very basic ability of rational beings to follow their experience in discerning some obvious things, making elementary connections among them…" (2007: vii). He further asserts that, "because this ability is so basic, it is shared by all rational beings, and that is why it is called 'common'. On the other hand, it is called 'sense' because it is developed naturally and because its operations are intuitive" (*ibid*). By our very nature as human beings, we are imbued with knowledge that is inherent in us without resorting to other means of knowing. In line with this, Bertrand Russell (1944) asserts that common sense is "uninfluenced by philosophy or theology." This simply means that it is a form of knowledge that is gained without the influence of philosophy or theology. Thus, the explanation of common-sense knowledge in both African and Western epistemology is similar.

Concerning wholistic or holistic in African epistemology, the reference is to the way in which Africans perceive reality. Cheptwony explains that Africans perceive and deal with reality as a whole function system (2011: 45). According to Uduigwomen, "the wholistic view of knowledge is the view that in perception, we are neither given an object nor a sense-datum, but a unity of experience in which the subject and object cannot be discriminated" (2009: 172). Corraborating this idea is Anyanwu's view on wholism. According to him "knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time. Only through this method does he claim to have the knowledge of the other. So, the method through which the African arrives at trustworthy knowledge of reality…is intuitive and personal experience" (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 94). This shows that both Ruch and Anyanwu hold a wholistic/holistic view of knowledge which presupposes a unity of experience that has also acclimatized to African culture. Though African

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[36] Roderick Chisholm says it is characteristic of commonsensism to begin with the assumption that "we do know most, if not all, of those things that ordinary people think that they know" (1977: 120; see also Lemos 1998: 476). Chisholm also cites with approval George Edward Moore's comment that, "There is no reason why we should not, in this respect, make out philosophical opinions agree with what we necessarily believe at other times. There is no reason why I should not confidently asset that I do really *know* some external facts, although I cannot prove the assertion except by simply assuming that I do. I am, in fact, as certain of this as of anything; and as reasonably certain of it" (Moore 1922: 163; Chisholm 1977: 120–21; see also Lemos 1998: 476). In addition, Noah M. Lemos says that, "in answering certain philosophical questions, commonsensism holds that it is appropriate to take as data certain ordinary, yet widely and deeply held, beliefs. Among the beliefs that commonsensism takes as data are beliefs about the world around us, e.g., that there are other people who think and feel, that the earth has existed for many years, that there are tables, etc" (Lemos 1998: 476).

scholars have always argued that African epistemology is wholistic in nature while Western epistemology dualistic in nature, but I contemplate that the Western idea of monism is not that different from the African idea of wholism. This is because monism is the idea that one's knowledge of the external world stand in close relationship with each other. In other words, they are not two entirely different things as in the idea of epistemological dualism. In this case, reality is one.

Max Velmans Goldsmiths defines monism as "the view that the universe, at the deepest level of analysis, is one thing" (2008: 1). Although, someone might contest this idea stating that both ideas (wholism/holism and monism) are explained differently giving the context in which they are applied in the various cultures; Africa and the West. A plausibly response to this would be based on the Greek origin of the word 'holos', meaning 'whole'. Mirza Iqbal Ashraf explains that:

> The holistic concept in ancient theological belief, per Heraclitus (c. 535-475 BCE), was strongly reflected in the concept of Logos and Pantheism. The Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (c. 369-289 BCE) was an exponent of the holistic philosophy of life, projecting a way of understanding that is uncommitted to a fixed system, a way that is fluid and flexible, and that maintains a pragmatic attitude towards the applicability of the "multiplicity of divers modes" of realization among different creatures, cultures and philosophical outlooks (2012).

My point here is, non-African origin shows that Africa probably employed its meaning from its Greek origin to better explain what they think wholism/holism is to them. And, I am of the view that, what they said about holism is not different from its original meaning, meaning wholeness and oneness, which is seen in epistemological discourse.

If there exist subject and object relationship and connection in Africa it has lost its identity in his explanation and in the modern world—because of the idea of modernity. If the assertion of subject and object is judged with its practicality in our modern world, I think, with the current situation, Africa can be said to be dualist in nature as opposed to Eastern traditions who now are the epitome of what wholism attest to. For example, Buddhism, alongside other Eastern traditions, does not make a distinction between nature and human beings. Nature, in this case, denotes the external world. As part of the tradition, they are not separated from nature, but are part of it. This is practical in their everyday life—the (their) reverence and care for nature. This is not present in modern day Africa. Buddhist ethical values are intrinsically a part of nature and rooted in natural law.[37] This, I think, makes the principles of Buddhism acceptable and useful to

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[37] See John Ross Carter (2005), Damien Keown (2005), Thomas P. Kasulis (2005), and Charles Hallisey (2005).

the modern world. In summary, according to Buddhist Ethics, all life is interdependent. Therefore, the happiness of one individual depends upon that of others. And this is visible in their way of life.**38**

Epistemologists believe that people know something simply because they are human beings. This strikes me as uncontroversial. An epistemologist that holds a Universalist view of epistemology we accept this idea maintaining that epistemology is universal and inure to human being simply in virtue of her being a human. He or she would add that one does not need any qualification in order for her to know or have a knowledge of something. This supposed universality of epistemology is seen to follow smoothly from the idea that human nature is universal. The conception of human nature underlying the Universalist intuition about epistemology is one of the human individuals stripped as it were of the particularities of culture and identified primarily by that core property she shares with every other human being (Oyowe 2014: 331). Some examples will be that of the forms of knowledge I have discussed, and most importantly the idea of rationalism and empiricism. Philosophers like Descartes, Hobbes, Hume, Lock, Kant and many others engaged with this one way or the other. Thus, concepts like *reason and experience* "permits the Universalist to focus on that which all human beings have in common qua persons, turning attention directly away from whatever else distinguishes them, in particular the contingencies of human nature" (*ibid*).

The protagonists of African epistemology or a relativist about African epistemology will possibly pose two objections to my position. Firstly, the protagonists of African epistemology or relativists may completely deny the Universalist representation of epistemology and human nature. They may hold that the conception of human nature upon which epistemology is grounded is "not an abstraction because humans are defined by their relations to others…" (Ghai 2000: 1097). In response to this, I do admit that it is sometimes difficult "to make sense of human nature without due attention paid to the ways in which the elements of culture and the various contingencies of human life have contributed to its realisation" (Oyowe 2014: 331). But in this case the explanation given about the forms of knowledge in African epistemology is clearly synonymous to that of the Western epistemology. So, instead of trying to show that there is a difference between the two, I think it will be a good idea to see epistemology as universal phenomenon, given that the concept of epistemology (definition, nature, origin, scope and the

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forms of knowledge) is applicable to Africans. In addition, talking about human relations to others, it clearly indicates the possibility that some ideas or forms of knowledge might have been taken from the west, given that they could identify some similarities in them and will want to incorporate it in their epistemology. The protagonists of African epistemology might insist that if the above is the case, what is it about human beings that distinguishes them from each other? In response to this I will say that seeking for a distinguishing feature in a culture, when there is clearly none, is not necessarily important. Instead of insisting on differences when there are none, we must admit the similarities in cultures sometimes. In the long run we might explain something in a similar way while thinking that there is a difference between both ideas.

Secondly, the protagonists of African epistemology or a relativist "may claim generally that the enforcement of values and the meanings of concepts are always relative to some culture" (Oyowe 2014: 331). This argument would begin with the thought that among different cultures in the world there is no universal or cross-cultural standard for understanding and assessing the practices and values of particular culture (*ibid*). In line with this, let's consider Jack Donnelly's concise description of cultural relativism. According to him, "cultural relativism is a doctrine that holds that (at least some) such variations are exempt from legitimate criticism by outsiders" (1984: 400). To a certain extent they will insist that meanings and values, to them, are culture-relative. They will also insist that the idea of epistemology, as well as whatever that can be taken to be its foundation, is a culture-relative phenomenon, and that is why there is such a thing as African epistemology. To this, I will say that there is no doubt some meanings are culturally relative, but in the case of the definition and explanation of some of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology there is no difference in its explanation with that from Western epistemology. Thus, in this case, with regards to epistemology, the prefix 'African' did not (radically) alter the meaning of the forms of knowledge. The meanings of the various forms of knowledge are still the same; whether in Western epistemology or the epistemology of other cultures.

While admitting there might be some elements of particularity in African epistemology and epistemological conceptualization, I think, the forms of knowledge in epistemology transcend the limits of culture and time, even though they stemmed from specific cultural contexts and foundations (Tavernaro-Haidarian 2018: 231; see also Gyekye 2004b: 23). Therefore, I think that the epistemological conceptualization in epistemology and the forms of knowledge in epistemology is universal.

African epistemology is the outcome of our irresistible search for knowledge and interaction with a wonder-immersed universe; so is epistemology in general. Hence, our search for knowledge and our interaction with the universe that is full of wonders "has the same expression in all cultures either as moral, aesthetic, metaphysics, epistemology, science or logic" (Ozumba 2015: 152). According to Ozumba, "All men [sic] reflect on their existence, and they produce certain thoughts which if understood can be more or less categorized under different aspects or compartmentalization of Western philosophy" (*ibid*). The point of this quote is to support my idea of the universality of epistemology and the forms of knowledge, although in this case I will replace the idea of "Western philosophy" with "our common humanity". This epistemological conceptualization in epistemology and the forms of knowledge is our common humanity. Given our common humanity, in our articulation of both the particularity and universality in epistemological conceptualization, we can see that each form of knowledge has a bearing on different cultures which makes it universal. Thus, I think the quest to show there is a unique African epistemology or forms of knowledge in African epistemology is unnecessary – the relevant quest is only as to the fact of the relationship, equivalence status and subject matter between African and Western epistemology or the forms of knowledge in African and Western epistemology. And because of this, I agree with Ozumba that the "human mind in many areas function alike especially as it concerns human quests to dominate and control his [sic] environment" (*ibid*).

2.4.   Conclusion

As specified in the introduction, this chapter aimed at achieving two things: (1) To discuss the forms of knowledge in African epistemology, and (2) To contest the idea that these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African; culturally relative. In the first section of this chapter I discussed five forms of knowledge in African Epistemology. These forms of knowledge are: Old age knowledge, perceptual knowledge, common sense knowledge, mystical knowledge, and holistic knowledge. In second section, I argued against the idea of cultural relativity of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology. I contested the idea that these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African; culturally relative. This was achieved by demonstrating that the prefix 'African' added to the idea of epistemology does not really make any difference, and that some of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology are the same as that of those in Western epistemology or other cultures. What this means is that

epistemology and the forms of knowledge, whether in Africa, the West or other culture, are universal. And this universality amounts to our common humanity.

Chapter Three

3. (*Ifá*) Divination as a Paranormal Cognition

3.1.   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explained some of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology. I also explained that divination is an example of mystical knowledge in African epistemology. To this, I elucidated that divination can be seen as a practice or a traditional knowledge system that helps one to obtain knowledge (information), truth and solution of different problems and inquiries that appears to go beyond everyday observation and perception. In line with the above, my aim in this chapter is to show that (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition.

According to Barbara Tedlock, the English word "divination" comes from the Latin noun *divinatio-onis f. (divino),* meaning "the gift of prophesy, divination". This was formed from the past participle of the verb *divinare,* "to foretell, prophesy, forebode, divine the future" (2001: 190). She further alludes that the Latin noun *divinatio-onis f. (divino)* "is closely related to the adjective *divinus-a-um,* "belonging or relating to a deity, divine" (*ibid*). Given that divination is a Western concept (with a different method of divination), it also shows that in the Western it is recognized as an example of mystical knowledge, and it is often associated as paranormal cognition or activities.

In section 3.2, I will provide an explanation of the divination system. In subsequent sections, subsection 3.2.1, I will briefly explain divination system as a way of knowing. In section 3.3, I will briefly define *Ifá.* In subsections 3.3.1, 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2, I will discuss *Ifá* divination in light of the works of William Bascom and Wande Abimbola. In the final part of this chapter, section 3.4, I will show that (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition.

3.2.   The idea of Divination: Nature

"I know of no people, whether they be learned and refined or barbaric and ignorant, that does not consider that future things are indicated by signs and that it is possible for people to recognize those signs and predict what will happen" (*Divination* 1.2).[39]

"The art of divination presents us with puzzling problems which I make no pretence to solve. A certain amount of communication goes on between diviners and non-human powers (whether living or otherwise or both). It is difficult to know exactly what this is: it might involve spiritual agents, it might be telepathy, it might be sharpened human perception, or a combination of these possibilities." John Mbiti (1990), *African Religions and Philosophy.*

The term "divination", according to Amar Annus (2015: 445), "refers to the varied forms of communication between humans and the supernatural." He further explains that "divination seeks to acquire knowledge that is otherwise unattainable because it is hidden" (*ibid*). Laura S. Grillo defines divination as:

> A divination is a technique used to determine the future and to make authoritative pronouncements about it. In the context of West African religious traditions, this is not its primary objective. Rather than merely projecting the future, divination inquiries about the significance of the present. Its aim is not prediction, but diagnosis. Divination is sought at moments of crisis, when a person becomes acutely aware of a disjunction between an ideal model of reality and the experience of human existence, when what "is" does not conform to what "ought" to be (2005: 438).[40]

According to Evan M. Zuesse, "divination, as an art or practice of discovering the personal, human significance of future, or more commonly, present or past events, is a preoccupation with the import of events and specific methods to discover it, and is found in almost all cultures" (1987: 375). Corroborating this view, Audrius Beinorius, defines divination as…

> The attempt to elicit from some higher power or supernatural being the answers to questions beyond range of ordinary human understanding. Questions about future events, about past disasters, whose causes cannot be explained, about the conduct in a critical situation, about The time and mode of religious worship and the choice of persons for a particular task – all

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[39] See Wardle, David, trans. and comm. *Cicero on Divination Book 1* (Oxford 2006) and Sarah Iles Johnston (2008).

[40] See also Grillo, L. S. (1989), "Dogon Divination as an Ethic of Nature." *Journal of Religious Ethics,* 20, 309–330. Laura S. Grillo (1995), Divination in the Religious Systems of West Africa. PhD, Chicago: the University of Chicago. Laura S. Grillo (1999). "African Religions", in S. Young (ed). Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion 1. Macmillan Press. pp. 6–12. Laura S. Grillo (2009), "Divination: Epistemology, Agency, and Identity in Contemporary Urban West Africa", Religion Compass, 3/6, pp. 921–934.

these have from the ancient times and in all parts of the world been the subject of divinatory enquiry (2016: 85).

What both definitions clearly show is that anyone can seek for information that is not obtainable through any means, whether inferential or empirical, one can get it through divination in consultation with the diviner. So, in the case where information is being sought, divination is employed to discover or get the information needed.

Annus explains that "since Plato (*Phaedrus* 244b), divination has been divided into intuitive and inductive kinds. The first involves the direct reception of information. The second involves the observation of signs, from which meanings are inferred" (2015: 446). Annus further explained, quoting Cicero (*De dtv*. 1.12), that there are two kinds of divinations which are both very old and are corroborated by the unanimity of all peoples and nations, and these two kinds of divination are technical and natural divination. Technical has to do with technique while, natural has to do with nature (*ibid*). Annus explains that in technical divination, "the gods communicate with humans indirectly through different signs", while in natural divination, "the gods communicate directly, such as through auditions and visions" (*ibid;* see Wardle 2006: 126).

There are stunning varieties of divination systems present in many communities around the world. Affirming this, Phillip M. Peek explains:

> Prometheus's gift of fire to humankind is well known, but his gift of the arts of divination has almost been forgotten, even though his name, meaning "forethought," reflects the importance of this contribution to Greek Culture (Oswalt 1969: 249–51). Other great civilizations have granted similar prominence to divination. Anthologies by Caquot and Leibovici (1968) and Loewe and Blacker (1981) include contributions on divination's critical role not only in the classical world but also in the Americas, India, Tibet, Japan and China, Africa, ancient Egypt and the Middle East, Judaism and Islam, and the Germanic world (1991: 1).

The above indicates the presence of divination systems and practices worldwide. The processes of divining in the above nations (within their cultures and traditions) are diverse, but they all follow some sets of routines by which they access and obtain information or knowledge perceived to be inaccessible. "Oral traditions and early European accounts confirm that many divination systems are centuries old" (Peek 1991: 1). In the ancient Greek and Roman worlds, divination was ubiquitous, just as it would appear to be ubiquitous in every culture known to us (Johnston 2008: 3). According to the historian of divination, "for most ancient Greeks and Romans divination hardly required explanation. It simply worked" (Struck 2005: 1). Even

amongst the Greek and Roman intellectuals, oracles (like the oracle of Delphi) were considered to have the potential to divulge the reality of things beyond their ordinary exigencies.

Beside the fact that there are different divination systems in the world, it is worth noting that there are also different divination methods. Annus notes that "divinatory methods are used to reduce anxiety toward the unknown. Insofar as exploring the sources of misfortune are the ways of repairing a situation is a stake, a component of natural or inductive is involved" (2015: 446). Wim M. J. Binsbergen (2008) in his work titled "*African Divination across Time and Space: The Typology, Intercontinental Connections, Prehistory, and Intercultural Epistemology of Sub-Saharan Mantics*", explains the different methods of divination which includes material divination, mental or trance divination, psychomotoric divination and ominous and oneiric divination (2008: 3). He further elucidates that in Africa, as in other continents, the varieties of material and trance divination include…

> 1. *'material' divination,* which involves verbal divinatory pronouncements triggered by the outcome of the manipulation (usually in intersubjective, collectively defined ways) of an object (that is usually neither unique nor idiosyncratic but defined within the repertoire of a local material culture) serving as a *random generator*;
> 2. *'mental' or 'trance' divination,* in which no external material apparatus is being used, but the diviner (or an assistant, translating the diviner's otherwise unintelligible utterances) produces verbal divinatory pronouncements that introspectively rely – in ways *not* dictated by external, objectified and verifiable epistemic procedure – on the diviner's subjective impressions, usually attributed to non-human agencies or impersonal powers as locally defined;
> 3. *'psychomotoric divination',* in which the diviner produces verbal divinatory pronouncements on the basis of specifically defined non-speech motor patterns (e.g. specific co-ordinated dancing movements) which, in the context of the divination session, are produced in the diviner or the client *in direct and more or less involuntary response to a variety of musical, olfactory or other sensory stimuli*; and finally
> 4. *'ominous and oneiric divination',* in which the diviner bases verbal divinatory pronouncements *on the client's reports* concerning more or less exceptional conditions the latter says to have witnessed or experienced in an ordinary waking state, in visions and hallucinations, or in dreams; typically, such conditions are interpreted by a fixed, usually rather elaborate and intersubjective catalogue of meanings – the equivalent of the well-known omen repertoires of the Ancient Near East and South Asia, and of the dream manuals of Graeco-Roman Antiquity and Islamic 'secret sciences' (Binsbergen 2008: 3–9).

Binsbergen further explains that:

> Apart from cleromantic divination as a somewhat alien technique, trance diviners – in Africa as elsewhere – may induce trance by the contemplation of mirroring surfaces, for instance a bowl filled with water, or a modern manufactured mirror. Divining bowls are known from many parts of Africa more or less in continuity with their use in Ancient Mesopotamia, Graeco-Roman Antiquity, and Ancient China. Both in Southern Africa (especially among the Venda) and in West Africa on the Bight of Benin, strikingly similar types of wooden bowls are in use whose rim, adorned with several dozen of realistic or fantastic animals, suggest

zodiacal connotations: not so much with Ancient Near Eastern or Graeco-Roman connotations (*pace* Davis 1955), but with Ancient China, where divining bowls with a rim of 3x12 zodiacal animals were in use in the middle of the first millennium CE, later to be replaced by the better-known twelve animals of the 12-year Chinese zodiac (Walters 1987 / 1989: 80).16 In recent periods in Southern and West Africa, such bowls were pressed into service in the context of varieties of geomantic divination, but initially they probably served trance divination in their own right, and without the elaborate notational symbolism and interpretative catalogue typical of Southern and West African forms of geomancy (the Hakata and Ifa systems, respectively) (2008: 9).

Based on the above, it is important to highlight that no matter the kinds divination systems and methods that communities are involved with, "all kinds of divination strive to know the hidden in the past, present, and future" (Annus 2015: 446).

From the above indented explanation, the question that comes to mind is, who are the diviners that conduct these processes of divination to ensure correct communication and the handling of the divination materials? According to Peek, "the central figure in this enterprise is of course the diviner, whose ascribed and achieved characteristics contribute to the separation of divination from normal activities" (1991b: 195). In other words, diviners are the central figures in the divination processes, and they play a key role in obtaining information during the process of divination. Diviners are regarded as specialists who conduct different processes that include healings and examinations of the past or future etc. In Africa, diviners are either determined at birth, chosen by the ancestors or spiritual powers, or volunteer themselves during their adulthood to be trained (*ibid*). As William Bascom writes, "One becomes a diviner in much the same way that he becomes a worshipper of any other deity: by following the worship (and profession) of his father, by being told through divination that one should become a diviner, or by a combination of these reasons" (1969: 87). Before one can become a diviner, the person is required to undergo "training, testing, and recognition by the group…there is a formal initiation and training period, there is usually a final examination (often public), after which the individual is officially recognized by the community as a diviner" (Peek 1991b: 196).[41] It is worth noting that diviners can be trained by other diviners and sometimes the office can be passed down from father to son. It is important to underscore that "just as not everyone can read cards of be a palmist, so not everyone can be a diviner. The exercise of this skill presupposes special knowledge or, more precisely, the force to know" (Tempels 1959: 56).

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[41] See Winde Abimbola 1977 and Victor W. Turner 1967.

Diviners serve as mediators, links or communicators between the worlds (this world and the spiritual realm) (*ibid*). When consulted, they are expected to give clues to their clients of what the results of an action taken by the clients may be or the nature of forces that could affect or is affecting the well-being of their clients. After some advice or wisdom from the diviner, the clients would have to make the decision either to heed the results revealed and advice given or not.

Diviners can be distinguished in different ways, either by their clothes, beads, regalia or some paintings on their faces, and they are always marked off from others (Peek 1991b: 196; Gebauer 1964: 149; see also Vansina 1971). Peek (1991b: 196) explains that "one of the most dramatic markers of diviners, especially in southern Africa, is cross-gender dressing, with women dressing as men because they have been possessed by male spirits (who are the actual divinatory agents)." Diviners are believed to possess extra sensory perception or knowledge far beyond an ordinary man's comprehension. In line with this, Peek elucidates that, "divination apparatus often incorporates elements of creatures, possibly primordial, which have special sensory abilities or are somehow extraordinarily endowed" (1991b: 198). Victor W. Turner explains that "at divinations, the physiological stimuli provided by drumming and signing, the use of archaic formulae in questions and responses, together take him [the diviner] out of his everyday self and heighten his intuitive awareness: he is a man with a vocation" (1972: 43). This state of heightened intuitive awareness facilitates a proper communication between worlds and permits "direct participation of superhuman entities in this world through their possession of the diviner" (Peek 1991b: 199). Diviners are regarded and acknowledged as special persons (*ibid*) and are among the most feared people in many African societies. And it is important to underscore that from the above discussion, diviners can be either a male or a female (Peek 1991b), but it is male dominated.

In the ensuing section, I will discuss *Ifá* Divination.

3.3.   *Ifá*: Definition

In many African cultures, divination systems are given a pivotal role within the society and thus, according to Peek, "must assume a central position in our attempts to better understand African peoples…" (1991a: 2). While there are different divination systems in Africa, such as those of the Luba in Central Africa, the Lobi of Burkina Faso, the Nankani interpretation of divination in the Upper East Region of Ghana, Zande divination of the Northern Democratic Republic of

Congo, Mediumistic divination among the Northern Yaka of Zaire, and Azande divination. I will focus on the *Ifá* divination as an example.

Ifá is known by the Yorubas as the deity of wisdom and intellectual development, and *Ifá* divination shapes individual interpretations of experience and is an important mode of knowing in African epistemology. Peek notes that, despite divination's centrality, accounts of its origins are not readily available; the Yoruba historical traditions about *Ifá* appears to be an exception.[42]

Wande Abimbola notes that:

> *Ifá* is a special divinity among the Yorubas. The Yorubas believe that it was *olodumare* who sent *Ifá* forth from the heavens and who charged him to use his wisdom to repair the world. The wisdom, knowledge, and luminosity with which *Olodumare* endowed *Ifá* account for *Ifá* preeminence among divinities in Yoruba land. "The-yound-but-immensely-wise one" is *Ifá* cognomen (1983: 6).[43]

Abimbola explains that *Ifá*[44] and *Orunmila* are the names that the Yoruba god of wisdom is mostly identified by. He explains that *Ifá*[45] and *Orunmila*, "refers to the same deity… the name '*Orunmila*' refers exclusively to the deity himself, the name '*Ifá*' refers both to the deity and his divination system" (1976: 3). Supporting and shedding some light on the above, Abimbola presents Bascom's view that, "the word *Ifá* is used to mean both the system of divination and the deity who controls; and this deity is known also as *Orunmila*" (1976: 3; Bascom 1939: 43). What this seeks to show is that the two names represent the same deity and could be used interchangeably to refer to the Yoruba deity of wisdom. Corroborating both views is Kola Abimbola's explanation of *Ifá*. Kola Abimbola (2006) explains that the word "*Ifá*" has six layers of meanings; I will only quote three layers that best support Wande Abimbola and William Bascom's views. He explains that

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[42] See E. M. McClelland 1982; Winde Abimbola 1976; William Bascom 1969.

[43] See Olufemi Taiwo 2004: 304. Also see Winde Abimbola (1983) for a well detailed explanation of Ifá divination.

[44] *Ifá* ancestry can be traced to the Yorubas. Yoruba is an ethnic group in South Western Nigeria. Some parts of the Republic of Benin (Dahomey) and Togo are Yorubas. It is important to note that *Ifá* divination exists in Cuba and Brazil.

[45] The Yoruba Alphabetical system contains different 'up' and 'under' strokes on the letters, but I decided not to include the strokes due to some technicalities involved with the use of laptop keyboard. The only part I will apply these strokes is on "*Ifá*". Nevertheless, the words and pronunciations still mean the same thing (its original form) without the strokes.

"(i) Ifá (also known as Orunmila or Orunla) is the name of the god of knowledge and wisdom; (ii) Ifá is used to refer to the divination process related to the god of knowledge and wisdom. This is known as "Ifá dida", i.e., Ifá divination; (iii) there is a body of knowledge also called Ifá (i.e., the Ifá Literary Corpus) associated with Ifá dida (the divination process). This body of knowledge is the Sacred Text of the Yoruba and all its denominations in Africa and the Diaspora. The corpus is made up of 256 Odu (i.e., "books" or "chapters"). Each Odu contains between 600 and 800 poems" (2006: 47).

According to William Bascom:

> *Ifá* is a system of divination based on 16 basic and 256 derivative figures (odu) obtained either by the manipulation of 16 palm nuts (*ikin*) or by the toss of a chain (*opele)* of 8 half seed shells. The worship of *Ifá* as the God of divination entails ceremonies, sacrifices, tabus, paraphernalia, drums, songs, praises, initiation, and other ritual elements comparable to those of other Yoruba cults; these are not treated fully here, since the primary subject of this study is *Ifá* as a system of divination (1991: 3).

Both Wande Abimbola and Bascom share the same view on the meaning of *Ifá.* It is worth noting that a substantial amount of studies has been carried out on *Ifá* divination by Wande Abimbola, while Bascom (1969 and 1980) has written substantial work on *Ifá* divination and its religious implication. A simple summary of his work is the idea that *Ifá* divination is a means of communication between gods and men; this forms part of the title of his book published in 1969. Like Bascom, Abimbola (1976 and 1977) has written an extensively on *Ifá* divination, *Ifá* divination poetry and literature, and has shed considerable light in his discussion of *Ifá* and *Ifá* divination in Yoruba religion. Below I will discuss *Ifá* divination as a repository of knowledge in light of the views of some scholars, more specifically the likes Bascom, Wande Abimbola and Olufemi Taiwo.

3.3.1. *Ifá* Divination: A Repository of Knowledge

Ifá divination, according to Wande Abimbola, is…

> Ifa and related systems of divination based on the stories and symbols of the Odu such as dida owo (divination with the sacred divining chain called opele) and etıte-ale (divination with the sacred palm nuts), eerındınlogun (divination with the sixteen cowries), agbigba (divination with a divining chain slightly different from opele), and obi (divination with kola nuts) (2001: 141).

Ifá is recognized as the repository of the Yoruba traditional body of knowledge. Moses Akin Makinde elucidates that, "*Ifá*, which is known as a repository of knowledge or infinite source of knowledge (imo aimo tan), is in possession of knowledge consisting of several branches: science of nature (physics), animals (biology), plants (botany), oral incantations (ofo), divination (prediction), medicinal plants (herbalism), and all the sciences associated with healing diseases

(medicine)" (1988: 6).[46] *Ifá* is further defined as "the Chief Yoruba system of divination and probably the most complex in Africa… its characteristics are the precision of the system, its vast corpus of related verses and its religious foundation of the worship of the *Orisha*, *Ifa*, or *Orunmila*" (Hinnells: 1995: 337). According to Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Ifá* is a "process of pursuit of knowledge about destiny, i.e., about the course of life. It is a quest for greater and greater individual and social self-understanding, especially in order to determine the right course of action for life" (1998a: 174).

The *Ifá* literary corpus is the store-house of the Yoruba culture; in it the Yoruba comprehension of their fundamental experiences—the experience of life itself and their understanding of their environment can always be found (Abimbola 1975a: 32; see also Abimbola 1977: 73–89). The *Ifá* literary corpus demands an oral performance, because the client must be present before the *Ifá* priest (*Babalawo* – a word which, according to Eze, literally means "Father of Secrets" (1998a: 174)—or according to Bascom, "father has secrets" (1969: 81)) who has to chant the poems from the relevant "*Odu*" very clearly to the hearing of the client and that of any other person present. It is important to point out here that the *Ifá* priest undergoes an extensive period of training in order to attain his or her knowledge (Abimbola 1976; Kamalu 1998). Not just anybody can become an *Ifá* priest, and even if you were chosen from birth, appointed or volunteered yourself, you would still need to be trained before you can be recognized as an *Ifá* priest. During this training, the person also learns the manipulation of all the 256 steps known as "*Odu Ifá*," Every *Ifá* priest, during and after the years of training, is required to properly study the literature of *Odu*, one after the other, and to memorize as much of this text as possible (Eze 1998a: 174). The 256 *odus* are divided into two categories, the major 16 are known as *Oju Odu* and the minor 240 known as *Omo Odu or Amulu Odu*. The combination of the major 16 and the minor 240 will provide us with a complete chart of the order of priority in the *Ifá* divination system (Adegbindin 2010: 23). We should also note that a set of poems accompanies each *odu* which an *Ifá* priest must know.[47] Below are the *Odu* and their pattern, when the divining chain is being thrown several times:

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[46] See also Makinde, M. A, "*Ifá* as a Repository of Knowledge," a paper presented at the XVIIth World Congress of Philosophy, Montreal, August 21–27, 1983a. Also in ODU: A Journal of West African Studies, No. 23, 1983b, pp. 116–121.

[47] For a detailed explanation see Winde Abimbola 1975a, 1975b, 1976, 1977; Moses Akin Makinde 1983a, 1983b, 1988; William Bascom 1991, 1993; Sophie Oluwole 1996, 1988; Chukwunyere Kamalu 1998. See also Omotade Adegbindin 2010.

Table 1

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1	*Ogbe*	2	*Oyeku*	3	*Iwori*	4	*Odi*
	1		11		11		1
	1		11		1		11
	1		11		1		11
	1		11		11		1

_____

5	*Irosun*	6	*Owonrin*	7	*Obara*	8	*Okanran*
	1		11		1		11
	1		11		11		11
	11		1		11		11
	11		1		11		1

_____

9	*Ogunda*	10	*Osa*	11	*Ika*	12	*Otuurupon*
	1		11		11		11
	1		11		1		1
	1		1		11		1
	11		11		11		1

_____

13	*Otua*	14	*Irete*	15	*Ose*	16	*Ofun*
	1		11		1		11
	11		1		11		1
	1		11		1		11
	11		1		11		1

_____

Source (Abimbola 1976: 29).

The *Ifá* priest usually chants verses from the *Odu* when consulted. The ordinary Yoruba patronizes the *Ifá* priest not only because of their belief in the predictions (past and future) and pronouncements of Ifá, but because of the esthetic satisfaction which they draw from listening to poetic narratives and chants. This chant is in the form of poetry which is exceptionally rich in style and language. The 256 *Odu* is very important in the *Ifá* divination system and it "is regarded as praise songs to *Esu*" (Eze 1998a: 174). It is also worth noting that the whole of the literary corpus known as *ese Ifá* is based on the *Odu*.

It is important to emphasize here that *Ifá* is a system that encompasses the history of the Yoruba people (the culture and tradition). *Ifá* is a body of wisdom. Makinde explains that "although Ifá is not a philosophy, it has in it a great stock of ideas that generate various philosophical issues, including metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, and science, of which the most developed is traditional medical science" (1988: 5).

3.3.1.1. (Ifá) Divination: An Important Mode of Knowing in African Epistemology

"Divination, which is a way of exploring the unknown, has been practised worldwide for millennia" (Tedlock 2001: 189), it is counted among African cultures' most ancient traditions. And is considered to be an important and notable form of knowledge in Africa and on other continents around the world. According to Peek, "every human community recognizes a need for the special knowledge gained through divination. While this need is hardly of the same order as the need for food and shelter, it is nonetheless universal" (1991a: 1; see also Peek 1998: 171).

Besides the fact that we can find divination systems in numerous other continents, like Africa, Asia, Europe, it is however, worth noting that divination "is at the heart of many African societies" (Binsbergen 2008: 2). In the subsequent section, I will discuss *Ifá* Divination. Thus, my aim in this section is to simply explain why divination is an important way of knowing in African epistemology (thought). I will use *Ifá* divination as my point of reference.

Peek explains that, "throughout African—whether in the city or in the country, no matter the religion, sex, or status of the individual—questions, problems, and choices arise for which everyday knowledge is insufficient and yet action must be taken. The information necessary to respond effectively is available, but often only through a diviner" (1991a: 1; see also Peek 1998: 171). Therefore, in the search for knowledge, divination helps to illuminate the path of an individual in his/her quest. Divination is employed in African societies when knowledge and demands are seldom obtainable through mundane means of inquiry, and this is "why divination continues to provide a trusted means of decision making, a basic source of vital knowledge (*ibid*). The reason for this is to ensure all pertinent information needed are availed before an action may be taken. For some traditional Africans, divination remains the highest means of seeking information and truth, and it "is a standardized process deriving from a learned discipline based on an extensive body of knowledge" (*ibid*). Because of their value for truth, traditional Africans would go to any length to attain truth. They do not shy away from seeking the truth and the answer to their worries through whatever means available. A good example of Africans' quest and value for truth can be seen through the Akan proverb explaining that even if truth lies in a mother's womb, and a son uses his 'manhood' to bring it out, he could not be said to have had sexual intercourse with her (Dzobo 1992: 83). The implication of this proverb is that truth should be sought no matter where it may be found and by whatever method.

Traditional Africans believe in divination. They try to find the solutions and answers to different questions about the realities of life through divination. For example, if someone is sick or wants to know more about an occurrence or the future that person turns to diviners for help with a solution. To this, Tempels explains:

> To know what particular vital influence has attacked a man to cause his sickness, one consults a specialist in the science of the interference of forces. In the same way, to know what "kijimba" will be able to restore such…, it is not enough to reply on one's own knowledge, any more than to rely upon the counsel of the first person whom one may meet. In such cases, the wise thing to do is to consult a diviner. Just as not everyone can read cards of be a palmist, so not everyone can be a diviner. The exercise of this skill presupposes special knowledge or, more precisely, the force to know (1959: 56).

To this and the idea of an individual that is sick and is in search of the care or cause or wants to know more about an incident or the future, Kamalu says, "many authors observe the fact that African traditional medicines treat both the spiritual and physical aspects of an illness" (1998: 85). Connecting it to the Yoruba medicine, Kamalu further explicates that, "healing is derived from Ifa and is possible because Ifa, being the divine intelligence, "knows the origin of diseases and the various names by which they are called (*ibid;* see also Makinde 1988: 88). Shading more light to the above, Moses Akin Makinde elucidates that, "Ifa is regarded among the Yoruba as the pathfinder (*atoka*), of medicine and healing, and the source of our knowledge of herbal and metaphysical medicine (divination and oral incantation), the kind usually referred to in the west as magical science" (1988: 88).

According to Peek, divination (systems) plays a pivotal role in African cultures… and it is the "means (as well as the premise) of knowing which underpin and validate all else" (1991b: 173). From the above we can rightly infer that traditional Africans believe, to a large extent, that divination gives an indubitable truth and revelation. Peek says, "contemporary Africans in both urban and rural environments continue to rely on divination and diviners to play a crucial role as mediators, especially for cultures in rapid transition" (*ibid*). In view of the aforementioned, I will like to point out that as much as divination can be seen as one of the African modes of knowledge that appear to be a legitimate approach to understanding reality and the quest for an indubitable truth or information, not all forms of divinations or divination systems could certainly be reliable and genuine. I deem these unreliable forms of divination as part the stumbling blocks and failed experiments one faces in the search for that [an] indubitable truth. My focus here is not devination's reliability or lack of it, but the fact that traditional Africans believe it to be a way of knowing. Based on the discussion thus far, it is evident that divination is seen as a way of knowing that is beyond an ordinary human's comprehension. They also see it as a major determinant of truth when consulted. They believe that through divination, one can or is able to know what the future holds, to find anything that is lost and to offer the cure for an illness, etc.

According to Eze (1998a), the starting point of knowledge in *Ifá* is not an abstract idea, but rather a fundamental experience of life itself and a practice of deep understanding – the process of seeking knowledge about human life and action.[48] The curiosity of the human mind pushes

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[48] See Eze, E. C., 1998a, "The Problem of Knowledge in "Divination": The Example of *Ifa,*" in Eze, C. E. (ed.), *African Philosophy: An Anthropology.* Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 173–174.

one to the desire to know about both himself/herself and of the universe. Generally, what human beings experience and see daily spurs them onto the search for a deeper understanding of human life and action. An attempt to deal with these issues and many others is the concern of philosophy, as well as divination, because "quest among philosophers has been to find objective criteria with which actions or conduct can be established as right or wrong" (Eze 1998a: 173). It is also for of these issues that many consult *Ifá* for answers. "*Ifa* work is, therefore, a quest for discovery of meaning and direction in life, personal or communal, through rational discernment and liberation" (Eze 1998a: 174).

According to Olufemi Taiwo:

> Ifá is omniscient: it is a repository of unsurpassable knowledge and wisdom. This means that Ifá transcends the limits of human cognitive capacities, has the capacity to know from several perspectives at the same time, and is not bound by the time-space constraints of human knowing (2004: 305).

Ifá's wisdom, knowledge and understanding cover the past, present and future. Within the Yoruba tradition, people consult Ifá based on their conviction that Ifá knows and has the answers to all their problems. They also do so because of the conviction that Ifá will help them with solutions and explanations of whatever issues have led them to the Ifá priest (Taiwo 2004: 305). Taiwo gives examples of circumstances that usually merit consultation with the Ifá priest. According to him, when a child is born, it is common or natural that the parents of the child would go to the Ifá priest to have Ifá reveal to them them what the child's path through life might be. Individuals also consult Ifá on diverse occasions, for example, when things are not going the way the individual expects or has planned, when an individual is about to embark on a new adventure, and when an individual is ill (Taiwo 2004: 306). During the consultation, the Ifá does not speak directly to the client; the Ifá priest must be interposed between the two (Taiwo 2004: 306). It should be noted that during the consultation, the client "expresses a wish to 'talk with the divinity'. This is a critical element in Ifá epistemology [African Epistemology]. In not talking directly with the Babalawo, the client underscores the intermediary role of the Babalawo and the process simultaneously denies the Babalawo any ambition to play god or play seer" (Taiwo 2004: 307). This is because what is being sought by the client is Ifá, not the Ifá priest (babalawo).

In what follows the client whispers her problem to a coin or a cowry shell presented to her. At this stage, the Ifá priest is not allowed to over-hear or listen in on what the client whispers. The

coin or cowry will then be dropped on the instruments of Ifá. Taiwo explains that in doing so two ends are served. Firstly "a physical connection is established between the client and Ifá as symbolized by the instruments" (*ibid*). Secondly "given that the client's 'scent' is on the coin or cowry shell that she whispered her problem on, Ifá is by that token personalized for her" (*ibid*). With these two ends, Ifá will know that the destiny is specifically that of the client's and not just anyone's.

After these steps, the *Ifá* priest will have to use the divining chain. When the divining chain is used, the *Ifá* priest holds the divining chain (the chain has four half-nuts of the *opele* tree tied to each side and each one of these half-nuts has a concave and convex surface) in the middle and throws it in front of him (Abimbola 1976: 29). The *Ifá* priest "quickly reads and pronounces the name of *Odu* whose signature he has seen. The answer to the client's problem will be found only in this *Odu*" (Abimbola 1977: 9–10). When the divining chain is thrown forward, an *Odu* would appear, as illustrated in table 1 in 3.2.1. The next stage of the divination process begins when the *Ifá* priest starts chanting the verses from the *Odu* to the client while he/she looks on and listens (*ibid*). Abimbola explains that the *Ifá* priest would chant poems from the *Odu* until the client chooses/selects a poem which tells a story containing a problem similar to the client's own. The client may stop the *Ifá* priest at this stage, for further explanation and clarification of that poem (*ibid*). In this sense, the client is required to be an active participant in the process of finding a solution to her problem. The client is the only one that can decide that the poem reflects a problem akin to his/her own, after which the explanation needed will be given and the client's problem will be discussed (Taiwo 2004: 308). The *Ifa* priest could help the client by further analyzing and interpreting the different *ese* he has chanted. In this way, the client is made to understand the prediction of *Ifá* about his/her problem. "If the divination is a successful one, both the *Ifá* priest and his client feel quite satisfied at the end of the long process of divination" (Abimbola 1976: 35). I am not going to go into the details of how the *Ifá* priest identifies the *Odu* and some parts of the divination process, because the above explanation captures the essential parts of the divination. Noteworthy is that some divination processes may take several hours or days to complete.

In anticipation of some epistemological objections that could be posed on (*Ifá*) divination, Taiwo gave some objections. The first objection has to do with the protection of *Ifá*. Taiwo says that "some might object that protecting *Ifá* itself from doubt approaches the dimensions of

unreasoned faith. That is, *Ifá* is protected from questioning, much less of falsification" (2004: 310). In response to this objection, he elucidates that…

> As Thomas Kuhn has shown, even in Euro-American science, where Karl Popper mistakenly suggested that scientists abandon "falsified theories," the truth is that it takes a considerable time before scientists give up on theories that have been found to be productive of adequate explanations in at least some situations. In the interim, they go to great lengths to explain away counter-instances or to construct subsidiary explanations for such anomalies as may arise. But they never doubt that science has within itself the resources with which to correct anomalies. So it is with *Ifá* (Taiwo 2004: 310).

To better explain the above, Taiwo quotes Bascom's idea to corroborate his position. Bascom points out that "as in the case of doctor whose patient dies, a number of explanations are possible, and while the doctor's skill or knowledge may be questioned, the system of medicine itself is not" (1991: 70). The second epistemological issues have to do with original diagnoses in divination system. According to Taiwo, the question is: "did the original diagnoses and prescriptions depend similarly on empirical reasoning? (2004: 310)". In response to this he said that implication of this is "that *Ifá* divination rests on the cognitive resources of an omniscient entity, namely, *Ifá*, suggests that the knowledge generated by the system itself does not depend on empirical inference alone" (*ibid*). His point is that besides the empirical inference, "analogical reasoning plays a large part in the "divination" system" (*ibid*). To borrow Polycarp Ikuenobe idea, to understand the analogical reasoning or rationality of the belief in divination, we must analyze 'what things *seem* like' to the diviners and those who accept the belief in divination (2000: 128).

It is important to emphasize here that the process of seeking answers from *Ifá* is interactive in ways that help give a proper solution to what is being requested. Through the divination process, the client becomes fully aware of his or her problems and the steps to solving them. It has been argued that this method and process of knowing cannot be verified scientifically. Many scholars like P. O. Bodunrin object to extra-sensory perception, and his work "Magic, Witchcraft, and ESP: A Defence of Scientific and Philosophical Skepticism" can be applied here. He argued that magic and witchcraft do not conform to the scientific methods and principles of logic. He believes that for such things as magic, witchcraft and extra-sensory perception to be thorough, they must convince us that there is a method of testing to prove its existence (1995). And according to him it must meet some scientific (scientifically organized experiments) and logical requirements. As such divination as a form of knowledge has been deemed irrational. I argue that while divination appears to defy scientific methods and principles of logic, it should not be

deemed irrational, but rather, a different mode of knowledge. Therefore, divination systems as a way of knowing do not require experiments and scientific reasoning. Some part of it is beyond the scope of human understanding. But our inability to understand and explain some parts of the divination processes may just be *for now*.

Also, in response to Bodunrin objection, Sophie Oluwole argues that the existence of witchcraft can be scientifically proved.[49] She provided three methods to establish the existence of witches. The first method is: "we may give an explanation of the *modus operandi* of witchcraft power". The second is: "we may *experimentally establish* a causal relationship between the postulated occult power and the mysterious even he (the African) cites to prove its practical efficacy". And the third one is: "we may show a practical manipulation of witchcraft power" (Oluwole 1995; Bodunrin 1995: 376). Oluwole calls the first method scientific method. Despite her intense discussion on this method, Bodunrin maintains that no matter what witchcraft still awaits further scientific and philosophical explanation. To this, Uduigwomen says that "in African traditional setting, experimentation is not resorted to if a disagreement arises between two parties regarding what one claims to observe. Rather, the testimony of a third party is sought to settle the difference" (2009: 172). Polycarp Ikuenobe gave a reply to Bodunrin's objection. According to Ikuenobe:

> Philosophy as an abstract and conceptual discipline does not have the right tools methods for determining and investigating the 'actual' truth of beliefs beyond common-sense, hence it is not concerned with truth as such; this is left to the discipline of science. Philosophy is not a scientific discipline: I do not imply that philosophy cannot use the *relevant* rational and analytical methods of science, but not all methods of science are relevant to philosophy. So, the difficulty of obtaining empirical evidence for a belief does not vitiate its rationality, such that we cannot intellectually speculate about it and its rational underpinnings (2000: 127–128).

In trying to draw a difference between African ways of knowing and science, Anyanwu asserts that, "skepticism arises from the method of science, not from the structure of reality. It is the product of logical reason doubting its own foundation. To spread this skepticism to African cultural experience and reality is completely naïve" (1981: 79–80). I think Anyanwu needs to rethink his assertion, for if we do not question reality, how do we get the correct answer and deeper knowledge of reality that we do not fully understand. After all, as Eze said, "the quest among philosophers has been to find objective criteria with which actions or conduct can be established as right or wrong (1998a: 173). And this is in line with Descartes' search for the

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[49] One cannot claim that because "something cannot be seen, it therefore does not exist" (Ellis & ter Haar 2007: 387).

indubitable truth, and the reason he decided to question what he knew and doubted everything. And this is why the use of the 'why' question in order to arrive at a well-founded knowledge is important.

Malcolm J. McVeigh made reference to "the African concern with the deeper 'why questions" (1974: 164), and "the African tendency to seek immediate mystical answers" (*ibid*: 230, n. 57). Monica Wilson observed that in Africa scientific answers are regarded as incomplete, for science "cannot answer the question the Mpondo or Nyakyusa is primarily concerned with when his child dies: 'Why did it happen to me?' 'Who caused it'" (1971: 141). With regards to the 'Why' question, John Mbiti wrote that it is not enough to ask *why* or *how* something caused another to happen. "In traditional life, the *who questions and answers* are more important and meaningful than the *how questions and answers*" (1983: 191). Even Hallen and Sodipo's study among the Yorubas shows that there is skepticism in Africa (1986). We can infer from the above that skepticism is an important aspect of African discourse (and in philosophy), and not a naïve step. What is philosophy without skepticism? According to Einstein, "the important thing is not to stop questioning; curiosity has its own reason for existing" (quoted in Gorvett 2017).

In Divination, knowledge can be accessed at a level beyond rational deliberation. This knowledge is the solution, between the diviner and the god [*Ifa*], which the diviner conveys to his/her clients. This kind of knowledge is beyond ordinary human cognitive capacity. Reality comprises the observable and the unobservable, the observable is comprehensible through rational deliberation, and the unobservable is comprehensible through divination (paranormal). Thus, we can rightly infer that extra-sensory cognition is the plausible way, by which the unobservable reality could be comprehended, and not through scientific methods and principles of logic. Diviners and their clients can attest to this.

3.4.   Divination as a Paranormal Cognition

According to Peek, "a means of acquiring normally inaccessible information, divination utilizes a non-normal mode of cognition which is then synthesize by the diviner and client(s) with everyday knowledge in order to allow the client(s) to make plans of action" (Peek 1991b: 194). And 'Paranormal cognition' is the means. Paranormal cognition can be defined as "knowledge without the use of any known sense organ" (Mundle 1967: 49–50). The paranormal cognition and event, according to Albert Mosley, is that which seems to contradict the fundamental ideas and principles upon which modern science has been based (1978: 9). Hallen and Sodipo write

that paranormal perception is a technical English-language term sometimes referred to as parapsychology. Parapsychology has four main abilities or powers that exist under it. These are telepathy, clairvoyance, psychokinesis, and precognition.

1.   Telepathy: Refers to the ability of a mind to be affected by the existing contents of another mind without the use of sensory intermediaries.[50]

2.   Clairvoyance: Refers to the ability to be affected by the existing information about physical objects or events, as distinct from mental ones, without sensory intermediaries.[51]

3.   Psychokinesis: Refers to the ability to influence physical states, without sensory intermediaries.[52]

4.   Precognition: Refers to the ability to acquire information about future events without the use of sensory intermediaries.[53]

According to Mosley, "these definitions are necessarily tentative because the very nature of such phenomena is a matter of continuing discussion and clarification" (2004: 137). All of these abilities are exercised by those with extra-sensory perception (ESP). Diviners share in ESP. Diviners and others with the ability of extra-sensory perception claim knowledge of these powers because they have the ability to control and manipulate these powers, and the sufficient testimony to the apparent validity of some of these claims.

Based on the aforementioned, it is clear that divination as a system of knowing is a 'paranormal perception'. The reason for this is because to obtain knowledge of some certain things we need a different mode of knowing, because the "normal knowledge is insufficient and a different way of thinking is demanded" (Peek 1991b: 204). And paranormal perception is the mode of knowing that can be sufficient. While it might be argued, against the above-mentioned, that the methodological principles (that is the divinatory procedures) or rituals, is sets divination apart from other paranormal activities, I think that when we consider the outcomes, divination is not

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[50] See Mosley (2004: 137).

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] *Ibid.*

that different from other paranormal activities. According to Peek, the throwing of bones and shaking of the basket, and divination apparatus etc. which appear so haphazard makes the divinatory enterprise unique and, ultimately, so effective (1991b). I do acknowledge this view and the view that divinatory procedures or rituals vary, but the ability and outcome, which is the use of the supernatural, does not make it different from other paranormal activities. The throwing of bones can be regarded unique, divination as a system of knowledge which is considered as paranormal perception is the same as other paranormal activities. Why? Because how the result of a divination process comes about is a non-normal mode of cognition—supernatural, and this technically, is worldwide.

Divination is considered an important mode of knowledge in African thought. Divination alongside spiritual mediumship and witchcraft are considered 'paranormal or paranormal cognition'. In other words, paranormal or paranormal cognition is the name used to refer to divination, magic, witchcraft, spiritual mediumship by modern science. Considering such, Gyekye asserts that in Africa "paranormal cognition is recognized, by and large, as a mode of knowing" (1987b: 201). Elsewhere, Gyekye explains that "Divination, witchcraft, and spiritual mediumship are psychical phenomena common in all African communities" (1995: 346).

A salient feature of divination, magic, spiritual mediumship and witchcraft is the super-naturalness or mystical power. My interest here is not whether it is real or not, or whether the outcome is good or bad, but rather, in the ability and result of divination—paranormal. It is evident that paranormal cognition is usually regarded as a mysterious power by virtue of which some people perform actions which the ordinary man cannot perform. The most mysterious characteristic of this power is the ability of the person in possession of this power to affect someone, or performs actions, without any contact or sensory intermediaries. This ability that they (those with the power) possess in common nullifies the idea that divination is unique to African.

Scholars like Peek and Abimbola hold strongly that divination as a way of knowing is different from other ways of knowing. Corroborating this view, one might argue that divination cannot be what it is without the divinatory procedures, the rituals and outcomes. But then, this should beg the question: is divination different because of its divinatory procedures and ritual, or is it unique because of the ability of the diviner to give information about future events? While it might be argued that the methodological principles (that is the divinatory procedures) or rituals are the things that made divination different from other paranormal activities, I think the outcomes are

all the same. When considering the whole processes or rituals involved to its outcome of divination, it appears to be different, but when considering the future event that is being predicted (outcome), the supernatural power that helps in the predictions of the future is still the same—meaning that divination is not that different from other paranormal activities. Whether in the absence or presence of the methodological principles or ritual, the ability to give information about future events (good or bad) is still the same.

To further clarify the above, let us consider the idea of continuity and change in Ifá. There have been changes with regards to the divinatory procedures or ritual, etc. Western civilization has led partly to the neglect of divination. Though still in practice, Ifá divination is not as strong as it used to be. Ifá priest:

> Have diminished and their patrons and audiences have become Christianized, Islamized, or marginalized by modern economic trends, large performances by Ifa priests involving the entire community, such as could be seen in festivals twenty years ago in almost every Yoruba town, now seem to have deteriorated to the point there are some small towns where there are no Babalawo, let alone Ifá festivals (Abimbola 2000: 180).

Abimbola elucidates that there is the inclusion of lines, phrases, or sentence from the neighbouring languages such as Nupe, Fon, Ewe, Gun, or Gan. He further explains that some of its equipments, like the beaded objects, performance, opa orere and the use of musical instruments etc. have been replaced, because most of them are no longer being produced in Africa. Drawing from all of the above replacements and other changes, he mentioned in his work, he asserts that, "the interesting thing is that change or deliberate creativity is built into and has become an integral part of the tradition of Ifa" (Abimbola 2000: 176). He further explains that with regards to the retention of rituals, African diaspora, like Cuba's and Brazil's, appears to be more conservative than the continental Africa. It appears to be the case that their conservative nature is due to the fact that they have lost some good parts of the sacred literature, and also the Yoruba language as an everyday vehicle of thought. Consequently, deciding to pay greater attention to the observance of numerous details of rituals. Given the above, it is evident that some things have been retained and many have been lost, because (of the idea) of change. This, I think, questions the importance of the equipment.

The conservative nature of African diaspora and the flexible nature of the continental Africa beg the question in that we are implicitly asked to accept the idea of change or deliberate creativity as an integral part of the tradition of Ifá, and not as something foreign that has had a huge impact on the tradition of Ifá. Whether the change is integral or foreign, chances are that more parts of the

tradition of Ifá will be lost deliberately or unintentionally since a good part of it has already been lost. So, what does this say about the tradition of Ifá? What it says is that if this change persists the tradition of Ifá would undergo a huge transformation that the so-called rituals or core aspects of it might cease to exist or be replaced with something different. This action is like throwing away a baby after nursing it for years. I think Abimbola is aware of the consequences of change that was why he asserts that change or deliberate creativity is an integral part of the tradition of Ifá. At first, Abimbola seems not to admit the idea of change, but partially redeemed himself when he admits that "change as a dynamic and creative process is also a part of this world order. This allows Ifa to be able to speak to each age in a language it can understand" (2000: 180). Despite his idea that change is integral to the tradition of Ifa, what he really refuses to accept is that change will have or has had a huge impact on the tradition of Ifá (divination as well).

The point I want to draw us to, is the idea that whether in the absence or presence of the methodological principles or ritual, the ability to give information about future events is still the same. With or without change, in any divination system—the tradition of Ifá—paranormal, the ability to give information about future events is still the same. Thus, I can rightly conclude that the ability to acquire information about future events and the outcome does not necessarily depend on the ritual. The fact that Ifá divination is still at work today, even though it has lost a great part of the sacred literature. In this case, arguably, I can say that the uniqueness in the ritual is fading away. Someone might still insist that divination is unique because not everyone has the ability to acquire information about future events. While I am disposed to accept that this is the case, I will like to argue that the ability of an African diviner to give information about the future is not that different from other paranormal activities. The ability and method might be different for those who possess it, but its outcome is still the same, because it has to do with the supernatural. The methodological principles or ritual might be different, but the ability to give or tell a client the information he or she seeks is the same. The use of supernatural ability [in divination] is not that different from other paranormal activities. Thus, (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition.

3.5.   Conclusion

My aim in this chapter has been to show that (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition. In section 3.2, I explained what divination system is. In what followed,

subsection 3.2.1, I briefly explained divination system as a way of knowing. In section 3.3, I briefly defined *Ifá*. In subsections 3.3.1 and 3.3.1.1, I discussed *Ifá* divination as a repository of knowledge and (*Ifá*) divination as an important mode of knowing in African Epistemology. In the preceding part of this chapter, section 3.4, I showed that (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition.

Chapter Four

4. Against the Basis of a Unique African Epistemology

4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I illustrated that (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition. And in the first chapter I explained that question of the existence of African epistemology cannot be addressed without due knowledge of the idea and acceptance of African philosophy. This is of paramount importance since the idea of African epistemology originates from the larger discussion, African philosophy. The existence of African philosophy has been proven by different scholars, like Kwame Anthony Appiah (1992), Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997), Kwasi Wiredu (1980), Henry Odera Oruka (1972), Paulin J. Hountondji (1976), etc. And as it stands, though problematic, there have been proofs of the existence of African philosophy and writings on African philosophy. According to Kaphagawani and Malherbe, "to assert the existence of an African philosophy is also to imply the existence of an African epistemology, to the extent that an African epistemology is a subset of African philosophy" (2003: 219). Consequently, since there is indeed such a thing as African philosophy, which encompasses all types and forms of philosophizing, it therefore follows that there exists such a thing as African epistemology. Just as it is reasonable to talk of African ethics, it does make sense to also talk about African epistemology (*ibid*). To understand the concept of African epistemology it important to start with those that engage with the discourse.

Also, in chapter one I explained that, according to Udefi, the protagonists of African epistemology want to direct attention to the cultural embedding of knowledge, as opposed to the ideological framework of European colonization that upholds and affirms the supremacy of Western reason over that of non-Western peoples and cultures (2005: 74 – 75; see also Jimoh 2017: 123). Scholars Placide Tempels, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher Anyanwu, Anselm Kole Jimoh, Amaechi Udefi[54] and others based their arguments for a distinctive or unique African epistemology on the premise or proposition "that each race is

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[54]Similar to the foot not in the first chapter, I will like to note again that I included Anselm Kole Jimoh to this list because his clearly talks about African epistemology and he argued also that there is a unique African epistemology. Thus, I believe that because of this, he can be considered to be an advocate of African epistemology. Also, I included Udefi Amaechi to this group of people because he appears to be a propagator and a critique of the ideas of the protagonists of African epistemology.

endowed with a distinctive nature and embodies in its civilization a particular spirit" (Udefi 2014: 112; see also Irele 1981: 70). In other words, according to Jimoh, "there is a distinctive African way of perceiving and reacting to the world" (2017: 123). The aforementioned are what constitute African epistemology. According to Onyewuenyi, African theory of knowledge follows closely upon ontology (1976: 525). What this means is that both ideas (African theory of knowledge and African ontology), according to Udefi, are "intimately related making it inconceivable to understand one without a prior knowledge of the other" (2014: 108 – 109). To argue for a unique African epistemology, the proponents of African epistemology did two things. Firstly, they tried to connect the African mode of knowledge with African ontology. Secondly, they "engaged in the conceptualization and theorization of African epistemology" (Udefi 2014: 110). These actually aid their argument of a distinct African way of knowing.

In chapter one, section 1.3., I explained there are two problems with the idea of African epistemology. I stated that the first problem lies in the emphasis that there is a unique African epistemology (a mode of knowing that is peculiar to Africans, and that African mode of knowing is social, holistic and situated notion of knowledge). And the second problem lies in the fact that advocates of African epistemology neglect some essentials when it comes to epistemic justification. The protagonists of African epistemology neglected the idea that both the internalist and externalist notions of justification are necessary to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification. In this chapter, I will be dealing with the first problem and in the sixth chapter I will concentrate on the second problem. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to show that African epistemology is not as unique as the protagonists' claims, because of the idea of "our common humanity".

The first part of this chapter will aim at outlining the arguments of some protagonists of African epistemology. I will begin with Tempels, followed by Senghor, Onyewuenyi, Anyanwu, Jimoh and Udefi defence of African epistemology. In the course of discussing the above protagonists of African epistemology, I will attempt a critique of their ideas. I will like to underscore that my aim and argument is not a question of the existence of an African epistemology, but that given our common humanity, the idea of a unique African epistemology is questionable. In the second part, 4.8, I seek to evaluate the concept of African epistemology in the light of some views of the protagonists of African epistemology. In subsection 4.8.1, I will focus on the reliance of Western ideas and language by the protagonists of African epistemology in their discussions. In subsection 4.8.2, I will further argue that African epistemology is particularistic, relative and

universalistic in nature. Subsequently, in subsection 4.8.3, my objection will focus on the idea of the modernization within Africa cultural system. In this case arguing that cultures are not totally pure because they experience modernization within while assimilating other peoples' culture into theirs'.

4.2.   Placide Tempels

Placide Tempels is one of the first prominent men to begin an ambitious venture of coming up with a philosophy that is peculiar to Africa. In his bid to devise better ways of ministering and for the Europeans to understand Africans, Tempels deemed it appropriate to classify and make a systematic analysis of the Bantu people or perhaps the African way of thought vis-à-vis the Western intellectual discipline. *La Philosophie Bantoue*[55] is the outcome of Tempels' systematic analysis. Moya Deacon tells us that:

> Essentially, *Bantu philosophy* can be seen as the structured portrayal of Tempels' comprehension of the indigenous Congolese, attained through his intimate relationship with them. The treatise was greeted with hostility by the Catholic hierarchy in the Belgian Congo, it being such that the ideas contained in the work were contrary to the hierarchy's notion of the African. Tempels' publication outraged, in particular, the Catholic Bishop of Elizabethville (2003: 101).

This first piece of literature concerning "Bantu (or African) philosophy" that Tempels brought into academic philosophical discussion[56] has to its credit, whole hosts of concepts such as the famous force and vital force in African philosophy. Regarding the idea of force, Tempels asserts that Bantu ontology, in essence, is a theory of forces[57]: "**the concept "forces" is bound to the concept of "being" even in the most abstract thinking upon the notion of being**" (1959: 35).[58] This idea will be explained further as I proceed. So, drawing up a comparison between the

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[55] Présence Africaine has published different editions of *Bantu philosophy (La Philosophie bantoue)* and in this work the references are to the 1945, 1959, 1961 and 1965 editions because of the different translations and word usgage. Hountondji explains that Rev. Father Placide Tempels, *La Philosophie bantoue,* was "translated from the Dutch by A. Rubbens (Paris: Présence Africaine 1949)" (1983a: 187).

[56] See f. Ochiegn'-Odhiambo's Forward to H. Odera Oruka's *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy* (Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers, 1990). iv.

[57] Tempels explains that, "the philosophy of forces is a theory of life, a **weltanschaung**. It is possible that it may have been devised to justify a given behaviour, or that a particular adaption of nature may have conditioned this behaviour, but always the philosophy of forces strictly governs in fact the whole of Bantu life" (1959: 49).

[58] According to Tempels, "We [Western] can conceive of the transcendental notion of "being" by separating it from its attribute, "Force", but the Bantu cannot. "Force" in his thought is a necessary element in "being", and the concept of "force" is inseparable from the definition of "being". There is no idea among Bantus of "being divorced from the idea of "force". Without the element "force", "being" cannot be conceived" (1959: 34).

Bantu and the Western conceptions of being, he says that the Bantu has a dynamic conception as oppose to the Western conception of being that is static. He further asserts "what has been said above should be accepted as the basis of Bantu ontology" (Tempels 1959: 34–35). Supporting his idea of the Bantu conception of being, Tempels says:

> For the Bantu power is not an accident: it is more even than a necessary accident; it is the very essence of being… Being is power, power is being. Our notion of being is 'that which is', theirs is 'the power that is'. Where we think the concept 'to be', they make use (*sic*) of the concept 'power'. Where we see concrete beings, they see concrete forces. Where we would say that *beings* are distinguished by their essence or nature, Bantus would say that *forces* differ by their essence of nature (1961: 35–36)[59].

The above quote is to show, according to Tempels, that the idea of force and being is of value to the Bantu people and that their entire effort; as Hountondgi puts it, "is devoted to increasing his 'vital power', for all power can increase or diminish. This again, Tempels tells us, is opposed to the Western conception" (1983a: 35).

As a Franciscan Belgian missionary, Placide Tempels worked among the Baluba people on the North Katanga province of the Congo (Deacon 2003: 99). He was concerned with the mission of evangelisation and in that process, for a successful mission, he decided to venture into understanding the Baluba people. During his work, "he discovered that fellow Belgians who worked in various stations and held different positions in the colonial administration were mostly worried about the failure of civilisation to take hold on the Baluba" (Matolino 2011: 336). Because of this failure, Tempels then decided to investigate the possible cause of the failure "by presenting what he deemed to be a comprehensive study of the Baluba"[60] (*ibid*). According to Tempels, anybody working among the Bantu needs to understand their ontology, as even their logic depends on it. Whoever understands this ontology penetrates into the 'soul' of the Bantu. The gulf dividing the blacks and whites will, therefore "remain and even widen for as long as we [whites] do not meet them in the wholesome aspirations of their ontology" (Tempels 1965: 16).

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[59] See also Paulin J. Hountondji's book: *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd (1983a). p. 35.

[60] Matolino explains that "Tempels did not just wish to limit his findings to the Baluba. Instead, he generalised his findings to apply to all the Bantu. He justifies this generalization on the ground that other colonial administrators had confirmed with him that his articulation of Bantu philosophy resembled what they had observed but could not articulate" (2011: 337). In other words, his investigation was influenced by the indoctrinated viewpoints and opinions of the colonialists (Deacon 2003: 100).

According to Tempels, all aspects of Bantu customs, including religion and magic,[61] "lie on the unique principle, the recognition of the intimate nature of things, that is to say, on the principle of their ontology. For it is only this philosophical term that can best designate their knowledge of being and of the existence of things" (1965: 22–23). The entire system of Bantu thought based on this ontology, is what Tempels calls 'philosophy' in his work, though he confesses not being able to convince his reader – the missionaries and colonial administrators – "that a true philosophy can exist among the natives, and that there is sense in searching for it" (Tempels 1965: 28). Thus, for Tempels, ontology is the focus of Bantu philosophy and this ontology is saturated by the 'vital force'.

Tempels explains that the core concept in Bantus' ontology is vital force, the quintessence of all being which he sees as the equivalent of force and being. In other words, the Bantu conception of life is centred on one quintessential value: life force or vital force (in French, *force vitale*). "The vital force is the invisible reality of everything that exists, but is supreme in man. And man can reinforce his vital force by means of the forces of other beings of creation" (Tempels 1965: 32). To this he explains that, for the Bantu people, force and being are inseparable. Tempels states that:

> "We [Western] can conceive of the transcendental notion of "being" by separating it from its attribute, "Force", but the Bantu cannot. "Force" in his thought is a necessary element in "being", and the concept of "force" is inseparable from the definition of "being". There is no idea among Bantu of "being divorced from the idea of "force". Without the element "force", "being" cannot be conceived" (1959: 34).

Tempels further states that:

> I believe that we should most faithfully render the Bantu thought in European language by saying that Bantu speak, act, live as if, for them, beings were forces, force is not for them an adventitious, accidental reality. Force is even more than a necessary attribute of beings: **Force is the nature of being, force is being, being is force.** When we think in terms of the concept "being", they use the concept "force". Where we see concrete beings, they see concrete forces. When we say that "beings" are differentiated by their essence or nature, Bantu say that "forces" differ in their essence or nature. They hold that there is the divine force, celestial or terrestrial forces, human forces, animal forces, vegetable and even material or mineral forces (1959: 35).

The Bantu dialogue in terms of gaining, reinforcing, losing, or diminishing this force. For the Bantu, all beings of the universe possess their proper vital force: human, animal, vegetable, or

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[61] Sometimes the use of these concepts reveals a grave misunderstanding of the religious beliefs and practices here in question.

inorganic (*ibid*). Masolo explains that Tempels uses the French phrase *la force vitale* to mean a certain property which underlies all things. To him, force is the very essence of being. This is why he equates being with force (being = force), just as we would analytically equate "animal + reason = man" (*ibid*). "This force, according to Tempels, is as much the essence of a mouse, a tree, a cow or a human as it is of a stone, a footprint, soil, or a piece of cloth" (Masolo 1994: 48).

In talking about knowledge, Tempels considers the elders as those who hold the powerhouse of knowledge are the only ones that know, and the ones that can help in directing the young ones towards the path of knowledge. To this Tempels elucidates that:

> It is this sense that the old say: "The young cannot know without the elders." "If it were not for the elders," the Bantu say again, "if the young were left to themselves, the village would get nowhere. The young would no longer know how to live: they would have neither customs, laws, nor wisdom any longer. They would stray into disaster" (1959: 48–49).

Based on the aforementioned, it is important to emphasize that, those considered as intellectuals, the elders, are "constantly blamed for unrest and misguidance of the youth and the public in general" (Masolo 1994: 50).

Tempels further asserts that "Bantu philosophy is based on internal and external evidence". To explain this assertion, he firstly notes that the Bantu accept their present beliefs free from doubt. He writes:

> If the Bantu so generally accept their present beliefs free from doubt, that is because—they say—their wisdom is engendered in them at the same time as their living force by their parents and ancestors, who continue to instruct them by means of divinations. Songs, fables, mythological traditions and ceremonies of initiation assure instruction in Bantu thought. However, they draw other arguments from their own experience (Tempels 1959: 50).

In addition, he elucidated that the Bantu ancestors lived by the above philosophy, "preserved and handed down life through their recourse to these natural forces, and saved the Bantu people from destruction" (*ibid*). And this consequently, according to Tempels, makes the Bantu wisdom to appear sound and sufficient (*ibid*). I am inclined to think that this statement comes with an element of doubt. My reason for this is because the word *appears* or *seems* (using Tempels exact word) does not necessarily denote certainty. I think this was the reason he states that, "no doubt, anyone can show the error of their reasoning" (Tempels 1959: 51). In this case, he casts doubt on the reasoning of the Bantu.

Tempels went further to briefly explain his idea of the external evidence (of experience), meaning the evidence of external knowledge, he noted what Mgr. Leroy says in "La Religion des Primitifs"[62] which has to do with the Bantu constant struggle with the forces of nature. He says that:

> The Bantu sees himself engaged in a constant struggle with the forces of nature which surround him; and he emerges from this struggle, now as victor, now as vanquished. He establishes every day the existence of hidden forces in plants and herbs. For primitive minds, these considerations furnish adequate grounds of proof of the validity of their philosophy of forces and of the concept of beings as forces. To see that natural forces are sometimes potent and sometimes ineffective is enough to justify to him the inference that a being, that is to say a force, can now strengthen and now weaken, that a being's force can become inoperative, that the **bwanga** can "depart", "grow cold", or be "trampled under foot", as they put it (Tempels 1959: 51).

Based on the above, I am inclined to think that his choice of reading (*La Religion des Primitifs*) and words like 'primitive minds' is no surprise as to why the Bantu reasoning is being questioned. His use of degrading terms like 'primitive', savages', 'uncivilized' extensively in his work, indirectly shows why Bantu reasoning contains errors. These terms deny Bantus the capacity to reflect and reason accurately.

His [the] above discussion thus far sums up his idea and belief that the criteriology of Bantu rests upon internal and external evidence. In essence, he is of the view that the Bantu's theory of knowledge and justification of his knowledge claim rest upon both the internal and external experience. To this he concludes by explaining that:

> The criteriology of the Bantu rests upon external evidence, upon the authority and dominating life force of the ancestors. It rests at the same time upon the internal evidence of experience of nature and of living phenomena, observed from their point of view. No doubt, anyone can show the error of their reasoning; but it must none the less be admitted that their notions are based on reason, that their criteriology and their wisdom belong to rational knowledge (Tempels 1959: 51).

From the above, one can see that Tempels thinks Bantu reasoning (internal evidence of experience or internal knowledge) is erroneous, contradictory and should not be trusted. This also translates into the fact that Western rational knowledge is higher than that of the Bantu, and no one can show or easily pinpoint the error of their reasoning. The aforesaid stems from the doubt he cast on Bantu reasoning. Tempels said "no doubt, anyone can show the error of their reasoning; but it must none the less be admitted that their notions are based on reason, that their

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[62] For further reading, see Bishop Alexandre Le Roy's book: "La Religion des Primitifs", (1909 and 1911 editions). English translation is: The Religion of the Primitives, 1922 (New York, Macmillan)

criteriology and their wisdom belong to rational knowledge" (*ibid*). *Anyone* in this case includes himself. Meaning that there should be errors in their thinking so that we can teach and raise them to our [their] standards. Thus, to borrow Matolino's idea, I am inclined to think that Tempels comment here "is informed by his general project that seeks to raise the Bantu system to the same status as the philosophical systems of the Europeans" (2014: 47).

One interesting point to note from the above indented quote from Tempels is that the Bantu external evidence of experience is not in doubt or questioned or under scrutiny. Why? I am inclined to think that it is because their experiences and interactions with other forces cannot be disputed. I am also inclined to think that what this means is that the Bantu knowledge of the external world or external knowledge appears to be reasonable. Reasonable in the sense that their actions correlate with the external world. In this case what is in doubt and under scrutiny is the Bantu internal knowledge (reasoning). In this case, the Bantu reasoning should be viewed with suspicion. Why? It's propable that their traditional model of life or reasoning was seen as awkward. Consequently, I think Tempels should have done more to explain his idea of the internal knowledge (reasoning or rational knowledge) and shown that everyone's knowledge claims, whether the Bantu people (Africans) or Westerns, are susceptible to errors and can be subjected to doubt.

In summary, I think the implications of his assertions are: firstly, do with what many African scholars, like Hountondji, argued against, that his project is in support of the missionaries and colonialism and not for the Bantu people. In this line, Masolo tells us that the background of Tempels, "rather than the research, influenced and controlled his conclusion" (1994: 58). Secondly, The Bantu rational capacity is questionable because it is not of the same standard as the Westerners' which is said to be scientific and proper. In other words, his assertions show that the Bantus or Africans are unable to conceive things in the way the Westerners do, and their reasoning is nowhere close to theirs, because Bantus reasoning contains errors and is questionable. When something contains errors, it implies that its contradictory or is full of contradictions. And in that regard, their (Westerners) duty is to upgrade the Bantu reasoning or system of rationality, possibly, to their standard. In other words, his (their) objective was to civilize, Christianize and 'upgrade' the Bantu or African person to Western modes of living and thinking. He seeks only to understand the African way of life in order to present it to his European audience to devise better ways of 'training' Africans (Tempels 1959: 29). Masolo's critique closely affirms my point when he loosely explains that Temples described and

categorized Bantu or African system of rationality as contradictory (1994).[63] This is part of the reason why, I think, Masolo suggested a close reading of Tempels work. He states that, "Tempels's theory may at times seem convincing, but looked at more closely it contains many problems" (Masolo: 1994: 58). Thus, in essence, I think, the above discussions of Tempels clearly affirms Onyewuenyi's claim that Tempels is a pioneer of the discourse of African epistemology.

So far as Tempels is said to be the pioneer of the discourse of African epistemology, and has argued to show the existence of knowledge and the wisdom of the Bantu people, the following quote in *Bantu philosophy* questions this good gesture of Tempels and appears to be clothed in deception. According to Tempels:

> We do not claim, of course, that the Bantu are capable of formulating a philosophical treatise, complete with an adequate vocabulary. It is our job to proceed to such systematic development. It is we who will be able to tell them, in precise terms, what their inmost concept of being is. They will recognise themselves in our words, and will acquiesce, saying 'you understand us: you know us completely: you "know" in the way we "know"" (Tempels 1959: 36).

According to Deacon, the above quote "proves indispensable to the African philosopher's claim of Tempels' racism" (2003: 102). In this light, Masolo explains that "Tempels has been highly criticized by many sensitive black scholars" (1994: 57). Using Aimé Césaire as an example, he explains that Césaire criticized Tempels "as having followed Levy-Bruhl and his school by proposing another point in support of the theory of the "prelogical," and as presenting an argument in support of imperialism" (*ibid*).[64] Paraphrasing Abbe B. Kiambi (1966: 432), Masolo explains that Kiambi "holds that it is nonsense for Tempels to have presumed that the Bantu notion of force replaces exactly the scholastic notion of being; because this implies that the Bantu have an intelligence essentially different from that of Europeans" (2014: 258).[65] Tempels' argument also questions the presupposed idea and partly his objectives and intentions, which is to raise the "Bantu to the level of Westerners" (Matolino 2014: 36). Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that for Tempels to have shown the presence of epistemology, knowledge and wisdom

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[63] Masolo elucidates that "for Tempels, then, there are two modes of thought or systems of rationality and two philosophical systems derivable from them: One Western, the other Bantu or African. The former is scientific and proper, the latter intuitive, magical, and contradictory" (1994: 57).

[64] For a more detailed critique and argument see Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialism* (Reclame, Paris, 1950).

[65] For a more detailed critique and argument see Abbe B. Kiambi's article titled "L'Etre chez les bantous," in *Revue du clergé africain,* Vol. 21, No. 5, 1966, pp. 428–35. See also

among the Bantu people, it means that Africa is not a place devoid of epistemology, knowledge, wisdom and philosophy.

4.3.   Léopold Sédar Senghor

According to Udefi, the Tempelsian notion of vital force is echoed in the epistemology implicit in Léopold Sédar Senghor's négritude[66] – a term coined by Aimé Césaire. Césaire introduced the concept of négritude in this work (famous poem) *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Return to My Native Land*) in 1939. According to Masolo:

> When Aimé Césaire published *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (English translation rendered as *Return to My Native Land*) in 1939, he introduced in and through it two new concepts which would later turn out to be key to the discourse on African identity and determinant of a new course in the franco-phone production and representation of knowledge about black Africa and its diaspora. The first of these concepts was "negritude," which Césaire is credited with inventing as a neologue in the *Cahier*. In this famous poem, Césaire uses the word "negritude" six different times to conceptualize the dignity, the personhood or humanity, of black people. The second concept is captured by the word "return," which appears in the title of the poem itself. Closely related to the concept of negritude, the idea of "return" gives the dignity, the personhood or humanity, of black people its historicity; it turns it into a consciousness or awareness, into a state (of mind) which is subject to manipulations of history, of power relations. It is this idea of "return" which opens the way to the definition of negritude as a historical commitment, as movement (1994: 1–2).

Both Senghor and Césaire regarded negritude "as representing in a functional sense, the effort of the Negro-African to recover for himself and for Africans in Diaspora, a self-pride and confidence shattered for centuries by the adventure of the colonizer and the resulting political and cultural devaluation" (Udefi 2014: 109). Before explaining his idea of négritude, Senghor notes that the Negro-African or Negro "is a man of Nature". To this he elucidates that:

> The African negro, whether peasant, fisherman, hunter or herdsman, lives outdoors, both off the earth and with it, on intimate terms with trees and animals and all the elements, and to the rhythm of seasons and days. He keeps his senses open, ready to receive any impulse, and even the very waves of nature, without a screen (which is not to say without relays or

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[66] Aimé Césaire (1913–2008) from Martinique, Léon Gontran Damas (1912–1978) from Guiana and Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001) from Senegal were the founders of Negritude (Diagne 2018 § 1). According to Souleymane Bachir Diagne, "the concept of Negritude emerged as the expression of a revolt against the historical situation of French colonialism and racism" (*ibid*). "Central to the concept of negritude is the idea of suffering through servitude, either directly through slavery or indirectly through colonization" (Wolfers 1979: 27). Césaire and Senghor both experienced the sufferings of racial segregation as young students. Hence, for them, there was a need for awakening the black person as a process of converting the victims into consciousness of reshaping their destiny. Aimé Césaire's idea of negritude was basically originated in history, and it was one of bitterness and discomfort. Thus, Negritude for Césaire is "the sum of the cultural values of the black world as expressed in the life, the institutions, and the works of black men; the sum of the values of the civilization of the black world" (Wolfers 1979: 44).

transformers) between subject and object. He does, of course, reflect; but what comes first is form and colour, sound rhythm, smell and touch (Senghor 1995: 117).

The above explains the nature of the African negro. Thus, for Senghor, Negritude[67] is simply "the sum total of African cultural values" (1970).[68] In his work "*Negritude and Modernity or Negritude as a Humanism for the Twentieth Century*" (2001), he explains Negritude as a "philosophy that postulates a cultural action adapted to the spiritual and sociological conditions of the black man" (quoted in Wolfers 1979: 144)[69]. He is not too consistent in his definition of the concept. In one sense, it is regarded as "a metaphysics of a black identity, an African personality and a black soul," in another sense, it designates "a kind of epistemological anthropology and political philosophy" (Wiredu 1998c: 98). D. A. Masolo notes that "in contrast to other exponents of negritude", Senghor "called for a harmonious integration of black and white values as the basis of the new "African personality" (1994: 25).

According to Wolfers (1979: 45), "the supreme value of black African civilization is life forces". African values simply show that blood bonds are of great significance because of vital realities, but not just because of race. Senghor holds that "the family in Africa encompasses all persons descending from a common ancestor who is responsible for the flame of life transmitted to his descendants" (Wolfers 1979: 48). As a result, negritude is all about pointing out African values and their authenticity. For instance, Senghor stipulates that:

> Black man's emotivity is due neither to inherently superior sensory faculties nor to inherently inferior rational faculties, but to a particular attitude toward the external world and its apparent complexity. Essentially positive and dynamic, this attitude is a direct result of the notion of life force and its intensification and the tendency to relate to the external world as to a network of interacting forces (quoted in Wolfers 1979: 75).

It is important to emphasise here that Senghor may have been disingenuous, but he is not at all innocent of the ongoing modern racial battles "over the meaning of reason and humanity when he notoriously defended a thesis that, *on the surface,* is unsurpassably droll: "Emotion is Negro,

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[67] Tsenay Serequeberhan (1994) in chapter two of his book "*The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy: Horizon and Discourse*" critique Senghor's idea of Negritude, accuses him of becoming a neo-colonial dictator and casts him as an impenitent racist.

[68] See Senghor (1971). *Liberté II, Nation et voie africaine du socialisme,* Paris: Seuil.

[69] Senghor further explains that Negritude has a double meaning: "subjective and objective, particular and universal, topical and eternal" (Senghor 2001: 144). "Objectively, as a civilization, Negritude is the totality of values; not only those of the peoples of black African, but also of the black minorities of America, or even of Asia or the South Sea Islands…Subjectively, Negritude is a will to take on the values of the black world, to live them oneself, after having impregnated and actualized them, but also to make them live in and through others" (Senghor 2001: 144).

and reason Greek" (Eze 2001: 41).[70] According to Eze, it is as if Senghor said, "well, you keep your Reason; we have our Emotion. Besides, our Emotion is superior to your Reason" (*ibid*). Nevertheless, Senghor's theoretical work illustrates how race plays itself in modern discourse (Nwosimiri 2015: 64–65). Soyinka asserts that Senghor's assertion "is one of the most notorious of such hyperbolic manichaisms" (2003: 622). Soyinka went on to say that, "but if we penetrate into the heart of the poetry of what can be interpreted as racial slander, if we expand, just for the sake of argument, Jean-Paul Sartre's dialectical situating of Négritude as anti-racist racism, we begin to appreciate such hyperboles as metaphorical weapons forged in the heat of contestation" (*ibid*).[71] For the critics of Senghor, Jonathan O. Chimakonam alludes that, it "is a critical shortcoming of Senghor's proposal for understanding the African humanity sorely stressed by colonial ideology" (2017a: 110). Chimakonam further asserts that, "it is on these two scores that Senghor has been criticized for (i) drawing a very sharp line between Western and African thought patterns, and (ii) subjecting the African pattern to an inferior treatment" (*ibid*).

Ali Mazrui asserts that Senghor's Negro-African epistemology starts from the premise of, "I feel, therefore I am" (1978: 86). The poet of negritude or poet-philosopher holds the view that the African "does not realize that he thinks; he feels that he feels, he feels his existence, he feels himself" (Senghor 1956: 64). It is on this note that he openly asserts that "Emotion is African as Reason is Hellenic".[72] Elsewhere Senghor explains that

> …nowadays the European White is no longer content to see, dissect, measure and weigh the object he wants to know. He must also touch it, taste it, and penetrate to its core: he must *feel* it, as the African negro does. To know, for example, a fact of human nature, whether in psychology or in sociology, is no longer to know it at second hand, as Lucien Lévy-Bruhl did. No matter how much of a genius one may be, it is no longer enough to examine it from the outside and to gather figures about it; one has to *live* it. To know the Caledonians, Maurice Leenhardt had to live among them; and Marcel Griaule, who lived several months a

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[70] See also Cf. Irele 1983: 18; Udefi 2014: 110.

[71] Soyinka further explained his point as follows. He says, "let us put it this way: it is as if you persist in calling me an idiot. For a long time, I protest, then, one day, I discover a way of silencing you. I startle you by responding, one unexpected day, with the joyous shout: yes, of course I am an idiot, but for a start, have you read Dostoyyevsky's *The idiot?* Now, that would be more than sufficient for a non-African black who has only attained the confidence of Négritude via the filter of European humanities. Imagine, however, if he was also a Yoruba, or has acquired sufficient weaponry from the racist, he would demand, 'And what do you know of the deity Obatala, the god and protector of albino, the cripple, and other disadvantaged of humanity? What do you know of that mysterious confider of the gods, the "touched by the gods" whose interior language of communication you interpret as idiocy?' The 'idiot' did not await the birth of 'political correctness', the coy acknowledgment of the impaired of society under cosmetic names in order to be admitted to the world of the 'norm', or the privileged. His being was from the beginning, and society recognized him as one of the children of the gods, and not even a 'lesser' one" (2003: 622).

[72] See also Cf. Irele 1983: 18; Udefi 2014: 110.

year among the Dogon, felt the need to have himself initiated so that he would know them. Father Libermann urged his missionaries to "become negroes among negroes" as the surest means of getting to know them "to win them over to Jesus Christ." This method, which consists in living the object, is that of the phenomenologists and existentialists. It is a matter of participating in the object in the act of knowledge; of going beyond concepts and categories, appearances and preconceptions produced by education, to plunge into the primordial chaos, not shaped as yet by discursive reason. It is, as Kierkegaard wrote in his *Journal*, a matter of "letting one's thoughts appear with the umbilical cord of first love." It is the attitude of a wide-eyed child; the attitude of the African negro. Knowledge is then no artificial product of discursive reason made to cover up reality, but discovery through emotion, and not so much discovery as *rediscovery*. Knowledge coincides here with the *being* of the object in its originating and original reality, in its discontinuity and indeterminacy: in its life (1995: 123).

The above is similar to Tempels' work with the Bantu people in his Bantu philosophy. Here, Senghor is of the view that knowledge is no artificial product of reason, but of emotion; feelings, in this case. So, for one to know an object one must feel. And according to him, European Whites are venturing into this way of knowing like the Negros, as opposed to their artificial product of discursive reason. This is just a simple idea of discovering things or knowing things through emotion – the emotion of the African Negro – to Negrohood (Senghor 1995: 123). This is what Jean-Paul Sartre defines as "certain affective attitude towards the world" (1939[73]: 16–17; see also Senghor 1995: 123–124). Even though Senghor tried to show the distinction between the Africans and Europeans by his assertions and his explanation that European Whites are not content with reason, it still does not make any difference for such African scholars as Eze and Soyinka; as I have explained above. And it also did not spare him the harsh criticisms he received from different scholars. His assertion: "Emotion is African as Reason is Hellenic", according to Diagne, has been considered the most controversial of all his formulations of the philosophy of Negritude (Diagne 2018 § 1). Diagne explains that "the criticism was that the formula was an acceptance of the ethnological discourse of the Levy-Bruhlain type making a distinction between western societies suffused with rationality and the colonized world of what he labeled "inferior societies", under the rule of "primitive mentality" (Diagne 2018 § 1; see also Senghor 1964b: 288). Following his controversial formulation, Senghor further avers that:

> The life-surge of the African, his self-abandonment to the other is thus actuated by reason. But here, reason is not the eye – reason of the European, it is the reason by embrace which parkers more of the nature of logos than ratio… *classical European reason is analytical and makes use of the object, African reason is intuitive and participates in the object* (1965: 33–34).

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[73] This book was first published in 1939 under the French title: Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions. The first English edition was published in 1962 under the title: Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions.

The above shows that Senghor is of the idea that the African methods of knowing are more emotionally loaded than being rational. Senghor states that for the African "reason is not discursive but synthetic; it is not antagonistic, but sympathetic… European reasoning is analytical, discursive by utilization; Negro-African reasoning is intuitive by participation" (1964a: 73–74). Simply put, African reasoning is intuitive and participatory, while the Europeans' reasoning is analytic. And he notoriously defended this idea. But he was criticized for "denying Africans any capacity for engagement in rational discourse and a reduction of the African mode of knowledge to sensuality and emotion" (Udefi, 2014: 110). In an attempt to redeem Senghor, Chimakonam asserts that it is possible that his critics might have misread and misunderstood him. Chimakonam further explains that:

> Yes, he identified a structural difference between Western and African thought but he never simply meant one to be inferior to the other. I am of the view that had Senghor understood the wider logical implications of his thesis, he would have chosen a different set of terms to explain his position. And that careful formulation could have served as a basis of asserting that African thought was unique only in an inclusive sense of logic relativity and not, as he has been read, in an exclusive sense that excludes any connection to a universal mode of reasoning (2017a: 100–111).

What the above simply means is there is a structural difference between Western and African thought, and in this case, Senghor is advocating for a unique African mode of reasoning and epistemology.

African reasoning, according to Senghor, is intuitive by participation, while European reasoning is analytical. He reduced the African mode of knowledge to emotion and sensuality and denies Africans any capacity to engage in rational discourse. He later modified his above claim when he said that "…in truth, every ethnic group possesses different aspects of reason and all virtues of man but each has stressed only one aspect of reason, only certain virtues. No civilization can be built without techniques. Negro- African civilization is no exception to this rule" (1965: 75). The impression here is that when it comes to reasoning, every ethnic group has different genome as human beings. Godwin Sogolo responds to this when he says "the mind of the African is not structurally different from that of the Westerners. Also, the contextual contrast between Western thought and traditional African thought, which considers only the former as a suitable material for philosophical reflection, rests on false premises" (1993: 74).

As humans, we discover daily, the extent to which we can make use of reasoning capacity and the level to which our minds can work. We analyze things to get a deeper meaning. These so-called ethnic groups comprise rational beings capable of self-consciousness and self-reflection,

which is the same everywhere, and this I think, makes sense in any metaphysical structure. Lee M. Brown offers a plausible explanation of what a person or a human being is. He states: "A human being is an animal that has a specific genome. All and only those having an instance of that genome are human. A person is an individual that is capable of self-consciousness and of self-reflections" (2004: 160). This ethnic groups that Senghor talks about are made up of different individuals that fit into the above explanation, meaning that when it comes to rationality, it is the same everywhere. In other words, reasoning is neither African nor Western, neither is it specific to any particular culture.

According to Masolo, "Within philosophy, and particularly in France, young African students were experiencing a time of formidable challenge to Cartesian rationalism" (1994: 24). Like other young African students, Senghor came in contact with Cartesian rationalism and neo-Freudian theories and in the process renounced the metaphysical dualism that grounds modern Cartesian epistemology (Headley 2019: 104). Modern epistemology separates the knowing subject from the object or knowledge. This means that the knowing subject (Man [sic] as the *res cogitans*), that is not connected to the object (*res cogitata*), the thing known, is like a by-stander of sorts, bearing no affective closeness or relation to the object of knowledge. The subject views the object as a separate being. The subject in this process is free to subjugate the object to his/her interests. This process renders the object inadequate and completely silences the object and reduces it as an implement of the knower (*ibid*). According to Senghor:

> [The European] distinguishes himself from the object. He keeps it at a distance, immobilizes it outside time and in some sense outside space, fixes it and slays it. Armed with precision instruments, he dissects it mercilessly so as to arrive at a factual analysis. Learned, but moved by practical considerations, the European […] uses the Other, after slaying it, for practical ends: He treats it as a *means.* And he *assimilates* it in a centripetal motion; destroys it by feeding on it (1965: 2; see also Senghor 1995: 118).

Senghor then went on to describe the African's approach to the object, to the other. He writes:

> [The African] does not distinguish himself, to begin with, from the object: from tree or pebble, man or animal, fact of nature or society. He does not keep the object at a distance, does not analyse it. After receiving its impression, he takes the object, all alive, into his hands–like a blind man, anxious not to fix it or to kill it. He turns it over and over in his supple hands, touches it, *feels* it…. It is in his subjectivity and at the end of his antennae, like those of an insect, that he discovers the *Other*. And at this point, he is r*e-moved* … and carried… from subject to object on the waves which the Other emits (1965: 3; see also Senghor 1995: 118).

Besides explaining the differences between the African and European in terms of an epistemological distinction, Senghor acknowledges important conceptual variations about their

respective conception of reason. The European tradition models reason as a tool of operation, hence susceptible to dismembering the object to expose its concealed essence. The African tradition models reason based on environmental relation. This relation has to do with her focusing on cultivating and a sustainable relation with the object (Headley 2019: 104). This explains the idea of the connectedness of the subject and the object. Instead of the subject seeking to use the object as a tool of operation, the subject connects and intermingles with the object with the hope that both encounters will help foster a proper disclosure of their beings. Senghor clams that the African "keeps his sense open, ready to receive any impulse, and even the very waves of nature, without screen… between subject and object" (1965: 1; see also Headley 2019: 104).

With the discussion thus far, Senghor clearly appears to have appreciated Western ideas in his Negro-African epistemology. His arguments or explanations appear to have been founded or dependent on Western ideas and language. For instance, Abiola Irele highlights the close connection between negritude (Negro-African epistemology) and Bergson's epistemology.[74] In this case he argues that Henry Bergson's epistemology served as the theoretical foundation upon which Senghor developed his idea of negritude (Irele 1981; see also Headley 2019). According to Irele, "it is largely the epistemology of Bergson that Senghor has adopted in his formulation of negritude (1981: 80). Another instance is Senghor's affirmation of self-consciousness using Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). Senghor asserts: "*I feel, I dance the other, I am*" (1995: 120). In this case, he twisted the Cartesian affirmation of the self and epistemology to formulate his own idea of the self and African epistemology. Senghor further explains that:

> In dark Africa, people always dance because they feel, and they always dance someone or something. Now to dance is to discover and to re-create, to identify oneself with the forces of life, to lead a fuller life, and in short, to be. It is, at any rate, the highest form of knowledge. And thus, the knowledge of the African negro, at the same time, discovery and creation—re-creation (1995: 120).

Similar to Senghor's assertion are Mbiti's formulations: *"I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am"* (1969a: 108–109). According to Airoboman and Asekhauno, Mbiti's "is couched in Sartre's existential philosophy that man is a being in the world and a being with the others" (2012: 15–16). It is important to note that both Senghor and Mbiti's formulations are

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[74] See Bergson, H. (1994). *Creative Evolution.* New York: Random House.

discussed in different texts as distinctive African contributions to knowledge.[75] These dictums and languages are familiar to modern philosophy. Thus, I think one obvious conclusion to be drawn from these dictums is that they could identify with the *cogito* or the humanism of Sartre. They could identify with it to the extent that they relate with it and apply it in the context of the African community. In this view, the reality of the communal world, in African context, takes precedence over the reality of individual life, Western context, whatever these may be (Menkiti 1984: 171).

I suggest that the key point to note here is the idea of identification and expansion of knowledge. The point of identifying the *cogito* or written text is, at heart, to insist that it does more than it says: its paraphrasable content, its messages, may or may not be truthful or important, but its status as a simple logic depends, in part, on how it communicates, not just on what. It is the specificity of the mode of expression, its particularity, that makes it profitable, applicable and of use to them (Appiah 2004: 538; my emphasis). I think that by identifying with Descartes' *cogito,* Senghor was able to make his own assertion by formulating his own dictum. Identification calls for two possibilities. The first possibility is the reformation of ideas—reformulating an idea or concept to fit your own theory or the society or to explain the idea of the foundation of your society or community. The second possibility is the idea of expansion or extension of knowledge or a concept. In this case, one identifies with the idea of the other and in that process, unravels other aspects of the idea that is applicable to them or all, either actively or passively, in a community or society. In other words, the idea appears to be a foundation which other people can use as a steppingstone or build upon—adding and discovering more to what we know. "Commonsense experience tells us that essential continuity exists in nature and that the human mind has no choice but to reckon with this perceived continuity" (Sogolo 1993: 69). Senghor and Mbiti fall into the two possibilities in this case.

4.4. Innocent C. Onyewuenyi

Innocent C. Onyewuenyi in his book, *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism* (1993) gave his view on African indigenous knowledge in line with the African origin of Greek philosophy. His point of entry into the idea of African indigenous knowledge is

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[75] Some examples of African philosophers and thinkers who have either endorsed or drawn from both formulations or positions are Kwame Nkrumah (1966); Julius Nyerere (1968); Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984 and 2006); Tsenay Serequeberhan (1991); and Desmond Tutu (1999).

based on the Egyptian texts and doctrines of the Egyptian Mystery System as embodied in the cosmogony-cosmological and social theories emanating from the major religious centres of Hermopolis, Heliopolis and Memphis. His objective in this book was to argue against the false notions that have been propagated against Africa and Africans by Western historians in the field of philosophy[76] (Onyewuenyi 1993: 283). Such notions include: (i) the idea that most Africans are intellectually inferior to the white race and unable to engage in any meaningful philosophical thinking; (ii) the idea that the discipline of philosophy originated with the Greeks; (iii) the idea that Africans have no philosophy and did not make any contribution to the study of philosophy which was transmitted to them by western scholars as part of the European education and civilization of Africa (Onyewuenyi 1993: 283). Thus, his book is a response to the aforementioned and also to show that Egyptian (Africa) thought system is the origin Greek philosophy.

He argues that the Greeks derived their philosophy from the Egyptian prototype, and also gave some evidence of the Egyptians' direct influence on the Greeks. He explained this by pointing to certain similarities between the works and writings of the Egyptians and the writings attributed to later Greek philosophers. He also explained that Western historians have undermined history by "refusing to highlight the appropriation of African philosophy by ancient visitors from the northern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea" (Onyewuenyi 1993: 283). He further explains that "some of the consequences of this deliberate misinformation are that generations of students of philosophy, both African and Western, have remained ignorant of the acknowledgements of their indebtedness to the wisdom of their African masters recorded by early Greek pre-Socratic philosophers. These biased historians went as far as denying black identity to Egypt and Egyptians" (*ibid)*. Furthermore, he concluded by explaining that his book was "informed by a burning desire to articulate and realize the implications of the sub-title of this book: An Exercise in Afrocentrism. Briefly put, the Afrocentrism movement aims at unearthing the true culture and achievement as they were prior to slavery and imperialism, which

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[76] Théophile Obenga in his work *Egypt: Ancient History of African Philosophy* (2004), explains that "the long history of African philosophy has shown connections with other continents, chiefly with Europe, since the Graeco-Roman world. In remote times African philosophy was mainly located in the Nile Valley that is, in Kemet or ancient Egypt, and in Kusg (Napata-Meroe). Philosophy flourished in Egypt from about 3400 BC to 343 BC and in Kush (also known as Nubia or Ethiopia by the Greeks) from about 1000BC to 625 BC" (2004: 31). Obenga further elucidates that "ancient Egypt was a flourishing ancient kingdom of Northeast Africa, located in the Nile Valley, nowise in "Asia Minor" or in the "Near East." The Egyptian civilization of the Pharaonic period (3400–343) was intrinsically, that is, in its essential nature, and African civilization, on account of its spirit, character, behaviour, culture, thought, and deep feelings" (2004: 32).

to justify, the western world mounted propaganda about the sub-humanity of Africans, a people without history and lacking in intellectual and technological accomplishments" (Onyewuenyi 1993: 286). In addition, "it is expected also that the reconstituted knowledge about the achievements of Africans will produce self-esteem, national and cultural pride in peoples of African descent" (*ibid*: 286).

It is essential to emphasize that Onyewuenyi has not been alone in arguing for these views, scholars like Cheikh Anta Diop (1974), George G. M. James (1954), Henry Olela (1984), and Henri Frankfort (1948) has written good and comprehensive works on Egyptian civilization and the stolen legacy. Henri Frankfort, in his book *Kingship and the Gods* (1948), gave evidence for the African roots of Egyptian culture. Similarly, George G. M. James in his book *Stolen Legacy* (1954) assert that philosophy and sciences "were bequeathed to civilization by the North Africa[77] and not by the people of Greece…that the Greeks were not the authors of Greek philosophy, but the people of North Africa…" (1954: 75–76).[78] He claims that some early Greek philosophers studied for a long time in Egypt. Of Pythagoras for example, James notes:

> We are also further informed through Herodotus and Pliny, that after severe trials, including circumcision, had been imposed upon him by Egyptian priests, he was finally initiated into all their secrets. That he learnt the doctrine of metempsychosis, of which there was no trace before in the Greek religion; that his knowledge of medicine and strict system of diethetics rules, distinguished him as a product of Egypt… and that his attainment in geometry corresponded with the ascertained fact that Egypt was the birth place of that science (1954: 43; see also Onyewuenyi 1991: 36).

Like James, Henry Olela gave an example of Aristotle. Olela writes:

> He went to Egypt with Alexander the Great. He had access to priestly material in the Temples and he freely acquire books from the Library at Alexandria. He adopted the Egyptian notion of the *unmoved mover*. Creative process developed from disorder (chaos) to order. This process was performed through *mind* and *word*…or pure intelligence. He also adopted the doctrine of the soul and discussed in the *Book of the Dead* (1984: 89; see also Masolo 1994: 20).

Like James, Cheikh Anta Diop in his book "*The African origins of Civilization: Myth or Reality*" (1974),[79] addresses some aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization and in the process asserts that

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[77] The North Africa people are called the Egyptians.

[78] See also Olela 1984: 89; Masolo 1994: 21.

[79] See also Jeffrey Crawford' (1995) work "Cheikh Ana Diop, the "Stolen Legacy," and Afrocentrism", in Albert G. Mosley (Ed). African philosophy: Selected Readings. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, pp. 128–146.

ancient Egypt was a Negro civilization. He argues that "many social and cultural practices, in their old and in modern forms, owe their origin to Egypt. Such practices and system include totemism, circumcision, kingship language, cosmogony, agriculture, social organization, and matriarchy" (Diop 1974; see also Masolo 1994: 18). Masolo (1994: 18) puts Diop argument as follows:

1. Egypt has been cited and recognized as the origin of and leader in many forms of human civilization.
2. Many of these forms of civilization originating in Egypt have closer affinity with similar forms in upper Africa than they have with their Indo-European and Semitic counterparts.
3. Egyptians and Africans are the same people and are originators of world civilizations.

Henry Olela also argued in the same vein. To this, he states that it is a "fact that even the ancient Greeks themselves often credited Africa with being the source of foundations of philosophical knowledge" (Olela 1984: 80; see also Masolo 1994: 19). Thus, the works of these scholars, including Onyewuenyi, show that ancient Greek philosophy was a stolen legacy and that it has its origin in ancient and modern African societies. This shows that African is not a place devoid of knowledge.

In his work "*Is there an African Philosophy*" (1991), Onyewuenyi dedicates a section for the discourse of African epistemology or the theory of knowledge. Like Tempels, he wants to show that African epistemology flows from African ontology. He explicates that the idea of knowledge in African epistemology is not different from its ontology or metaphysics. According to Onyewuenyi, African theory of knowledge follows closely upon ontology (1991: 41). What then is ontology, he asks. In response to this he says, ontology is the science of "being as such," "the reality that is" (1991: 40). He asserts that African theory of knowledge is consonant with its metaphysics. To this, he brings to mind the difference that Tempels made about the dynamic concept of being of the Bantu and the static concept of being for Westerns. According to Onyewuenyi, "the metaphysics of Western philosophy has generally been based upon static conception of being. In the African philosophical thought, being is dynamic" (*ibid*). In this case, knowledge or wisdom for the African, according to Onyewuenyi, consists in how deeply one understands the nature of forces and their interactions (1991: 41). While quoting Tempels, he asserts that, true wisdom "lies in ontological knowledge; it is the intelligence of force, of their hierarchy, their cohesion and their interactions" (*ibid*; see also Tempels 1969: 73). In the same direction as Tempels or borrowing Tempels' explanation, Onyewuenyi says:

> God is force; God is also wisdom in that He knows all forces, their ordering, their dependence, their potential, and their mutual interaction. A person is said to know or have wisdom inasmuch as he approaches divine wisdom. One approaches divine knowledge when one's flesh becomes less fleshy, to use Leopold Senghor's expression, that is, the older a person gets, the more wisdom he has. The same note of hierarchy comes into play here. The ancestors have more wisdom, followed by the elders, dead or living (1991: 41).

What the above seems to suggest is that for one to understand African mode of knowledge, one must pay careful consideration to the background of African spiritualistic and dynamic metaphysics (Udefi 2014: 109). This dynamic metaphysics takes into cognisance the idea of hierarchy and the relationship that exists between the epistemic subject and object. In other words, there is that awareness of the interdependence and interaction that exists between man [sic] and the external world. Anyanwu explains this idea when he says that the "self vivifies or animate the world or mind so that the soul, spirit or mind of the self is also that of the world. The order of the world and that of the self are identical. What happens to the world happens to the self" (1983: 60). As stated above, there is a relationship between the subject and the object. Based on the analysis the relationship which exists between the subject and object is the one thing, among other things, that the protagonists of African epistemology have in common or share in their discourse of African epistemology. This shows that the protagonists believe in epistemological monism (Udefi 2009a: 83).

Furthermore, in his final analysis of what African epistemology is, Onyewuenyi seeks to explain the distinction of the two levels of human intelligence. He asserts that intelligence could either be *practical* or *habitual.* By *practical* intelligence he means "cleverness, slyness in dealing with the contingent aspects of forces", and by *habitual* intelligence he means "active knowledge of the nature forces, their relationship" (Onyewuenyi 1991: 42). Onyewuenyi explains that this kind of wisdom is different from book knowledge, because in the strict traditional sense, book knowledge is not regarded as wisdom. Quoting Tempels, he explicates that "study and personal search for knowledge does not give wisdom. One can learn to read, to write; but all that has nothing in common with 'wisdom.' It gives no ontological knowledge of the nature of beings. There are many talents and clever skills that remain far short of wisdom" (Onyewuenyi 1991: 42; Tempels 1969: 74). Similarly, he asserts that, having a college degree does not qualify or make an African a wise person in the African community. To explicate his point he states that equating wisdom to having a college degree "in part explains why there has been confusion in Africa since the colonial era, because the colonial administrators regarded the educated as the wise people, and consequently and arbitrary appointed them legislators and leaders in the community, contrary to African political philosophy, which regarded the eldest of the community, to be, by

divine law, the repository of wisdom and the link between God, the ancestors, and the living" (Onyewuenyi 1991: 42). The above brings to mind Tempels hierarchy or classification of wisdom.

Quoting from Swailem Sidhom article "*The Theological Estimate of Man*" (1969), Onyewuenyi says that Sidhom lamented the state of things when he said:

> Power is conceived by the African as something pertaining to the divine. Hence it cannot be placed into unexercised hands. But the hands are rarely exercised nowadays. Scheduled education has replaced experience and has toppled the accepted standards. Seniority of age does not of his bowels. Nevertheless, power is dangerous and it kills. Like a live coal from upon the very altar of God, it can only be cared for by those who have been graduated into maturity (1991: 42; Sidhom 1969: 115).

The above speaks of power, age and the practicality of wisdom. To this, Tempels asserts that the wisdom of the Bantu people is a practical and experiential one that gives consideration to age. With regards to age, Tempels elucidates that, "… just as the vital human force (it's being) does not exist by itself, but is and remains essentially dependent upon its elders, so the power to know is, like being itself, essentially dependent upon the wisdom of the elders" (1959: 48).

Tempels explains that God is divine and all knowing, he knows all forces, and in the same process gave man the "power" to know. Africans hold that if the ancestors and elders have lived long, then it follows that they must have known a lot during their existence; and also, the ancestors and elders get the power of wisdom from God. Because of their wisdom, the elders are considered wise persons and the repositories of wisdom. As Onyewuenyi puts it, using Senghor's expression, "the older a person gets, the more wisdom he has" (1991: 41). This wisdom is needed by the elders in order for them to be "able to explain and interpret events in terms of their deeper and metaphysical causes" (Masolo 1994: 50). *Ipso facto*, it is evident that the wisdom of the elders surpasses that of other men like the young people. But the "seniority of age does not mean much anymore, and a father may now be instructed by the child of his bowels". This is because of the toxic nature of power and the misuse of power. Power is dangerous and it could kill. To this, Onyewuenyi concludes with the assertion "this despair is understandable if you grasp the African's conception of existence and his philosophy of vital forces" (1991: 42).

Based on the discussion of Onyewuenyi's idea of African epistemology thus far, I am inclined to think that he follows Tempels' terminology closely and his thinking is animated by Tempels. In other words, he is simply restating and affirming what Tempels has already said. I believe that

there is not much difference between Tempels and Onyewuenyi. The only difference between both is the fact that Tempels thinks the system and intellect of the Westerner is higher than that of the Bantu (African). This is why he "seeks to raise the Bantu system to the same status as the philosophical systems of the Europeans", while Onyewuenyi argues against the false notions that have been propagated against Africa and Africans by Western historians in the field of philosophy. I have identified themfrom the beginning of my discussion. Thus, besides the above specified difference among them, all other ideas like ontology, force and the hierarchy of beings and wisdom are the same.

4.5.   Christopher K. Anyanwu

In their book "*African Philosophy: An Introduction to the main philosophical trends in Contemporary Africa*" (1981), E. A. Ruch and K. C. Anyanwu, more specifically the latter, devoted considerable attention on the idea of knowledge (African epistemology). In the chapter titled: *Essay 1 – The African World-View and Theory of Knowledge*, Anyanwu asserts that every philosophy is a cultural philosophy that is conditioned and limited by culture. He argues that "all cultures may observe the same facts (trees, rivers, heavenly bodies, life and death, good and evil, joy and suffering) but their basic assumptions, theories and standards, with which they interpret such facts are different" (Anyanwu 1981: 78). Cultural differences in philosophy depend on the difference of the basic assumptions and theories about reality. He asserts that:

> There may be resemblances or similarities between the philosophical doctrines of different cultures but these similarities do not mean identities. We must examine the basic assumptions of cultures and the methods which the owners of the culture use to arrive at a trustworthy knowledge of what they believe reality to be" (Anyanwu 1981: 78).

Besides the fact that he accepted the possibility of similarities in some cultures, he calls for the proper examination of its basic assumptions, because he believes that inasmuch as there are similarities the method in which the (each) culture arrives at a trustworthy knowledge is different.

For Anyanwu, epistemology or the theory of knowledge is the basic problem of any philosophy. To arrive at a trustworthy knowledge of reality, the mind must follow the method of epistemology. He further explains that "epistemology provides the basic premises with which other problems, namely, religious, moral, ethical, political economic, artistic and aesthetic doctrines, can be approached" (1981: 81). Philosophy (epistemology) is a conscious effort to know or justify the above problems and the general principles governing the African cultural

beliefs which shape African institutions and behaviour. As an example of how to respond to various issues on African cultural beliefs, he listed some epistemological question that will help one better understand some cultural beliefs. These are the questions: "How do the Africans know what they claim to know? What is their basic assumptions about the nature of things? What method must the mind follow in order to arrive at what the Africans accept as a trustworthy knowledge of reality? What in their experience, led to the beliefs they hold? What does experience mean to the African in the African culture?" (*ibid*). If we know these, according to Anyanwu, we can claim to understand why an African behaves the way he or she does.

Anyanwu talks about African epistemology in terms of culture, belief and experience. He asserts that "the beliefs in God, divinities, spirit, ancestor, livingdead, etc…. are beliefs of some people about certain things. If these beliefs have any meaning, value and justification, they must have arisen from human experience and must be products of culture" (Anyanwu 1981: 82). In the same vein, Bert Hamminga explains that knowledge is not universal but locally tribal: other tribes have different knowledge. This explains the idea that knowledge varies from culture to culture. Hamminga further explain that "in classical African culture, knowledge is not produced, but it comes, is given to you by tradition, the ancestors, as a heritage. So, knowledge acquisition is purely social matter, a matter of teaching, of being told, "uploaded" (by living, dead or spiritual powers) only" (2005: 76). To further clarify his above assertion, Anyanwu explains what he means by culture. According to him, culture is a human response to experience, beliefs and ideas which enables human beings to live meaningful lives (*ibid*). Reality for him refers to objects of experience and thought. These objects can be natural objects, events, religious beliefs, thought itself, myths, languages, social institutions and artistic products. He further explains that thought refers "to a conscious activity which handles the objects of thought or reality" (*ibid*). He sees thought as something that modifies, synthesizes, analyzes and organises language, religious beliefs, events etc. He, therefore, asserts that African beliefs and knowledge about reality are the product of human experience, and the theories of such beliefs and knowledge must be the product of logical reflection (*ibid*: 83).

What is experience? Anyanwu asks. He asked this question to draw a distinction between scientific experience and personal experience. Experience, according to him, "is a procedure by which human beings become immediately and directly acquainted with the object of knowledge. That which is experienced is given to the individual who experiences it" (Anyanwu 1981: 84). He sees immediate and direct experiences as personal experience and impersonal and mediate or

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indirect experience as scientific experience. Personal experience is the greatest aspect of human knowledge because it does not call for self-detachment as scientific knowledge. A person puts himself or herself in the context of experience to live, feel and grasp its relations. The person or subject who experiences something is the Ego, and the object experienced is the World (*ibid*: 84). The person or subject or Ego is part of the world as long as he/she lives in the World. Thus, the person or subject or Ego is dependent on the World.

According to Anyanwu, "the African culture makes no sharp distinction between the ego and the world, subject and object. In the conflict between the self and the world, African culture makes the self the centre of the world" (1981: 86–87). In this case, every experience and reality itself is personal to the self. In other words, reality must have reference to personal experience. And Anyanwu defines personal experience as the totality of human and their faculties. "Such experience does not address itself to reason alone, imagination alone, felling and intuition alone, but to the totality of a person's faculty" (*ibid*: 87). He further explains that:

> The truth of this experience is lived and felt not merely thought of. The world which is centred on the self is personal and alive. Self-experience is not separated from the experiencing self. The self vivifies or animates the word so that the soul, spirit or mind of the self is also that of the world. The order of the world and that of the self are identical. What happens to the world happens to the self… the world that has no reference to the person, to self-order or that is not self-centred has no meaning for the African. So, the world has meaning, order and unity by virtue of the self (Anyanwu 1981: 87).

The above explains that African culture deals with synthesis. It also shows that in African culture man and nature are not two independent and opposing realities, but one inseparable continuum. Thus, "the African maintains that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches himself from it…. Knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (Anyanwu 1981: 94). The African can only claim to know or have, through the above methods, the knowledge of the other. I think that he is restricting Africans to these methods of knowing, as such thinking that it is unique to Africa. To this, I argued in chapter two that these methods are not unique to Africans. The subject is continuously involved. In this knowing process, the subject is not only seeing and thinking, but also experiencing and discovering the object. There can be no knowledge of the object without the subject entering into experience with the object. Nasseem captures this better when he explains that "the cognitive process is not complete without the experiential. The self of the subject and the objective world outside of the self are really one" (2003: 265). The former (subject) 'vivifies or animates' the latter (object), as Nasseem puts it.

Elsewhere, Anyanwu explains that there is some kind of interdependence and connection with man [sic] and the external world. In this case, what happens to the one happens to the other. Anyanwu elucidates this point when he says that "self-vivifies or animates the world or mind so that the soul, spirits or mind of the self is also that of the world. The order of the world and that of the self are identical. What happens to the world happens to the self" (1983: 60). This implies that the contrast said to exist between the (epistemic) subject and the object in the Western philosophy does not exist in African thought. The implication of the above is that there is no such kind of interdependence and connection with man [sic] and the external world in Western philosophy.

At first glance the above appears as if Anyanwu's explanation is only applicable to Africans alone, but a careful reading of Descartes says otherwise. Descartes' *cogito* which some, like Senghor and Mbiti borrowed to construct some of their assertions or dictums from to explain my point that we are all interdependent and connected to the external world. I am inclined to think that Descartes' *cogito* is a significant input that should not be undermined, because Descartes appears to have detached himself from reality or doubted many things in his search for true knowledge. I suggest that we should read and see Descartes' exercise and argument not just as an individual detaching himself totally from the external world—being different—but as someone trying to understand himself and the external world properly. I think that search for that indubitable truth explains and reaffirms his connection with the universe. How? His exercise, in search of truth, is done in connection with the external world—because he cannot doubt what he has no idea about or is connected to.

The underlining truth here is that, by doubting the self, things, true ideas, and God, Descartes indirectly acknowledged his connection with the universe. Thus, to be certain of his ideas he casted some doubts on them. Not because he is not connected to them, but because he really wants to ascertain a knowledge that is indubitable. This is what reasoning and epistemology is all about. So, when we critically and rigorously scrutinize our belief, it does not necessarily mean that we are dissociating ourselves from reality. According to Kehinde A. Owolabi, "the fundamental objective of epistemology is to inculcate in humans, the desire to subject every idea however self-evidence to rigorous scrutiny" (2000). What this means is that, we are actually striving towards a full understanding of that which we are connected to. By *detaching the ego,* one is not totally detaching oneself from reality, because it is impossible. My point is that to detach oneself from the external reality to understand what it is, is not a total detachment or disconnection from the external—a total detachment or disconnection is impossible. Thus, this so-called *detaching of the ego* actually

provided Descartes with the firm acknowledgement that he (Descartes) is a thinking thing and that the self, things, and God exist—meaning that they are connected.

The axiom "action follows being" attests to the fact that everything acts in accordance to the nature of its being. Through knowledge, we can make a claim (true or false) about anything. This is because not everything is self-evident. Pertinent to the act of knowing, knowing beings know reality in respect to the nature of their being. Thus, human beings, come to know things using their faculties which are directly connected to the physical realities. One comes to acquire knowledge by a constant questioning of the physical reality which one is connected to. Pertinent to the act of knowing, there has to be proportionality between the intellect and its object in the light of the axiom that maintains that "whatever is received is always received in the receiver in accordance with the receiver's mode of existence" (S.T. 1, q. 55, art 1, ad 2). Moreover, knowledge entails an immaterial union between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge (Philips 1950: 213). At this point, it seems then that knowledge is impossible because there is no proportionality between the subject and the object. This explains the fact that without the idea of interdependence and connection, it would be impossible for a human being to understand reality. Human beings know and operate through ideas on account of some close links, like the external world, and its association with it.

Anyanwu argues that the relation of the subject and object in African epistemology is not accidental because, in African culture, there is no sharp distinction between the subject and object. Talking about African culture, he asserts that within the African cultural status quo, the self is the centre of the world and every other thing, like reality and experience, are a personal experience. This is a monistic or holistic view of knowledge and presupposes a unity of experience. The view is also in line with African cultural assumption where "reality depends on personal experience and the world has meaning, order and unity by virtue of the living experience of the ego" (Anyanwu 1983: 60). Udefi explains that the kind of personal experience which Anyanwu refers to here "transcends reason, imagination, feeling and intuition in the sense in which Descartes used them as sources of knowledge" (2009a: 82).

Furthermore, Anyanwu argues that man [sic] "by the way he acts, reacts and is acted upon by events, that is, the way he is interwoven into the multiplicity. The ideal of the African culture is coexistence with and the strengthening of vital-force or vital relationships in the world and universe" (1981: 87–88). In the same page, he argues that "African vitalist strives to put himself in an immediate and personal relationship with the soul of the world, with God and spirit in order

to find the guarantee of his hope (to live) as well as evidence of what he does not see" (*ibid*). If I understand this properly, he is still explaining man's [sic] relationship with the object.

Anyanwu might think that he has clearly argued or elucidated his point, when in fact, he merely narrates what he thinks Africans believe in or think she believes in. He failed to clearly show the practicality of his position—that is if it is still the case or still in practice or not. I think his explanation was just a superficial explanation as to what is expected from a strong assertion about the nature of the relationship between the subject and object. A strong assertion like his needs more clarity and practicality. The fact that he said something about the subject and object does not mean that he has philosophically explained the idea. One thing Anyanwu needs to know is that a clear and thoughtful argument or explanation is of utmost importance in philosophy, and this is lacking in this argument. If and only if there exist subject and object relationship and connection in Africa, it has lost its identity in his explanation and in the modern world—because of the idea of modernity. I am inclined to think that the idea of subject and object relationship should be compared to Wiredu's idea of anachronism. Anachronism refers to outmoded practices [of social and cultural life][80]. Wiredu explains that:

> My use of the word 'anachronism'… is fairly straightforward extension of the ordinary use. I propose to call anything anachronistic which outlasts its suitability. Anachronism then becomes the failure to perceive anachronistic things for what they are and to discard or modify them as the case may require. Various habits of thought practice can become anachronistic within the context of the whole world if the ways of life within it are predominantly anachronistic (1980: 1).

Considering the above, I think there is reason to believe that the subject and object relationship is outmoded. This is because the idea has outlasted its suitability in Africa. Jimoh affirms this when he says that, "… African has lost his concept of a continuum between the subject and the objet, while acquiring the other person's subjectivity" (2017: 128). Thus, I suggest that, for this reason, within the context of development in Africa the idea of subject and object relationship has become anachronistic.

Similarly, to my argument in chapter two, I suggest that if and only there exists subject and object relationship and connection in Africa, it has lost its identity in his explanation and in the modern world—because of the idea of modernity. If the assertion of subject and object is judged by its practicality in our modern world, I think, with the current situation, Africa can be said to

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[80] See Keith J. Ansell-Pearson (1987: 78). Also see Wiredu 1980.

be dualist in nature as opposed to Eastern traditions which now are the epitome of what wholism attests to. For example, Buddhism, in line with some other Eastern traditions, does not make a distinction between nature and human beings. Nature, in this case, denotes the external world. As part of the tradition, they are not separated from nature, but are part of it. This is practical in their everyday life—the [their] reverence and care for nature. This is not present in modern day Africa. Buddhist ethical values are intrinsically a part of nature and rooted in natural law.[81] This, I think, makes the principles of Buddhism acceptable and useful to the modern world. In summary, according to Buddhist Ethics, all life is interdependent. Therefore, the happiness of one individual depends upon that of others. Hence, either the protagonists of African epistemology adopt the ideas of Buddhism or Eastern traditions, consider modifying their own idea within the context of development in Africa and the world, or discard the idea entirely.

Talking about practice, I am inclined to think that the idea of the existing relationship between the subject is not well rooted in the experience of the modern-day Africans and, it is hardly practised and noticed by many of the modern-day Africans. Anyanwu speaks of this relationship theoretically and not practically. In this case, it appears to be more a book knowledge than a pragmatic knowledge. There is no pragmatic representation of this relationship in reality. In absence of such pragmatic representation, the idea is sloping towards its end. Pragmatic examples require pragmatic representative reality. Within academic settings, it sounds easy to write about the relationship that exists between the subject and the object, and its practicality within various writings, but the actual practical empirical representation and application of it, in reality, is missing. When I talk about the pragmatic representation of the relationship that exists between the subject and the object, I am talking about how individuals and groups should live practically and show that there is a relationship exists between them and the object within the context of development in Africa and the world.

Anyanwu asserts that "knowledge…comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (Anyanwu 1981: 94), however, he fails to explain properly the importance of reason. In fact, he attributed rationality to the Westerners. This is evident in his assertion that, "…the West is a world of great rational thought and analysis; the African culture is a world of great art and synthesis" (Anyanwu 1981: 87). The implication of the above is that Africa is not a world of

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[81] See John Ross Carter (2005), Damien Keown (2005), Thomas P. Kasulis (2005), and Charles Hallisey (2005).

rational thought and analysis, but a world of art and synthesis. It is just clear that he strips Africa of rational thought and analysis. More of his discussion rest on his explanation of human experience. It is important to point out that John Locke did assert that evidence of experience is defeasible (1975). Anyanwu is not different from other protagonists of African epistemology, because he (and the protagonists of African epistemology) passively acknowledged the role of reason, and failed to properly acknowledge and explain that without reason we cannot make a good judgement. The protagonists of African epistemology "who with eagerness are seeking to revive the idea that the mind of the African is so intellectually malstructured that it does not accord with some presumed universal principles of reasoning" (Sogolo 1993: 74). I am inclined to think that such an idea does not exist, because in their attempt to draw the difference between African epistemology and Westerner epistemology they fail to see the common idea of reasoning that exist in logic and epistemology. The truth is that both ideas are "similarly marked by the same basic features of the human species" (*ibid*).

In chapter one (*Varieties of Rational Experience*) of his book "*On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Race*" (2008), Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze discuss six varieties of theories of reason. He says that "these theories are implicitly or explicitly advocate different ideals—models—of rationality". These theories of reason are: "*calculative, formal, hermeneutical, empiricist, phenomenological, and ordinary* conception of rationality" (2008: 24). My aim is not to explain these theories, but to underscore that Eze talked about these theories in light of their applicability to all human beings. Like Aristotle, Eze considers reason (logic) as "the ideal form of human language. For it most accurately frames and mirrors the truths of the various state of what is objectively real" (2008: 38). Rationality is the most distinctive of a human being. And as rational beings living in a natural world of cause and effect, we can master nature, manipulate society, change culture, and, indeed, shape ourselves with the aid of reason (Masolo 1994: 126)[82]. But Anyanwu and some of the protagonists of African epistemology seem not to acknowledge this, but place greater emphasis on experience without knowing that human reason is in relation with our capacity for experience. To explain the relationship that exists between human reason and experience, Eze explains that, "when one speaks about the spontaneity of human reasoning, therefore the word "reason" is a reference to the creative emergence of mind in the world across vast areas that include the emotional aspects

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[82] According to Masolo, "this position holds a conception of rationality that identifies logical consistency and coherence in the explanation of reality as its minimal characteristic" (1994: 126).

of perception (empathy, imagination, willing, etc.)" (2008: 52). This is what Eze categorized as empirical reason. Eze further explains that:

> Reason in experience is affirmation of an ontological familiarity of the mind with the form of the world. It is on the grounds of this familiarity or likeness that a subject may be capable of spontaneously expressing freedom as law by constituting the world as *its* own: a world of experience (2008: 54).

The above explains the idea that human reason is capable of re-cognizing order in nature or world as a productive grasp of rationality in experience (*ibid*).

What is culture and belief without rationality or rational entities involve? I wonder. But as Sologo says, "it is difficult to find an entire belief-system that is devoid of any rationality. A particular belief may be said to be irrational but often the man who subscribes to such a belief may also embrace others that are rationally grounded" (1993: 37). Likewise, Eze asserts that, "rational grounds for belief *are* the law of reason" (2008: 89). And according to Lockean view, human beings by nature are rational individuals pursuing their self-interests in a society of competing self-interests.

With the invention of formal logic[83], Aristotle became the first philosopher to systematize all forms of positive thinking about thought. Aristotle considers logic (reason), the ideal form of human language. He is noted to have pointed out that rationality is the key feature that distinguishes human beings from other animals. According to him, the human by nature is rational. Over the years, logic has been a core part of philosophy and philosophers have consistently believed that rational assessment requires the rules of logic to decide whether a belief, proposition etc. should be accepted as rational or not. I think that the rules of logic apply to every human irrespective of one's cultural background or worldview. Since Aristotle's introduction of formal logic[84] different forms of logic have been introduced, like dialectic logic,

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[83] Formal logic has interrelated fundamental laws. The first is the law of identity. The second is the law of contradiction. The third is the law of excluded middle. The first law is the most important of them all, and it "simply states that a thing is always equal to or identical with itself (A equals A)". The second law, which is the law of contradiction, states that "a thing cannot be unequal to or different from itself (A is not non-A)". And the third law states that "if a thing is equal to itself it cannot be unequal to or different from itself (if A equals A it cannot equal non-A)" (Sogolo 1993: 68).

[84] Martin Hollis arguments on the rules of logic and universal modes of inference appear to be a good example of my position that similarities in some case are identity. Hollis' position is that there are certain patterns which all humans, irrespective of their culture and history follow. He illustrates his point via the logical form, "If p and if p implies q, then q" (Hollis 1967). The point here is that when you have "p → q" and "p", every rational person must conclude "p". No rational person will affirm both P and not P at the same time (Udefi 2014: 114).

to help human beings with a proper way of correct thinking or evaluation and justification of beliefs and concepts. "Over the years it has been assumed that the ability to reason logically and to draw valid inferences is an essential characteristic of all human races" (Sogolo 1993: 68). It is important to mention that rational is used to describe both human and human's specific beliefs or knowledge claims. In both cases of human (the agent) and human beliefs or opinion, rationality can be contrasted with either non-rationality or irrationality (Brown 1995: 744).

In conclusion, Human beings share in some basic values and perceptions, which call for similarities in some ideas. The simple law of identity and non-contradiction, given our common humanity, is something that appears to be universal. Udefi endorsed this argument in his critique of the advocates of a unique African epistemology. He asserts that, "ontologically speaking, our common humanity which presupposes that certain values, experience and characteristic features are common to all human beings makes the position of the champions of a unique African epistemology unattractive and unilluminating" (Udefi 2014: 114). I think that my arguments follow a similar route.

4.6.   Anselm Kole Jimoh

Anselm Jimoh and John Thomas (2015) co-authored an article titled "An African Epistemological Approach to Epistemic Certitude and Scepticism". In it, they examine how African epistemology deals with the issues of doubt (scepticism) and certainty. Their work "researches into the notion of African epistemology as that which is strongly based on the African ontological conception of reality and examines how African epistemology justifies epistemic claims" (Jimoh and Thomas 2015: 54). They are of the view that culture plays an important role in the cognitive understanding of reality. Hence, according to them, it is important that one understands the African cultural and ontological conceptions of reality. They also believe that by understanding African cultural and ontological conceptions of reality, one would be able to understand the African Approach to knowledge. They argue that "the fundamental difference between the way Western epistemology has attended to the issue of certitude and scepticism and African epistemology has attended to the same issue is found in the basic distinction between the cultural and ontological conception of reality" (*ibid*: 61). They further argue that Western epistemology "limits itself to the scientific method of abstraction and divides reality into subjective and objective in consonance with Western ontology", and "African epistemology in consonance with African ontology conceives the world as a basic unitary system, therefore, sees reality as interwoven and connected" (*ibid*: 61). This implies that in the

domain of knowledge, Western epistemology is polarised between doubt and certitude, and African epistemology is a unitary system. In as much as reality for them is interwoven and connected, in the domain of knowledge in African epistemology we should see our knowledge claims as situated within the social milieu, so that we do not think of knowledge, truth and rational certainty in abstract terms (Jimoh 1999: 37). They concluded by asserting that "African epistemology is able to see beyond the issues of distinction between knowledge and belief, the subject and the object, the noumenon and the phenomenon, and appreciate the role and contributions of the human person, the environment, and the society to our epistemic claims" (*ibid*: 61). Thus, it is clear that their method of justifying epistemic claims is socially based, which is external.

Anselm asserts that knowledge is dependent on human and social factors rather than being an objective, impersonal relation between object known and the knowing subject (1999). For him, African epistemology is a context-dependent theory of knowledge that takes note of the important role that humans and social factors play in establishing and justifying a knowledge claim. To explain his idea of context-dependent theory of knowledge, he referred to I. C. Jarvie's quotation of Peter Winch idea on Truth and falsity. Winch argues that:

> Whether a statement is true or false will depend upon what it means. What it means… will depend upon how it is being used; how it functions as part of the form of life it belongs to. The notion then, of translating one form of life into the terms, concepts, preconceptions of another, does not make much sense. The way belief operates in a form of life is peculiar to that form of life. In particular, there is no reason to suppose that a statement true-to-them is translatable into a statement true-to-us but if it is translatable into a statement true-to-us that does not show that it is false-to-them. One way or another, it makes no sense to talk of true or false tout court (Jarvie 1972).

The above idea conceives knowledge as a product of societal convention, rather than an objective phenomenon, and this is applicable to the thought system of most African cultures. Drawing from Winch's explanation, Jimoh asserts that truth is meant to describe human experience of reality, and the justification of knowledge claim in African epistemology is culture bound and therefore context-dependent.

In his work *An African theory of Knowledge* (2017), Anselm Kole Jimoh outlined African theory of knowledge. To achieve this, he gave critical discussion on African epistemology and how African epistemology justifies epistemic claims. Like the other protagonists of African epistemology, Jimoh asserts that "culture plays an important role in the mental understanding of reality" (2017: 122). In order to understand the African approach to knowledge according to

Jimoh, "it is important that we understand the African cultural and ontological conceptions of reality" (*ibid*). Also, similar to other protagonists of African epistemology, he believes that "African epistemology is essentially and necessarily rooted in African ontology", and "that the epistemological view of the traditional African is in consonance with his metaphysics" (2017: 125). To this, Jimoh further asserts that there is a relationship between ontology and epistemology. The reason for this is because "epistemology is about the claims we make concerning the facts of our experience and these facts are always interpreted within certain assumptions, concepts, theories and worldviews" (*ibid*). This relationship that seems to exist between ontology and epistemology, according to him, "enables us to recognize, understand and authenticate our cognitive claims" (*ibid*). To explicate this point, he quotes Ruch and Anyanwu. Ruch and Anyanwu explain that:

> We must know the basic assumptions, concepts, theories and worldview in terms of which the owners of the culture interpret the facts of experience. Without the knowledge of the African mind process and the worldview into which the facts of experience are to be fitted both the African and European researchers would merely impute emotive appeals to cultural forms and behaviour suggested by some unknown mind (1984: 77; see Jimoh 2007: 125).

For Jimoh, like other epistemologies, the African theory of knowledge is a social or cultural epistemology. What this means is that African epistemology is an epistemology that is culture based. In other words, African epistemology, according to Jimoh, "is an epistemology that is deliberately situated within a particular cultural context" (2017: 124). He went further to elucidate his point when he said that, "when we talk about a phenomenon as being within a cultural context, we are talking about bringing it within the rational framework of the said cultural context; in this case, African culture" (*ibid*). Quoting Kaphagawani and Melherbe to buttress his point, Jimoh says that, according to Kaphagawani and Melherbe, "[T]he way in which epistemic rationality and its related concepts are instantiated, 'filled out' as it were, the concrete content that they are given in terms of linguistic descriptions and social customs, varies a great deal from one cultural context to another" (1998: 207; see also Jimoh 2017: 124).

According to Jimoh, "African epistemology deals with what the African means and understands when he makes a knowledge claim. This consists of how the African sees or talks about reality" (2017: 123). To explains the above, Jimoh quotes Molefi K. Asante. Asante writes that "there are several elements in the mind of Africa that govern how humans behave with regard to reality: the practicality of wholism. The prevalence of poly-consciousness, the idea of inclusiveness, the unity of worlds, and the value of personal relationships" (2000: 2; see also Jimoh 2017: 124).

Jimoh's idea that knowledge claim consists how the African sees or talks about reality is similar to my explanation of what it is to know in chapter two. I explained in chapter two that, according to Hallen, "persons are said to mo (to ''know'') or to have imo (''knowledge'') only of something they have witnessed in a firsthand or personal manner... *Imo* is said to apply to sensory perception generally, even if what may be experienced directly by touch is more limited than is the case with perception (2004: 298). While *Igbagbo* "encompasses what one is not able ''to see'' for oneself or to experience in a direct, firsthand manner. For the most part, this involves things we are told about or informed of – this is the most conventional sense of ''information'' – by others" (*ibid*). Hallen and Sodipo argue that the Yorubas make a distinction between knowledge and belief. According to them, *imo* is gotten through first-hand information, observation and sense-experience. *Imo* can be subjected to verification, confirmation and falsification. *Igbagbo* is obtained through second-hand information; however, it could later become *imo* after some empirical testing. In addition to the second-hand information, Jimoh asserts that, "the traditional African would rather ask for the testimony of a third party to settle the difference" (2017: 129).

Knowledge in Yoruba is based on sensory perception, mainly visual perception (i.e *irirn*) of the external world. In other words, what someone sees, when conjoined with cognitive activities or mind (i.e *eriokon*) like understanding, comprehension, consciousness, judgment, and proposition pertaining such experiences are regarded as true (i.e *ooto*) (Hallen 1998a: 832; see also Udefi 2014: 111). The African finds it very difficult to doubt what he has witnessed with the empirical senses. The question of whether one is deceived by his senses is out of place here. In some cases, where there are problems with ascertaining the veracity of claim to knowledge, the African would request the eye-witness. The Africans believe any witness, especially if done over an oath, is true. The practice and ritual of swearing on holy books, like the Bible or Koran, in the law court before presentation of a case or acting as a witness seems to vindicate this African belief (Etim 2013: 129). While I would like to admit that the above mentioned are the customs of the people, I will however, like to say that there is a present of rationalists and empiricists objectivists validation presents in the justification of belief or truth.

Talking about wholism and the unity of worlds, it is important to underscore that like Anyanwu, Jimoh believes there is an interdependent relationship between the subject and the object. In other words, man and nature are an inseparable continuum. Similarly, Ruch and Anyanwu write that, "[M]an and nature are not two separate independent and opposing realities but the one

inseparable continuum of a hierarchical order" (1984: 87; see also Jimoh 2017: 124). Similarly, Jimoh explains that:

> African epistemology does not demarcate between the epistemic subject and the epistemic object. The epistemic subject, which experiences the epistemic object, and the epistemic object, which is experienced, are joined together such that the epistemic subject experiences the epistemic object in a sensuous, emotive, intuitive, abstractive understanding, rather than through abstraction alone, as is the case in Western epistemology (2017: 126).

Based on the discussion of Jimoh's idea of African epistemology thus far, I am inclined to think that he follows Anyanwu's discussion closely and his discussion on African epistemology is animated by Anyanwu's idea of African epistemology. Thus, I think he is simply affirming, restating and affirming what Anyanwu has already said. I think that there is not much difference between Anyanwu and Jimoh. The major difference between both is that, Anyanwu articulated the differences he noticed between African ways of knowing and the Western ways of knowing, while Jimoh did the same, but acknowledged that African ways of knowing have been partly tinted with Western ideology. Jimoh writes that, "the literary revolution which came with colonialization exposed more African to Western education and literature within Africa and therefore, affected the cognitive content and structure of the Africa mind… the impact of this on African epistemology is that the African has lost his concept of a continuum between the subject and the object, while acquiring the other person's subjectivity" (2017: 128).

Furthermore, Jimoh went on to discuss his idea of African "homo-cultural" theory of justification of knowledge. He explains that the reason he "describe this theory of justification as "homo-cultural" is "because it deals with human, cultural and environmental factors that come into play in our cognitive experience" (Jimoh 2017: 131). This theory, according to him, provides a template upon which epistemic claims in African epistemology can be justified. Jimoh explains that:

> Justification is ascribed to a belief in virtue of the belief satisfying certain evaluative norms with regard to what a person ought to believe. The norms play the role of measuring the "correctness" of a belief in relation to epistemic goals. These goals include attaining truth and avoiding error. Justification is pitched against the doubt that we can attain the kind of certainty that is traditionally taken to be involved in knowledge; it is the same as asking whether it is possible to guarantee out knowledge claims against scepticism (2017: 131)

The above is to explain how epistemic claims are justified in African epistemology. Jimoh notes that "in Western epistemology, theories like foundationalism, coherentism, contextualism, reliabilism, and context-dependency—fashioned after post-modernist ways of thought—have

attempted to explain how our epistemic claims are justified" (*ibid*). In contrast, he notes that "African epistemology, akin to context-dependency and situated epistemology, tends towards the view that human and social-cultural factors necessarily interfere with influence human understanding and therefore help to define rational certainty" (2017: 131–132). In other words, he is of the view that justification in African epistemology is culture-bound and therefore context-dependent. Thus, in order to establish our knowledge claims, African epistemologists should bear in mind the part played by the human person and the society. What this implies is that "the truth-value or falsity of our epistemic claims is ultimately dependent on factors that are human, social and culture-based" (2017: 135).

To conclude, Jimoh made some assertions that I find a bit dubious. In the concluding part of his work *African Theory of knowledge*, Jimoh asserts that:

> Knowledge claims among traditional Africans are not validated in objectivist terms, as required by rationalists and empiricists, but with regards to the habits and customs of the people. As human beings, we are naturally inclined to follow tradition. Whenever we do, the tradition itself is reinforced in us and we develop the habit of following it. This implies that neither *a prior* nor *a posteriori* reasons suffice in the justification of human knowledge. Ultimately, therefore, our epistemic or knowledge claims are justified by the customs and habits that convince us of the truth or falsity of such claims… the truth-value or falsity of our epistemic claims is ultimately dependent on factors that are human, social and culture-based (2017: 135).

I find fault with the above for three reasons. Firstly, instead of saying that "knowledge claims among traditional Africans are not validated in objectivist terms, as required by rationalists and empiricists, but with regards to the habits and customs of the people", he should have said that that knowledge claims among traditional Africans are not *only* validated in objectivist terms, as required by rationalists and empiricists, but they are also validated with regards to the habits and customs of the people. I am inclined to think that his assertions are not far-fetched from Senghor's assertion that "Emotion is African as Reason is Hellenic". In this case, I think, he is possibly denying Africans any capacity of validating things in objectivist terms, and also denying Africans any capacity for engagement in rational and empirical discourse and a reducing the African mode of knowledge to the habit and customs of the people. I think, a further explanation would be appreciated and, in this case, affirm the presence of objectivist terms in the habit and customs of the African people.

Secondly, just because "our epistemic or knowledge claims are justified by the customs and habits that convince us of the truth or falsity of such claims" doesn't mean we should discard the

presence of *a prior* or *a posteriori* knowledge. Jimoh asserts that, "as human beings, we are naturally inclined to follow tradition. Whenever we do, the tradition itself is reinforced in us and we develop the habit of following it" (2017: 135). Inasmuch as we are inclined to follow tradition it does not mean all we know about tradition comes automatically to us. We learn and experience some aspects of tradition. The important question to ask here is: How do we develop our habits without reason and experience? At some point in our life we were trained or thought or experienced some aspects of tradition and this training enhance our knowledge of our tradition. And in some doing, we immediately experience and develop characters or habits that allow us to judge what action is appropriate in the various situations we may find ourselves in the society.

Thirdly, Jimoh's claim that "the truth-value or falsity of our epistemic claims is ultimately dependent on factors that are human". To this, the important question which comes to mind is: Are the rationalists and empiricists objectivist terms of validation not human? I think that the major problem here, which also applies to the protagonists of African epistemology, is that, he [they] thinks that Western epistemology limits itself or their justification of knowledge or epistemic claims to the scientific method of abstraction only. They forget that the idea of rational and empirical justifications is not limited to scientific justifications alone, but also has to do with one's rationality and experience.

As a final analysis, Jimoh asserts that, "in African epistemology, the domain of knowledge is not polarized between the doubts that assail our epistemic claims and the certitude that assures our claims. Rather, African epistemology concentrates on the truthfulness and falsity of our epistemic claims" (2017: 136). In this, I think, there is nothing unique or difference from what epistemology is all about, because epistemology is about the truthfulness and falsity of our epistemic claims, and the validation of the claims. It is important to underscore that "in every epistemological system or study, one is bound to find such core notions as "knowledge, justification, truth, belief, ideas, intentions, explanation, understanding, experience and human actions" etc. One term which encapsulates all these is rationality, which again is found, one way or the other, in all societies and conceptual systems" (Udefi 2014: 114).

4.7.   Amaechi Udefi

Like Jimoh, Amaechi Udefi is a strong advocate of African epistemology. He and Jimoh have been in the forefront of the propagation of the ideas held firmly by their predecessors. The major difference between both is that Udefi is more critical when it comes to the discourse of African epistemology, while Jimoh, though critical in his discussion, believes there is a unique African Epistemology. Unlike Jimoh, Udefi believes that there is some element of particularity and universality in both Western and African epistemological conceptualizations. And is also critical of the state of African epistemology and the present realities of Africans in their interaction with the rest of the world. In his work "*The Rationale for an African Epistemology: A Critical Examination of the Igbo Views on Knowledge, Belief, and Justification*" (2014), Udefi explains that, just like the larger discourse of African philosophy (especially in its early beginnings) the idea of African epistemology still faces some challenges (2014: 108). He further elucidates that, "one of the challenges" of African epistemology, "centers on the proper meaning and adequacy of the idea" (*ibid*). To this he says that:

> No doubt this difficulty has instigated some misgivings about the discourse prompting some philosophers to either reject it outright or accept it with reservations. I believe that part of the misgivings of African epistemology borders on the meaning ascribed to it by the advocates of the concept which is fluid and inappropriate with the present realities of Africans in their interaction with the rest of the world (*ibid*).

From the above, it is evident that he is worried and critical about the state of African epistemology when aligned with the current state or present realities of Africans in their interaction with the rest of the world. He believes that African epistemology cannot be considered unique.

According to Udefi:

> The idea of an African epistemology as understood by those who proposed it is taken as a way the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience (Anyanwu, 1983, p.60). The idea of African epistemology is based on their (its advocates) acceptance that such concepts as knowledge, truth, rationality etc. can be interpreted using African categories and concepts as provided by the African cultural experience without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual framework. Thus this epistemology is abstracted from the collective worldview of Africans and learning essentially on such materials as myths, folklores, proverbs, folk wisdom etc (2014: 108).

The above is what African epistemology is, according to Udefi. He went further to divide the discourse of African epistemology into two phases. The early discourse of African epistemology

tried to connect the African mode of knowledge with African ontology. Corroborating this view is Onyewuenyi's assertion that African theory of knowledge follows closely upon ontology (1976: 525). Thus, both ideas (African theory of knowledge and African ontology), according to Udefi, are "intimately related making it inconceivable to understand one without a prior knowledge of the other" (2014: 108–109). Scholars whose works are associated with the early discourse are Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy* (1959); E. Bolaji Idowu, *Oludumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (1962); Léopold Sédar Senghor, *On African Socialism* (1964); John S. Mbiti*: African Religions and Philosophy* (1969a, 1969b), among others.[85] These scholars deployed an ontological and comparative approach to epistemology. According to Udefi, their intention is to argue that:

> African epistemology or ways of knowing flows from African ontology and ultimately to establish that Africans had an idea of God even before Europeans came to Africa, apparently refuting the so-called civilizing mission of the Europeans with its dominant ideology which ascribed a pre-logical mental frame to the Africans and other non-Western peoples during the hay day of colonialism (2014: 108).

In the later discourse of African epistemology, he said that "we see some African scholars and professional philosophers engaged in the conceptualization and theorization of African epistemology as opposed to the earlier attempt which was dominated mainly by theologians and poets" (Udefi 2014: 110). Although he did not list the scholars, but I think that scholars like Onyewuenyi (1976, 1993) and Anyanwu (1981, 1983), among others are those he associated with this discourse. Nevertheless, I think that they should be included in the early discourse, because of the period their works were published.

I explained in a preceding paragraph that Udefi is worried about and critical of the state of African epistemology with the present realities of Africans in their interaction with the rest of the world. Consequently, he doubted the idea that there is a unique African epistemology. To this view he asserts that "although there is an African epistemology just as we have African ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, political thought, African literature etc. to the extent that it reflects the cultural and lived experiences of the African peoples, but such epistemology cannot, by this

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[85] Amaechi Udefi explains that, in the early beginnings, the scholars whose works are associated or linked with this view, who were mostly religious clerics and theologians including, Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy* (1959); E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (1959); W. E. Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (1966); J. B. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God* (1968); John S. Mbiti, *African Relgions and Philosophy* (1969a, 1969b). Although Udefi explain Senghor's idea on Negro-African epistemology in his discussion of the early phase on his discussion, he did not explicitly specify that Senghor belong to the later stage, he only used him to explain the Tempelsian notion of vital-force. I decided to add him in the early phase, because I think that is where he belongs.

factor, be said to be unique such that Africans are cocooned from any form of interaction with the rest of the world" (Udefi 2014: 114). To buttress his point, he utilized the Igbo epistemology as a specimen. To this he argued that the Igbo epistemology "is not in contradiction or opposition with Western epistemology". He explains his reason for this when he says that "in every epistemological system or study, one is bound to find such core notions as "knowledge, justification, truth, belief, ideas, intentions, explanation, understanding, experience and human action" etc" (*ibid*). He went further to assert that in the treatment of African thought, inductive reasoning is frequently overlooked. For him, it should not be the case because there is inductive reasoning Igbos. He further tries to show that just like there is inductive reasoning in Western philosophy, there is also inductive reasoning in Igbo. To this end, he tries to show the relationship between inductive reasoning in Igbo and in Western philosophy. After some attempts to show this, he established that, "the traditional Igbo thought (epistemology) cannot be dismissed as radically different from the Western ones because of its (former) appeal to non-physical forces, oral traditional etc. which are unquestionably accepted" (2014: 115; see also English 1999: 86). The point here, he explains is that, whether beliefs are justified or not, the essential thing is about the way the human mind works. And in this case the human mind works in the same way.

Elsewhere in one of his work titled "*Rorty's Neopragmatism and the Imperative of the Discourse of African Epistemology*" (2009), Udefi explains that when the views of those who argue for an African epistemology are being analysed, "one thing is common and that is that in African knowledge system, there is some kind of symbiotic relationship between the subject and the object" (2009: 83). In other words, upon his analysis of their views like those of Onyewuenyi, Anyanwu and other advocates of African epistemology, they "believe in epistemological monism" (*ibid*). He went further to explains what he meant by epistemological monism. According to Udefi:

> The notion of epistemological monism implicit in the views of the protagonists of African epistemology might create the impression that the African cannot draw a line between himself and other objects in the external world. But on the contrary, the African knows there is a distinction between him and other objects like trees, mountains, stones and wood (2009: 83).

What the above simple means is that a relationship exists between man [sic] and the object. There is a possibility that it might create an impression that man [sic] cannot draw the line between himself and the object, but that is not the case. The case here is man [sic] knows that

there is a distinction between him and other objects, only in this case there is some kind of symbiotic and beneficial relationship between both (subject and object). To support his idea Udefi quotes Anyanwu. on this point, Anyanwu says, "because everything is a vital force or shares in this force, the African feels and thinks that all things are similar, share the same qualities and nature. (But) it does not mean that the African does not know the distinction beteen a tree and a goat, a bird and a man (Ruch and Anyanwu 1981: 90; see also Udefi 2009: 83)

While propagating the idea of African epistemology, he anticipated possible objections. According to Udefi some professional African philosophers like Hountondji (1976; 1983: 73), Wiredu (1980: 132) and Bodunrin (1981a: 173; 1981b: 178) "seems to hold a universalist conception of philosophy and rationality argue for the adoption and deployment of the critical edge of science and technology to the understanding of African proverbs, folktales, oral tradition with a view to sifting out the philosophical contents in them" (2009: 83). In this case, these Universalist or analytic African philosophers might passively accept or reject the idea of African epistemology as propounded by its advocates. Their passive acceptance is based on the fact that there is a science called epistemology that applies to all society. Their rejection is based on the idea that the advocates of African epistemology explain their idea of epistemology based on the way the African interprets or represents things or knowledge based on her own cultural environment. The reason for the above is because they seem to hold a Universalist conception of philosophy as a rational and critical study of which argumentation and clarification are its essential hallmarks (Udefi 2014: 113).

Udefi summarised the reason they reject the idea of African epistemology in six points. The first point is the idea that there are no distinctive cognitive principles said to belong to a society. Second is the idea that knowledge cannot differ from one society to another. Third is the idea that if something is being acknowledged as knowledge, then it is true for all people (anywhere and at any time). Fourth is the idea that criteria of justification (true or false) of a knowledge claim are the same across cultural contexts. The fifth point is the idea that communities may differ with regards to knowledge in some ways, but these are not epistemologically important. Sixth is the idea that wherever epistemology is practised or studied, it is the same; "just as one does not find a distinctively Chinese or American or African mathematics, so, too there is no such thing as a distinctively African epistemology" (Udefi 2014: 113; Kaphagawani and Malherbe 2003). The professional African philosophers believe that the conception of philosophy and its relevance, irrespective of the fact that they give critical attention to the

intellectual foundations of their own cultures, transcends the limits of cultures (Gyekye 2004b: 23–24). Paraphrasing Irele A., Udefi responds to the Universalist idea of the professional African philosophers by saying:

> Their universalist conception of philosophy as a rational and critical reflection seems to land them in an erroneous impression that philosophy is an activity that can set up a theory or standard of rationality that is permanent, culture-transcendent, and an impartial matrix that can adjudicate between different cultures by assessing what is rational or irrational in this or that culture (Irele 1994: 88; Udefi 2009: 83).

Furthermore, Udefi thinks it is pointless for the protagonists of African epistemology and advocates of a universal epistemology to dogmatically insist on their position (2014: 133). To this he explains that:

> There is need for some flexibility since there are both elements of particularity and universality in epistemological conceptualization. Even though the advocates of a unique African epistemology may have a point in contextualizing knowledge and rationality since there is a sense in which we can say that philosophical ideas and insights arise out of the historical and cultural experiences of a people, but the problem here is that it will scuttle or undermine the possibility of exploring the intellectual resources, ideas and values as well as institutions of other people (Udefi 2014: 113–114).

What Udefi is trying to say in the above is that there should be that recognition of the elements of particularity and universality in African epistemology by the protagonists of African epistemology. Nevertheless, he asserts that, "ontologically speaking, our common humanity which presupposes that certain values, experiences and characteristic features are common to all human beings makes the position of champions of a unique African epistemology unattractive and unilluminating" (Udefi 2014: 114). One important thing to note about Udefi is that he was critical of the views of both the protagonists of African epistemology and the Universalist African philosophers.

4.8. African Epistemology: An Evaluation

From my discussions thus far, it is evident that the protagonists of African epistemology, like Senghor, Onyewuenyi, Anyanwu and Jimoh, based their argument for a distinctive or unique African epistemology on the premise or proposition "that each race is endowed with a distinctive nature and embodies in its civilization a particular spirit" (Udefi 2014: 112; Irele 1981: 70). Hence, they believe that Africans have their unique way of conceptualizing reality. Also, they based their idea of African epistemology on the belief that "concepts as knowledge, truth, rationality etc. can be interpreted using African categories and concepts as provided by the

cultural experience without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual framework" (Udefi 2014: 108). They believe is the existence of a unique African epistemology (a mode of knowing that is unique to Africans). African mode of knowing, according to them is social, monistic (holistic) and situated notion of knowledge. And they believe that knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (Anyanwu 1981: 94). In line with this, Emmanuel J. Ibout argues that man "cannot know without the involvement of his emotions, faith/belief, imagination, etc., that the only place you can find a knowledge that does not involve human emotions is artificial intelligence like computes and robots" (2010: 58–59). The above ideas are a critique to Western epistemology, hinting on the idea that "true knowledge of any kind is a result of the different faculties of the human person, not only of the intellectual activity as the West thinks" (Lajul 2017: 19). Also, the ideas seek to assert and affirm the idea of a unique African epistemology. The protagonists of African epistemology also see their mode of knowing as situated or generated within a culture bound by interest. However, in their bid to prove is the existence of a unique African epistemology the idea of a 'common humanity and modernity' appears to be a threat to their project.

The protagonists of African epistemology believe that Africans have their own interpretation of what life is, and which is essentially rooted in their culture and tradition, as well as their personal view of reality. For this reason, Anyanwu asserts that the idea of African epistemology is a way the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience (Anyanwu1983: 60; see also Udefi 2014: 108). In line with the above, Onyewuenyi defines African theory of knowledge (epistemology) as "how deeply he (the African) understands the nature of forces and their interaction" (1976: 525). Thus, with both assertions, it would be right to conclude that the idea of African epistemology is completely anchored in cultures and traditions of Africans.

Therefore, my aim in this section is to evaluate African epistemology in light of the views of the protagonists of African epistemology under three headings. The first subsection, 4.8.1., will focus on the reliance on Western ideas and language by the protagonists of African epistemology in their discussions. In subsection, 4.8.2., I will argue that African epistemology is particularistic, relative and universalistic in nature. In what follows, subsection, 4.8.4., I will focus on the idea of the modernization within Africa cultural system. In this case arguing that cultures are not total

pure because they experience modernization within while assimilating other peoples' culture into theirs.

4.8.1.   The Reliance on Western Ideas and Language

According to Airoboman and Asekhauno, the idea of a unique African epistemology advocated by the protagonists of African epistemology is said to have been founded on a wrong epistemic premise, that is, since there is an epistemology called Western epistemology, then there must be African epistemology (2012: 15). The impression one might get from this is that the idea is presented by passionate defenders of African cultures or cultural values who are of the view that there must be a unique African epistemology just as there is a unique Western epistemology. The truth is that there is no unique Western epistemology, but rather different epistemological views of individual philosophers (*ibid*). To this, Airoboman and Asekhauno elucidate that "there is no prescribed or peculiar communalistic, racial and continental European epistemology; instead what we have is the epistemology of individual European philosophers which are divergent and opposing" (*ibid*).

The protagonists of African epistemology appear to have appreciated Western ideas instead of explaining clearly why they hold that African epistemology is unique. Some arguments or explanations of the protagonists appear to have been founded or dependent on Western ideas and language (*ibid*). For instance, Senghor's affirmation of self-consciousness using Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). Senghor asserts: "*I feel, I dance the other, I am.*" He twisted Cartesian affirmation of the self and epistemology to formulate his own idea of the self and African epistemology. Another example is Mbiti's formulations: *"I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am"* (1969a: 109). According to Airoboman and Asekhauno, Mbiti's "is couched in Sartre's existential philosophy that man is a being in the world and a being with the others" (2012: 15–16). It is important to note that both Senghor and Mbiti's formulations are discussed in different texts as a distinctive African contribution to knowledge.[86] The above as well as some ideas of the protagonists of African epistemology make Western epistemology more attractive than theirs. Why? Because it seems they are forced to come up with their own epistemology that is different from that of the Western world, trying at all cost to show its uniqueness while borrowing ideas from the Westerns, and comparing it to theirs.

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[86] Some examples of African philosophers and thinkers who have either endorse or drawn in both formulations or positions are Kwame Nkrumah (1966); Julius Nyerere (1968); Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984 and 2006); Tsenay Serequeberhan (1991); and Desmond Tutu (1999).

Human beings are social creatures, and there is therefore a need for us to communicate with each other. Our languages, both written and spoken, have evolved overtime in response to the same questions about reality. These spoken and written languages construct and interpret our idea of reality, in this case, allowing individuals to express their ideas, beliefs, perceptions and concepts etc. Since language is quintessential, there is a need to communicate in a way that represents an idea or what an individual wish to express. And in this case the supposed preferred language that will properly envoy the idea will be used. I think that this is where the protagonists of African epistemology run fowl of success. This is because they mostly speak and write using the Western languages. They need to speak and write with their languages that are independent of Western languages and ideas of epistemology, which they claim African epistemology is different from. I think that, if the idea of a unique African epistemology is serious business for them, they should consider the languages they use.

A critic may reasonably argue that the use of Western languages by the protagonists of African epistemology is to educate the Westerners about their epistemology. As much as I might be inclined to accept that it is possibly the case, I will like to say that for it to be appreciated as a unique epistemology it needs to do all it takes to appear that way. And conveying their ideas in Western languages in not a viable step, because it has been in used for long, and as it appears there is no proposed way to change. I suggest that the protagonists of African epistemology must speak, write, and in other words convey their ideas in their own native languages. Take the example colonialization where the Europeans have taught Africans their language in order to communicate properly with them. Eze confirms this when he that "we know that the earliest Africans in America and Europe were largely forcefully brought there through slavery, and that the succeeding generation who came after the abolition of slave trade came largely to learn the ways of the West in preparation for the revolutions that would crystallize in constitutional de-colonization (Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Senghor etc.)" (1998a: 219). I am not of the view that Africans should forcefully make the Westerners learn their language, but rather they should write in their languages or do something that can draw or arouse the curiosity of the Western world and other continents to reading their epistemological works. I think in order for African epistemology to be considered unique, the protagonists of African epistemology have to articulate their ideas in their own languages, and not to succumb to the idea that not everyone will understand it. Thus, in all this, the protagonists of African epistemology should take into epistemological cognizance their own languages, because they "might bring an added dimension" to their "theoretical considerations" (Wiredu 1980: 35). I think that African

epistemology is still an ongoing task that has a lot of things to do in order to achieve the so-called idea of a unique African epistemology. And since Africa has different languages and cultures some narratives and practices are not the same, and for those that appear to be the same, there is a possibility that their mode of operation and interpretation may differ.

4.8.2. The Particular, Relative and Universal nature of African Epistemology

In chapters one and two, I clearly indicated that my aim was not to discard the idea of African epistemology, but to investigate if it is unique as its protagonists say. I noted that my intention was not to contest the existence of African epistemology, but to question its uniqueness as proposed by the protagonists of African epistemology. Before I proceed with the discussion, I will like to note that as part of my argument, I will employ some arguments from the individual works of the following scholars: Godfrey O. Ozumba (2015), Amaechi Udefi (2014) Jonathan O. Chimakonam (2014, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2017b).

My previous discussions on the views of the protagonists of African epistemology clearly indicate that their ideas and discussions on African epistemology have to do with the way in which "the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience" (Udefi 2014: 108; see also Anyanwu 1983: 60). The idea here is that concepts and philosophical concepts can be understood and interpreted by African categories and concepts "as provided by the African cultural experience without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual frameworks" (Udefi 2014: 108; see also Tavernaro-Haidarian 2018: 231). However, I am inclined to think that this was not the case, as some of their ideas are based on Western or alien conceptual frameworks. I am also inclined to think that their discourses were aimed at comparing and raising African epistemology to the same status as Western epistemology. Why? Because in their various discussions they seem to make it a duty to compare and show the difference between African epistemology and Western epistemology.

Human beings by nature possess the inherent aspiration and desire to know what appears mysterious or unknown. It is in this unquenchable desire that an individual uses his or her "mental and rational capacities to address, articulate and resolve the ultimate questions in life about existence, God, human nature and so on" (Nwosimiri 2015: 22). This, I think, is not different from what the protagonists of African epistemology have done. "All human beings, as rational animals, are endowed with these capacities and all societies are confronted by these

ultimate questions. Since we apply reason in all that we do, reasoning does not belong to anyone, it is part of nature" (*ibid*). The foregoing, partly, underscores the universalistic nature of African epistemology. The search for knowledge and understanding of reality can be said to be a universal and there are also universal forms of knowledge as I have discussed in chapter two. My reason for saying "universal" is because we have ways of acquiring knowledge that both the Africans and Westerns can identify with. It is also true that the way people come to know and understand reality can vary from culture to culture, and people to people. These different understandings of reality can also be "due to the internal dynamics of the thoughts system" acquired by acculturation and assimilation of other people's culture. The above ideas are where the element of particularism and relativism comes into play. Thus, grounded on the above, I am inclined to think that African epistemology can be categorize into three forms or natures, namely *particularistic, relative and universalistic*. Ozumba corroborate this view when he said:

> Knowledge is viewed as a well rehearsed and rationalized set of ideas, which are seen as having met the optimal standard of rationality, acceptance, with evidential corroboration within the traditional community. This makes African epistemology or concept of knowledge universalistic, particularistic and relative at the same time (2015: 158).

This affirms the tripartite nature of African epistemology. Ozumba in his book "*A Concise Introduction to Epistemology*" (2015) explains these concepts clearly. He elucidates that it is Universalistic "because opinions are canvassed, subjected to rigorous analysis, after which it is either rejected or upheld. If the opinion stands positively against all attempts at falsification or meets the criterion of adequacy, such opinions are upheld" (Ozumba 2015: 158–159). He also explains what he meant by it being Particularistic. According to Ozumba, "it is particularistic because every event elicits the same kind of adequacy test. The acceptance of an opinion does not confer upon it the stamp of universal application in future similar cases. Each case is examined against the same opinion to ascertain its relevance or appositeness" (2015: 159). He further explains that it is relative because "opinion is considered true relative to the circumstance of place, time and the exigencies of strategy, auspiciousness and relevance. It is relative also because at times, it is the representative views or opinions of the select cream of the community that is sampled and accepted" (*ibid*).

Thus, against the backdrop of African epistemology, I agree with Ozumba that African epistemology or "concept of knowledge is universalistic, particularistic and relative at the same time" (2015: 158). I also agree with Udefi that there "is need for some flexibility since there are both elements of particularity and universality in epistemological conceptualization" (2014:

113). And I also agree with Leyla Tavernaro-Haidarian that "we can conceptualise knowledge and rationality that arises out of the experience of various peoples and cultures while acknowledging our common humanity" (2018: 231–232). This, quoting Tavernaro-Haidarian (2018: 232) again, "can lead to the fruitful exchange of insights and knowledges between many peoples and cultures" around the world. I believe this is why Chimakonam (2014, 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2017b) proposes and advocates the school of thought or idea of "Conversational Philosophy" (CP). In other words, "Conversational School of Philosophy (CSP)"[87]. This school of thought that calls for a strict engagement among philosophers "in which critical and rigorous questioning and answering are employed to creatively unveil new concepts and open up new vistas for thought" (Chimakonam 2017b: 116; 2015a: 463). The school proposes that we use "Conversationalism" and "Interrogatory Theory" as two basic methods of Conversational philosophy (Chimakonam 2014: 1–25). Both proposed methods "are basically united by the major preoccupation of Conversational Philosophy which is the systematic inauguration of viable ideas, thoughts, principles, theories, and systems in African philosophy that can help humans in different societies across the globe to address specific challenges and meet their needs" (Nweke 2016: 56).

Conversational philosophy is truly representative of the ideas it conveys, since it is a school of thought that is cross-cultural. In other words, the discourse and conversations are conceptualized between various approaches, and the conversations or philosophical engagements "is not culturally hijacked by the dominant Western discourse" (Tavernaro-Haidarian 2018: 232). Conversational philosophy "speaks to the idea of philosophy within and across the borders" (Chimakonam 2017b: 117). *Ipso facto*, it is within the opened mindedness of the cross-cultural critical and rigorous questioning and answering that the particular, relative and universal nature, idea or approach to epistemology, that I consider African epistemology not to be as unique as the protagonists of African epistemology made it to be.

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[87] According to Clement Victor Nweke, "the CSP is a philosophical movement inspired by the words of I. I. Asouzu, P. Iroegbu and C. S. Momoh but formally convened (at the University of Calabar, Calabar Nigeria) as a professional body of (African and non-African) scholars who are committed to doing African philosophy, and/or any aspect of African studies using the methodological dispositions and canons of Conversational philosophy (CP) articulated by Jonathan O. Chimakonam (Chimakonam 2014; 2015a; 2015b and 2015c). It is modelled after the likes of the Frankfurt school of the Vienna circle" (2016: 56).

4.8.3.   Modernizing from Within: The Question of Purity

As explained in chapter one, human beings share some certain basic values and perceptions irrespective of where their origin or birthplace. These shared values and perceptions foster some forms of interaction between people of diverse nationalities or different continents. Africans share some certain values, perceptions, interactions, and common interests with the rest of the world. These values, perceptions and interactions they share with the rest of the word prompted African people to attempt to modernize their societies or develop some of their traditional systems within, in harmony with the ethos of the contemporary world. The protagonists of African epistemology believe the African theory of knowledge is a social or cultural epistemology, but fail to see that a kind of modernization has taken place within its system, and in this case questions the purity of the system. Based on these ideas, my aim in this section is to show that the above questions the idea of a unique African epistemology.

In his book "*Tradition and Modernity*" (1997), particularly in chapters 8 and 9, Gyekye explains that for more than a century, the notion of modernity has been very significant for the people of the world, like the notion of development. Societies in the world have with no exception aspired to become modern and this concept has gained a normative status. This aspiration of becoming modern is visible in the social, cultural and political lives of many in different societies. To this Gyekye says that, "Western societies generally, from which the notion is said to have emerged, have become the quintessence of modernity, the mecca to which people from non-modern societies go for inspiration and knowledge as to models of thought and action in pursuit of the development of their societies and transition to modernity" (1997: 263–264). Corroborating this view and showing Africa's involvement in the idea of modernity and development, Oyekan Owomoyela explains, "Already evident is the philosophers' conviction that Africans must discard their traditional ways in favour of modern European (or Western) ways in the name of development" (1991: 161–162).

Kwame Anthony Appiah (2005a), recapitulates his views on epistemological problems in Africa. His view edges closer to being a work of African epistemological prognosis. Appiah tries to "expose some errors in our thinking about the traditional modern polarity, and thus help understand some striking and not generally appreciated similarities of the logical problem situation in modern western philosophy of science to the analysis of traditional African epistemic procedure" (2005a: 23). Here, he explains that the dogmatic traditional mode of thought is different from that of the modern scientific mode of thought. According to Appiah the images of

knowledge represented in both modes of thought are opposed to each other. This simply means against each other. In other words, both modes of thought are different from each other in the sense that they have strikingly conflicting ideas; one is based on African traditional thought while the other is based on western science. He also explains that the similarity of both traditional and modern modes of thought rests upon both types of analysis dealing with *"procedures crucially hinging upon knowledge claims"* (*ibid*). This means that the similarity of both traditional modes of thought rest on the idea that they know something and are aware of that thing on the basis of which they know. Furthermore, he concludes by saying "Literacy, then, makes possible the modern image of knowledge as something that is constantly being remade; what drives the culture to take up this possibility is, I believe, the economic logic of modernity" (*ibid*: 55). By this, he means the modern dynamics of knowledge help to reshape culture.

With the above in mind and as far as the history of human civilization goes, Africans have made attempts to modernize their societies and develop some of their traditional systems within. There have been interactions between African people and different continents, which prompted the idea of cultural integration. The idea of a culture acquiring knowledge from other cultures and the assimilation of this knowledge into its culture and value systems is common and widespread. Likewise, within our various cultures we assimilate knowledge and ideas in small bits consciously or unconsciously from other cultures. This clearly shows the modernization and development within a particular culture. And this gives way for the presence of change and integration of knowledge within cultures. The above is a distinctive feature of human history. Granted this history of cultural integration, it follows that "every scientific revolution has been a revolution on an existing state of science" (Okere 2005: 26–27). An example is that of mathematics—which Western science and philosophy borrowed from ancient Egyptian concepts and integrated it into their work, and it is now part of modern science. It is important to note that mathematics, as the rest of other branches of science have been a continuum and intellectual transition. Ernst Cassirer asserts that, "there is no power in our modern world which may be compared to that of scientific thought. It is held to be the summit and consummation of all our human activities, the last chapter of mankind…" (1967: 207). As Wiredu notes: "for my part I take science to be the crucial factor in the transition from the traditional to the modern world" (1980: 32).[88] Wiredu writes:

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[88] Quoting Wiredu, Owomoyela explains that in another context Wiredu writes: "Modernization is the application of the results of modern science for the improvement of the conditions of human life. It is only the more visible side of

Contemporary Africa is in the middle of the transition from a **traditional** to a **modern** society. This process of modernisation entails changes not only in the physical environment but also in the mental outlook of our peoples, manifested both in their explicit beliefs and in their customs and their ordinary daily habits and pursuits. Since the fundamental rationale behind any changes in a world outlook is principally a philosophical matter, it is plain that the philosophical evaluation of our traditional thought is of very consideration relevance to the process of modernisation on our continent (1980: x)

Wiredu's argument above refers to the idea of change in Africa, from a traditional to a modern society. This is a process of modernisation and it has "opened up African traditional thought to a wider world of learning" (Jimoh 2017: 128).

According to Gyekye, there is some interesting implication for our understanding of the nature of culture and of humankind itself with regards to the phenomena of cultural borrowing or appropriation. He goes on to argue that "… the fact that people of a different cultural tradition can appreciate the worth of another cultural tradition and would desire to appropriate at least some elements of it, it seems to follow that there are certain cultural values that human beings, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds, can be said to share in common; for example, technology" (Gyekye 1997: 225). An example is Senghors's idea of Negritude and his dictums, and also Tempels' Bantu philosophy. Senghor argues that the Western way of gaining knowledge must be assimilated into the African way of thinking. Considering this assertion, one can barely accept any assertion like this without much scrutiny. It might have been his assimilation of his so-called Western way of gaining knowledge that actually made him to notoriously defend his thesis. Similarly, Anyanwu asserts that "the philosophy of a collective people is not lifeless logic but profound beliefs, the feelings and emotions of the ideals" (1981: 80). As much as Senghor and Anyanwu would want to celebrate emotional as a unique way of knowing, their ideas and attempts to present African knowledge or the idea of knowing (gaining knowledge) as static and rigid, and not open to the possibilities of change or outside knowledge. They restrict Africa to other possible ways of knowing. Their move of casting African epistemology or way of gaining knowledge in a way that is not sensitive to the possible diversity of human beings, knowledge and change is erroneous. To this, I assert that African has gone beyond emotion and there is no need to claim uniqueness or cast a romantic glance on an idea that is no longer fully functional as a way of knowing.

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development; it is the side that is more associated with the use of advanced technology and novel techniques in various areas of life such as agriculture, health, education and recreation" (1987: 153–154).

From the foregoing, it actually indicates that with the idea of borrowing, change, integration, modernization and development, culture is not as pure as it appears to be—a question of purity. Talking about purity, Gyekye explains that:

> It is true that no cultural tradition can claim to be a pure tradition, in the sense of having evolved or developed on its own terms, in total isolation from alien cultural influences. In one way, elements of an alien cultural tradition can be voluntarily assimilated through adaptation by an indigenous tradition; in another, alien cultural elements may be regarded as having been foisted on an indigenous tradition. In the history of growth and evolution of cultures, the former (i.e., voluntary assimilation) has been a more common and more effective mode of cultural diffusion than the latter (1997: 224).

With the question of purity in mind, Bruce Janz in his book "*Philosophy in an African Place*" clearly specifies the need to categorize African thought as African before the task of mining its resources can take place (2009: 123). If this does not take place, according to Janz, one's thought by implication continues to be colonized. This, I think, is what the protagonists of African epistemology need to do and consider before arguing for the idea of a situated notion of knowing.

Thus, with the argument so far, it follows that with the interaction that the protagonist of African epistemology (sometimes) have with the external world; their ideas and knowledge of things can be (has been) influenced or changed. This influence or change would bring about scrutiny and changes in their conception of knowledge and things both outside and within their cultures. This ideology, I think, is necessary for the enhancement of their cultural tradition. Meaning that from time to time, ideas and traditions must be critically evaluated in order to improve the conditions of the people. During this critical evaluation, many of the ideas that are being scrutinized are ideas from the past that have been inherited. As Gyekye said, "we may not always be aware that in undertaking certain actions we are in fact subjecting a received tradition to some questioning or that we are assessing it in some fashion" (1997: 229).

Also, in our evaluation or aim to improve some ideas and cultural traditions, which I think is what the protagonists of African epistemology did, we could possibly be subjecting our tradition and a received tradition to doubt using another tradition to improve it. This is what modernization and development brings about—questioning and evaluation. Therefore, "the fact that tradition can be—and has now and then in the past been—evaluated clearly subverts any absolute authority it is alleged to possess simply by virtue of itself" (*ibid*). It is important to note that in this questioning and evaluation, it is possible to recognize similar or compatible elements in both cultural traditions—African, Western or Chinese. This should not be a problem at all,

because it will actually help in the evaluation process. This is evident in Benjamin Schwartz's explanation when he says, "there may indeed be elements of Chinese traditional thought which are similar to or compatible with elements of modern Western thought" (1972: 82).

No society can confidently say that they are pure because of their commitment to innovation. Thus, it would be right to say that in our daily conversations with others we make an intellectual and social transitions to a new way of life—a modern era. During this transition "some of the elements of the past cultural life will simply have to be left behind; these would be the debris and the encumbrances of the passing era, elements that, on normative or functional grounds, cannot be borne over the bridge to the new era" (Gyekye 1997: 287).

Modernization and development is not a one-sided enterprise as it still recognizes and embraces Africa's cultural traditions and communal identity. This is our common humanity. Given the idea of modernity which encompasses our shared values, common interests and interactions, what matters is not necessarily the idea of a situated notion of knowing or the knowledge generated from within a culture, but that of a common humanity. In our day to day pursuits of a common humanity we should aim at the integration and augmentation or growth of epistemology. Thus, "it is the function of our own and every age to grasp the knowledge which is already existing, to make it our own, and in so doing to develop it still further and to raise it to a higher level" (Ansell-Pearson 1987: 75).

4.9. Conclusion

As described in the introduction, the aim of this chapter was to show that African epistemology is not as unique as the protagonists' claims, due to the idea of "our common humanity". This I achieved by outlining and critiquing the arguments of some key protagonists of African epistemology's defence of African epistemology. This was achieved in the first part. While in the second part I evaluate the concept of African epistemology in light of some of the views of the protagonists of African epistemology. This was presented in subsections. In subsection 4.8.1, the focus of my critique was the reliance of Western ideas and language by the protagonists of African epistemology in their discussions. In subsection 4.8.2, I argued that African epistemology is particularistic, relative and universalistic in nature. Subsequently, in subsection 4.8.3, my critique focused on the idea of the modernization taking place within the Africa cultural system. For this, I argued that cultures are not totally pure because they experience modernization within while assimilating other peoples' culture into theirs.

Chapter Five

5. African Epistemology: A Struggle of African Identity and Recognition

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is based on the premise of the main argument of the protagonists of African epistemology and part of my discussion in chapters one, two and four, thus far. The premise is that there is a distinctive or unique way Africans perceive, apprehend, interpret and conceptualize reality. Drawing on the insights of the history of African philosophy as a 'counter-colonial practice' as well as the fact that to affirm the existence of an African philosophy suggests the existence of an African epistemology, my aim in this chapter is to show that the protagonists' aim of advocating for a distinctive African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive, which this chapter identifies as a struggle of African identity. Undoubtedly, the above is not the only motive for their project. Another motive is to show that Africa has her own epistemology. But that is not my aim in this chapter. Most importantly, as previously stated, my aim is to show that the project of African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive, which is a struggle of African identity. In this chapter I advance three crucial claims. In the first section, 5.2., I suggest that the enunciation of a unique African epistemology is *partly* driven by some non-epistemic intention, which I identify as a struggle of African identity. In the second section, 5.3., I argue that the protagonists' idea of African epistemology is a struggle of African identity and recognition. Finally, in the third section, 5.4., I suggest the integration of African epistemology and Western epistemology in order to account for a multi-dimensional and unified approach to the understanding of reality.

5.2. A Non-Epistemic Basis for a Unique African Epistemology[89]

In this section, I suggest that a non-epistemic intention, which I identity as a struggle of identity, underlies the idea and the articulation of a unique and distinct African epistemology by the protagonists of African epistemology. I try to achieve this by showing that when African

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[89] This section is motivated by Oritsegbubemi Anthony Oyowe (2013) article titled "Personhood and Social Power in African Thought". Some of my argument runs parallel as that of Oyowe but with a bit of some changes in the concept, giving the fact that we are both talking about different ideas under the umbrella of "a non-epistemic basis and identity".

epistemology is examined as a 'counter-colonial practice', the protagonists' aim of advocating for a distinctive and unique African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive.

The protagonists of African epistemology think that there are some forms of knowledge that are uniquely and distinctly African. The reason for this is because; in their discussion or comparison of African and Western discourse of knowledge they focused on western scientific knowledge. They believe that the tradition of Western epistemology is best known for being technical and analytical in such a way that the outlook of the world is subjected to systematic scrutiny through rigorous rational analytic method (Wiredu 1991: 87; Ani 2013: 305). Corroborating this view, Elvis Imafidon avows that the West are more focused on calculation, instrumental rationality and science oriented (2017: 256). Furthermore, Anselm Jimoh and John Thomas argue that Western epistemology "limits itself to the scientific method of abstraction and divides reality into subjective and objective in consonance with Western ontology", and "African epistemology in consonance with African ontology, conceives the world as a basic unitary system, therefore, sees reality as interwoven and connected" (2015: 61). Consequent upon my research I observed that many African scholars, Like Robin Horton (1995), Bodunrin (1995), Ajei (2007) Ani (2013) and others, as well as the protagonists of African epistemology, that enunciated that Western epistemology focus on scientific knowledge as if it were the only form of knowledge in existence. They neglected the fact that besides scientific knowledge and Western philosophers also discussed other forms of knowledge, like rationalism, empiricism, intuitive knowledge, inferential knowledge, common sense knowledge, perceptual knowledge, and others. These African scholars place more emphasis on scientific knowledge and sidelined other forms of knowledge. They regard other forms of knowledge as it were absent from Western epistemology. Therefore, they make these forms of knowledge appear uniquely and specifically African. It must be noted here that, I am not discarding the fact that scientific knowledge was at a point in Western philosophy and epistemology placed at a higher pedestal to other forms of knowledge. This is because Western philosophers, like Kant, observe that we err when we expect philosophy – and other fields of knowledge – to give the kind of results that science gives (Copleston 1963: 86). Successes in other fields of knowledge are measured differently from successes in science. Thus, science knowledge then "remains only one of many [legitimate] forms of knowledge" (Okere 2005: 20) in western epistemology.

But why do the protagonists of African epistemology hold that Africans have their unique way of apprehending reality and that concepts like rationality, knowledge, truth etc. can be interpreted

using African categories and concepts as provided by the African cultural experience without a recourse to Western or alien conceptual framework? I analyse this idea to the reasonable status of their claim as facilitated, *partly*, by a non-epistemic motivation. I start from what I consider to be an uncontentious idea that what has come to be known as African philosophy, from which African epistemology springs, at least in its modern form, is situated within the historically tense relationship between Africa and the West (Oyowe 2013: 209). This relationship, without doubt, is characterized by several unpleasant past moments, especially colonialism.

Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze described colonialism as "the indescribable crisis disproportionately suffered and endured by the African peoples in their tragic encounter with the European world, from the beginning of the fifteenth century through the end of the nineteenth into the twentieth" (1998b: 213). Historically, much of Africa has been the scene of long series of invasions by European fortune seekers. Each of these fortune seekers "was attracted to the continent by self-interest: economic, political, military, and prestige" (Harris 1998: 203). This self-interest was aimed at the extraction and trading of natural resources and raw materials, for example, gold and ivory. These commercial, individual and institutional interests "quickly expanded into the exportation of able-bodied Africans and their children as slaves to the Americas and other parts of the world" (Eze 1998b: 213). According to Aimé Césaire, "colonialism of the past three hundred years, particularly of the black peoples of Africa, has had more sophisticated weapons – efficient methods of economic exploitation, pseudo-psychology, pseudo-anthropology, uprootment of large populations to areas of new white settlements, cultural indoctrination" (1969: 10).

The colonial period was a period "marked by the horror and violence of the transatlantic slave trade, the imperial occupation of most parts of Africa and the forced administrations of its peoples, and the resilient and enduring ideologies and practices of European cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) and "racial" supremacy (racism)"" (Eze 1998b: 213). This period, can be understood as what Cornel West categorized as "the Age of Europe." According to him, this was the period "[b]etween 1492 and 1945". This period was marked by "European breakthrough in oceanic transportation, agricultural production, state consolidation, bureaucratization, industrialization, urbanization and imperial dominion [that] shaped the makings of the modern word" (West 1993: 5). Describing the European domination and the situation as it was during the colonial period, Césaire tells us that:

> Between colonizer and colonized there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses. No human contact, but a relation of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production… colonization = "thing-ification" (1972: 21).

"Colonial and capitalist expansions are therefore a logical necessity for the realization of the obviously universal European idea, and by labelling the non-European territories and people as "backward" in "industry," they become legitimate prey for colonial and colonialist activities" (Eze 1998b: 216). The colonizers maintained the balance of power by instigating fear and violence. They often kept a close watch and control over the colonized preventing them from any form of rebellion. The Apartheid regime in South Africa, for example, used several forms of segregation and cruelty to dominate and stifle any rebellious acts by black natives.

This epitomises the encounter between Africa and the West. As a result, African epistemology "exists first and foremost as a 'counter colonial practice' since it is in part the response by the colonized to the negative effects of colonialism" (Oyowe 2013: 209). This idea is firmly rooted in Eze's view on African philosophy; in this case, African epistemology. According to Eze:

> The idea of 'African philosophy' [African epistemology] as a field of inquiry thus has its contemporary roots in the effort of African thinkers to combat political and economic exploitations, and to examine, question, and contest identities imposed upon them by Europeans. The claims and counter-claims, justifications and alienations that characterize such historical and conceptual protests and contestations indelibly mark the discipline of African philosophy (1998b: 217).

Corroborating the above and explaining African scholars' intention, Hountondji argues that:

> African intellectuals wanted at all costs to rehabilitate themselves in their own eyes and in the eyes of Europe. To do so, they were prepared to leave no stone unturned, and they were only too happy to discover, through Tempels' notorious Bantu Philosophy, a type of argumentation that could, despite its ambiguities (or, rather, thanks to them), serve as one way of ensuring this rehabilitation (1983a: 48).

Scholars like Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and many others see African philosophy as a philosophy born of struggles. And this struggle deals with protestations and contestations that I identified in the above quotes. Since this is the case, it rightly follows that African epistemology "is born out of these protestations and contestations" as well (Oyowe 2013: 209). This has significant influence on the birth and structure of African epistemology. The idea of negritude as a philosophical movement symbolizes this feature of African epistemology. "Negritude addresses itself at once as an ideology of difference and resistance,

albeit one that implicitly accepts the very Eurocentric assumptions to which it is opposed" (*ibid*). Another example can be located in Innocent C. Onyewuenyi's book, *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism* (1993). Here he gave his view on African indigenous knowledge in line with African origin of Greek philosophy. His point of entry into the idea of African indigenous knowledge is based on the Egyptian texts and doctrines of the Egyptian Mystery System as embodied in the cosmogony-cosmological and social theories emanating from the major religious centres of Hermopolis, Heliopolis and Memphis. His objective in this book is to argue against the false notions that have been propagated against Africa and Africans by Western historians in the field of philosophy (Onyewuenyi 1993: 283). His book seeks to show that Egyptian (Africa) thought system is the origin Greek philosophy. From the discussion thus far, "it is hard to miss the fact that these ideologies are not merely driven by a search for truth" (Oyowe 2013: 209), knowledge and wisdom, "but instead by a powerful desire to resist and assert the difference" (*ibid*), especially the difference between Western and African epistemology and ways of knowing.

From the above we can deduce that the motive behind the argument of a unique African epistemology has its justification in history. Thus, I am inclined to think that the primary motivation for African epistemology is in part couched in the long history of Western denigration of African modes of thought. As a reaction, the protagonists were united around the idea of difference in giving content to the philosophies, ideas and theories that emerged in the period ushering in independence and beyond. Reading through some the works of the protagonists of African epistemology, I get the impression that they want to establish themselves in their own eyes, against the denigration from the West, as having a unique epistemology and way of knowing. With these divulges, it is clear that the construction of ideas "is not always at the service of truth; it can sometimes draw its force from non-epistemic sources, particularly, as in this case, the motive of resistance and cultural reaffirmation" (Oyowe 2013: 209–210).

I wish to emphasize here that I am by no means claiming that African epistemology in its present form is always defining itself against the West. To this, I employ Gyekye's explanation to clarify what I think African epistemology in its present form does. I think that African epistemology in its present form approach to (Western) modernity or knowledge is selective for at least two reasons. One is that African epistemology may not feel enamoured with all the manifestations of modernity (knowledge) that have been pursued in Western societies: no cultural tradition has commended itself in its entirety to others outside that tradition. The second reason is related to

the first; the desire on the part of African epistemology to preserve those of their cultural values they consider not only worthwhile, but also preferable to their Western equivalents (Gyekye 1997: 270). In view of this, divination especially, as a way of knowing in Africa should be preserved.

5.3.   Africa Epistemology: The Struggle of African Identity

As discussed so far, if the motive behind the idea of African epistemology had its justification in history, the epistemological status advanced by the protagonists remains dubious. Their assertion is merely to reposition the African in a perceived power struggle between Africa and the West, and the recognition of African identity. To this end, African epistemology is not different from the practice of what has come to be known as ethnophilosophy. Like ethnophilosophy, African epistemology "reflects a retreat, a 'return to the source' as a way of validating and reaffirming the African identity" (Oyowe: 2013 209). In this case, as explained in the previous section, it clearly shows that the protagonists of African epistemology are not simply motivated by the fact that they simply want people to know about the discourse and divulge the main idea of African epistemology, but instead by a powerful desire to resist, rehabilitate and assert the difference between Western and African epistemology.

The point is that, in connection with history as I have indicated, the practice of African epistemology itself reflects a struggle of African identity. Indeed, my submission is that the arguments presented for a distinctive and unique African epistemology and the general preoccupation to defend the idea is a struggle of identity. For example, Anyanwu's idea of African epistemology. Anyanwu talks about African epistemology in terms of culture, belief and experience. He asserts that "the beliefs in God, divinities, spirit, ancestor, livingdead, etc…. are beliefs of some people about certain things. If these beliefs have any meaning, value and justification, they must have arisen from human experience and must be products of culture" (Anyanwu 1981: 82). According to him, "the African culture makes no sharp distinction between the ego and the world, subject and object. In the conflict between the self and the world, African culture makes the self the centre of the world" (1981: 86–87). In this context, every experience and reality itself is personal to the self. In other words, reality must have reference to personal experience. And Anyanwu defines personal experience as the totality of humans and their faculties. "Such experience does not address itself to reason alone, imagination alone, felling and intuition alone, but to the totality of a person's faculty" (*ibid*: 87). He further explains that:

> The truth of this experience is lived and felt not merely thought of. The world which is centred on the self is personal and alive. Self-experience is not separated from the experiencing self. The self vivifies or animates the word so that the soul, spirit or mind of the self is also that of the world. The order of the world and that of the self are identical. What happens to the world happens to the self… the world that has no reference to the person, to self-order or that is not self-centred has no meaning for the African. So, the world has meaning, order and unity by virtue of the self (Anyanwu 1981: 87).

The above explains that African culture deals with synthesis. It also shows that in African culture man and nature are not two independent and opposing realities, but one inseparable continuum. Thus, "The African maintains that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches himself from it…. Knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (Anyanwu 1981: 94). The African can only claim to know or have, through the above methods, the knowledge of the other. The above is used as a foil against Western epistemology. Since Anyanwu and the other protagonists' belief that Western ways of knowing stands in sharp contrast to the African ways of knowing. "The primary motivation for this is in part couched in the long history of Western denigration of African modes of thought" (Oyowe 2013: 205). In reaction, Anyanwu and the other protagonists of African epistemology (African intellectuals) "rallied around the idea of difference in giving content to the theories and philosophies that emerge in the period ushering in independence and beyond" (*ibid*). Thus, I am inclined to think that it is all an idea for the need of cultural reaffirmation and reassertion of African identity [epistemology] against Western epistemology.

Kwame Anthony Appiah in his widely cited book 'The Ethics of Identity' (2005b), laid out in remarkable clarity and great detail what (social) identity is. According to Appiah, "the contemporary use of "identity" to refer to such features of people as their race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, or sexuality… this use of the term reflects the conviction that each person's identity—in the order sense of who he or she truly is—is deeply inflected by social features" (2005b: 65). Regarding identity, Appiah explains that "once this label is applied to people, ideas about people who fit the label come to have social and psychological effects" (2005b: 66). These ideas, Appiah further explain once this label is applied to people, ideas about people who fit the label come to have social and psychological effects, shapes the ways these people fitting the label conceive of themselves and their projects. Thus, "the labels operate to mold what we may call *identification,* the process through which individuals shape their projects" (*ibid*). The project of African epistemology is not different from this, as they have been working tirelessly along this trajectory to show that African epistemology differs substantially

from Western epistemology. I am inclined to think that to elaborate their difference; they try to shape their ideas that both epistemologies are different. Like Appiah, "it seems right to call this "identification" (*ibid*), because African experience and colonization play a role in shaping the trajectory the protagonists of African epistemology.

One likely objection to my submission would be that Africa is not trying to reaffirm and reassert African identity [epistemology] against Western epistemology, because African identity is already there. While I do agree that African identity already exists, I reject the denial that Africa is reaffirming and reasserting her identity. This objection would have held had there been nothing as colonialism. Yes, African identity already exists, but it has to be reaffirmed and reasserted for a proper recognition. This clearly shows that the motivation behind the idea of African epistemology had its justification in history (colonization). In essence, I think that the project and motivation of African epistemology by its protagonists is a plea for African identity and recognition, because Africa epistemology was silenced by colonialism and the African colonial experience. Therefore, in the discourse of Africa epistemology, there is a tension of 'We' (Africa) versus 'Them' (West). In this case, an African will say that we are different from them.

In summary, the idea of African epistemology appears to be a quest to resist, re-establish and culturally reaffirm the idea that African culture is distinct from the West's. This is visible in the protagonists' motives, assertions and pursuit of a unique African epistemology. They are striving to develop and assert their ideas and theory of knowledge in the direction that will give them a role—a social and public role for the recognition of African epistemology—what this chapter identifies as a struggle of African identity.

5.4. Western and African Epistemology: The Need for an Integrative Epistemology

I clarified in chapter one that, according to Inanna Hamati-Ataya, "epistemologists have traditionally been concerned with propositional knowledge (knowledge about things, or knowledge that) rather than knowledge by acquaintance (knowledge of things), self-knowledge, or knowledge how" (2014: 1116). This focus on propositional knowledge, according to her, rests on the assumption that the proposition is both "the principal form in which reality becomes understandable to the human mind" and "the form in which knowledge is communicated" to others (*ibid*; see also Zagzebski 1999: 92). It follows that the primary concern of Epistemology is

in knowledge as a state of being that connects the subject to reality through a true proposition (*ibid*).

As explained previously, knowledge has a long history, beginning with the ancient Greeks and continuing to the present. Plato stands as the second of the great trio of ancient Greek philosophers – Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Till date, his system of philosophy remains very influential in Western Philosophy. One of Plato's works is his theory of knowledge. Herein, he explicates the nature, conditions and values of knowledge as he understood it. Plato's epistemology is not found in one book but scattered among his many dialogues. The traditional standard analysis of knowledge was first introduced by Plato in the Theaetetus; which defines propositional knowledge as Justified True Belief. In the Theaetetus Socrates proposes that knowledge is justified true belief. Tell date justified True Belief still exist as a basis of explaining a knowledge claim and many epistemologists have sought to characterize knowledge as justified true belief (JTB) (Rescher 2003: 3). Many philosophers, whether African or Western, can identify with this epistemological trajectory, and have applied it at some point or other to their day to day activities. Thus, I am inclined to think that this shows the unity and commonality in our philosophical and epistemological discourse. This common comprehensive standard of understanding one's knowledge claim is situated within the integrative epistemology.

The idea of integrative epistemology is Godfrey O. Ozumba's concept. According to him, integrative epistemology is derived from his thoughts "while articulating his views on his brain-child integrative humanism" (2015: 227). In his book *Philosophy and Method of Integration* (2010), Ozumba gives a detailed explanation of the methodological and systematic outline of integrative humanism with a universal appeal. Ozumba explains integrative is "concerned with resolving conflicts, enlarging the frontiers of knowledge, for comparative and integrative studies. It will also help us in fathoming the reason for disagreements and divergences of opinions, seeking of missing links and in identifying messing points of ideas and facts" (2010: 37). To this, Adekunle A. Ibrahim explicates that integrative humanism aims at presenting an integrative perspective of one's understanding, oneself and the environment (2011: 143). The idea of integrativism here, according to Ozumba, means to harness and process "through engrafting of the different components of knowledge" in order to attain insight into our knowledge claims (2010: 41; see also Ibrahim 2011: 143). In other words, integrativism has to do with the idea of enhancing the co-operative effort of humans to arrive at a clear understanding of any discourse for the benefit of human (Ibrahim 2011: 143).

Now let's turn to the subject matter, Integrative epistemology. According to Ozumba, integrative epistemology is simply that:

(1) All epistemological theories are potential, necessary planks in the repertoire of knowledge.
(2) That knowledge has its forms and contexts namely subjective, objective, absolute, relative, scientific, intuitive, linguistic (propositional), perceptual, spiritual, mystical etc.
(3) That knowledge involves a process of analysis and synthesis.
(4) That knowledge has as its basic, necessary criteria as justified true belief.
(5) That knowledge of falsehood plays a part in knowledge.
(6) That certain knowledge are absolute and divine (Revelational knowledge).
(7) That the logic of knowledge can be one valued, two valued, three valued, four valued, five valued or multi valued depending on the context of discourse or form of life.
(8) That all epistemological theories can form a necessary link with one another to project knowledge. Though some form of knowledge may be simple. Like some perceptive knowledge, they are nevertheless synthetic.
(9) The motto of integrative epistemology is "analysis for synthesis" (2015: 229).

The above can be understood as the pillars for integrative epistemology. Importantly, Ozumba notes that each of the points "can be extrapolated, and expanded to give us volumes of discourse. Suffice it to say that integrative epistemology leaves an open-ended ambience for continuing epistemological discourse" (*ibid*). Jonathan O. Chimakonam corroborates Ozumba's idea integrative epistemology in his work "*Current Trends in Epistemology*" (2013). Chimakonam articulate the thesis of integrative epistemology as follows:

(i) that sources of knowledge are multilayered and so are the theories of their justification; (ii) that there are three types of knowledge, knowledge about the world, about the self and about other, (iii) that these three types of knowledge represent what we call epistemic parallelism, (iv) that that epistemically parallel theories cannot have similar justifications; (v) that epistemological theories are to be restricted in application to the type of knowledge they seek; (vi) that all viable theories are those that interpret accurately the framework of a given type of knowledge and finally, (vii) that all viable theories form a holism and serve the goal of appropriately describing reality, while individually, variously describing a given sphere of reality (2013: 59).

From the foregoing, alongside Ozumba's idea of integrative epistemology, it is evident that knowledge is boundless and sees various theories or concepts of knowledge as dependent on each other. In this case, "each theory provides the missing link between one aspect of reality to the other in the attempt to gain a synoptic picture of reality. In this sense, knowledge becomes a collective or integrative effort to understand ourselves in relation to our world" (Ibrahim 2011: 145). In line with this reasoning, I suggest that African and Western epistemology can work collectively in an effort to serve as the missing link to complementing each other to accentuate an integrative epistemology in the process of knowledge acquisition, and to account for a multi-

dimensional and unified approach to the understanding of reality. My point thus far is that the idea of integrative epistemology (integrative humanism), which I consider to be the combination and integration of African and Western epistemology, can provide the theoretical framework and idea upon which our knowledge claims can be integratively justified. At this juncture, if both the African and Western conception of knowledge is well integrated would constitute and propagate a multi-dimensional and unified approach to our understanding of reality and the justification of our knowledge claims. Thus, "in this ways, an integrative effort will be sustained in striving towards the growth and advancement of humanity. Hence, the more theories there are, the more we are able to unravel the endless secrets of reality" (Ibrahim 2011: 146).

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I sought to show that the protagonists' aim of advocating for a distinctive and unique African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive, which this chapter identified as a struggle of African identity. Drawing on the insights of the history of African philosophy as a 'counter-colonial practice' alongside the fact that to affirm the existence of an African philosophy suggest the existence of an African epistemology, this chapter advanced three crucial claims in each of the sections. In the first section, I suggested that the enunciation of a distinctive and unique African epistemology is *partly* driven by some non-epistemic motive. In the second section, I argued that the protagonists' idea of African epistemology is a struggle of African identity and recognition. In the concluding section, using the idea of integrative epistemology, I suggested the integration African and Western epistemology to account for a multi-dimensional and unified approach to the understanding of reality.

Chapter Six

6. The Roads Less Recognized and Acknowledged: Internal and External Bases of Justification in African Epistemology[90]

6.1. Introduction

Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter is based on the premise that has been the main argument of the protagonists of African epistemology and part of my discussion in chapters one, two, three, four and five thus far. The premise is that there is a distinctive or unique way Africans perceive, apprehend, interpret and conceptualize reality. Drawing from the discussions and arguments advanced in the previous chapter, I think that the advocates of African epistemology neglect some essentials when it comes to epistemic justification. They neglected the fact that both the internal and external idea of justification is needed in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification. This is because externalism complements internalism. Hence, both the internal and external notions of epistemic justification are crucial to the task of epistemic justification in African epistemology. Thus, this chapter will focus on the internal and external bases of justification in African epistemology. The chapter will further show how the internal and external notion of epistemic justification is crucial to the task of epistemic justification in African epistemology.

Over the years, the internalism-externalism (I-E) debate in contemporary epistemology has captured the attention of many epistemologists.[91] Genarally, internalists hold that for a belief to be justified the subject must have direct cognitive access to the belief, while externalists hold that things outside the subject's mind can affect the justificatory status of the subject's belief. We can infer from the above, that many internalists are driven by the demand of reasons, while many externalists are driven by the demand of truth. Many epistemologists have attempted to rectify and reconcile issues in the debates, but despite these   attempts disagreements between the internalists and externalists as to whether grounds of justifying beliefs are internal or external,

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[90] A slightly modified version of this chapter has been published in *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion* (2020), 9(1): 79–96.

[91] Contemporary debate on these dates roughly from Goldman (1979, 1980) and Bonjour (1980).

persist.[92] Michael Bergmann argues that "there is no clear and accurate statement of the fundamental disagreements" at the heart of the debate (1997: 399) as the terms 'internalism' and 'externalism' have been used loosely and in many ways within epistemology. However, both internalists and externalists share one thing in common; they are concerned with the nature and grounds of evaluative epistemic properties, especially justification (Turri 2009: 147).

When we consider the internalism and externalism debate in contemporary epistemology in relation to discussions on African epistemology, we observe that most of the protagonists of African epistemology's[93] ways of justifying their beliefs, knowledge claims and knowledge of reality are based on the view and perspective of the externalist.[94] In the protagonists' pursuit of understanding reality from an externalist perspective, they failed to clearly recognize the internalist perspective. I suggest that the failure to clearly recognize the internalist view and perspective is that the protagonists of African epistemology claim to hold a holistic[95] form of knowledge. I reason that they do have an idea about the internalist perspective, but since their pursuit of justifying that their knowledge claim is externally based and a holistic notion of epistemic justification they actively chose not to recognize or acknowledge internalism. Consequently, I will argue that internalism was passively recognized or acknowledged in African epistemology.

For the protagonists of African epistemology, the justification is *entirely* an external matter, one that has to do with their environment—things we can see. Perhaps the worry is that by obviously

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[92] See Sosa 1991; Kim 1993; Bergmann 1997; Marvan 2006.

[93] The protagonists of African epistemology are: Léopold Sédar Senghor, Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, Christopher K. Anyanwu and Anselm Kole Jimoh. I do acknowledge that there are many traditional beliefs in Africa and that some of the existing traditional beliefs and ways of knowing are different. I do not intend within the pages of this chapter to present the different traditional beliefs and ways of knowing from different parts of Africa and to illustrate and analyse these differences. Rather, my intention is to explore and dwell on what I consider the most crucial ideas and definitions of African epistemology by Udefi by those he deemed as the protagonists of African epistemology. And I think that Africans can identify with this.

[94] This idea is not because I wish to pretend that the whole of Africa has one homogenous way of knowing or to say that their ways of knowing are all the same. I am aware that there are many countries in African and within each country there exist variety traditional cultures and their ways of knowing differ in some respect. Nevertheless, with regards to definition of African epistemology, it shows that there are deep underlying affinities running through these cultures (or the cultures of the protagonist of African epistemology) which justify speaking the generalization.

[95] I have explained this concept in chapter one. But "Holistic or holism", as explained by Kesis, is from the Greek word meaning *all, whole, entire* and *total.* And according to Ashraf (2012), the term 'holism' originates from the Greek 'holos', meaning 'whole'. Implicit in this definition and in these concepts is the idea that "when individual components of a system are put together to produce a large functional unit, a holistic quality develops which is not predictable from the behaviour of the components in their individual capacity" (Ashraf 2012).

and actively recognizing internalism, their idea of holism in African tradition would be distorted, because they believe that justification is entirely external. In this case, what they failed to realise is that if they clearly recognize, acknowledge and accept the internalist perspective, and combine it with the externalist, they will still achieve their aim which is to show that the African way of knowing is holistic. My reason for this claim is because I think both the internalist and externalist bases of justification is needed in African epistemology in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.[96]

In the first section of this chapter, 6.2., I present a brief explanation of Internalism and Externalism. In the second section, 6.3., I present a detailed explanation of externalism in African epistemology. Here, I will show that the protagonists' ways of justifying their epistemic claims are based on their knowledge of the external. In the third section, 6.4., I will give some examples of where internalism appears in the discourse of African epistemology, albeit not explicitly recognized and acknowledged. These examples will show that there exists some implicitly recognized internalist notion and perspective of epistemic justification in African epistemology. In the fourth section, 6.5., I will illustrate that the epistemological perspective of *Ifá* divination is an example of an internalist conception of justification. In the fifth section, 6.6., In the fifth section, I will illustrate that the epistemological perspective of Ifá divination is an example of an internalist conception of justification. And in the sixth section, I will show that Ifá divination system embodies both the internalist and externalist basis for justification in African epistemology. And in the sixth section, 6.7., I will show that both an internalist and externalist basis of epistemic justification is needed in African epistemology. In other words, internalism and externalism are two ways of knowing and justifying the same reality in African epistemology; they are two aspects (sides) of the same reality (coin).

This chapter is based on the argument that internalism and externalism both feature in African epistemology and that both bases of justification are needed in African epistemology to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.

6.2.   Internalism and Externalism

Before I begin this section, I will like to underscore that the debates between 'internalism and externalism' in contemporary epistemology is complex and I do not intend to go into the details.

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[96] See Ogungbure, 2014.

It is also worth noting that in contemporary epistemology, more than one debate goes by the label 'internalism vs externalism', but all are concerned with the nature and grounds of evaluative epistemic properties, especially justification. Epistemologists generally agree that epistemic justification and truth are important and that there is a constitutive relation between both. Laurence Bonjour states that "if finding epistemically justified beliefs did not substantially increase the likelihood of finding true ones, then epistemic justification would be irrelevant to our main cognitive goal and of dubious worth" (1985: 8). This is to say that the epistemic justification of a belief essentially aims at truth.

Internalism is the epistemological position concerned not only with the idea that one knows something, but that one is aware of that thing on the basis of which one knows. In this case, the epistemic subject needs to be aware of the reasonable grounds for his/her knowledge claim. A good example of this is given by George Pappas. He says:

> Imagine that you know that a flock of Canada geese has landed in a neighborhood park in your city; and suppose that you came by this piece of knowledge on the basis of and as a result of some testimony from another person who has just returned from that park. Then knowledge internalism would be the view that in knowing that the geese are in the park, one also knows or is aware of that on the basis of which one knows, namely, one is aware of the testimony on the basis of which one has knowledge of the geese. Or, more plausibly, one could become aware merely by reflection of that on the basis of which one knows about the geese (2017 § 1).

Matthias Steup offers the following account of what internalism is:

> What makes an account of justification internalist is that it imposes a certain condition on those factors that determine whether a belief is justified…. The condition requires [such factors] to be *internal to the subject's mind or, to* put it differently, *accessible on reflection* (1996: 84).

From the above quotes, recognizeable are two ways of characterizing internalism. The first way is "accessibilist" internalism or "access internalism", the view that justification is determined by considerations that the subjects have reflective access to.[97] In other words, access internalism, in this sense, is that the justificatory factors must be reflectively accessible to the person. Reflective access, in this sense, means that one is always in a position to know something by reflection in order to justify a particular thing. One knows some proposition *p* only if one can become aware by reflection of one's knowledge basis for *p*.[98] The second way is *mentalism* or *mentalist*

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[97] Steup (1996, 1997), Bonjour (1985) and Ginet (1975) advocated for this form of internalism.

[98] See George Pappas, 2017, § 1. An example is: "Every one of every set of facts about S's position that minimally suffices to make S, at a given time, justified in being confident that *p* must be *directly recognizable* to S at that time.

internalism, the view that justification is determined by the subject's "occurrent and dispositional mental states, events, and condition" (Conee and Feldman 2004: 55–56). In other words, a person's beliefs are justified only by things that are internal to the person's mental life (Conee and Feldman 2001: 233). This justification has to do with the subjects' cognitive perspective or mental state of cognizers. According to John Pollock, the internal state of the cognizers is pertinent to determining which of the cognizers' beliefs are justified (1999). It is important to highlight here that common to both is the idea of epistemic responsibility on the part of the subject. A point worth stating is that the internalists hold that justification is *entirely* an internal matter, and by reflecting upon one's own conscious state one can find out if one is justified in having a particular belief.

Externalism is the negation of internalism. In other words, externalism is defined simply as the denial of internalism. According to John Greco, "Externalism in epistemology holds that *some* factors that are relevant to epistemic status are not internal to the believer's perspective" (2005: 258). Externalists hold that justification of one's belief is not an issue of how things stand with one psychologically, but rather, of how one's belief is related and determined at least by factors that are external to the person. A popular externalist view is *reliabilism*—here justification is basically an issue of the reliability of the process that led to the belief. In other words, reliabilism is "the view that a belief is epistemically justified if it results from a cognitive process that is (sufficiently) reliable in producing true beliefs" (Bonjour 2010: 34; Goldman 1980). If we look at this view, we can see that one guiding insight is that justification relates one's belief to the external world in a way that guarantees that the beliefs are possibly true. Steup says:

> Externalists about justification would point to the fact that animals and small children have knowledge and thus have justified beliefs. But their beliefs can't be justified in the way evidentialists conceive of justification. Therefore, we must conclude that the justification their beliefs enjoy is external: resulting not from the possession of evidence but from origination in reliable processes. And second, externalists would say that what we want from justification is the kind of objective probability needed for knowledge, and only external conditions on justification imply this probability. So, justification has external conditions (2017 § 2.5).

Regarding reliabilism, Alvin Goldman (1979) explains that beliefs that are justified are reliably produced beliefs. Bonjour further elucidates that, what makes reliabilism a version of externalism is that reliabilism does *not* necessitate that the subject or believer in question, has

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By 'directly recognizable' I mean this: if a certain fact obtains, then it is directly recognized to S at a given time if and only if, provided that S at that time has the concept of that sort of fact, S needs at that time only to reflect clear-headedly on the question of whether or not that fact obtains in order to know that it does" (Ginet 1975: 34).

any kind of cognitive access to the fact that the belief-producing process is in this way reliable in order for his/her belief to be justified. What matters for justification in this case is that the process in question be reliable, whether or not the subject or person in question (or indeed anyone else) believes or has even the slightest inkling that this is so, or indeed even the slightest understanding of the specific process is involved (Bonjour 2002: 244–245).[99]

6.3.   Externalism in African Epistemology

According Jimoh, "African epistemology deals with what the African means and understands when he makes a knowledge claim. This consists of how the African sees or talks about reality" (2015: 55). African epistemology is essentially rooted in African ontology. Onyewuenyi corroborates this view when he says that true wisdom, according to Tempels, lies in ontological knowledge, it is the intelligence of forces, of their hierarchy, their cohesion and their interaction (1976: 525; see also Tempels 1959: 73; Udefi 2014: 109). African ontology has to do with African traditional thoughts, African experience and a cultural view of reality. "There are several elements in the mind of Africa that govern how humans behave with regard to reality: the practicality of holism, the prevalence of poly-consciousness, the idea of inclusiveness, the unity of worlds, and the value of personal relationships" (Asante 2000: 2). Reality, from the perspective of African culture, comprises both the physical (natural) and the metaphysical (supernatural). African epistemology is also rooted in African ontology. Knowing that African epistemology is rooted in African ontology, it is important to underscore here that the epistemological view of the traditional African is in harmony with her metaphysics. Since metaphysics investigates reality, this reveals the essential contents of being qua being. It is in this context that we become aware that knowledge in African epistemology is the understanding of the nature of forces and their interaction with the cosmic. Anyanwu clearly explains this when he writes:

> We must know the basic assumptions, concepts, theories and worldview in terms of which the owners of the culture interpret the facts of experience. Without the knowledge of the African mind process and the worldview into which the facts of experience are to be fitted both the African and European researchers would merely impute emotive appeals to cultural forms and behaviour suggested by some unknown mind (Ruch and Anyanwu 1984: 77).

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[99] Just to mention in passing that there is content externalism. This view holds that some of the contents of a person's mental state are determined, at least to some extent, by the world around the person.

The protagonists of African epistemology advanced and favoured the externalist notion of justification. They believe that Africans have their own interpretation of what life is and also believe that it is fundamentally rooted in their culture and tradition, and in their personal view of their environment and reality. Take for example, Anyanwu talks about African epistemology in terms of culture, belief and experience. He asserts that "the beliefs in God, divinities, spirits, ancestors, living,dead, etc…. are beliefs of some people about certain things. If these beliefs have any meaning, value and justification, they must have arisen from human experience and must be products of culture" (Anyanwu 1981: 82). To further clarify his point, he explains what he means by culture. According to him, culture is a human response to experiences, beliefs and ideas which enables human beings to live meaningful lives (*ibid*). Another example is in Jimoh's assertion that knowledge is dependent on human and social factors rather than being an objective, impersonal relation between the object known and the knowing subject (1999). For him, African epistemology is a context-dependent theory of knowledge that takes into account the important role that human and social factors play in establishing and justifying a knowledge claim. He conceives knowledge as a product of societal convention rather than an objective phenomenon, and this is applicable to the thought system of most African cultures. Jimoh further asserts that truth is meant to describe human experience of reality, and the justification of knowledge claims in African epistemology is culture bound and therefore context-dependent. Further discussion can be seen in chapter four. It is important to recall here that externalist holds that things outside the subject's mind can affect the justificatory status of the subject's belief. Externalists also hold that one's belief is not an issue of how things stand with one psychologically, but rather, of how one's belief is related and determined by factors that are external to the person. From the above, it means that for the advocates of African epistemology the ground of justification is external. Anyanwu, Jimoh and others take the metaphysical route in justifying their knowledge claims and in that process base their justification on the external, without giving much recognition or acknowledgment of the internal aspects.

They are of the view that the ways by which one can justify one's ideas or knowledge of something can be explained either from the contextualist or neo-positivist perspective.[100] According to the contextualist perspective, one should see one's knowledge claim as situated within a social environment, so that one should not think of knowledge, truth and rational certainty in abstract terms (Jimoh 1999: 37; see Ogungbure 2014: 43). And according to the neo-

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[100] See Ogungbure, 2014, p. 43.

positivist perspective, knowledge should be dependent on empirical factors such as sense-experience or sensory perception (Hallen and Sodipo 1986; Ogungbure 2014: 43). Both perspectives are embedded in the externalist view of justification—the idea that knowledge is a product of external or empirical conditions of justification. An example of the above is evident in Anyanwu's assertion that the idea of African epistemology is the way the African conceptualizes, interprets and apprehends reality within the context of African cultural or collective experience. In line with the above, Onyewuenyi defines the African theory of knowledge (epistemology) as "how deeply he (the African) understands the nature of forces and their interaction" (1976: 525). Thus, with both assertions, we can infer that their ideas of African epistemology are embedded in the externalist orientation of justification. But this, I argue, does not give a complete representation of how reality is being apprehended in Africa.

Further examples of knowledge as a product of external or empirical conditions of justification can be seen Barry Hallen and John Olubi Sodipo's explanations of knowledge that I have previously explained in preceding chapters. Hallen and Sodipo attempt to analyse three key concepts central to Yoruba thought. These three key concepts are: *aje, imo and igbagbo* which can be translated into English to mean witchcraft, knowledge and belief, respectively. *Imo* (knowledge) and *Gbagbo* (belief) are of interest because they have to do with the Yoruba propositional knowledge. Hallen explains that "persons are said to mo (to "know") or to have imo ("knowledge") only of something they have witnessed in a firsthand or personal manner... *Imo* is said to apply to sensory perception generally, even if what may be experienced directly by touch is more limited than is the case with perception (2004: 298). He further explains that *Igbagbo* "encompasses what one is not able "to see" for oneself or to experience in a direct, firsthand manner. Mostly, this involves things we are told about or informed of – this is the most conventional sense of "information" – by others" (*ibid*).

According to Hallen and Sodipo, knowledge for the Yoruba is derived from the first-hand experience of the physical world through the sense of sight (1986: 60). They argue that the Yorubas make a distinction between knowledge and belief. According to them, *imo* is obtained through first-hand information, observation and sense-experience. *Imo* can be subjected to verification, confirmation and falsification. *Igbagbo* is obtained through second-hand information; however, it could later become *imo* after some empirical testing. Knowledge in Yoruba is based on sensory perception, mainly visual perceptions (i.e *irirn*) of the external world. In other words, what someone sees, when conjoined with cognitive activities (i.e *eriokon*)

like understanding, comprehension, consciousness, judgment, and propositions pertaining to such experience are regarded as true (i.e *ooto*) (Hallen 1998a: 832; Hallen 1998b; Udefi 2014: 111). *Igbagbo* which is based on second-hand information can only be justified in the course of formal education, what one learns from books, the media, other people and oral traditions (*ibid*: 833; *ibid*). The *imo* is easily considered as true knowledge in contrast with *igbagbo,* and *igbagbo* is only considered as truth after some empirical verification through the testimonies or evidence or explanation (i.e *alaye*) given by people of good character. Thus, the conclusion that can be derived from both ideas (*imo and igbagbo*) is that the Yorubas seem to hold that the external world exists independently of being perceived, and that sense experience is the sole source of our knowledge of the phenomena of the world.

Another example comes from Bert Hamminga who explains the notion on African epistemology by articulating his idea of the traditional African view of knowledge. His argument was grounded on three points: the first is that "in the traditional African view, knowledge is not acquired by labour but 'given' by the ancestors". The second is that knowledge is "immediately social: not 'I' know, but 'we' know". And the third is that knowledge is not universal but locally tribal: other tribes have different knowledge. Like other things in nature, knowledge has its 'biological variations'" (2005: 57). What he means in the first point is that the traditional African people do not need to labour for knowledge, because all knowledge is given to them by their ancestors. In other words, they depend on their ancestors for knowledge. The second point simply means that you as an individual is not the knowing subject, but the clan or tribe is the knowing subject. Knowledge becomes social in the sense that what you think you know is subjected to the tribe because they actually taught you what you know. To put it simply, "All power comes from the forces preceding us: our ancestors" (*ibid*: 59). The third point explains the point that knowledge is not universal. It explains the idea that knowledge varies from culture to culture. Hamminga concludes by saying that "in classical African culture, knowledge is not produced, but it comes, is given to you by tradition, the ancestors, as a heritage. So, knowledge acquisition is purely social matter, a matter of teaching, of being told, "uploaded" (by living, dead or spiritual powers) only" (*ibid*: 76). Thus, for him the method of justifying epistemic claims is based on one's socio-cultural interaction with others.

What stands out from this example analysis and explanation of knowledge is some aspect of internalism that has to do with reflection, cognitive access and awareness, but they are in favour of the context-dependent theory of knowledge that explains and justifies knowledge mostly by external means.

The main bases of justification in African epistemology (knowledge in African thought) are external and that even though they do use the internal it is not clearly recognized and acknowledged in African epistemology. The validation of knowledge of reality should not be limited to the physical world and external means, but the internal means that are employed should as well be acknowledged. Their recognition will not distort the view of synthesis and co-operation, but rather enhance and help in a proper articulation of the idea that knowledge "comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (Anyanwu 1981: 94).

6.4. Internalism in African Epistemology: Unrecognized Internalism in African Epistemology

In this section, I have two aims. The first is to give some examples of places where there is internalism in the discourse on African epistemology that is not explicitly recognized or acknowledged. The second is to argue that the epistemological perspective of *Ifá* divination is an example of the epistemological perspectives of the internalist conception of justification.

The protagonists of African epistemology are of the view that there can be no knowledge of reality if an individual detaches him/herself from it, but have failed to explicitly recognize and acknowledge that the act of reflecting on one's own conscious state and reality is an internalist criterion for the justification of knowledge and epistemic claims. They acknowledge that knowledge comes from all human faculties and experiences, but in their justification of knowledge they focus mainly on the external. Here, internalism is (deliberately) side-lined for externalism and the idea of holism in African epistemology. I am inclined to suppose that the idea of holism is used as a cover-up for their preference which is externalism. So, they cast the entire picture of the justification of knowledge as a holistic one to avoid the discussion of internalism. This is because they want to show that there is a unique way of knowing in African epistemology. In their use of holism, they argued that all faculties were recognized, but I propose that this claim is a false recognition. For the reason that not all the functions of the faculties mentioned are properly explained. An example is reasoning. Reasoning has to do with reflection. In this case one is always in the position to know something by reflection to justify a particular thing. One knows some proposition *p* only if one can become aware by reflection of one's knowledge basis for *p*. It is evident that the advocates of African epistemology invoke the internalists' perspective but fail to recognize and acknowledge its usage. Thus, internalism is put

aside for externalism, accompanied by holism in order to argue that they have covered all the conditions for the justification of knowledge in African epistemology.

Jimoh, for example, argues that Western epistemology "limits itself to the scientific method of abstraction and divides reality into subjective and objective in consonance with Western ontology", and "African epistemology in consonance with African ontology conceives the world as a basic unitary system, therefore, sees reality as interwoven and connected" (2015: 61). This implies that in the domain of knowledge Western epistemology is polarised between doubt and certitude, and African epistemology is a unitary system. For him, reality in African epistemology is interwoven and interconnected. He explains that in the domain of knowledge, in African epistemology we should regard our knowledge claims as situated within a social milieu so that we should not think of knowledge, truth and rational certainty in abstract terms (1999: 37). He asserts that "African epistemology is able to see beyond the issues of distinction between knowledge and belief, the subject and the object, the noumenon and the phenomenon, and appreciate the role and contributions of the human person, the environment, and the society to our epistemic claims" (2015: 61). And he believes that African epistemology is a context-dependent theory of knowledge.

Jimoh's claim blinds him, as well as the other advocates, to the existence of internalism in African epistemology. His claim that knowledge be seen as situated within a social milieu so that we think not of knowledge, truth and rational certainty in abstract terms. This acknowledgment of rational certainty clearly indicates the presense of internalism in his claim. Reason and rationality are the internalist criteria for the justification of knowledge, and it is not seen in an abstract form. Because when you engage in reasoning you are in reality engaging in some act of introspection and reflection, in order to properly access and be aware of something. It is rather a starting point of the self or of one becoming fully aware of what one claims to know; rational cognition. Janz attempts to distinguish between reason and rationality in his discussion of Eze's notion of reason. His distinction is as follows: "reason is a process and an activity, while rationality is a property of the person, one that expresses itself through (at least) the process of reason. Rationality expresses itself through reason, but reason may not only be the expression of rationality" (2008: 296).[101]

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[101] What this indicates, according to Matolino, "is that there has to be a property of rationality that is possessed by an entity in order for it to exercise reason. If that property is there, the individual entity may be able to express it through reason (among other things)" (2016: 54).

Though Jimoh's view of knowledge, truth and rational certainty might be the reason he indulges in externalism, one thing is certain, that he has a reason for his belief in externalism, and this alone is an affirmation of the fact that he, as epistemic agent, has cognitive access to his belief that form the basis of his knowledge; internalism. Thus, I am inclined to say that his belief has some reflective awareness, and it was in the exercise of that reflective awareness that he articulated the reasons he had for choosing externalism.

Speaking of limitation, Jimoh limits his scope of knowledge his assertion that African epistemology is a context-dependent theory of knowledge that takes into account the important role that human and social factors play in establishing and justifying a knowledge claim. This is only one side of knowledge, and if African epistemology will be restricted to this then, there is a problem, and Jimoh is not different from the Western epistemologists that he has accused of limiting themselves to scientific method of abstraction and the divide of reality into subjective and objective. So, by not recognizing and acknowledging the internalists' perspective, Jimoh and other advocates of African epistemology contend that African epistemology is a unitary system, basing their claim on the idea that reality for them is interwoven and connected. This is evident in Ruch and Anyanwu's claim that "knowledge, therefore, comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences. He sees, feels, imagines, reasons or thinks and intuits all at the same time" (1984: 94). There is no doubt that that this seems to be the case in African thought, but a clear and in-depth explanation and articulation of each notion (reason, imagination etc.) will not invalidate or distort their claim. One cannot properly understand something as a unitary system without understanding its various components. Thus, Jimoh and other advocates of African epistemology limit themselves to a context-dependent theory of knowledge, which in my view will not help them arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification. They might argue that their knowledge of reality is based on the external alone. But to that I assert that their knowledge of reality is only possible because of the presence of internalism which is not explicitly recognized. I think that because of their pursuit of a unique African epistemology they disregard internalism.

Another example where internalism is not explicitly recognized in African epistemology is in Anyanwu's explanation of culture, reality and thought. According to Anyanwu, culture is a human response to experience, beliefs and ideas which enable human beings to live meaningful lives (1984: 94). And reality for him refers to objects of experience and thought. These objects can be natural objects, events, religious beliefs, thought itself, myths, language, social

institutions and artistic products. He further explains that thought refers "to a conscious activity which handles the objects of thought or reality" (1984: 94). He perceives thought as something that modifies, synthesizes, analyses and organises language, religious beliefs, events etc. He therefore asserts that, African beliefs and knowledge about reality are the products of human experience, and the theories of such beliefs and knowledge must be the product of logical reflection (1984: 83). I think that this assertion that theories of African beliefs and knowledge must be the product of a logical reflection is an internalist perspective, as deals with reflective accessibility. And this is an example of internalism in African epistemology that is explicitly unrecognized. This actually indicates that there exists in African epistemology the internalist notion and perspective of epistemic justification.

Anyanwu explains that epistemology or the theory of knowledge is the basic problem of any philosophy. And to arrive at a trustworthy knowledge of reality, the mind must follow the method of epistemology. He elucidates that, "epistemology provides the basic premises with which other problems, namely, religious, moral, ethical, political economic, artistic and aesthetic doctrines, can be approached" (1981: 81). Philosophy (epistemology) is a conscious effort to know or justify the above problems and the general principles governing African cultural beliefs that shape African institutions and behaviours. Anyanwu goes further to list several epistemological questions to help one better understand some cultural beliefs of how to respond to various issues on African cultural beliefs. These questions are: "How do the Africans know what they claim to know? What are their basic assumptions about the nature of things? What method must the mind follow in order to arrive at what the Africans accept as a trustworthy knowledge of reality? What in their experience, led to the beliefs they hold? What does experience mean to the African in the African culture?" (1981: 81). If we know these, according to Anyanwu, we can claim to understand why an African behaves the way he/she does. Some of these questions account for the possibility of using different methods and perspectives to justify one's belief. The question "what method must the mind follow in order to arrive at what the Africans accept as a trustworthy knowledge of reality" is indicative of the possibility of the application of internalist perspective here.

The protagonists of African epistemology base their justification of knowledge claims on the external or externalist perspective without recognizing and acknowledging that part of their basis of justification is internal. The above examples show that though the internalists' perspective can be invoked in the justification of knowledge claim in African epistemology, it is not explicitly

recognized and acknowledged. Thus, I can infer that internalism is deliberately side-lined for externalism in African epistemology for the purpose of depicting a unique African epistemology.

6.5.   The Evidence of Internalism in African Epistemology

According to William S. Sahakian, what confers justification must be "internal" to the subject in that he or she must have a direct cognitive access to it (1968). Pursuant from this assertion and one of the principles of internalism or the internalist theory of justification, one thing required to justify a knowledge claim is to determine whether the individual who claims to know has a cognitive access to this knowledge claim, and whether or not the conditions that validate such knowledge are located in the individual.

Now, going by the internalist justification of knowledge, one of to the requirements for justifying a knowledge claim is to determine whether the individual who claims to assert or know, for example, that "divination is a way of knowing in Africa or African epistemology" has cognitive access to this belief. And whether or not the conditions that validate such belief are situated within the knowing subject; which is the individual. Another thing required to justify a knowledge claim, according to the internalists' theory of justification, is a process of introspective and reflective awareness by the individual since knowledge starts with the self in terms of rational cognition.

Divination as a way of knowing, partly, represents the epistemological perspective of the internalists' conception justification. My reason for saying *partly* is that within the scope of African epistemology, the justification of knowledge is mostly considered a product of the external or empirical conditions (divination can be seen as an example of such), and the internal is being neglected. An individual's ability to display some form of cognitive grasp in comprehending reality, independent of the empirical conditions is informed by the internalist's perspective. Thus, there is a need for the internalist perspective (the cognitive perspective of the individual) in justification of a knowledge claim in African epistemology. This clearly shows the need for both the internalist and the externalist basis of justification in African epistemology to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.

Let's take the *Ifá* divination for example. In the search for knowledge, divination helps to light the path of an individual in his/her quest. Divination is employed in African societies when knowledge and demands are seldom obtainable through mundane means of inquiry. The reason

for this is to ensure that all relevant information is availed before an action can be taken. For some traditional Africans, divination remains the highest means of seeking information and truth. Eze explains that the starting point of knowledge in *Ifá* is not an idea in the abstract, but rather a fundamental experience of life itself and a practice of deep understanding – the process of seeking knowledge about human life and action. The inquisitiveness of the mind forces one into yearning and longing to know more about oneself and of the universe. What one experiences daily makes the person long for a deeper understanding of human life and action. An attempt to deal with these issues, through introspective or reflective awareness and analysis, is internalism. This reflective awareness forces one into consulting *Ifá* in search of answers. And according to Eze, "*Ifa*-work is, therefore, a quest for discovery of meaning and direction in life, personal or communal, through rational discernment and liberation" (1998a: 174).

The Yorubas believe that *Ifá*'s wisdom, knowledge and understanding transcend the past, present and future. Within the Yoruba tradition, the consultation of *Ifá* is based on the reason that consulting party engage in some kind of reflection internally, and within them, they are convinced that *Ifá* knows and has the answers to their problems. The reason for their belief in *Ifá* is internal because there exist some reflective awareness and cognitive access to the belief. They believe in *Ifá* because of the conviction that *Ifá* would offer solutions and explanations to whatever issues that have led them to the *Ifá* priest. The same reason, belief and conviction that exist in the client exist in the *Ifá* priest as well, though those of the *Ifá* priest might sometimes appear to be stronger than the client since he or she takes the intermediary role between the client and *Ifá*. The most significant aspects of this belief are the reasonable grounds, cognitive access and reflective awareness of one's belief. This is what internalism is interested in.

There are numerous belief systems and practices present in African society, but one thing remains certain, the individual with such beliefs has a rational basis or reason for that belief. Therefore, the reason and justification for such beliefs are sometimes internal rather than external. What this suggests is the existence in African culture, beliefs that are rationally constructed and those that are nature based or physical. Even if such a rationally constructed belief has an external justification, as is usually the case in Africa, the fact is that there is a rational thinker present in such epistemic justification. This is contrary to the externalist perspective that advocates of African epistemology use as their justification. Beliefs and thought in African epistemology and tradition can pass as knowledge because the epistemic agent has some rational grounds for that belief and thinking that it is true.

One's rational grounds, cognitive access and reflective awareness of one's cultural and traditional belief are evidence of internalism or an internalist perspective of epistemic justification within African epistemology. The basis for regarding culture and tradition as knowledge is consistent with the internalist criterion for justification. This is because the individuals that have these beliefs have reasonable grounds for regarding their beliefs as true and thus establishing knowledge. Some aspects of culture and tradition gained through reflection are cognitively available to the individual. For one to make sense of one's belief or know the metaphysical part of one's belief, one requires an amount of reflective and cognitive awareness. Even if the metaphysical can be empirically verified or the explanation is within the range of one's physical eyesight, the process by which the individual(s) involved becomes cognitively aware of its verification is internalism. For example, if one believes that what one sees in front of one is a pencil rather than a pen, it is at the cognitive level that one can differentiate between the two conflicting things.

My reason for the above claim is that for one to completely know or be aware of something, one requires a degree of introspection, reflection and cognitive access to the object known. This sometimes comes in the form of a question. Why is this like this and not the other way? What do culture and tradition mean to me? How do I know that this is what I think it is? What process do I need to follow to arrive at what I think justifies my belief as trustworthy? The questions could be endless, but the conclusion that one draws in the verification and knowledge claims includes the internalist perspective, given that (1) the person has a reason for believing in it, (2) there is some amount of introspective and reflective awareness involved in the process of knowing, and (3) the person has a cognitive access to the evidence that supports the truth of the thing known. Thus, what is needed here for the justification of the knowledge of the metaphysical reality for the epistemic agent that claims to possess such knowledge is to have the above reasons. I will like to emphasise here that in African epistemology, belief in the reality of gods, spirits, physical beings and other metaphysical beings is not only interpreted in physical terms, but also in rational terms. The reason this is because most of the time a person has his/her reasons for believing something. And that is why such belief is held in high esteem.

The above discussion shows that not all knowledge claims in African epistemology are justified through the external means alone. Some are justified using the internal. Thus, there are different beliefs in African culture and tradition (African epistemology) that are within the internalist perspective of epistemic justification.

6.6. Ifá Divination System as an Embodiment of the Combination of both the Internalist and Externalist basic of Justification in African Epistemology

In view of what has been discussed in the above sections, it is evident that Internalism features in African epistemology. To this, we can infer from the discussions thus far that that internalism and externalism both feature in African epistemology. Therefore, in this section I seek to show that Ifá divination system embodies both the internalist and externalist basis of justification in African epistemology.

As previously explained in chapter three, diviners are the central figures in the divination processes, and they play a key role in obtaining information during the divination process. They are regarded as specialists who conduct different processes that include healings and examinations of the past or future etc. They serve as mediators, links or communicators between the worlds (this world and the spiritual realm). When consulted, they are expected to give clues to their clients of what the results of an action taken by the clients may be or the nature of forces that could affect or is affecting the well-being of their clients.

As previously explained, diviners are believed to possess extrasensory perception or knowledge far beyond an ordinary man's comprehension. In line with this, Phillip M. Peek elucidates that, "divination apparatus often incorporates elements of creatures, possibly primordial, which have special sensory abilities or are somehow extraordinarily endowed" (1991: 198). Victor W. Turner explains that "at divinations, the physiological stimuli provided by drumming and signing, the use of archaic formulae in questions and responses, together take him [the diviner] out of his everyday self and heighten his intuitive awareness…" (1972: 43). This state of heightened intuitive awareness facilitates proper communication between worlds and permits "direct participation of superhuman entities in this world through their possession of the diviner" (Peek 1991: 199). This shows the presence of internalism and externalism.

In view of the above, "the fundamental metaphysical idea underlying Africans' belief in witchcraft [and similarly, in my view, the belief in Ifá divination system] involves the possibility of a disembodied mind. This is anchored in their belief in the dualism of mind and body, and the possibility of a causal interaction between mind and body or the manifestation of casual efficacy of the mind in physical objections" (Ikuenobe 2000: 133). The spiritual mind of an Ifá priest (the diviner) conceived as an 'active thing'; has the power to act in such a way that the action is

manifested in the client consulting Ifá. In this sense, the mind is conceived as having the ability to perform the following functions: (1) the source of consciousness; (2) the intermediary between Ifá and the client; (3) and the source of decision and inspiration for actions by Ifá. "All of these beliefs constitute the human, historical, and cultural reality of African [in this case the Yorubas] people's existence and experience" (*ibid*). To this, the Yorubas' conception of cosmology and ontology gives credibility to their belief in Ifá with reverence to the nature of event causation in Ifá divination system. The ability of the Ifá priest's mind and body to interact in the divination process and the in manifestations of (physical) outcomes suggest a casual efficacy such that the action has an internal and external justification.

When things are not going the way, the individual expects or has planned, when an individual is about to embark on a new adventure, and when an individual is ill (Taiwo 2004, 306). An individual goes to consult Ifá. During the consultation, the Ifá does not speak directly to the client; the Ifá priest must be interposed between the two (*ibid*). It should be noted that during the consultation, the client "expresses a wish to 'talk with the divinity'… In not talking directly with the Babalawo, the client underscores the intermediary role of the Babalawo…" (*ibid*: 307). This is because what is being sought by the client is Ifá, not the Ifá priest (babalawo).

In what follows the client whispers her problem to a coin or a cowry shell presented to her. At this stage, the Ifá priest is not allowed to over-hear or listen in on what the client whispers. The coin or cowry will then be dropped on the instruments of Ifá. Olufemi Taiwo explains that in doing so, two ends are served. Firstly "a physical connection is established between the client and Ifá as symbolized by the instruments" (*ibid*). Secondly "given that the client's 'scent' is on the coin or cowry shell that she whispered her problem on, Ifá is by that token personalized for her" (*ibid*). With these two ends, Ifá will know that the destiny involved is specifically that of the client's and does not belong to anyone else.

After these steps, the Ifá priest will have to use the divining chain. When the divining chain is used, the Ifá priest holds the divining chain (the chain has four half-nuts of the opele tree tied to each side and each one of these half-nuts has a concave and convex surface) in the middle and throws it in front of him (Abimbola 1976: 29). The Ifá priest "quickly reads and pronounces the name of Odu whose signature he has seen. The answer to the client's problem will be found only in this Odu" (Abimbola 1977: 9–10). When the divining chain is thrown forward, an Odu would appear. The next stage of the divination process begins when the Ifá priest starts chanting the verses from the Odu to the client while he/she looks on and listens. Wade Abimbola explains that

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the Ifá priest would chant poems from the Odu until the client chooses/selects a poem which tells a story containing a problem similar to the client's own. The client may stop the Ifá priest at this stage, for further explanation and clarification of that poem. In this sense, the client is required to be an active participant in the process of finding a solution to her problem. The client is the only one that can decide that the poem reflects a problem akin to his/her own, after which the explanation needed will be given, and the client's problem will be discussed (Taiwo 2004: 308). The Ifa priest could help the client by further analyzing and interpreting the different ese he has chanted. In this way, the client is made to understand the prediction of Ifá about his/her problem. It is important to underscore that it because of the interaction between the mind and the body of the Ifá priest in connection with Ifá that he is able to analyze and interpret the different ese and the client's problem.

Ifá divination system which rests on the cognitive resources of an all-knowing entity, namely, Ifá, suggests that the knowledge generated in the system itself does not only depend on empirical inference. The implication of this is that both rationalism (internalism) and empiricism (externalism) are involved in Ifá divination system. In other words, both reasoning [the mind] and experience [the physical connection between Ifá priest and Ifá, divination apparatus, and also physical connection established between the client and Ifá as symbolized by the instruments] has a big role to play in divination system. In view of this, the mind of the Ifá priest "is construed as a *type* of mental state or entity [internalism], which is fundamentally characterized by its casual and functional roles or efficacy. Such functional or causal manifestations are actualized in material entities—things, events, and states [externalism]" (Ikuenobe 2000: 133). The mind conceived as an active thing helps in the manifestation of activities in physical and material entities. Both the mind (rationality) and the body (empirical) of the Ifá priest, even that of the client, helps with the outcome which the client seeks. The client's credence in Ifá yields certain expected outcome, which will possibly help him/her to manage his/her life.

In the divination process, one of the significant aspects of this belief is the reasonable grounds, cognitive access, and reflective awareness of one's belief; internalism. And during the divination process the Ifa priest further helps the client to conceptualize, interpret, and apprehend it within the context of their experience. This process is dependent on empirical factors such as sense-experience or sensory perception; externalism. Therefore, from the discussion thus far, we can infer that Ifá divination system embodies both the internalist and externalist basis of justification in African epistemology.

6.7. Internalism and Externalism: Two Ways of Knowing and Justifying the Same Reality in African Epistemology

Internalism and externalism must be understood as two aspects of one and the same reality. My argument in this section begins with a story illustrating that both the internalist and the externalist basis of epistemic justification is needed in African epistemology. The story is titled: "The tortoise and the wisdom of the world". My reason for employing this story as my point of entry is based on the idea that in African tradition story telling is significant and it is a way of making sense of the world.

A long time ago, in a community, the tortoise was determined to show he was the wisest of all. Since he did not want any other creature to challenge his superior wisdom, he claimed a monopoly of wisdom. He decided to gather all the wisdom in the world for himself. He went around the community gathering wisdom into a gourd, which he hung around his neck so that no one would be able to get to it. When he was satisfied that he was done collecting all of the wisdom in the community, he decided that he would hang the gourd at the top of a very tall palm tree where nobody could find it to steal his wisdom. When he finally located the palm tree, with the gourd strapped to his chest and a rope around himself, he tried to climb it but was unable to. Persistently, with the gourd against his chest, he made several more attempts to climb the palm tree, but all were unsuccessful. After numerous attempts without knowledge of what was making his move difficult, he was still struggling to climb the palm tree when a snail passing by stopped to watch him. After watching the tortoise slide down the palm tree again and again, to his amusement, the snail noticed that the gourd between the tortoise and the tree trunk was the reason for his inability to climb the palm tree. After a while, the snail called him close and told him that because he strapped the gourd against his chest, it would be impossible for him to climb the palm tree, and so suggested that tortoise strap the gourd to his back instead. The tortoise tried the snail's suggestion and realized that it would be easy for him to climb to the top of the palm tree if he strapped the gourd on his back.[102] Despite all the wisdom he had collected, the snail proved to the tortoise that that alone is not enough, and that some things cannot be done alone without someone's help.

From the story, the tortoise can be regarded as an externalist while the snail is an internalist. The tortoise was under the impression that since he has observed people with climbing a palm tree

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[102] See "All Folk Tales".

with a keg on them and a rope around them, it would be easy for him to do the same. But he never knew what it took to climb a palm tree while something. He believed that he would be able to climb the palm tree with the gourd on him based on the factors that are external to him—based on his knowledge of the people he has seen climbing. In other words, his knowledge was based on the fact that he had seen others climb the tree with something strapped to them. The tortoise does not have any kind of cognitive access to his belief that he could climb the palm tree with the gourd. Even if he does have a cognitive access to his belief before his attempt, it is clear that there was no cognitive reflection, after his failed attempts, as to how it was possible for others and why he is finding it hard to climb the palm tree. So, his belief was based on the fact that he has seen others doing it. The individuals that were able to climb the palm tree with either a gourd or keg on them were able to do so because they went through a process of introspective and reflective exercise before they could succeed.

Through introspection and reflection individuals become cognitively aware of what to do. This is an example of knowledge starting with the self in terms of rational cognition and this is an internalist perspective. The snail belongs to the internalist category because upon looking at the tortoise's several failed attempts, the snail searched within to know what the problem was before he could suggest to the tortoise what to do. One can argue that he first saw before he could decipher what the problem was—externalism and internalism, but the suggestion he provided was as a result of his reflective awareness and rational cognition. One can further argue that there is a possibility he already knew the ins and outs, or methods of climbing a palm tree. This point can be true also, but the fact still remains that he has a cognitive access to his belief and knowledge with regards to palm tree climbing. Arguably, the snail became fully aware of the methods or rules of palm tree climbing, because the conditions that validate such knowledge are located within him; he has rationalized or engaged in some cognitive reflection on the possible ways to climb the tree; or possible ways for the tortoise to successfully climb the palm tree.

The point that I am drawing us towards is that both the internalists and externalists can be employed in order to achieve a particular aim, as seen in the story. Tortoise's judgement was based on the external and that of the snail was based on the internal. Both positions and perspectives can complement each other. They are two sides of the same reality. One could argue, like above, that it is possible that the snail saw the palm tree before he could make out methods to use. It is possible, but it could also be argued that during this process he made use of both the internalists' and the externalists' perspectives.

The justification of knowledge in African philosophy should not be restricted to empirical data. Sometimes for one to clearly justify a knowledge claim about something or empirical data one needs reflective awareness, cognitive access and rational cognition. Sometimes we can explain something using the internalist or externalist perspectives, and sometimes both perspectives can complement or check and balance the other in African epistemology. This is because they are basically explaining the same thing or reality in their own different perspectives.

Our experience in life often forces us into posting two worlds of knowledge – one inside the mind and another outside the mind; internalism and externalism. This is the same in African epistemology when connected to African experience. According to Ogungbure:

> The life experiences of African people are multi-dimensional, revealing the nature of reality to African people in ways that are subject to plural interpretations. In this process of interpretation, references are often made to realities that transcend the physical, and the senses alone cannot fully apprehend the nature of such realities. Nevertheless, the need to apprehend these realities lies at the very heart of the African worldview, and yet this aspect of the African worldview cannot be captured by the externalist mode of explanation (2014: 43).

In view of the above, I would like to state that the life experiences of African people which according to Ogunbure are multi-dimensional can be categorized under these two worlds. These are the umbrellas under which different epistemic justification can be categorized. These two views best explain the African worldview and justify any knowledge claim. These two worlds produce ideologies that enhance the possible understanding of the same reality. With these two worlds, African epistemology can celebrate the value of plurality while explaining the same reality from a different perspective. By recognizing these two worlds in African epistemology, it will help African epistemologists avoid the "danger of a single story".[103] By this, I mean that these two worlds will help African epistemologists to better understand reality. In order to avoid the risk of misunderstanding or mispresenting the reality that they seek, these two worlds will foster and provide different views of reality.

The dichotomy between internalism and externalism will cease to exist once they are shown not to be alternatives to each other, but complementary to each other (Mondal 2011). Both internalism and externalism acknowledge the existence, contributions and limitations of the other. External objects cannot exist on their own without our internal rational cognition; and internal rational cognition, on the other hand, cannot develop, grow and function without being

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[103] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, TED talk.

grounded in the external world. This acknowledgment is evident in the claim that knowledge "comes from the co-operation of all human faculties and experiences". Building on such insights, we can now clearly articulate an account where internalism and externalism are both at the same level.[104] What is suggested here is the complementary (synthesizing and harmonizing) existence between internalism and externalism. The whole picture can now be viewed in the form of a holistic[105] picture. For something to be seen as a whole, it must first be viewed as singular units before it can be merged together, to check its compatibility and complementarity. The protagonists of African epistemology used the idea of holism in order to avoid explaining internalism. So, the point here is, in order for the idea of holism to be viewed as a proper concept that best explains an African view of the world, there must be that recognition of both internalism and externalism. We cannot accept one and throw away or side-line the other because it will render holism meaningless; one sided—external. By acknowledging both internalism and externalism the idea of holism will become meaningful. Holism will, therefore, afford us a picture of reality as multi-dimensional entities that can be understood internally and externally or under the umbrella of internalism and externalism.

When we view both internalism and externalism in terms of parallel complementarity, we will observe that the internalist and externalist perspectives of justifying a knowledge claim are in reality aspects of the same phenomenal reality. These two aspects are dynamic and they will provide us with a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification. But when viewed separately our epistemic justification will be one sided. The complementary justification provided by the internalists and externalists is what we can describe as holism in African epistemology. Holism is furnished with the idea of internalism (individual) and externalism (environment).

Internalism and externalism can be compared to two drivers in the same lane with the same destination—one on the right and the other on the left. The speed with which they move in the

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[104] See Prakash Mondal, 2011.

[105] With regards to the discussion and the story, it is important to note that I will narrow down my idea of holism to internalism and externalism. My reason for this is that, from the story, since it is evident that both the internalism and externalism are compatible or can complement each other, it is important to recognise where fusion is holistic. Thus, to get a well-founded view of what reality really is in African epistemology, there must be that holistic recognition of both internalism and externalism. We cannot accept one and throw away or side-line the other as it will render holism meaningless; one sided—external. By recognizing both internalism and externalism the idea of holism will become meaningful. Holism will, therefore, afford us a picture of reality as multi-dimensional entities that can be understood under the holistic umbrella of internalism and externalism.

same direction does not matter. What matters is that both cars are going to the same destination. In the course of their journey, what they see and encounter could either be the same or different, depending on their perspectives. Even if they are both driving at the same speed and in close proximity, one on either lane, their explanation with regards to what they see on their way might differ, as a result of their positions on the lane. The important thing here is that their explanations constitute part of their own encounter to their destination. And when both explanations are combined it gives a clearer picture of what one can possibly expect to see or sees when driving through the same lane or going to the same destination as these drivers. The same can be said about internalism and externalism. Both explain reality from different perspectives. The speed at which one gets to explaining or justifying what one knows does not matter, what matters is they both have a different idea of what reality is to them. Both their explanations are based on their view of the same reality. Thus, to get a well-founded view of what reality really is, both views can be combined or complement the each other. And from the combination and complementation of both aspects a detailed explanation will emerge.

Thus, from the arguments presented above, it will be right to conclude that both the internalist and the externalist basis of justification is needed in African epistemology in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.

6.8. Conclusion

This Chapter began with the explanation of internalism and externalism. Thereafter I discussed externalism in African epistemology. In this section, I bared that the protagonists of African epistemology way of justifying their epistemic claims is based on their knowledge of the external. I supported this with some examples of places where the discourse of internalism in African epistemology is not explicitly recognized or acknowledged. I showed the existence in African epistemology of some unrecognized internalist notion and perspective of epistemic justification. I further revealed that the epistemological perspectives of *Ifá* divination are an example of the epistemological perspectives of the internalist conception of justification. In what follows, I showed that Ifá divination system embodies both the internalist and externalist basis of justification in African epistemology. In the concluding section, I showed that both the internalist and the externalist basis of epistemic justification are needed in African epistemology in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.

Conclusion

This dissertation was a critique of African epistemology. The dissertation sought to critically examine the claims of the protagonists of African epistemology and the idea of African epistemology, to illustrate that given our 'common humanity' (the ideas we share) and our interaction (languages) with each other irrespective of our origin(s), African epistemology is not as distinct and unique as the protagonists of African epistemology claim.

To achieve the aim of the dissertation, the first chapter offered an explanation of the nature of African epistemology. Since my thesis sought to critically examine the general claim of the protagonists of African epistemology of the existence of a unique African epistemology, I started with the discussion of epistemology and Western epistemology, then I proceeded to explain and discussin detail the nature of African epistemology. I noted that the above is important as it would give us the analysis of what epistemology is, and its connection to African epistemology. Besides, I also noted that the importance of this discussion was to shed some light the whole idea of African epistemology and the sense in which we describe traditional African thought and indigenous knowledge as knowledge.

The second chapter aimed at achieving two things: (1) To analyse the forms of knowledge in African epistemology, and (2) to contest the argument that these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African; culturally relative. In the first section of the chapter I discussed five forms of knowledge in African Epistemology. These were old age knowledge, perceptual knowledge, common sense knowledge, mystical knowledge, and holistic knowledge. There are numerous forms of knowledge, but I limited my discussion to the above five. In the second section, I argued against the idea of cultural relativity of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology. I contested the idea that these forms of knowledge are uniquely and specifically African; culturally relative. This I achieved by demonstrating that the prefix 'African' added to the idea of epistemology does not really make any difference, and that some of the forms of knowledge in African epistemology are the same as that of those in Western epistemology or other cultures. What this means is that epistemology and the forms of knowledge, whether in Africa, the West or any other cultures, is universal. And this universality results in our common humanity.

The third chapter aimed at illustrating how (*Ifá*) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of

paranormal cognition. In the chapter I explained what divination system is. Subsequently, I briefly explained divination system as a way of knowing. Here, I also discussed (Ifá) divination as a repository of knowledge and (Ifá) divination as important mode of knowing in African Epistemology. In the final part of the chapter, I showed that (Ifá) divination, an example of a (mystical knowledge) form of knowledge in African epistemology, is similar to the Western concept of paranormal cognition.

Chapter four aimed at showing that African epistemology is not as unique as its protagonists' claim, based on the idea of "our common humanity". This was achieved by outlining and critiquing the arguments of some key protagonists of African epistemology in defence of African epistemology. In what followed I evaluated the concept of African epistemology in light of some of the views of the protagonists of African epistemology.

In chapter five, I argued that the protagonists' aim of advocating for a distinctive and unique African epistemology is *partly* driven by a non-epistemic motive, which this chapter identified as a struggle of African identity. And drawing on the insights from the history of African philosophy as a 'counter-colonial practice' as well as the fact that to affirm the existence of an African philosophy suggest the existence of an African epistemology, this chapter advanced three crucial claims in each of the sections. In the first section, the chapter suggested that the enunciations of a distinctive and unique African epistemology are *partly* driven by some non-epistemic motive. In the second section, I argued that the protagonists' idea of African epistemology is a struggle of African identity and recognition. In the third section, using the idea of integrative epistemology, I suggested the integration African and Western epistemology to account for a multi-dimensional and unified approach to the understanding of reality.

The sixth chapter began with the clarification of internalism and externalism. In what followed I discussed externalism in African epistemology. In this section, I indicated that the way of justifying their epistemic claims of the African epistemologists is based on their knowledge of the external. I gave some examples of places where the discourse of internalism in African epistemology is not explicitly recognized or acknowledged. I showed that there exists in African epistemology some unrecognized internalist notion and perspective of epistemic justification. I also further revealed that the epistemological perspective of Ifá divination is an example of the epistemological perspectives of the internalist conception of justification. I also showed, in the section that follows, that Ifá divination system embodies both the internalist and externalist basis of justification in African epistemology. In the final section, I showed that both the internalist

and the externalist basis of epistemic justification is needed in African epistemology in order to arrive at a coherent and well-founded account of epistemic justification.

In this dissertation, I have provided a critique of African epistemology. While the conclusions reached in each chapter are important contributions to the discourses on African epistemology, it is important to point out that certain new related areas of future research have emerged. Many of these are beyond the immediate scope of the dissertation, which is to critically examine the idea of universalism and particularism in African epistemology and a deep attention to the concept of African epistemology with special reference to the justification of knowledge and traditional beliefs in Africa.

In conclusion, the general idea of this dissertation is: "African Epistemology." This idea is also known as "African indigenous knowledge." This subject is dear to the hearts of many and is, I believe, of critical importance to Africans. It is therefore with much appreciation that I decided to engage in this discourse and to show its importance and why scholars should engage it more. In view of this, I think that one central area of future research in this discourse would involve articulating a substantive critique of African epistemology and other beliefs in Africa that are in need of justification. These areas of recommendation for future research hinge heavily on a well-articulated and detailed concept of African epistemology and knowledge or African indigenous knowledge. Going forward, and for the purpose of emerging research on the subject of this dissertation, I recommend that future studies on African epistemology or African indigenous knowledge be given greater attention.

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