



**Metaphysical Foundation of African Epistemology:
*A Study of the Afemai-Etsako of Edo State in Southern Nigeria***



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Abstract

Truth and knowledge are essentially the dictates of some rationality or metaphysical ordainment. By sense experience man is capable of accounting for his past, contemplate his life and predict his future and all of reality, for traditional Africa, however (as is the case with most native societies), there is another mode of knowing beyond man's immediate capacity in search of truth and reality. An analysis of this perception indicates that there is some metaphysical tinge to epistemology or knowledge claims—whether in the spheres of justice, morality/ethics, religion, political authority, prosperity, law, or ontology/world-view. Put on a plain pedestal: Isn't there an African mode of knowing? By the study among the Afemai-Etsako of Southern Nigeria, this article tersely adumbrates the scope and nature of knowledge and discovers that, beside the common routes to it (experience and reason), the gamut of knowledge among the traditional Africans also have several metaphysical strands reducible to creative determinism, reactive interference, and representativeness in timing and naming.

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I. Introduction

Apparently, whereas much of Western philosophy thrives on some rational-epistemological theory; whereas African philosophy is predicated and thrives on some ethnological perceptions; and whereas epistemology is, perhaps, the basis of philosophical research (at the risk of tautological fallacy (Asekhauno, 2012), therefore, an African epistemology is predicated and thrives on some intuitive-metaphysical pedestal—ontological, cosmological, or theodicy.

However, to begin this study it is pertinent to understanding the people of Afemai-Eskato from their historical perspective. According to M. D. Enaikele

Historically, Etsako people were known to have migrated from Benin kingdom in the 16th century during the reign of Oba Ewuare or Oba Ozolua (Ede 2012). At first, they settled at the country side of Aviele, lying North to Benin kingdom. At some point, dissension arose between them and the initial settlers and this forced them to further migrate north ward to settle at the area now lying between Auchi, Uzairue and Ugioli (Enaikele, 2014)

Having said that, it will not be out of place to state categorically that this work attempts to articulate the metaphysical basis of traditional African epistemology. It does not intend to argue whether metaphysics is prior to epistemology or vice versa; rather, it shall argue that the concepts of truth, belief, opinion and knowledge are birthed on the notion of traditional African ontology. Here, there is a basic assumption that African metaphysical considerations cannot be separated from an African epistemology; that they are like two sides of the same coin we shall refer to as *creative determinism* and *reactive interference*, the adumbration of which is the imperative of the following pages.

Granted, an epistemological theory is a search for the grounding of truth. Commonly, by epistemology is meant, in the least, in Western epistemological circles, the study of and the quest for a theory of knowledge. And philosophy is ultimately committed to and is consisted with the search after truth. But what is truth? It is clearly indisputable that all cravings and striving for knowledge are geared towards the attainment of truth—imaginary or real, factual, and certain. In the bid to overcome ignorance, illusion, delusion, confusion and human misery, man searches for moral order and truth. Human quest for truth is historical. For instance, while Plato held that truth exists only in *Form*; Augustine and other medieval thinkers believe it comes through divine illumination and revelation (Oredipe, *et al*, 2003, 31); while Nietzsche (Popkin, 1999, 562) held that truth lies in power and the will to power, Machiavelli, as did Hobbes, defines truth as that pronounced of the *Prince*—that it is not absolute but dynamic and situational. Heidegger (Stumpf and Fieser, 2003, 454) believes that truth is phenomenal, being or being-in-the-world—where being implies the after-math of or strove for truth. But Descartes (Stumpf and Abel, 2002, 45) rationalized the concept—that truth is anything that is the object of thought or appears to one as

indubitable, certain, clear and distinct through intuition and deduction. G.W.F. Hegel (1821), as did other exponents of *coherence* theory, opined that truth is what flows from sequential thought or judgment: the truth of subjectivity lies in the subject, and of a personality, in a person; truth is also the dictate of the law, religion, and morality, from the abstract to the concrete. Pragmatists (Dewey, James and Pierce) believe truth is whatever is useful, applicative and workable; whatever is successful guide to prediction and action (Popkin, 592). Perhaps, truth could be said to be *ad quatio rei intellectum*—the thing and the idea about it (a correspondence of illocutionary speech and fact). However, literary philosophers believe truth as what can be shown or verified (explicit), or what is implied by some antecedent proposition/act—including fictitious ones. Thus such claim worsens the plethora of approaches to truth and it makes the possibility of determining truth more diverse and elusive. This article adopts a commonsensical definition of truth that it (even though it may not always be the case) is the agreement of facts with statements of facts, i.e. the correctness of the information represented by a proposition. And the idea of truth in traditional African epistemology involves not only the real/physical but also metaphysical connotations—a pragmatic representation of spiritual essence—in the sphere of medicine, justice, communication/transport, and art, for example. For instance, art in traditional Africa has no such conflicting impressions or issues; art in traditional Africa is a complete vehicle of transmitting religious, social, moral, political, cultural, and communal/economic values. Art, music and dance (Asekhauno, 2013) could also be of coven origination. Thus, African art and aesthetic experience has wide relevance to her epistemology.

II. Metaphysics

Metaphysics always concerns with the study of reality or of being beyond that fathomable by the senses. Metaphysical inquiry has existed long before it was so named. Beginning from the activities of the early philosophers who came from Miletus (Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes) they engaged in finding the primal constitute of the cosmos. The work of these philosophers pictured metaphysical enquiries and for that Andronicus of Rhodes, an editor of Aristotle's work, years after his death, intended to separate his work concerning nature, and place the other after and called it *ta meta ta physica* (meta-physics). Metaphysics is the investigation into causal principles in an individual existence of being; it delves into the essence of reality as a whole hence its scope is broader than science (meth-sciences). As opined by George N. Schlesinger (1981, 221), "Metaphysical problems are problems about how the world is, but which scientists do not tackle, leaving them to philosophers to investigate." Similarly, Ogbenika (2011, 21) sees metaphysics "As an investigation of the nature constitution and structure of reality." This means that it, from Aristotle, engages itself towards philosophical inquiries which ask question about what is and

what becomes what, the study of being “qua-being” especially of a substance. Plato held that the world of idea features eternality, unchanging, objectivity and immaterial which can only be known by reason. And the world of matter which comprises of temporarily, ever changing and finite which can be understood by the sense experience. He affirmed that knowledge must be founded on these universal features that will be the same for all ages. He relates that the world of form is responsible for whatever that occurs in the material world, which is not causal in effect, but as a result of what he called a demiurge.

Hume explains that the only contention for meaningfulness is through sense impression and mathematical concepts. Through sense impression objects are meaningful because they are tested by experience and also mathematical concepts are meaningful because they express the relationship between ideas we can intuitively see to be true and certain. For Hume, no other concept can be meaningful since we have no way of testing its validity. Secondly, Hume viewed substance different from pre-metaphysicians who ranked substance as the unintelligible. But for him, substance is found evident in their sense impression or reflection which resolves them into emotion or passions. Since Plato and Aristotle, metaphysics has withstood the test of time and the idea of being beyond materiality (both the immanent and the transcendental) makes sense everywhere, anytime—it also has an epistemology.

III. Epistemology

Epistemology as a branch of philosophy, occupies itself with the study of the theory of knowledge, with the scope, nature, sources and limit/authenticity of our knowledge (Hamlyn, 1980, 3). In the bid to answer the skeptic, Plato sought to distinguish opinions, beliefs, knowledge and wisdom. Since, knowledge is justified true belief; it stands irrespective of belief/opinion; and the knowledge of this is wisdom. Memory, intuition, reason, sense experience, and revelation are some of its sources. The core of epistemology, against Western orientation, is not sacrosanct because they do not exhaust the possibilities; there exist an African conception which poses knowledge is both a **dynamic** and unity in spiritual understanding.

Hence the pre-Socratic philosophers concerned themselves mainly with the attempt to place all things under one concept, the and even the Aristotelean successors concerned themselves with the task of conjecturing nature and existence, with reasonable appeal to reason and the cosmos. From the time of St. Augustine, attention had shifted from the Platonic forms and knowledge to the questions of God and his manifest stations. Then knowledge was a gift of belief and grace. Vivid skepticism and the question of scope of human knowledge reared its head in the late-modern time, especially beginning with the philosophical works and methods of Rene Descartes (1596-1650) with his “cogito” raising the problem about truth and its justification.

Appropriately, the theory of knowledge as it is known today (epistemological-based) is a post-Cartesian phenomenon.

Traditional philosophers, ever since Plato, tried to discover or establish the ultimate foundations of knowledge, to provide grounding for absolutely certain truth. Most classical responses were experience-base, and the medieval thinkers mystified and rooted it on God. Centuries later, analytic philosophers, by contrast, scaled down the enterprise of philosophy to the more modest objective of discovering the foundations of meaningful language, instituting objectivity and verifiability of claims as the yardstick. However, it had seemed to a number of modern Western philosophers—Dewey Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Rorty and Quine, amongst others—that once the idea of ‘the given’ is indicated, discredited and rejected, then the search for ultimate philosophical justification of knowledge should be abandoned altogether. While Quine (1953) makes a case for ‘naturalized’ epistemology, Dewey (1929), following his pragmatist schism and a niche for philosophical praxis; and Wittgenstein (1958), using an analogy of St. Augustine’s notion of time, noted that traditional philosophy is a conceptual activity that attempts in non-scientific, non-factual, or non-empirical ways to understand the nature of the world, including its human inhabitants which “essence is hidden from us”. For him, philosophy is not a fact-finding discipline but its function is to change one’s orientation to and understanding of reality by calling one’s attention to facts one has known but seen as unimportant. Similarly, Heidegger (1962), the concrete analysis of phenomena involves a “destruction” or “deconstruction” of the tradition that provides the background for the place where we find ourselves today. Rorty (1979) try to show the non-systematization of traditional philosophy, and the irrelevance of epistemology and metaphysics. Importantly, these and similar views have propelled post-modernist, hermeneutic, and post-structuralist challenge to extant western strand of philosophical activity. Perhaps, an African tradition is free from those challenges—knowledge is what is known, knowable or understandably true.

IV. Traditional African World-Outlook

By Africa we meant the peoples of the continent of African south of the Sahara. Thus an African metaphysics could be appropriated from the traditional cultures scattered all over the continent, with their distinctive cultures but similar in their essentials. Adler (Blunt and Jones 1992, 189) holds that “the cultural orientation of a society reflects the complex interaction of the values, attitudes, and behaviors displayed by its members.” Culture is to human collectivity what personality is to an individual. Accordingly, culture is the aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group’s response to its environment. Hence culture determines identity of a human group just as personality determines individual identity. In fact, UNESCO Declaration of 2001 holds that culture “should be regarded as the set of distinctive,

spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, life-styles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” Culture, therefore, constitutes in the amalgamation or assemblage of the social practices, beliefs, traditions and philosophy that shape the outlook of a society. It is the core of culture that forms values/knowledge; African cultures rivet interaction with the spiritual; African cultures inform African epistemology. Take the Afemai-Etsako of Edo state in Southern Nigeria, for instance. They place high emphasis and value on harmonious personal relationship and special respect as that shown to persons like the traditional healer/doctor and the rain-maker whose skills are considered as a mixture of ‘scientific’ and ‘spiritual’ powers/elements, and whose activities commit to restoring or maintaining good relations between their ancestors, gods, and their descendants, between man, nature, and spirits (Onyemelukwe, 1973, 26). But since most of the metaphysical presuppositions in Afemai-Etsako are also found in most of other African cultures, we shall describe what could be called an African metaphysics—with a unique conception of personhood, cosmology, ontology, ethics, being, ancestors (life/death), and God/deities.

Traditional African metaphysics is a lived metaphysics, practiced in the words and gestures of everyday experience. According to Tempels (1969, 35), “we (the West) hold a static conception of being”; the West conceives the transcendental notion of “Being” by separating it from its attribute “Force” while the Bantu (Africans) cannot. Truly, the African conceives of “*force*” as being, that “being is force”, and that the concept “Force” is inseparable from the definition of “Being”; thus, there is no idea among the Africans of “Being” divorced from the ideas of *Force*. Rather, it concerns itself with this problem of the dynamics of reality. Horton (1938), comparing African thought and Western science, tries to explain why explanations in modern Western culture tend to be couched in an impersonal idiom while explanations in traditional African society tend to be couched in a personal idiom. His view is that in the rapidly changing industrial societies, only the inanimate world is stable and predictable enough for scientific prediction, while in the traditional African society, only the human society obeys rigid and well determined rules—where the forces of nature remain uncontrolled and unpredictable. Traditional Africa was, though, concerned with cognitive problems, but more with religious and mythical or metaphysical ones; the traditional African does also so much want to know as to what satisfy his emotional needs. He is less interested in physical questions of causality—as in finding motives, motivating and motivated agents. Thus, Horton points out that “even in a game of pure chance, nine Africans out of ten would attribute their luck or misfortune to a god or to the gods”. But Horton’s views about traditional Africa are critical in that, for traditional Africans, the forces of nature are sometimes predictable and could be controllable. Traditional Africans know what could result if ‘such and such’ obtains; they could invite or avert evil reprisal by beseeching and propitiation of the *force(s)*

involved. Beings move and their mutation affects other beings; nothing moves in this world of “Forces” without influencing other forces by its movement. The African world is not made up of series of beings each of which would occupy its proper place and, therefore, be mutually exclusive and be counted separately; it is a world that is made up of “beings” which participate in each other and interpenetrate one another. The African world is not like the Platonic dualism which makes a distinction between “ideas” and their “shadows”, nor is it like the Aristotelian abstractive dualism which finds a transcendental world by abstraction from the particular and contingent world of empirical experience. According to Ruch and Anyanwu, (1981, 146) “the African world is one of participation between two distinct and partly separate worlds. The world which falls under our sense is not merely a shadow of the sacred transcendental world as it would be for Plato.” On the other hand, the divine is not a dimension which is arrived at by rational abstractions from the empirical; rather, it is experienced in the empirical. Both are equally directly perceived and equally concrete. But this does not expressly mean the universe is God or God is identical with the world—which would assume a unity restored after an original abstractive dichotomy between the empirical and the transcendental (Idara, 2008).

The traditional African world-view, existence is identified with interaction and exchange of forces. What we mean here is that to exist in the traditional African conception is to be able to influence and be influenced by others in the surrounding. The living-dead (i.e. the ancestors) exists in so far as his vital force can still be communicated to other beings in the universe. This perception stems from the African conception of God as the source of all that exist and hence, the giver and taker of life. Man can by his acts diminish the ‘being’ of another. The “strengthening, weakening and annihilation” of being belongs to the metaphysical realm; hence the African conception of motion or dynamism or the interaction of forces is not a subject which lends itself to scientific experimentation and computerization. The African universe is a tiered/structured and each tier is believed to be dynamically constructed and since there is no definite compartmentalization of life, there is dynamism, the invisible communicate with the visible and vice versa. In fact, there is continual motion of the various categories of spiritual beings from one plane to another and their various activities impinge on the fortunes of man depending on his responsibility to the hierarchy of forces (Uwemi, 2009). Accordingly, the traditional African world view could be said to be animistic-communalistic—thriving on divinities, deities, ancestors, and with a lot of invocation, praise, libation and worship of supreme being/divinities. It is not everyone that goes to a shrine for worship, veneration and pouring of libation; but, often, the elders and the traditional priests do so on behalf of the entire people—although the people have the opportunity to do so at the turn of the year festival (*ɛsi*, in Afemai-Etsako) time (Uwemi, 2009).

Moreover, the traditional African universe, fundamentally is not a chaotic one but one in which forces are arranged in a hierarchical order. The word ‘hierarchy’,

according to Hornsby (1974, 403) refers to “an organization with grades of authority from lowest to highest” or highest to lowest. In the African ontological frame-work, beings are according to hierarchy and are differentiated according to their vital power or inherent vital rank. Take the Afemai-Afemai-Etsako view, for instance. At the head of their ontological ladder is God, called *Osinegba* or *Oghena*—an idea derived and substantiated by the nature/contingency of the world. The word, *Osinegba* is derived from two terms: *osi* (which means in-corporeality or spiritual and transcendent) and *egba*—which means one or both of charm and divinity or super force/protective charm (Aigbona, 2015). The conjoined term, *Osinegba*, therefore, means *osi na ne egba* (spirit that is greater than *egba*). *Osinegba* thus, implies the “Supreme Being that is more powerful than *egba*” (Omonokhua, 2005, 38). He is transcendent and immanent, invisible and omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, reachable only by divinities and spirit-beings through divinities; and is one. Ekarika (1979) defines divinity as “the endeavor to obtain information from about the future things or those otherwise removed from ordinary perception, by consulting informants other than human.” *Osinegba* is He who has force-power in Himself; He gives life, power of survival and of increase to other forces; He is who empowers and increases other *forces*.

Next in the ontological hierarchy are the ‘living-dead or ancestors’, called “*alimbafé*”, who binds the living to God. According to Mbiti, (1970, 62) the “living-dead are still people and have not yet become ‘things’, ‘spirits’ or ‘its’, they return to their human families from time to time and share meals with them however symbolically”. The “living-dead” know and have interest in what is going on in the family. In the words of Tempels (1969, 62), “the living-dead are now spiritualized beings belonging to a higher hierarchy participating to a certain degree in the divine force.” The dead are believed could strengthen or harm the living. Next is man—the ‘being-with-intelligence’. As is the case in most traditional Africa, the Afemai-Etsako believes that man has a physical body as well as a spiritual element. At the level of human understanding, “to see” could be simply sensual (*umiemi*) or ability to foretell (*imiodé*); sometimes, these and “to hear” (*usembi*) become interchangeable. The Afemai-Etsako admit too that, while man’s physical and animal life on earth comes to an end at the moment of death, his life after death, while “diminished” from the animal point of view, is more powerful than life here on earth in the sense that its participation in the “vital union’ with the ontological life-force originating from God is closer to the source of force and freer from the limitations which material life imposes on us (Uwemi, 2009). Beneath human-force are other sacred animal, plant and mineral forces. According to Ekarika (1979), a thing is sacred because it is the dwelling place of the divine. A sacred place has significance because it is believed that they are objects of divine powers and are endowed by God or closely connected with a god, such places as River *Ole*, *utukue-Afasio*, *et cetera*). We might say that, at least, in its generality, the Bantu speaking Africans hold that the “shadow” is a material entity which disappears with death. Thus, “life’ does not necessarily imply immortality which seems

to be generally restricted to man, i.e. to the “being-of-intelligence’ who alone has experience in the full sense of the word. Man ‘exists-with-life’, but his existence is not identified with or reduced merely to earthly living. Nevertheless, the ‘principle of life’ is not to be identified with the concept of ‘force’ or ‘life-force’ as we mentioned earlier. The principle of life or of being, called *life and temporality* is neither increased nor diminished in the strict sense of the word. It simply ensures that the being in question is alive and not dead; that is, is able to perform the activities of a living being (Okomi, 2008). Accordingly, Tempels’ terminology is misleading on the ground that he seems to confuse the ‘ontological force’ with the ‘principle of life’. Tempels believes that the supreme value for the Bantu is ‘force’, to live strongly, to ‘have a powerful life’, or more simply “to be healthy, rich, to live long, *et cetera*.” And he concludes from this that prayers, magical rituals and medicine are aimed primarily at “strengthening” life. Hence, according to him, “life-force” refers essentially to the quality of life. Although man, everywhere in the world, wants to be strong, healthy, wealthy, and intelligent; to protect and strengthen his life, there is nothing typically Bantu or African in this attitude; it is a fact of humanity. But one must not confuse the *vital force* as it refers to “life” in the philosophical sense (i.e. in as far as it determines the essential nature of a being as *living*) and “life” in the accidental sense—“to be alive” means not “being dead”. Thus, the network of existential and ontological forces which control physical and social life, for the Afemai-Etsako (as for the Bantu) is quite distinct from his physical well-being and from his corporeal strength (Okomi, 2008; Uwemi, 2009). It must be pointed out that Tempels made the mistake (which is all too common among people dealing with African Philosophy) of taking univocally a term which should have been understood analogically or even metaphorically. Thus, it is true that the traditional Africans (as in the case of the Bantu and Afemai-Etsako) often refer to a ‘broken down motor-car’, a thing as ‘having died’ or will say that a blocked road is ‘dead’; so do other African cultures. They speak of a ‘dead-end-street’; refer to someone as having “killed a project”, or to a regulation as remaining a “dead letter”. In traditional Africa, no one would dream of taking these expressions literally. It would be invidious and dangerous to build a philosophy on terminology without checking whether the intention in using certain terms is univocal and literal, or analogical and figurative. It could be said that the concept, “vital force’ in the sense of “vitality’ (as explained by Okomi and Uwemi) is only analogically related to the essential concept of ‘life’ as constituted by the union of the shadow with the body, but Tempels took them literally or univocally, which is not good enough. In turn, the concept of ‘life’, which could be compared with Aristotle’s “Substantial Union” between body and animal soul (and which determines our classification of being as ‘living’), bears only a remote and analogical relation to the ‘vital union’ which is a relationship of being and a life of everyone with one’s lineage, God and nature; and also with one’s society, law, or state. Since both the living and the dead share in some vital union, it cannot possibly be said that “vitality” or “living strongly”, “being” or

“existing”, is living *per-se*. And, though it is easy especially for a human being to be incorporated in this net-work of “vital union”, it cannot be said that ‘vital union could be identified with “vital force” in the sense of “vitality” *per-se cumdi quid*. Yet another level of force is the reality of evil forces like the use of craft (sorcerer or witchcraft)—a symbol of anti-social activity manifested in form of anger, hatred, jealousy, greed, lust, poison, and relentless, secret crime, sorcery or magic. But their nefarious activities are countered by appeal to swearing, oracle, divinity and oath. Witchcraft by definition is a “secret affair, exercised even unconsciously by witches during their sleep” (Shorter, 2002). Thus, the Afemai-Etsako believes further that some terrestrial and celestial forces can and do manipulate an individual’s body and spirit, and could, therefore, be conjured to repay some irresponsibility. What the Afemai-Etsako call spirit is force: a god, an ancestor, divinity, the living dead, and other invisible forces in nature in interaction with man and society (Uwemi, 2009). This force or Oghena accounts for the existence evil in the world. Onimhawo, John Ogah, Clement Osakue and Stevenson Omoera (Onimhawo, Osakue and Omoera, 2014) correctly puts it thus:

A more serious enigma is the one that attributes a form of duality to the activities and nature of Oghena (God/Élóhim). This is invariably connected to the problems of evil, especially illness and death. We may illustrate this from a number of Etsako sayings about God. It is strongly held by Etsako people that Oghena lọ lọ trhẹdrhe meaning “God takes/kills and brings alive” (ibid.); others accept disasters and misfortunes simply as aboghọrhi Oghena meaning “the will of God” (ibid.), some Oghena Oagbe Ogboloa fuese meaning “God kills and saves(ibid.). A blind man once said agbọ orhimhẹle Oghena Olesẹ meaning “nature has cheated me God knows.”

The above quotation brings into question the relevance of language in understanding Afemai-Estako metaphysics. This again brings into question the appropriateness of the translations of the conceptual idioms of Afemai-Estako into the target language, it was in this sense that Emmanuel Asia (2018) noted that unless there is an urgent need to theorize into the language factor in African philosophy, Scholars in Africa will continue to invent African philosophy through wrong linguistics interpretations.

V. An African Epistemology and Its Metaphysical Base

Thus far, an answer to the question: “Is there an African way of knowing?” becomes clear in the positive, and having to do with man’s interaction with the spiritual forces of nature. Consider, for instance, the power of precognition which is the ability to foresee events both before they happen and before there is normal evidence that they are going to happen; then introspection, like spiritualism, which is internal perception; perception implies material entities. Thus introspection implies that perceiving ideas

in the mind are material entities. In this way, introspection is a science of some sort, a subjective objectivity because making report of one's mental life is itself a piece of behavior—which can be studied objectively as any other. Similarly is intuition, which in Kant (1966/88) has an empirical form and structures sensation into the experience of things in space and time. These categories plunge perception against independent reality; indicate that every event has a cause vis-a-vis the idea/law of contingency and necessity; pitch corporeality/materiality against immateriality; sparks the priority between essence and existence; and ignite a theory of being or non-being.

Consequently, an *African* ontological account and world-view impinges on her epistemology of other ideas. Let's take a few instances. On *justice*, traditional Africa acknowledges, just as the application of modern technology/mind detectors imply, that man by nature is often deceptive and unreliable; thus he may not be fair with truth. Hence traditional Africa engages in effective oath practice replete with sacred/spiritual forces capable of vesting reprisals (including diseases and death) on such victims (Asekhauno, 2006). And Leinhardt Godfrey says

If creativity and fatherhood are attributes of Divinity is hold ultimately to reveal the truth and falsehood, and in doing so provides a sanction for justice between men..... Lies, and the misunderstanding, suspicious, hostilities and malice which accompany them are mentioned to shows that Divinity is especially needed to intervene in human affairs, to put them straight by making the truth appear..... Divinity is thus the guardian of truth...

Similarly, on morality, ethical standards are stipulated by rules of custom and tradition grounded by performance of rites and libations. Thus moral rectitude is like a religious ritual among the Afemai-Etsako since breaking some important moral code could involve not just blame but the performance of prescribed rituals and propitiations. Religion itself is vivid with pragmatic spiritual presence, where sometimes the spirit of some god/ancestor could be invoked and appear to address a pressing issue. Hence African traditional religion is clearly interactive and practical. Its practicality is also implied in the political realm where kings/monarchies in authority are held to be semi-divine or spiritually ordained—hence they are accorded absolute loyalty amid political stability. Similarly, good health, prosperity, and the family are considered gifts from gods as reward for piety and piousness. The law is handed down from the gods through divinities and elders; obedience to the law is obedience to the gods: all these because God/gods is/are obviously held as superhuman and are determinants of blessings and curses. Animals, plants, and other nature objects as rivers are also credited enormous role in dealing messages to man (Aigbona, 2015). Yes, in African world, some animals held sacred speak to man, as sources of knowledge just as the sense in modern animation s (which though are mere entertaining artifacts); yet both arrogate unprecedented human capacities to animals. Hence, if electronic animations are make some sense, then animal proverbs are ok as sources of knowledge for the African.

African spiritual prudence is defiant of distances but brings to close proximity places set apart by a million mile, to mere meters; it all radically rebuts the authenticity of elasticity/elastic limit and defies the law of gravitation. Hence, craft, that African craft is not only a boundless and costless carrier; it is a potential rational/spiritual scanner (organically and mechanically), a mental detector, a health machine, a geographical chronometer, a nuclear energy/force, and Just imagine a world without wires but waves; imagine a world without courts but judgments, one without drugs but healings, one without laws but responsibility and order. Think of a world without guns/bombs but guided missiles (Asekhauno and Inagbor, 2011), where there are no institutions but there is learning. Imagine a world without aircrafts but flights, without clouds but rains, and without the sun but light. And yet imagine a world without dams/generators but power. The possibilities are **in exhaustive**. But imagine, just imagine such a world, realizable not just through the extant energy-sapping scientific procedures but by some (African) pragmatic spiritualism—which is the neo-science.

In view of the foregoing, it is somewhat clear now that access to truth and perfection is both physical and spiritual. And by deduction, is left to infer that truth and falsity exist. Sometimes one sure route to the stuff of the mind is the raw fill from the senses; and the report of the feel of the mind is the senses too. In either way, truth and knowledge could be distorted. But the fact remains that for the mind to grasp truth, the claim of the senses must cohere with nature—given the unreliability of the senses and the possible deception of appearances of objects. This epistemology and metaphysics of the mind indicate an intricate relationship between sensation, mind and truth. Again this is like saying that truth is a phenomenal reality—the world of physical things in which I partake; or truth is *true* reality—the world of spirit and the higher self. The fact is that truth must be an agreement between phenomenal and *true* reality. Yet, true reality may be unquestionable while phenomenal reality raises a lot doubt and suspicion. True reality instructs phenomenal reality and phenomenal reality communicates with true reality. The phenomenal world consists in space and time, including man (body)—with his consciousness, emotion, and will. Now such body is a system that impedes the readiness of the mind to embrace truth. And, yet, the self is transcendental, so it could exist outside space and time. Therefore, it is the mind/soul that is the intermediary between the true world and the phenomenal world. Consequently to the Afemai-Etsako, the cycle is that the phenomenal world is the object of the activity of the senses which supply truth to the mind; the mind is screened by the true reality/transcendental world; therefore, the transcendental world screens and determines the validity or otherwise of the phenomenal world. But just as a table cannot come to existence unless by the relation of parts/material stuff that make it up, spirit behavior necessarily influence physical reality because it is this that carry life or existence, the subject which directly perceives reality.

VI. Evaluation and Conclusion

From every indication, it follows that the various issues in philosophical activity are relative and sometimes replete with subjectivity and mystery. Africa has its own experience, which reflects their ontology. African ontology has two elements, unity and hierarchy, through which reality is conceived; and two dimensions, the spiritual order (the Supreme Being, deities, ancestors, and other vital forces in nature), and the physical order (human beings, plants, and inanimate beings). Through these, African ontology reveres the communality which reveals its identity. African conception of reality is inter-woven together, like a spider-web, which is a network of interaction. There is no spatial aggregate of independent things, but a complex of closely related and hierarchical ordered life-force. African ontology and epistemology is ranked in the utterances of the divine.

Though philosophy raises questions about the universe and its existence, an African philosophy, on the other hand, articulates and reflects on being in the total experience of the Africans with their divine order. The discussion so far strives to build an interception between knowledge capacity and spiritual forces in wide areas of human cognition. The issues involved could best be reducible to the following principles:

1. Creative determinism: this concerns the practical intervention by spirits, and the evidence of predestination and incarnation/re-incarnation;
2. Reactive interference: this concerns reliance of effective divination, soothsaying, oracling, and efficacious oath-practice to access vital but hidden information and justice;
3. Representations in time and naming: this refers to the actual manifestation of promised events revealed by divinities and oracles, as also with revelation in a dream, vision, or other intuitions like itching palm, or beliefs in superstitions in nature/stories/myths.

The forgoing principles wholly concern praxis and relativity of knowledge amid deterministic tendencies. In this way, essentialism pervades all of traditional African thought; hence issues about life, hunger, war, birth, death, suffering, freedom, fear, injustice, tragedy, etc. do not border us. Nevertheless, those issues are considered only after and in so far they are subsumed within the gamut of spiritual dictates. In other words, issues are not so considered or worrisome among the traditional Africans because they remain open expressions or manifestations of some other platform—metaphysical in nature. Accordingly, for us in Africa, there, definitely is some future in our past/spiritual universe—in the areas of justice, morality, and pragmatic spiritualism. A rejection of African pragmatic spiritualism is objective amounts to a denial/condemnation of Peirce's principle of pragmatic consequences; it touts as senseless the 'talking donkey', and denies the reality of a 'Drone-jet-plane'; it rejects cell transplant, robotics and other artificial intelligences/animations. In the world of

justice, for instance, efficacious oath system possesses some perseity (it is capable of acting out of its own inner nature (Blackburn, 282). African knowledge is dynamic and holistic in its outlook bringing everything into one which gives them their place; though esoteric, it is rational for what is rational is real and what is real is rational; and the territory of right is in general the spiritual, and its origin is the will (Hegel, 1821). Thus, to detractors, like Edwin Smith (1950, 118) who derogatorily asks: “How can the untutored Africans conceive God? How can this be?” and claims that “...Deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing”, one answers: Africans do not just conceive God in their own way which is summed in the Supreme Being, they assign practical and supervening role to Him; no one would cause other to suffer knowing the gods would bring justice upon him. These formulae could even be exhumed, revived refined, and applicative in modern times, for national or international development could even be exported as one of our contributions at globalization

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