

African Epistemology and Epistemic Injustice Against Women: Complementary Epistemology to the Rescue.

Eyo, Evaristus Matthias
Department of Philosophy,
Akwa Ibom State University
Email: evaristuseyo96@gmail.com

and

Obioha Precious Uwaezuoke, Ph.D
Department of Philosophy,
Akwa Ibom State University
preciousobioha@aksu.edu.ng, unclepees1@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3463-8240>

Abstract

This paper contends that there exists epistemic injustice against women in African epistemology. Thus, the pertinent question is, does African epistemology marginalizes women? In investigating this question, we shall trace the foundation of this epistemic injustice to the chauvinistic codification of African epistemology and the two-value logical system which creates and sustains the unequal binary opposition. The paper shall argue that when women are deliberately or unconsciously placed on the epistemic margin by the prevailing African epistemic paradigm, they are denied access to epistemic space, thereby reducing their personhood. To address this problem, we contend that one of the veritable ways of making African epistemology a site of counter-hegemony is to advocate for epistemic balance, and this could be achieved through complementary epistemology which is predicated on a trivalent logical system. Here, all mature discussants would be given equal access to the power of knowledge and the opportunity to blaze their own epistemic trail. The paper shall rely basically on the complementary method as a viable method of philosophical investigation.

Keywords: Epistemic, injustice, women, complementary epistemology, epistemicide.

Introduction

Despite global action toward gender sensitivity and epistemic balance, African epistemology is still grappling with the problem of epistemic marginalization of women. In this

work, we shall employ the concept of 'epistemic injustice' to characterize the experiences of women regarding knowledge production, dissemination, and regulation. The paper recognizes epistemic injustice or marginalization against women as the source of all forms of marginalization women suffer, and therefore proposes complementary epistemology as an alternative hegemony. It argues that where women lack access to power or are discounted from circles, bodies, and agencies that control knowledge production, dissemination, and regulation in society, they ultimately get a 'bad deal' in all areas of life, and it renders African epistemology as a one-sided epistemology instead of a site of counter-hegemony. It shall inaugurate the idea of complementary epistemology as a veritable way of doing African epistemology. For instance, Odera Oruka in his famous work, *Sage Philosophy*, interviews twelve sages, but sadly enough, only one is a female, while eleven are male. This portrays epistemic imbalance because women are seen as being inferior to men and underestimated (Mosima 16). Thus, for Sanya Osha, the African epistemic space is determined by a phallogocentric regime and there is a need to question it (34). In questioning this phallogocentric regime, this work argues for epistemic balance in which the contribution of women to the development of human civilization in Africa and the African knowledge economy could be recognized. Our idea of 'epistemic balance' recognizes the liberalization of Africa's intellectual spaces through complementary epistemological strategies to distribute power and accommodate all genders.

The exclusion or marginalization of women in knowledge production, dissemination, and regulation amounts to not just gender marginalization but the 'marginalization of the feminine epistemic perspective', and this falls within what Miranda Fricker calls 'epistemic injustice' which she says consists primarily "in a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower" (1). This epistemic injustice, she says, has two forms: testimonial and hermeneutical. "Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word; hermeneutical injustice occurs at a prior stage when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences" (1). In the first type, women sometimes are viewed and treated as mentally weak to hold opinions that are intelligent, logical, and rigorous. In the second, women have often been relegated to the background as the second sex in Simone de Beauvoir's terms and assigned roles that further put them at disadvantage with regards to opportunities to develop their potential, express their abilities and exercise power and influence in knowledge production through to regulation.

Put together, these two forms of epistemic injustice seem to combine to deny women in parts of Africa presence in intellectual spaces where knowledge production, through to regulation occur. The goal of this work, therefore, is to argue for fair allocation of intellectual spaces between the two genders because as Chimakonam posits, 'epistemology is not complete if it is built on the foundation of injustice' (*Addressing Epistemic Marginalization of Women*12). It is arguable that African traditional society operated within the paradigm of inclusiveness and complementarity (Asouzu, *New Complementary Ontology* 27) but assimilation of Western culture according to Osha (20), shattered the foundation of such an egalitarian society. Even though this egalitarianism was not fully practiced accommodating women in positions of influence, this work calls for the re-negotiation of that Afro-communitarian framework. Hence, conceptual decolonization according to Wired becomes apt which will pave the way for

epistemic balance and justice.

Kristie Dotson (32) for instance holds that 'epistemic oppression is the persistent exclusion that hinders one's contribution to knowledge production'; Chimakonam also posits that epistemology is not complete if it is 'built on the foundation of injustice' (*Addressing Epistemic Marginalization of Women*12). Following these scholars, this work holds that epistemic injustice is when a mature discussant is denied credibility, fair hearing, and access to knowledge production and distribution; and this is the manacle that is holding back the progress of our collective knowledge economy. Though some scholars seem to subscribe to the idea of justice as only concerned with distribution, this work shall subscribe to the idea of justice offered by Young as "the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and co-operation" (39). Epistemic injustice shall not be conceived as epistemic oppression, but rather as a form of exclusion and marginalization when it comes to epistemic space.

Conceptualizing Epistemic Injustice

The concept of epistemic injustice implies a form of epistemic unjust setting, predicated on unequal formation within epistemic space. It is the idea that we can be unfairly discriminated against in our capacity as a knower based on prejudices about the speaker, such as gender, social background, ethnicity, race, sexuality, tone of voice, accent, and so on (Byskov 118). According to Jane McConkey, the concept of epistemic injustice belongs to Miranda Fricker and concerns the conferral of credibility upon knowledge claimants. It is a condition of unequal social formation within epistemic space(197). Espousing the concept of credibility, McConkey posits that "credibility relates to the believability a person possesses" (198). This credibility is conferred on individuals by the community and since it is the community or society that has the power to determine if one is believable or not, there is that possibility of denying some group of people credibility.

The powerful privileged ones seem to be more favoured in credibility assessment than the under-privilege; in this case, women seem to suffer the injustice of credibility assessment. This is where power corrupts relationality because it is used to oppress others (Tshivhase 110).Audu and Imafidon in their work, *Epistemic Injustice, Disability and Queerness in African Cultures* argue that epistemic injustice entails the suppression of others and monopolization of the process of knowledge production and distribution(403).From the foregoing, it is pellucid that epistemic injustice is a conscious attempt to exclude some sets of people from the domain of knowledge production and dissemination on the ground of bias and prejudices. Epistemic injustice is not only about knowing, but also the process that leads to the structure of knowledge. According to Fricker (2), this process must observe gender equilibrium, if not, it is erected on the foundation of injustice.

Epistemic injustice in generality is a form of epistemicide whose aim is to "destroy other epistemologies and their agents so that the hegemonic people and their epistemology assume a position of unchallenged superiority over the conquered people" (Masak67). In the global South, knowledge has been silenced because it does not conform to the perceived "standard" of knowledge as set out by the West for the purpose of eliminating the epistemology of the South. It can be argued that a parallel precarious appraisal of the nuisance of the hegemonic

knowledge model on the global South has been adequately done by a plethora of thinkers from the global South earlier than the inventing of the term 'epistemicide' by Santos (20). The aim of such a project is the elimination of indigenous knowledge and the glorification of the epistemologies of the West. This will now corroborate their erroneous conception that Africans are incapable of producing a system of thought that is purely African. This is the logic behind the denial of Africans' humanity; epistemic injustice is the foundation of all other forms of injustice suffered by Africans.

African Epistemology: A Synopsis

Conceptualizing African philosophy in a univocal way seems to be impossible as the meaning of African philosophy is shrouded in an avalanche of polysemy. However, this does not vitiate the nature and existence of the discipline because African philosophy as a tradition has come to stay and is beyond dispute (Agada 41). African philosophy could be seen as the location of wonder in African places; it is the rigorous and critical application of the tool of reason such that a culturally-inspired methodic ambience accounts for the systematicity of its discourse (Chimakonam, *History of African Philosophy* 14). This shows the place of reasoning in African philosophy. This portrays that African philosophy reflects the values, thought system, and the problems of the Africans either by Africans or non-Africans. In his entry into the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Jonathan Chimakonam posits that African philosophy as a systematic study has a very short history. And the history is also a very dense one. At this point, having established the concept of African philosophy, it, therefore, becomes quintessential to discuss the enterprise of African epistemology in order to understand the content of the African knowledge economy.

As a branch of philosophy, epistemology studies the philosophical problems associated with the theory of knowledge, this is due to the primary place of knowledge in human existence. As noted by Umotong, "it is the branch of philosophy which deals with the origin and structure of knowledge, as well as the methods and validity of knowledge acquisition" (22). African epistemology is said to have a "context-dependent approach to the justification of knowledge and is predicated on African ontology" (Jimoh 194). It is experiential knowledge that takes into cognizance all aspects of reality because knowledge in the African context is the combination of spirit and matter (John, 1040), and it is predicated on the ontology of cooperation, and this ontology is "unitary and communal as it sees beings or realities as interconnected and interrelated" (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya 179). This does not in any way mean that Africans are not critical in their knowledge pursuit as erroneously claimed by some anti-Africans and Eurocentric scholars, rather, just like Kantian phenomena and noumena, African epistemology is also beclouded with both perceptible and transcendent realm. However, the practitioners of African epistemology for decades have neglected this inclusive approach to knowledge production and dissemination by glorifying male-centered hegemony to the detriment of the perspective of women thereby creating the problem of epistemic injustice against women.

Within the purview of the African knowledge economy, knowledge is attained when there is a nexus, between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge; affirming this, Aja posits that according to African thought, "knowledge is essentially the revelation of an object, and the

means of knowledge are distinguished according to the causes responsible for the revelation of the object to the knower" (196). This portrays the fact that knowledge within the African framework is not a mere abstraction, there must be intercourse between the knowing subject and the object of knowledge.

It can be argued that African epistemology is embedded in African ontology, to understand African epistemology, one needs to have a holistic view of African ontology, a deviation from this may lead to an improper comparison of African epistemology with Western epistemology which will in turn result in an error of transposition and a picture-type fallacy (Asouzu, *Complementary Reflection, and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*17). On the strength of this, Quamph et al aver that every knowledge claim embodies a certain way of understanding what is to know (ontology) as well as a certain way of understanding how to know what to know (epistemology)(854). This entails that knowledge in any given society is embedded in the way the people view reality, knowledge, and ontology go together, it is argued that ontology is the raw material and the foundation of knowledge to some extent.

African Epistemology and Women

One foremost theme of mainstream epistemology that seems to be motivating epistemic injustice against women is the notion of dualisms of mind/body, rationality/irrationality, culture/nature, masculine/feminine and so on which was promulgated by Plato in his Republic, in the book VI, 509 and 510. Most critics of mainstream epistemology including feminist epistemologists view this taxonomy or dualisms or unequal binary opposition as prejudice and makes epistemology androcentric. This is a result of the privileging of the male sex with the notion of rationality whereas the female sex is associated with emotions, this unequal binary opposition acts as the catalyst of epistemic exclusion and marginalization of women. However, this has been seen as a weakness in the dominant male-centered hegemony. Hence, exalting rationality in favour of the male sex is androcentric. African epistemology in her search for validation seems to follow this line of thought, thereby sustaining the project of epistemic exclusion and injustice.

It is arguable that the history of African philosophy is the history of male dominance in the intellectual space. As reported in the extant literature, women are seen as incapable of rigorous intellectual activity. They get a 'bad deal' within epistemic space, but the agencies and reasons for this intellectual quagmire have been underexplored. Some scholars as noted earlier, pay more attention to the rights of women, consciously or unconsciously neglecting the epistemic right which is the foundation of all rights. It becomes pellucid that epistemic injustice is the foundation of all forms of gender subjugation, and African philosophy in general and epistemology, in particular, play a significant role in this ramshackle. Is there any form of justice in African philosophy when we consider the works of Odera Oruka, Kwasi Wiredu but ignores the works of Sohpie Oluwole and Anke Graness? A deep reflection on this subject matter will clearly point to the fact that there is no justice in doing so, and thus, a need for reconstruction of the African epistemological edifice.

The structure of African epistemology is set in such a way that it excludes women from the scheme of work. African philosophy as the product of wonder raises many questions, but what is the place of women in the question of African philosophy? According to Chimakonam, when

wonder strikes, the next thing that follows is a question (*Addressing the epistemic marginalization of women*11), wonder and questioning thus become the *conditio sine qua non* (the necessary condition) of philosophical inquiry. Wonder is the beacon of hope and the *terminus ad quo* (the starting point) of philosophy. African epistemology, beclouded with a plethora of gender exclusion, can be argued to be nothing more pretentious than a *genderized* epistemology, which is also lopsided, and deformed (*Addressing the epistemic marginalization of women* 12), if this is allowed to continue, it will only lead to one-sided epistemology.

African philosophy as we have noted earlier was a reaction against an intellectual onslaught by the West that there can be no rigorous, critical reflection in the global south. In responding to this onslaught, the professional philosophers seek to show that there is rigorosity, criticality, and reasoning in African philosophy, but they took this to the extreme where they exclude the other perspectives from the domain of African epistemic space. In becoming ever more technical or as closely technical as the philosophy of the metropolises, African epistemology unwittingly started excluding the possibility of incorporating other voices within its context that could contribute to the development of a truly counter-hegemonic form of philosophy (Matolino 132). It is pertinent to note that this does imply that criticality and rationality are not veritable tools of doing African philosophy, but undermining the other aspect of knowledge acquisition is the problem that has resulted in the exclusion of the feminine perspective in epistemological space, du Toit describes it as 'the absence of strong women's and feminist voices within the discipline of African Philosophy' (413). One may argue here that African epistemology or philosophy does not marginalize women, rather, it is the women that marginalize African epistemology. This point can be counter-argued by positing that the masculine codification of the discipline serves as the beginning of epistemic marginalization. The system is structured male-codified, which scared the women away. This points to the fact that African epistemology wittingly excludes the contribution of women. However, there is a need to include her-story (Edet 162) in African epistemology to build a holistic epistemological structure that will draw narratives from both male and female perspectives. This will help in salvaging African epistemology from the danger of a one-sided story.

African epistemology arguably rejects the idea that social constructs such as gender, race, and class have a role to play in knowledge production, one would begin to wonder what the justification for the epistemic oppression against women might be, though it has been argued by Uduma (220), that there is "no evidential support of a conscious process of making African philosophy a male-dominated profession or an attempt to keep male control of the production of ideas in African philosophy", however, it could be counter-argued that such position seems to undermine the existential condition of women because women have been kept at the margins, while the discrimination has not been a straightforward loud and public barring of women from the academy (Matolino 132). However, this is a form of an epistemology of ignorance seeking to validate epistemic marginalization through back door. Though it has been argued in extant literature that women enjoyed a privileged place in traditional African societies, this is not extended to the epistemic space (Matolino 129). Thus, the prevailing epistemic exclusion despite the apparent complementary and communitarian society. Men have been gatekeeping the epistemic warehouse, creating values that best suit them, projecting rationality, thereby projecting epistemic space as beyond the capability of women, therefore,

preventing women from gaining access to it.

We contend that due to the existing prejudice that the words of a woman do not possess much weight as the words of a man, women are often deprived of credibility. Some of these prejudices are that women do not or ought not to remain silent when crucial decisions are being made, which all stem from the notorious epistemological position on the dualism of rationality as against irrationality, with the woman being linked with the latter. Thus, women are denied the freedom to express themselves and it leads in the long run to the existence and practice of testimonial epistemic injustice in African space.

The prevailing two valued-logic can be argued to be the foundation of an unequal binary opposition that creates and sustains epistemic injustice against women. Here, there is a dichotomy between superior and inferior, black, and white, male, and female, good and bad. With this idea, the epistemic edifice is erected in unequal opposition and diametrical to each other. But on the other hand, African epistemology as a site of counter-hegemony rides on the crest of a trivalent system of logic which Chimakonam coined *Ezumezu* logic, which is a prototype of African logic. This is a portrayal that contemporary African epistemology is erected on the foundation of inclusivity and epistemic balance. It is here that the experiences and perspectives of women would be given due consideration. It is a complementary epistemology that seeks to remove all artificial barriers, bifurcations, and marginalization. Here, credibility which is one of the main foundations of epistemic injustice against women will be given to all irrespective of sex or gender.

Towards Complementary Epistemology

It is important to note that Jonathan Chimakonam first argues for complementary epistemology but through his theory of Cogno-normative epistemology. According to him, Cogno-normative epistemology is predicated on the fact that knowledge is not only cognitive; it is also normative (Chimakonam, *The Knowledge Question* 673). Here, epistemological questions should not only centre on the nature of knowledge but should also consider the value of knowledge; this epistemic value recognizes the moral implication of any epistemic adventure. While the cognitive component of knowledge seeks to reach certainty or greater understanding, the normative component seeks to weigh the moral value of the cognitive component (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya 163-164). The cogno-normative epistemology by the virtue of moral implication makes a distinction between knowledge that ought to be sought and the ones to be avoided. As a moral-epistemic theory of knowledge, it implies that Africans should not engage, seek or pursue any epistemic project with no moral value or worth because it will vitiate humanity. Rather, Africa needs knowledge that enhances and promotes the flourishing of the human person (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya 164). Going by this, any scientific knowledge that can obliterate human existence and makes life miserable like the production of weapons of mass destruction ought not to be embarked on. The sole aim of African knowledge ecology should be how to ameliorate African existential problems like economic dwindling, political instability, insecurity problems, leadership, and other problems that threaten human existence in the global South.

Cogno-normative epistemology is an epistemological outlook with human face and interest as it seeks to use knowledge to better human society, there are also ways in which

knowledge within this new paradigm should be pursued; here, knowledge should be devoid of any form of spiritism but aided with the instrumentality of reason and senses. Thus, according to Chimakonam, cogno-normative epistemology seeks to prescribe both sensual and rational tools divorced from spiritism as veritable sources of knowledge for the modern African philosopher (*The Knowledge Question*79). From the above locution, it is pellucid that knowledge is for the service of humanity and human interest, this is the only way that knowledge can be said to have value. It must be noted here that there is no dichotomy between rational and empirical, knowledge from this African perspective is “a complementarity of both the cognitive and the normative as well as the empirical and the rational” (Chimakonam and Ogonnaya165). Thus, it's sufficient to posit that cogno-normative epistemology is a form of complementary epistemology.

However, this paper shall further argue that African epistemology should be complementary in outlook because this will bring about epistemic equality and inclusivity, and these qualities can be sustained during the epistemic conversation. Complementary epistemology (CE) is the epistemological ambience of complementary reflection (*Ibuanyidanda*) propounded by a renowned African and Nigerian scholar, Innocent Asouzu. This epistemological outlook is a reaction against the exclusionary and bifurcated epistemological mindset that characterizes the mainstream and traditional African epistemology. Complementary epistemology as noted by Asouzu makes a distinction between the raw primary and complementary cognitive ambiances. CE is a reaction against bifurcated, exclusionary, and marginalized epistemic hegemony; it is an attempt to “re-conceptualize epistemology with the intent of exploring fully the dynamic character of the mind as we seek to understand more fully the character and origin of ideas” (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*85).

Asouzu (*Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*78) conceives the raw primary cognitive ambience to be that putative ambience that the agent or the actor considers his or hers, and it appears very real to the subject. It is that “ambience that links the actor to the world, persons and institutions and it can be seen as the raw primary cognitive ambience of socialization, education, and indoctrination” (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems* 85); it is that particular ambience that the actor draws the meaning and experience of the world from. It must be noted that this ambience is the ambience of bias, prejudice, and uncritical beliefs which blurs one from reality. Here, the actor believes that he/she possesses the proper knowledge of reality and the world, but it is distorted knowledge engulfed with bias and prejudices. The raw primary cognitive ambience has a way of acting and conditioning the mind of the actor towards an exclusive and diametrical interpretation of reality.

The complementary cognitive ambience on the other hand is the “ambience we share with all missing links of reality as to constitute the domain of universally correlated thought” (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems* 81). It avails the actor the ability to affirm his/her being in a complementary relationship and existence with other existing realities. It is the ambience of complementarity, an ambience void of bifurcation and marginalization. This is the ambience of CE in which everything that exists serves as the missing links to reality (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence* 27).Asouzu further

argues that this ambience is ontologically founded and exposes the actor to the danger and implication of the constraints he/she has been exposed to. It is here that one can come to the realization that one shares the world with other existing realities, and thus, one ought to act within this paradigm.

As the ambience of CE, the complementary cognitive ambience seeks to revalidate and purge the mind from the effect of the raw primary cognitive ambience through the process of noetic propaedeutic (pre-education of the mind), it is *Ibuanyidanda* mindset (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*82). This epistemological ambience is inclusive since it recognizes all actors and epistemic agents, it is a firm epistemological foundation; thus, any epistemic enterprise that is not firmly rooted within the domain of this complementary primary cognitive ambience is bound to be lacking in some measure of credibility (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*83).

CE is an articulate epistemological theory “for African philosophy” which seeks to address the following pertinent epistemological issues in African space: the knowledge question in African philosophy by (1) investigating what it means 'to know' in a modern Africa that is facing numerous challenges (2) the connection between the rational and the empirical modes of knowing and (3) the connection between knowledge, morality, and community” (Chimakonam, *The Knowledge Question* 69). It is an attempt to ground African epistemology on an inclusive framework riding on the crest of complementarity because, for a while, the practitioners of African epistemology have pretended that their raw primary cognitive ambience is all that matters, thereby exalting epistemic exclusion, marginalization, and risking what authentic epistemology represents. Beclouded with *ihe mkpuchi anya* (the phenomenon of concealment) (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*78), most practitioners of African epistemology believe that it is only rationality that can serve as the source of authentic knowledge, thereby neglecting the other perspectives like emotions. Complementary epistemology explores all available means through which knowledge can be attained. It adopts the logical structure, and the normative and complementary principles of knowledge inherent in African thought (Chimakona, *The Knowledge Question*73).

The preceding entails that as a viable epistemological theory in African philosophy, Complementary epistemology (CE) seeks to explore African intellectual heritage which has been under explored; by so doing, it recognizes the fact that knowledge in African space is attained through a complementary mode of existence, this will not only obliterate the epistemic injustice against some group of people, it will also show that the faculty of reason is not the only authentic source of knowledge as this has created tension within African epistemic edifice, rather, it is all-encompassing. This implies that knowledge is both cognitive and normative; empirical and rational (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya 164-165). This shows that complementary epistemology is void of any form of bifurcation or polarization.

African epistemology and mainstream epistemology are beclouded with the conundrum of legitimizing the epistemic perspective of women. There seems to exist entrapment of reason overarching rationality thereby excluding the others' perspectives like emotions, sense experience, etc., this could be the result of ethnocentric commitment due to education, indoctrination, and socialization (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*79). Complementary Epistemology is an attempt at re-conceptualizing African

epistemology that would accommodate all. Here, there is no tension based on gender; it is an epistemological outlook that is just and balanced.

In complementary epistemology, the concept of truth is important; however, unlike the traditional African and mainstream epistemology that predicated truth on fact, complementary epistemology grounds truth on context, thus, whatever stands as truth depends on the context in which such proposition is asserted, hence, the context-dependent value. Put differently, truth is the product of a credible-value judgment (Chimakonam, Ezumezu119). This point shows the inclusive nature of complementary epistemology because it seeks to contextualize truth in order to avoid the rejection of any epistemological perspective that might be true in a particular context but otherwise in another. The idea of context-dependent value is that what is true in context "A" might not be true in context "B", hence, in making a value judgment, one needs to go beyond the proposition stated to include the context in which such proposition is asserted.

Conclusion

In this, paper, we argue that African epistemology is exclusionary because of the epistemic marginalization of some group of persons from epistemic space; that is, women. The foundation of this epistemic injustice can be traced to the two-valued logic which brings the idea of unequal binary opposition. If African epistemology is allowed to continue this way, then it has failed to remedy the problem of exclusion and marginalization found in the mainstream Western epistemology.

Challenging this phallogocentric hegemony, we ground African epistemology on complementary logic, which is trivalent in nature, thus, African epistemology should be done in a complementary way in which all stakeholders and mature discussants are allowed to blaze their own epistemic trail without any form of discrimination. It is within this perspective that epistemic equality could be achieved. Stated differently, the paper inaugurates and sustains the idea of complementary epistemology as one of the veritable ways of doing African epistemology. This portrays the idea of epistemic decolonization as an aspect of decoloniality. It is through this project of epistemic equality that African epistemology could be said to be the site of counter-hegemony.

Works Cited

- Abudu Kenneth, Imafidon Elvis. "Epistemic Injustice, Disability, and Queerness in African Cultures." Imafidon, Elvis. (ed). *Handbook of African Philosophy of Difference*. Springer Nature, 2020, pp. 393-410.
- Agada, Ada. "African Philosophy and the Challenge of Innovative Thinking". *Thought and Practice: A Journal of Philosophical Association of Kenya*. Vol.5, No1, 2013 pp. 41-67.
- Aja, Emmanuel. *Elements of Theory of Knowledge*. Magnet Business Enterprise, 2004.
- Asouzu, Innocent. *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology Beyond World Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction, and Imposition*. Litverlag, 2007.
- Asouzu, Innocent. *Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence* (Philosophy, the Science of Missing Links of Reality), 50th Inaugural Lecture. University Calabar, 2011.
- Asouzu, Innocent. *Complementary Reflection and Some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today*. LIT VERLAG, 2013.
- Byskov, Morten. "What Makes Epistemic Injustice an "Injustice"?" *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 52 No.

- 1, 2021, pp. 116133, DOI: 10.1111/josp.12348.
- Chimakonam Jonathan. and Ogbonnaya Lucky. *African Metaphysics, Epistemology, and a New Logic A Decolonial Approach to Philosophy*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Chimakonam, Jonathan. "African Philosophy, History of". *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. A Peer-Reviewed Internet Resource 2014. www.iep.utm.edu/afric-hi. Retrieved 15/03/2020.
- Chimakonam, Jonathan. "The Knowledge Question in African Philosophy: A Case for Cogno-Normative Epistemology". Chimakonam, J. (ed.). *Atuolu Omolu: Some Unanswered Questions in Contemporary African Philosophy*. University Press of America, 2015, pp. 671682.
- Chimakonam, Jonathan. *Ezumezu: A System of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies*. Springer Nature, 2019.
- Chimakonam, Jonathan. "Addressing the epistemic marginalization of women in African philosophy and building a culture of conversations" Chimakonam Jonathan and du Toit Louise. (eds.) *African Philosophy and the Epistemic Marginalization of Women*. Routledge, 2018, pp. 8-21.
- Dotson, Kristie. Tracking epistemic violence, tracking practices of silencing. *Hypatia*, 26(2), 2011, pp. 236-257.
- Edet, Mesembe. "Women in the His-story of Philosophy and the Imperative for a 'Her-storical' Perspective in the Contemporary African Philosophy." Chimakonam Jonathan and Louise du Toit (eds.). *African Philosophy and the Epistemic Marginalization of Women*. Routledge, 2018, pp. 155-166.
- Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics of Knowing*. University of Oxford Press, 2007.
- Jimoh, Anselm. *Certitude and Doubt: A Study Guide in Epistemology*. Ebony Books, 2013.
- John, Elijah. "African Epistemology". Uduigwomen, Andrew (ed). *From Footmarks to Landmarks on African Philosophy*. Second edition pp. 1037-1042, Obaroh and Ogbinaka Publishers, 2009.
- Masaka, Denis. "Global Justice and the Suppressed Epistemologies of the Indigenous People of Africa". *Philosophical Papers*, 46:1, 2017, pp. 59-84.
- Matolino, Bernard. "African Philosophy's Injustice against Women" Chimakonam Jonathan. and Louise du Toit. (eds.). *African Philosophy and the Epistemic Marginalization of Women*. Routledge, 2018, pp. 126-141.
- McConkey, Jane. "Knowledge and Acknowledgement: Epistemic Injustice as a Problem of Recognition". *Politics*. Vol. 24 (3), 2004, pp. 198-205.
- Mosima, Pius. *Philosophic Sagacity and Intercultural Philosophy: Beyond Henry Oruka*, African Studies Collection, 62. Tilberg University, 2016.
- Oruka, Odera. *Sage Philosophy*. Acts Press, 1991.
- Osha, Sanya. "Philosophy and Figures of African Female". *Quest*, 20 (½), 2008.
- Quampah Bernice, Samuel Asubonteng, Ngmenlanaa Fidelis, Samuel Boakye. "Philosophical Foundation of Knowledge on Africa". *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*. Vol.6, (9), 2016, pp. 852-859.
- Santos, Boaventura. *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide*. Routledge, 2016.
- Tshivhase, Mpho. "Understanding and (Re)configuring Personhood: Contra Systemic Dehumanisation". Molefe, Motsamai, and Allsobrook, Christopher. (eds.), *Towards an African Political Philosophy of Needs*. Springer Nature, 2021, pp. 109-129, /10.1007/978-3-030-64496-3_6.
- Uduma, Uduma. "Are women marginalized in African philosophy?" Chimakonam Jonathan. and Louise du Toit. (eds.). *African Philosophy and the Epistemic Marginalization of Women*. Routledge, 2018, pp. 219-248.
- Umotong, Iniobong. *Exploration for Knowledge*. Robert Minders International, 2007.
- Wiredu, Kwasi. *Conceptual Decolonization: 4 Essays Introduced by Olusegun Oladipo*. Hope Publications, 1995.
- Young, Marion. *Justice and Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press, 1990.