

THE INTERNALIST AND EXTERNALIST COGNITIVE CONTROVERSY: AN INTEGRATIVE EPISTEMIC SYNTHESIS

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Abstract

This study seeks to harmonize the impasse between the internalist and externalist epistemological theories within the purview of integrative epistemology. These two warring factions in contemporary epistemology conduct their debate as if their so called differences cannot be unified. Epistemologists of diverse schools of thought have discussed internalism and externalism from the purview of the Gettier problem, reliabilism, naturalized epistemology, and the issue of justification in general. Some scholars argued that internalism and externalism are contemporary issues in epistemology without reference to the ancient, medieval, and modern epochs of philosophical inquiry. This work strongly holds a contrary view, because every epistemic theory that emerges as a new insight has something that ties it together with the already existing ones. Basically, no epistemic theory holds sway without reference to the already existing theories either as a critique, a criticism, an appraisal, an evaluation, or a review. The objective of this study is to show that internalism and externalism are contemporary advancement of rationalism and empiricism, respectively synergizing their positions, showing that what some scholars construed to be radically different can be integrated. It is with this mindset of epistemic harmonization and integration that ratio-internalist-et-empirico-externalist-spirito-discourse is made possible. Historical analysis, contextual and textual research methods were employed in this research.

Keywords: Epistemology, Internalism, Externalism, Rationalism, Empiricism.

Introduction

The primary objective of this study is to advance a synergy between epistemological theories of internalism and externalism from the perspective of integrative epistemology. This research will also show that internalism and externalism are contemporary advancement of rationalism and empiricism, respectively. It will also show that internalist and externalist epistemic theories which some scholars construed to be radically different can be integrated and harmonized. When, for instance, Steve argued that internalism and externalism are purely contemporary issues in epistemology that have nothing to do with the past (16), he seems to have lost sight of the fact that every philosophical theory, not just epistemology, is necessitated as a result of reactions and counter reactions either for or against already existing positions. That is why this work strongly holds that epistemic internalism and externalism are proximately or remotely advancing the frontiers of rationalism and empiricism within the context of 21st century epistemic discourse. This research construes that, Steve must have been highly influenced by the postmodernist deconstructionist approach to philosophy, because no scholar argues from nowhere. Integrative epistemology strongly abhors postmodernism both as a movement and as a

philosophy, perhaps, because of their radical approach to philosophy which is outside the province of the ‘spiritual/metaphysical’ and also against any form of grand narrative. Following such a philosophy hook line and sinker will definitely lead to an indirect attack to traditional epistemology. This must have prompted Ozumba to write: “I was provoked into the philosophy of integrative humanism by the dead-endism advocated by postmodernism” (13). It then implies that integrative epistemology, which is a by-product of integrative humanism is anti-postmodernism that came to radicalize and revolutionize against traditional epistemology. Fortunately, integrative epistemology contextually complements positions of diverse epistemic schools of thought and orientations like internalism and externalism with the aim of bringing out the best out of them by way of epistemic unification, that is integrativism.

After the long heated debate between the rationalists and the empiricists in the modern epoch of philosophy and the intermediary role of Immanuel Kant, little did the epistemic world know that it would be a seemingly unending debate. It has to be noted that internalism and externalism are theories also discussed in ethics as a branch of philosophy, philosophy of mind, sociology, economics and some other fields of study within the disciplines of Arts and Humanities. That is why the need for the prefix – “epistemic” in the title of this work. Internalism and externalism have been construed in various ways by scholars of diverse gnoseological schools of thought and orientations. Some hold that epistemic internalism and externalism are offshoots of reliabilism as an epistemological theory, while others conceive that they are among important issues for debate in epistemology orchestrated by the Gettier problem. Some other thinkers strongly hold that internalism and externalism are fundamental, especially within the 21st century debate on the issue of epistemic justification. In all these, justification is very relevant and central in contemporary epistemic discourse. Broad as they are, the issue of internalism and externalism are also discussed from the point of view of naturalized epistemology, especially with particular reference to the problem of *a priori* knowledge and the problem of induction. This must have been one of the reasons why Wrenn holds that,

The debate between internalists and externalists concerns whether anything besides mental states help to constitute the justification of beliefs. Internalists hold that a belief is justified only if it is appropriately related to other mental states, and externalists hold that justification comes at least partly from elsewhere, for example from the reliability of the process that generated a belief (*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, IEP, www.iep.utm.edu/nat-epis retrieved 05/06/2023).

It has to be noted that among naturalised epistemologists who endorse internalism are Donald Davidson and John Pollock. Davidson’s naturalism is fairly weak, in the sense that he does not directly apply much hard science on epistemological problems. Nevertheless, he does take seriously Quine’s admonition that epistemology is just one

part of our theory of the world, and he feels free to take for granted such things as the existence of the external world when it comes to explaining how we could have knowledge concerning the external world. He also holds that only another belief can justify a belief, and he thus sees justification as arising from the relationships among one's beliefs (*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, IEP, www.iep.utm.edu/nat-epis retrieved 05/06/2023).

From his own perspective, Pollock endorses a view he calls "norm internalism". He holds that beliefs are justified when formed in accord with curtailed internalized rules concerning the correct ways to form beliefs. Those internalized rules are, in his term, "psychologically real" contingent features of our cognitive architecture. Nevertheless, he also thinks that experimental studies of reasoning will not be very helpful in determining the contents of the internalized rules. Rather, he thinks the best way to learn their contents is by examining our intuitions about what counts as knowledge or justified belief and what does not (Wrenn, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, IEP, www.iep.utm.edu/nat-epis retrieved 05/06/2023). On the other hand, it is important to note that naturalised epistemology, especially espoused and advanced by Quine, Goldman and Kuhn, strictly speaking, is not committed to either internalism or externalism. According to Wrenn, "Many, perhaps most naturalistic epistemologists endorse reliabilist theories of justification or knowledge, and so they are externalists. Goldman in particular has been a standard-bearer for externalism" (*Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, IEP, www.iep.utm.edu/nat-epis retrieved 05/06/2023). It is, therefore, on the basis of his embrace with reliabilism that Goldman is identified as an externalist.

It has to be recalled that after the renaissance interlude where Bacon and the like of Copernicus and Galileo flourished, the modern epoch witnessed a great bifurcation of views as it concerns the source of human knowledge. The rationalists led by Descartes and the empiricists led by Locke went their ways, however, Kant tried to harmonise the impasse. In the contemporary era the internalists and the externalists widened the already existing chasm in a variety of ways. Descartes, the rationalist, had despised experience, and Bacon, the empiricist, had despised mathematics; but Locke aims to show that while the reason is the instrument of science, demonstration its form, and the realm of knowledge wider than experience, yet this instrument and this form are dependent for their content on a supply of material from the senses (Falckenberg 156). Apart from Kant's synthetic a priori, the harmonizing and contextual character of integrative epistemology will also be employed to close the gap.

As a philosophical theory, integrative epistemology holds that all epistemological theories can form a link with one another to form knowledge. In integrative epistemology, we are talking of seeking knowledge from wholly contextual and integrated points of view. We have knowledge from the absolute, relative, objective, subjective points of view. However, our view is that all human knowledge should draw insight from both spiritual and physical dimensions of reality so as to attain the most comprehensive and reliable versions of knowledge that the context can yield (Ozumba 12). By so doing *ratio-internalist-et-empirico-externalist-spirito-discourse*

(RIEESD) becomes a new way of understanding the synergy between rationalism and internalism, empiricism and externalism, which in the spirit of integrative epistemology considers the contextualization and harmonization of the opposing views.

Internalism: A Contemporary Advancement of Rationalism

The term internalism, is derived from a root word ‘internal’ which means connected with the inside of something, that is, coming from within a thing itself rather than from outside it. In line with this analysis, the *Dictionary of Common Philosophical Terms* construes internalism as “the view that we directly experience the natural world in conscious states that can never be proven to relate to the external world in any objective way”. This implies that justification of one’s experience is solely determined by factors that are internal to a person (Ojong and Ibrahim 56). Internalism is an epistemological theory which also came into the philosophical lexicon among other things, as a reaction to the Gettier problem. It has to be reiterated that this epistemic theory holds sway in 21st century epistemology with its variegated approach, nuances of expression and understanding from diverse schools of thought and orientations ranging from reliabilism, naturalistic epistemology, probabilism, and so forth. Internalism can be construed as a contemporary advancement or 21st century continuation of rationalism championed by Rene Descartes, Benedict Baruch Spinoza, and Gottfried Leibniz in the modern epoch of philosophical discourse. It has to be recalled that though Plato lived in the ancient era, however, he can be described as a charter member of the rationalist school of thought.

Rationalism, on the other hand, is an epistemological theory which holds that knowledge comes primarily from reason. This position is strongly held by all the thinkers of rationalist school of thought. In their quest for knowledge, the rationalists downplayed sense experience as the primary source of human knowledge. They uphold intuition and reflection as veritable works done by the human reason in knowledge acquisition. Rationalism is the philosophical position that reason has precedence over other ways of acquiring knowledge, or, more strongly, that it is the unique path to knowledge...In recent philosophical writing, the term ‘rationalism’ is most closely associated with the position of seventeenth-century philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, and sometimes Malebranche. These thinkers are often referred to collectively as the Continental rationalists, and are generally opposed to the...British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley and Hume (*The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* 673)

Internalism maintains that the justifiability of a belief should be a function of our internal states. Beliefs are internal states, so doxastic theories are internalist theories. Internalists tend to emphasize our conscious internal access in relation to our beliefs. On this understanding of internalism, reflective, careful agents are able to make epistemological assessments of their beliefs. In his book, *Theory of Knowledge*, Roderick Chisholm writing on internalists says, “In making their assumptions, it presupposes that they are rational beings. This means, in part, that they have certain properties which are such that, if they ask themselves, with respect to any one of these

properties, whether or not they have that property, then it will be evident to them that they have it. It means further that they are able to know what they think and believe and that they can recognize inconsistencies” (5).

The idea behind internalism is that the justification of a belief is determined by whether it was arrived at or is currently sustained by “correct cognitive process”. The view is that being justified in holding a belief consists of conforming to epistemic norms, where the latter tells you “how to” acquire new beliefs and reject old ones. Internalist theories are committed to the principle that the correctness of an epistemic move (a cognitive process) is an inherent feature of it. For example, it may be claimed that reasoning in accordance with *modus ponens* is always correct, whereas arriving at beliefs through wishful thinking is always incorrect. This is implied by the claim that justifiability of a belief is a function of one’s internal states, because what that means is that we can vary everything about the situation other than the internal states without affecting which beliefs are justifiable. In particular, varying contingent properties of the cognitive processes themselves will not affect whether a belief is justified. This is called *cognitive essentialism*. According to cognitive essentialism, the epistemic correctness of a cognitive process is an essential feature of that process and is not affected by contingent facts such as the reliability of the process in the actual world (Pollock and Cruz 25). In all these, one thing that is apparent is that internalism which is a contemporary or 21st century epistemological theory has the same common features that characterize the modern epistemic theory, rationalism.

Theories and Versions of Internalism

In the words of Zany, discussions on epistemic internalism cannot be adjudged to have been completed without at least making brief remarks on other theories that emanate from it (82). Epistemologists have approached internalism in diverse ways which include but not limited to: accessibilism or accessibilist internalism, deontologism or deontological internalism, mentalism or mentalist internalism, and reliabilism or reliabilist internalism.

(i) Accessibilism or Accessibilist Internalism

Accessibilism or accessibilist internalism holds that the epistemic justification of a person’s belief is determined by or depends on things to which the person has some special sort of access to. According to this view, every factor that determines whether one’s belief is propositionally justified is reflectively accessible (Ojong and Ibrahim 58). It is the position of the accessibility internalists that one could gain access to knowledge/justification introspectively or reflectively. It therefore follows that their positions are anchored on introspection or reflection, without which for them, no knowledge claim can be made. For one to make any claim of knowledge, such knowledge must be reflectively or introspectively anchored. Here, knowledge without introspection or reflection can be likened to a wide goose chase.

(ii) Deontologism or Deontological Internalism

Deontologism as a philosophical theory falls with the ambience of ethics. However, it is employed here in the epistemic divide of philosophical discourse instantiating the

claim that integrativism is real and ongoing, especially within the context of contemporary or 21st century philosophical discourse. Deontological internalism is extrapolated and grafted into internalist epistemic discourse as a source of support based on the deontological character of justification. According to Ojong and Ibrahim, “It is argued here that the language of ‘justified’ and ‘unjustified’ invokes concepts like rightness and wrongness, blameness and blameworthy and dutifulness and neglect...Thus, deontological internalism holds that the concept of epistemic justification is to be analyzed in terms of fulfilling one’s intellectual duties or responsibilities. In other words, epistemic justification contains some deontic elements” (62). The deontological internalists firmly hold that epistemic justification has to do with satisfying one’s duty as a rational being so that a person’s beliefs are justified to the extent that this duty has been fulfilled in accepting them.

(iii) Mentalism or Mentalist Internalism

The idea of mentalism as an offshoot of internalist epistemic theory is that a person’s beliefs are justified only by things that are internal to the person’s mental state. It then implies that what determines the justifiability of a belief is one’s internal state. Some of the notable scholars who hold this view are Williamson (one of the chief exponents of mentalism), Pollock, Feldman, and Conee. One of the advantages of mentalism is that it upholds a clear internalist thesis – justification is determined by one’s mental state without appealing to the problematic notion of access.... The mentalist escapes this problem. One’s mental state determines justification, and one does not explicate what one’s mental states are by appealing to the problematic notion of access. However, mentalism does face the objection that since it preaches the notion of access it is not a genuine form of internalism (Ojong and Ibrahim 61).

(iv) Reliabilism or Reliabilist Internalism

As an epistemic concept, reliabilism encompasses a broad range of epistemological theories which seeks to explain knowledge/justification in terms of truth conduciveness of the process by which an agent forms a true belief. It is of importance to note that one of the reasons why the reliabilists were unable to grapple with the Gettier problem which they set out to address is because of their lack integration. Reliabilists of the internalist and externalist orientations could not agree and unify their views. The reliabilists of the internalist divide hold that internalism is a perspective that examines truth conduciveness as an internal process internal to the individual and are internally accessible through introspection or reflection. This could be done by an internal process focusing on what is in the consciousness-thoughts and other sensory impressions (Ozumba 170). From the analysis so far, it has been observed that among the internalists, there is also divergence in their approach which include, accessibility internalism, which is concerned with the accessibility of the justifier to consciousness. But the question is: how readily are the justifiers accessible to consciousness? From another perspective, the deontological internalists construe justification as that which “has some internalist components because it seems related

to a kind of control over beliefs that the epistemic agent may be thought to have” (Ojong and Ibrahim 76; Zanzu 83).

Externalism: An Empiricist Discourse of the 21st Century

Externalism can be discussed in philosophy of mind, in ethics, and in epistemology. In the theory of knowledge, externalism is the view that a person might know something by being suitably situated with respect to it, without that relationship being in any sense within his purview. The view allows that you can know without being justified in believing that you know (Blackburn 133). Externalism, as an epistemological theory, is a contemporary advancement or 21st century expansion of empiricism whose chief exponents are John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. Thus, externalism accounts for justification in a way that minimizes the importance of your reasons and your evidence for a belief. Ex implies that what justifies your belief is not any mentally accessible reasons or evidence that you have for the belief (Hetherington 82). Externalism is not only the denial of internalism but also an extension of the empiricists’ approach to knowledge in the modern era. In the words of Pollok and Cruz,

Externalism is the denial of internalism. According to externalism, more than just the internal states of the believer enter into the justification of beliefs. A wide variety of externalist theories are possible. What we might call *process externalism* agrees with the internalist that the epistemic worth of a belief should be determined by the cognitive processes from which it issues, but it denies cognitive essentialism according to which the correctness of a cognitive process is an essential property of it (26).

A different kind of externalist theory is probabilism, which assesses beliefs in terms of their probability of being true. Probabilism makes no explicit appeal to the cognitive pedigree of a belief, although the probability of a belief being true can of course be indirectly influenced by the cognitive process from which it derives... One of attractions of externalist theories is that they hold out promise for integrating epistemic norms into a naturalistic picture of human beings.... Externalist theories have seemed to provide the only possible candidates for naturalistic reductions of epistemic norms, so this has made them attractive in the eyes of many philosophers. Externalist theories are automatically non-doxastic theories. That is, they take the justifiability of a belief to be a function more than just one’s total doxastic state. This will prove to be a source of difficulty for externalist theories (Pollock and Cruz 27). However, one thing that is unambiguous and incontrovertible about externalism is that

it shares some of the features of empiricism like emphasis on sense experience and downplaying of reason in the quest for knowledge about reality.

Theories and Strands of Externalism

One of the splendour of philosophy is that scholars have always addressed issues from a variegated point of view, especially when they critique and counter critique existing views (Wilberforce 97). As a result, epistemologists have approached externalism in diverse ways. However, I consider it necessary in this study to delineate on externalism from the perspective of reliabilist externalism, common sense externalism, and scientific externalism.

(i) Reliabilist Externalism

Notable among the reliabilists of the externalist divide are Alvin Goldman and John Pollock. On the other hand, reliabilists of the externalist background are concerned with non-introspective knowledge and the extent to which the knowledge that is to be grounded conduces to common sense or scientific evidence as warrant for reliability. It is on this basis that some externalists like Alvin Goldman is of the opinion that common sense evidence is sufficient for justification, while others like John Pollock strongly oppose it and advocates scientific evidence as a warrant for justification. For the externalists, justification is exclusively an external process, which this research considers could be analogically likened to the verifiability principles of the logical empiricists. The question is: How verifiable are common sense, and scientific evidence?

(ii) Common Sense Externalism

When a philosophical reflection is carried out with particular reference to common sense, G.E. Moore easily comes to mind. It is the position of common sense externalists that common sense experience is enough to justify knowledge claim. That is, knowledge can be justified by way of common sense without reference to the rigors of extra mental reasoning. For instance, Moore argues that it is common sense knowledge that he has two hands. It is Moore's position that things can exist unperceived at least in relative terms.

(iii) Scientific Approach Externalism

Science is an organized body of facts, or knowledge that can be proved by testing, observation, or experimentation. Scientific approach externalists are of the view that for anything to be justified as knowledge it must pass through the crucibles of observation and verification. It is on this basis that scholar like A.J. Ayer and the other logical positivists, who argue that verifiability is a *conditio sine qua non* for knowledge claims can be regarded as externalists of the scientific approach.

Integrative Epistemology

Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism (which integrative epistemology is an offshoot) was first published in 2010 and on-going, is the brainchild of Prof. Godfrey Okechukwu Ozumba. Integrative epistemology is an attempt to conceptualize knowledge and contextualize their approach and understanding. A wholesale, homogenous understanding of reality is not possible from a purely sensual or rational or spiritual perspective – the three must be present. Thus knowledge can be sensual or rational but with a vision and insight into the spiritual realm better knowledge possibilities stare us at the face (Ozumba and Chimakonam vi).

Integrative epistemology draws impetus from the principles, methods, ideals and vision of integrative humanism. This vision is that knowledge is human and non-human centred. It is about man, his environment, ecosystem, his creator, and the created world that could impact on man's world and existence (Ozumba and Chimakonam 42). By implication, some ideas have to be extrapolated from integrative humanism for clarity and precision. Integrative humanism is simply defined as a *ratio-spirito-centric* approach in understanding human existence, interpreting human affairs, and a rigorous philosophical attitude which takes into consideration, the spiritual and the mundane philosophizing from the point of view of holistic truth bearing in mind that man is both mortal and immortal, terrestrial and preternatural, spirit and body (Ozumba 22). The implication of this is that every aspect of man is put into consideration in integrative epistemology.

Philosophy generally deals with reality which has a multi-dimensional approach and points of reference, not without the inevitable tools of logic, reflection, criticality, systematization of thoughts and codification ideas. Integrative epistemology, contextually, aims at unification of the vast expanse of reality by way of harmonizing matter and spirit and diverse constituents of reality, open even to objective criticism and suggestions in order to better the lot of humanity. It is unlike Paul Fereyabend's and Richard Rorty's idea of "anything goes"; whatever should be integrated must have the characteristics for which philosophy is known. The methodological demands of integrative humanism, and by extension, integrative epistemology are contextual, analytic, complementary and mutual integration. Therefore, integrative humanism is a cautious management of relevant variables in context-dependent dynamic network for resolutions of tasks that would rather prove difficult for mono-sequestered and non-contextualized theoretic frameworks. It further bridges the gap between one culture and another, and between one philosophical tradition and another (Ozumba 27). In integrative epistemology, integration, complementation and harmonization as well as contextualization hold sway.

a. Integration and Harmonization

Integration is the act of bringing together similar or diverse smaller components into a single system that functions as one. Harmonization, on the other hand, is the action or process of making something compatible or consistent. Harmonization is aimed at finding commonalities, identify critical requirements that need to be retained, and provide a common standard. Integration within the context of this study seeks to bring

together rationalism and internalism (ratio-internalist) and empiricism and externalism (empirico-externalist) which becomes ratio-internalist and empirico-externalist discourse. The Igbo-African expression *njikoka* simply connotes (unity). It is better to unite than to disunite, and that is why bringing the positions of the rationalists and the internalists (the ratiocinative dimension to knowledge) as well as the empiricists and the externalists (the experiential approach to knowledge) together does epistemology more good than harm. According to Ozumba and Chimakonam, “To insist on one philosophy and its absolutization would be arrogant” (1). It has to be recalled that another name for integrative humanism is *njikoka* philosophy.

b. Contextualization

Contextualization is the view that inferential justification always takes place against a background of beliefs that are themselves in no way evidentially supported. This view has not often been defended by many, but Dewey, Popper, Austin, and Wittgenstein are arguably among its notable exponents. As this list perhaps suggests, contextualization is closely related to the “relevant alternatives” concept of justification, according to which claims to knowledge are justified not by ruling out any and every logically possible way in which what is asserted might be false or inadequately grounded, but by excluding certain especially relevant alternatives or epistemic shortcomings, these varying from one context of inquiry to another (Williams 156). In contextualization the study is concerned with finding the locus of justification within the context of discourse.

Internalism and Externalism: An Integrative Epistemic Synthesis

It is the position of integrative epistemology that philosophical theories, schools of thought and orientations should be grappled with within the context of human interest treating man as a temporal and an eternal being. Here, man is at the centre of all intellectual activities. This idea of spirito-centric humanism takes the spiritual component of reality into consideration. From the argument of the internalists and the externalists, the intellectual and experiential dimensions of man are emphasized without reference to the spiritual perspective. And each of them are conducting their debates as if their positions cannot be unified, but they can. This study strongly maintains that all the epochs of epistemic discourse have significant contributions to make in understanding internalism and externalism, especially as it is discussed within the purview of integrative epistemology. It is from the idea of the rationalists and empiricists successes and shortcomings that the exponents and other members of the internalist and externalist schools of thought and orientations espoused their thoughts and advanced their ideas, respectively. It is in the spirit of integrative epistemology (integrative criteria of knowledge) that knowledge is pursued and advanced holistically not losing sight of the spiritual dimension of man, who is a composite of body, soul, and spirit. There are always strong hiccups and setbacks when reason alone or reason and experience are emphasized at the expense of faith and the spiritual. In the words of Ozumba:

Philosophical orientations for the most part end up in agnosticism if they try to pursue their goal solely, from the point of view of reason. Kant tried and ended up in phenomena and had to accept the impermeableness of the noumena. Husserl tried through phenomenology and ended up equating appearances with reality (86).

From the above, it becomes apparent that conceptualizing the dynamics of internalism and externalism within the confines of integrativism cannot but carry along with it the spiritual. Epistemic synergy cannot be over-emphasised at this stage of the reflection. Faith, reason and experience must be integrated in order to make headway. It has to be pointed out that language remains a problem or a challenge in the quest for knowledge. The linguistic challenge is such that in analyzing and describing our perception, we employ different languages because it is natural that we perceive the same reality from diverse perspectives. The fact remains that the problem of relativism has not left us since the time of Protagoras of Abdera who argued that: “Man is the measure of all things, and of things that are that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not” (Mugumba 197). It is therefore, within the framework of integrative epistemology that internalism advancing rationalism becomes ratio-internalist (that is, reason which is at the internalist state being the source of knowledge), and externalism expanding the frontiers of empiricism becomes empirico-externalist (experience which is at the externalist state being emphasized as the gateway to knowledge) in their approach to knowledge. Epistemic goals have to be pursued with critical, creative and caring thinking (CCCT). This idea I have developed in another work which will be published subsequently. It has to be recalled that internalists and externalists have conducted their debate on the assumption that man is on his own either introspectively/intuitively or experientially/experimentally. In the light of integrative epistemology, it should not be (either/or), but both introspectively/intuitively and experientially/experimentally that reality can be better grappled with not losing sight of the spiritual (supernatural/revealed dimension of reality).

It is on that note that this work holds *ratio-internalist-and-empirico-externalist-spirito-discourse* (RIEESD) as a new approach to knowledge with a view to synthesizing epistemic internalism and externalism integratively. It is so because it is in understanding of the thought pattern of integrativism that this life is not all that man has to contend with and man is responsible both to himself, his fellow human beings (the society) and to God. What this work is trying to arrive at is that everything does not end with man. This is against the notion that, “man is on his own, that this life is all that he has to contend with, and we are responsible to ourselves (Blackburn 13). This is in line with the orientation that, “Philosophy must go beyond explication of concepts to show how the concepts bear some relevance to man’s existential situation as “being unto eternity” (Ozumba 89), showing that in integrative epistemology, “man is not the measure of all things” as against the position of Protagoras.

There are some basic features of rationalism which are clearly evident in internalism, and there are also some distinguishing characteristics of empiricism the externalists hold so dear and espouse with new vigour and renewed interest. The issues of intuition, introspection and the preeminence of reason over and above sense experience are commonly held by almost all the rationalists right from the time of Plato. It has to be noted that, "Though Plato is not a Continental rationalist, he is construed in this research as a 'charter member' of the rationalist school of thought. Some of the fundamental features of the rationalists which include the preeminence of reason over and above sense experience, the idea of innatism, intuition and indispensable role of the human mind in acquisition of knowledge are all identified in Plato's epistemic exploits" (Uzoigwe 27). Again, the empiricists strongly emphasize leadership of sense experience and experiential approach to knowledge over and above reason. The empiricists had earlier described the human mind as a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) right from birth.

Internalism emphasizes human reason, intuition and introspection. It is reasonable and sound argument that knowledge can be gained intuitively and introspectively, but that does not in any way come close to arriving at holistic knowledge. From another perspective, externalism holds so tenaciously sense experience, the world of physical existence, and experimentation. It is also a sound reasoning to hold that some of the knowledge of reality are experiential and at times verifiable. However, just like rationalism and empiricism, with Kant's *synthetic a priori*, both internalism and externalism fail to include the spiritual dimension of reality in their cognitive schemes. However, "When man is viewed as a being unto eternity, it is then that the preternatural and supernatural divides of his being will be better harmonized and appreciated" (Ezenwanne 98). It is so because every knowledge whether from the perspective of the internalists or from the point of view of the externalists are geared towards the good of man. The gap to be filled is the spiritual dimension of knowledge which none of the epistemic divides carried along as they espoused and advanced their ideas. This is beyond Richard Rorty's "anything goes", because integrative criteria of knowledge strongly hold that there is need to give account if not here, hereafter. By implication, nothing will be neglected or overlooked, especially the spiritual. In fact, St. Paul strongly emphasized that it is the spirit and the spiritual that is more profitable. The integrativist thinkers would also insist that nothing in the real sense of integration is useless or meaningless, because knowledge has to be purposive. Man is a tripartite being. He has a mind, a spirit and body. And these three dimensions supply him with knowledge or rather elicit for him knowledge relevant to his being. There is need for physical knowledge to attend to his physical well-being, mental knowledge to attend to his mental and soulful life and finally, spiritual knowledge to attend to the spiritual component of his existence (Ozumba and Chimakonam 42). Therefore, every dimension of man has to participate in his quest for knowledge that is integratively periscope.

Conclusion

Epistemologists of internalist and externalist schools of thought in conducting their debate mistakably held that they were completely at variant. From the above analysis and synthesis, it has been clearly shown that both epistemic theories are not radically different. They can be integrated, harmonized and synthesized. This study also shows that no epistemic idea in particular or philosophical theory in general emanates from a vacuum. Every new epistemic idea or philosophical theory arises either as a reaction or as a response to the already existing ones and the schools of thought that espouse them. This shows that in formulating and espousing epistemic cum philosophical theories, there is always an isomorphic string between the past and the present, and then envisaging the future. It is chiefly because philosophy with its various strands remains a living discipline. Such is the case with epistemic internalism and externalism which have been synthesized within the framework of integrative epistemology. The mathematical and scientific influence of the Renaissance interlude to philosophy are clearly demonstrated in the two great philosophical traditions of the modern era namely, rationalism and empiricism.

It is apparent that internalism is a contemporary advancement of rationalism, while externalism is an empiricist discourse of the 21st century. The former adopted the mathematical method clearly demonstrated in the epistemic postulates of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz and in the contemporary epoch appropriated and advanced by the internalists, while the latter employed the empirical/scientific approach as exemplified in the epistemic ideas of Locke, Hume and Berkeley; and employed and expanded in the 21st century by the externalists. Kant did a great work in synergizing between rationalism and empiricism with his famous *synthetic a priori*. However, he failed to include the spiritual dimension of knowledge. It has to be recalled that long before Kant, the idea of integrating philosophical ideas has been there along the ages with Empedocles in the ancient era integrating water, air, and fire, which were the views of Thales, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, respectively and then, he added 'earth' (his own contribution to knowledge) as the primary stuff of things. In the medieval period, St. Bonaventure, founder of the Franciscan Order, who was of the Augustinian tradition, combined both Augustinian and Aristotelian views in his epistemic discourse to instantiate the claim that integrativism and complementarity had been part of the scheme in philosophical inquiry right from the earliest times.

As it were, every philosopher's position contains a modicum of truth, though some are more convincing than others. I then figured that truth must be a phenomenon with many colours, phases, faces, dimensions, contexts and genres. I decided that to avoid half-truth we must adopt a system of philosophy that must aspire to comprehensivism, eclecticism, hotchpochism and integrativism. Truth, for me, becomes conceptualized conceptual milestones integratively periscoped (Ozumba 13). In general, it has been observed that every vantage position cannot be out-rightly wrong, it will definitely have something sensible to communicate when it is contextualized; each view has some element of truth or reality to present, when approached integratively synergizing the diverse positions to arrive at knowledge. In that sense, the internalists and the externalists with the rationalists and the empiricists whose ideas they advanced more vigorously will synergize their views and come up with *ratio-internalist-and-*

empirico-externalist-spirito-discourse (RIEESD). Integrative epistemic synthesis construes that human reason, sense perception and the spiritual dimension of reality must all be considered in a harmonious manner if the internalists and the externalists will make any headway in their quest for knowledge, because it is better to integrate than to disintegrate.

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